

Neath Port Talbot

Healthy Relationships For Stronger Communities

2016 - 2019

Implementing the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and
Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015

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1. Introduction

The human and emotional costs of Violence in domestic and public spheres cannot be underestimated.

Every year an estimated 2.1 million people in the UK suffer some form of Domestic Abuse; 1.4 million women and 700,000 men.

The term “Violence Against Women” which is used nationally and in this strategy refers to the range of crime types which are **predominantly, but not exclusively**, experienced by women and girls. Such gender-based violence includes domestic abuse, rape and sexual violence, stalking, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, crimes committed in the name of ‘honour’, trafficking, sexual exploitation, including commercially through the sex industry, and sexual harassment in the workplace and public sphere.

Having a co-ordinated approach to addressing these issues does not mean this neglects abuse directed towards men and boys or other groups and individuals who experience these forms of violence, or neglects to deal with violence perpetrated by women where this occurs.

This strategy is an overarching plan which outlines the priority areas and strategic direction around healthy relationships and the implementation of the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 within Neath Port Talbot. It has been developed with the involvement of partner agencies and survivors. It aims to tackle all forms of violence in relationships, responding to the growing number of referrals being received by specialist providers, reducing harm and improving the lives of those affected.

We want to ensure this agenda is acknowledged as ‘everyone’s business’ and is a cross cutting theme that requires all areas of public policy to address violence in domestic and public spheres, to shape and improve the delivery of services for those affected and to meet the requirements outlined in the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015. This Act places a statutory duty on the Local Authority and ABMU Health Board to jointly prepare and publish strategies to meet local needs and to prevent all forms of Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence.

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council (NPTCBC) and ABMU Health Board has worked with a wide range of partner agencies to develop this strategy and will continue to work with partner agencies to provide services to all victims of crime and to bring all

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offenders to justice. We will also work across the Western Bay Region to identify elements of this plan which are best delivered on a wider area basis.

Those with the power to transform the cultures that perpetuate violence must work together. This strategy encourages partners to further work together to achieve positive outcomes.

2. Context

Welsh Context

In Wales, the cost of Domestic Abuse is estimated to be £303.5m annually: £202.6m in service costs and £100.9m to lost economic output. These figures do not include any element of human and emotional costs, which research estimates costs Wales an additional £522.9m. Taking the costs of sexual violence and other forms of abuse into account would significantly increase this amount.

Over the last few years in Wales, significant progress has been made in improving services for those who experience Violence within their relationships. This culminated in the enactment of the **Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act** in 2015.

Section 5 (1) of the Act places a duty on Local Authorities and Local Health Boards to jointly prepare and publish a Local Strategy which aims to end and ensure consistent consideration of preventative, protective and supportive mechanisms in the delivery of services. The first strategies need to be published by May 2018.

This strategy has a key role to play in ensuring that Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council and ABMU Health Board are meeting the requirements of the Act.

In 2010 the Welsh Government published a 6-year national strategy: '**Right to be Safe**', tackling all forms of violence against women, which set out 4 key priorities;

- Prevention and raising awareness
- Providing support for victims and children
- Improving the response of criminal justice agencies
- Improving the response of health services and other agencies.

The recently published Welsh Government **National Strategy on Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (2016-2021)** sets out a renewed commitment to tackling VAWDASV, building on progress to date and prioritises delivery

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in the areas of prevention, protection and support, in line with the purposes of the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015.

A suite of statutory guidance will also be issued under the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act, which sets out how relevant authorities should exercise their functions in relation to implementation. This is expected to include guidance on a whole education approach, National Training Framework, 'Ask and Act', multi-agency working, commissioning, working with and responding to perpetrators, information sharing and the commissioning of specialist services.

The National Training Framework has been established by Welsh Government to ensure an unfailing standard of public service in order to create a consistent standard of care for those who experience Violence.

This National Training Framework has two main functions:

- Consistent, proportionately disseminated training for relevant authorities to fundamentally improve the understanding of the general workforce and, therefore the response to those who experience violence.
- Alignment of existing specialist training to further professionalise the specialist sector, to improve consistency of specialist subject training provision nationally and to set core requirements of specialist service provision.

Welsh Government is also introducing a policy framework, supported by statutory guidance, on '**Ask and Act**'. This is a process of targeted enquiry to be practiced across the Public Service to identify people affected by this agenda. "Ask and Act" is one of the most significant practice changes, facilitated through the National Training Framework. These two policies are integrated, in that local delivery of the National Training Framework also delivers key aspects of "Ask and Act".

The aims of the national "Ask and Act" framework are to:

- Increase identification of those experiencing Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence ;
- Offer referrals and interventions for those identified, which provide specialist support based on the risk and needs of the client;
- Begin to create a culture across the Public Service where addressing Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence is an accepted area of business and where disclosure is expected, supported, accepted and facilitated;

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- Improve the response to those who experience Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence with other complex needs such as substance misuse and mental health; and to pro-actively engage with those who are vulnerable and hidden, at the earliest opportunity, rather than only reactively engaging with those who are in crisis or at imminent risk of serious harm.

Work is also currently underway to develop;

- A framework for sustainable funding models for regional service provision
- Funding and professional development requirements for specialist workers
- Guidance and policy linked to commissioning and regional service provision.

The requirement to undertake a local needs assessment in relation to the duties in the Act aligns with Section 14 of the **Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014** (SSWBA), which also requires a ‘population needs assessment’ to inform the development of local strategies. The first population assessment has been published. When a local authority and Local Health Board is exercising functions in relation to children under SSWBA, they must also have regard to Part 1 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

In addition to the requirements of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, the **Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015** requires the Welsh Government, along with the 43 other specified public bodies (including all local authorities), to ensure that, when making their decisions, they take into account the impact they could have on people living their lives in Wales in the future. To do this, the Act puts in place a “sustainable development principle” which requires public bodies to follow five ways of working to help them work better together, with people and communities, avoid repeating past mistakes and to tackle some of the long terms challenges being faced. The five ways of working are:

- Prevention: How acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help public bodies meet their objectives
- Integration: Considering how the public body’s objectives may impact upon each of the well-being goals, or on the objectives of other public bodies.

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- Collaboration: Acting in collaboration with any other person (or different parts of the body itself) that could help the body to meet its well-being objectives
- Involvement: The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals, and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves.
- Long Term: The importance of balancing short term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to meet long term needs.

The ***Housing (Wales) Act 2014*** enshrines in legislation the role of the local authority in preventing and alleviating homelessness, this will change the way that services are delivered to survivors of violence who flee their home seeking a safe place to live. The Welsh Government guidance which supports the practical delivery of the legislation advises local authorities and their partners, as follows:

“Local authorities should be led by the wishes and feelings of the victim of domestic abuse when determining accommodation arrangements. The first option, where appropriate, should be for the perpetrator to be removed from the property to enable the victim to remain in their home. The Local Authority must also consider improving the security of the applicant’s home to enable them to continue living there safely. Alternatively, the Local Authority must assist the victim in sourcing alternative accommodation, whether on a permanent or temporary basis”¹

This reinforces the need for local authorities need to work in partnership to ensure that prevention of homelessness is at the forefront of thinking. This will require an alternative approach to the provision of temporary, crisis accommodation and support.

The **Wales Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) study** is also of relevance to this work, and the well-being of future generations. The findings from the recently published study into the impact of adverse childhood experience on adults in Wales² suggests that a significant number of adults in Wales have experienced one or more forms of ACE; these include witnessing domestic abuse, experiencing verbal, physical or sexual abuse, as well as witnessing substance misuse. Evidence suggests that experiencing 4 or more types of adverse childhood experiences leads to a person being 14 times more likely to be a victim of violence. It also provides evidence that preventing ACE’s can significantly reduce the possibility of violence victimisation by 57%,

¹ Welsh Government 2016. Code of Guidance for local authorities on the allocation of housing and homelessness.

² Public Health Wales (2015) Wales Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) study, PHW

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and can further reduce the likelihood of violent perpetration by 60%. Ultimately the provision of effective support and early intervention for those impacted by ACE will have a longer term impact on the reduced demand and costs to health and social services. The Home Office strategy suggests ACE initial enquiry should be actioned within health care settings.

NICE Domestic Abuse Guidance and Quality Standards

In 2014, the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) issued “*Domestic violence and abuse: how health services, social care and the organisations they work with can respond effectively*”. The Welsh Government has an agreement in place with the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) covering the Institute's guidelines which highlights; domestic abuse is a complex issue that needs sensitive handling by a range of health and social care professionals. The cost, in both human and economic terms, is so significant that even marginally effective interventions are cost effective. NICE will be issuing further Domestic Abuse Quality Standards for healthcare providers aimed at everyone working in health and social care whose work brings them into contact with people who experience or perpetrate Domestic Abuse. Recommendations will include key issues of importance for regions to have regard to when delivering local Domestic Abuse strategies.³

The Quality standards were published 29th Feb 2016 and the Home Office Strategy states that an updated version of “Responding to Domestic Abuse: A resource for Health Professionals” will be published in the near future.

UK and EU

Welsh Government has framed its legislation and guidance on Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence alongside the UK and EU legislation;

- Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (2016-2020)
- European Union (EU) Directive on Victims’ Rights⁴
- The Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women, and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention)
- Welfare Reform

³ The full suite of recommendations can be found at <http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/PH50/chapter/1-Recommendations>

⁴ A person should be considered to be a victim regardless of whether an offender is identified, apprehended, prosecuted or convicted and regardless of the familial relationship between them. For a summary of European Commission priorities for victims of crime see http://ec.europa.eu/justice/criminal/victims/rights/index_en.htm . The full text of the Directive (2012/29/EU) is available at <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32012L0029>

PREVALENCE OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

WITHIN NEATH PORT TALBOT

2.1 MILLION

NUMBER OF
PEOPLE ACROSS
ENGLAND & WALES
AFFECTED BY
DOMESTIC ABUSE



NEATH
PORT TALBOT
HAS A RESIDENT
POPULATION

139,800

18,174

OF RESIDENTS

COULD BE EXPERIENCING
SOME FORM OF
DOMESTIC ABUSE

11,883

WOMEN



6,291

MEN

1186

ACCORDING TO
LOCAL
POLICE DATA

REPORTED
CRIMES IN
2015
2016



PEOPLE RECEIVED
SUPPORT
FROM SPECIALIST
SERVICES

DEPENDENTS

340

+ 316

3. Resources and Service Mapping

There are a range of services in Neath Port Talbot including 3 specialist providers; Port Talbot and Afan Women's Aid (PTAWA), Calan DVS and Hafan Cymru.

Available services have been categorised into the following;

- 1) Accommodation
- 2) Support
- 3) High Risk
- 4) Children & Young People
- 5) Targeted Specialist Services

1) Accommodation

Refuge Provision

Calan DVS and PTAWA provide refuge services within NPT.

Calan DVS have 2 refuges offering a total of 13 spaces and PTAWA have 1 refuge offering 6 spaces.

One of Calan's 13 spaces is a crisis room which has a two week maximum stay and is restricted to women from Neath Port Talbot.

Over 58% of women entering Calan DVS refuges stay for less than one month. The average length of stay in the PTAWA refuge is 7 weeks.

PTAWA staff also provide short term resettlement support for women moving on from the refuge.

Women's move-on from refuge is mixed. During 15/16 the main reasons were; social housing, returning to their original home and referral to other women's aid organisations.

Both refuge providers operate a 24 hour on-call system.

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Fixed Term Temporary Accommodation

Fixed Term accommodation is time limited. Once the support needs of the women are met they are required to move on to other non-supported accommodation.

PTAWA have five self-contained flats which are described as providing “move-on accommodation” supported by staff based at the refuge. Individuals can remain in these properties for up to two years. In 2015-16, 6 women were supported, 2 of whom had dependent children resident with them. The average length of stay during the year was just over 12 months.

Hafan Cymru operate three clusters of temporary accommodation providing 14 units of housing. During 15-16, Hafan Cymru supported 22 women and 20 dependent children. There are no formalised referral pathways to this accommodation and referrals come from a variety of sources.

Homelessness

For a proportion of survivors of Domestic Abuse, incidents (or repeated incidents) of domestic abuse force them to flee from their home to places of safety.

The local authority has a duty to assist victims of domestic abuse to find alternative accommodation. However, it should be noted that many victims fleeing domestic abuse do not necessarily approach the local authority for assistance and access services in many different ways.

Neath Port Talbot Housing Options Team	April 14 to 15	April 15 to 16
Number of homeless presentations	2327	2008
Number of homeless presentations as a result of Domestic Abuse	130	123

2)Support

Floating Support

All three of the specialist providers provide floating support services to survivors of domestic abuse, funded by the Supporting People Programme Grant.

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PTAWA are funded to provide 10 units of floating support and employ one full time dedicated member of staff to provide this service. Additional support is provided by the Community Services Manager.

Calan DVS are funded to provide 10 units of floating support and employ two dedicated full time members of staff.

Hafan are funded to provide 1 unit of floating support.

Freedom Programme

All 3 specialist providers deliver The Freedom Programme which is a 7-8 week group programme that helps women deal with the effects of domestic abuse, and to avoid abusive relationships in the future.

Discussions are underway between the agencies to develop a partnership approach to this programme to enable open referrals, rather than maintaining waiting lists.

The demand for this programme is far higher than the current capacity, demonstrated by the length of waiting lists.

All 3 specialist providers also offer further interventions, which are explained in further detail later on in the Strategy.

One Stop Shop

The OSS is based in Neath and provides a drop in service which is operated by the partnership. The service offers advice, information and support from specialist support workers to help **anybody** affected by violent relationships

The premises offer space for meetings, training events and counselling.

Partner agencies deliver sessional work from the OSS to deliver additional targeted services to clients.

In particular:

- A remote evidence facility for Neath and Port Talbot County Court and Family Court offering witness support
- Citizen Advice, offering welfare benefit and debt advice
- New Pathways, working with rape, sexual abuse and trauma, offers one to one counselling
- Wales Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) undertaking one to one work with low to medium-risk offenders to tackle the causes of their behaviour
- Victim Support- providing information and support to victims of crime

Between September 2015 and February 2016, 672 individuals accessed services at the OSS.

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National Helpline

During 15/16 189 women were supported into refuges in the NPT area.

32 helpline referrals were turned away as refuges were full at the time.

1 helpline referral was refused as the perpetrator was local to the refuge so it would not have been a safe option.

These victims would have been given alternative options, including details of support providers within their area.

3)High Risk

Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)

The MARAC meet once every fortnight to discuss high risk victims of domestic abuse. Key statutory agencies, such as the Local Authority, the police and health work alongside relevant third sector agencies to form this partnership.

MARAC	14 / 15	15 / 16	16 / 17
Cases discussed	306	370	446
Children in household	342	483	551
Repeat cases	22%	21%	23%
Police referrals	66%	61%	60%
Referrals from partner agencies	34%	39%	40%
BME	1.00%	1.9%	2.9%
LGBT	0.00%	0.5%	0.6%
Disability	5.60%	1.9%	2.0%
Males	5.20%	5.5%	5.6%
Victims aged 16-17	8	2	3
Cases where victims aged 16-17	2.60%	0.25%	0.4%
Harming others aged 17 or below	4	2	3

There is a significant increase in the number of cases being discussed with over 50% of those cases being referred from the police.

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Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) service

In 2015/16 Neath Port Talbot Council had one full-time IDVA and one IDVA working three days a week, based within the Community Safety Team at Neath Police Station, working with high risk domestic abuse cases. In June 2016 this increased to two full time IDVA's.

However, due to cuts in the Home Office Grant that part funds this, alternative arrangements will need to be considered for the future

IDVA Referrals	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
	265	344	

4)Children & Young People

Children's Services

There is a Single Point of Contact facility (SPOC) that is designed to respond to all contacts that come into Children and Young People Services (CYPS) and the Team Around the Family (TAF).

At the Single Point of Contact, all referrals received by CYPS and TAF are "screened" by a qualified, experienced Social Work Manager who will then decide on the appropriate next steps. These include:

- Signposting to support services
- Referral to early intervention and prevention services via (TAF)
- Referral to statutory support services via the Intake Team
- Advice provided and no further action required.

TAF provides a service to families who are likely to need help from two or more agencies.

During 15/16 TAF made 59 referrals to Domestic Abuse services, the majority of which were for young people support, as they had witnessed Domestic Abuse in the home environment, or were displaying such behaviour themselves.

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Calan DVS are funded to provide three specialist domestic abuse workers to work alongside the TAF team. Between August 2015 and March 2016 they supported 50 families and 79 individuals. The STAR programme (Safety Trust and Respect) was also delivered to 8 individuals.

Spectrum

Hafan Cymru operate Spectrum which is an All Wales project delivered in primary and secondary schools across all parts of Wales, including Neath Port Talbot. Spectrum uses a 'whole school' approach to tackling all forms of Domestic Abuse. Lessons are delivered by trained teachers working with Personal & Social Education (PSE) teachers in support of the PSE Framework in schools to teach Children and Young People about healthy relationships, abuse and its consequences and where to seek help. Classes receive this intervention on an annual basis.

The Spectrum staff also deliver sessions to teachers and support staff, youth workers, social workers, other interested professionals, and parents.

During 15/16 Spectrum have delivered to 2461 pupils in Neath Port Talbot, across 122 visits

BRAVE Early Intervention and Prevention Project

Calan DVS operate the BRAVE Project, which is an early intervention and prevention project for Children and Young People. This is a research and development programme aimed at developing and piloting new and different approaches to work with children and young people. The overall aim is to improve practice and share learning about effective interventions.

All Wales School Liaison Core Programme

The programme educates young people about some of the dangerous issues that affect our society today. The intention of the programme is to safeguard all children and young people living in Wales by providing them with information about the dangers associated with issues such as substance use and misuse, anti-social behaviour and domestic abuse. Lesson content is delivered by trained police officers working in partnership with Personal & Social Education (PSE) teachers, in support of the PSE curriculum in schools in Wales.

During 15/16, 220 lessons were delivered in total, received by 5,500 children.

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Positive Relationships Programme

Port Talbot and Afan Women's Aid have developed an hour long session plan, dealing with domestic abuse, healthy relationships and other forms of abuse. This is aimed at secondary schools and has been rolled out across the county borough over the last 2 years.

Crucial Crew

Crucial Crew is an annual event for year 6 pupils organised by the Neath Port Talbot's Community Safety Team. The event is designed to raise awareness among pupils in their final year at Primary School, of the dangers they may face in everyday life. Crucial Crew is held for two weeks every year and involves many different agencies working in partnership to raise awareness of various different issues, one of which is Domestic Abuse. This event reaches 1600 pupils every year.

Western Bay Youth Justice and Early Intervention Service

Young persons aged 10-18 who have committed a violent offence (which could include domestic or sexual violence) automatically engage in the STAR and RESPECT programme to aid understanding about healthy relationships. This is delivered internally by suitably trained staff.

Data from the Core Assessments completed with young people involved with the Youth Justice and Early Intervention Services shows that 41% had witnessed violence in the family and 39% had experienced some form of abuse themselves.

NPT Youth Service

Neath Port Talbot Youth Service works with young people aged 11-25.

They encourage and enable young people to participate in all opportunities available to them and gain the skills needed to become happy, confident and fulfilled adults and members of their communities. Staff are trained to deliver Domestic Abuse and Sexual Health training to the young people accessing their services.

Higher Education

As part of the programme of awareness raising of Domestic Abuse and the services available, prevention campaigns and initiatives are regularly held in local colleges and universities.

5) Targeted Specialist Services

Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC)

The SARC is a specialist facility where recent victims of rape or sexual assault can receive immediate help and support. SARC services are provided in the Swansea area, with 2 full-time ISVAs managed by New Pathways.

In 15/16, 76 individuals from NPT accessed the SARC service. 59 were female and 17 male. 35 individuals accessed the adult counselling service of which 18 were female and 17 male. 3 children were supported (2 female, 1 male).

BAWSO (Black Association of Women Step Out)

BAWSO is the lead specialist provider of services to people from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) backgrounds affected by domestic abuse and other forms of abuse, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), human trafficking, prostitution and forced marriage.

BAWSO offer purpose built refuges that are specially adapted to meet the cultural and religious needs of service users. They offer outreach support; information and advice, floating support as well as a FGM Health and Safeguarding community based project.

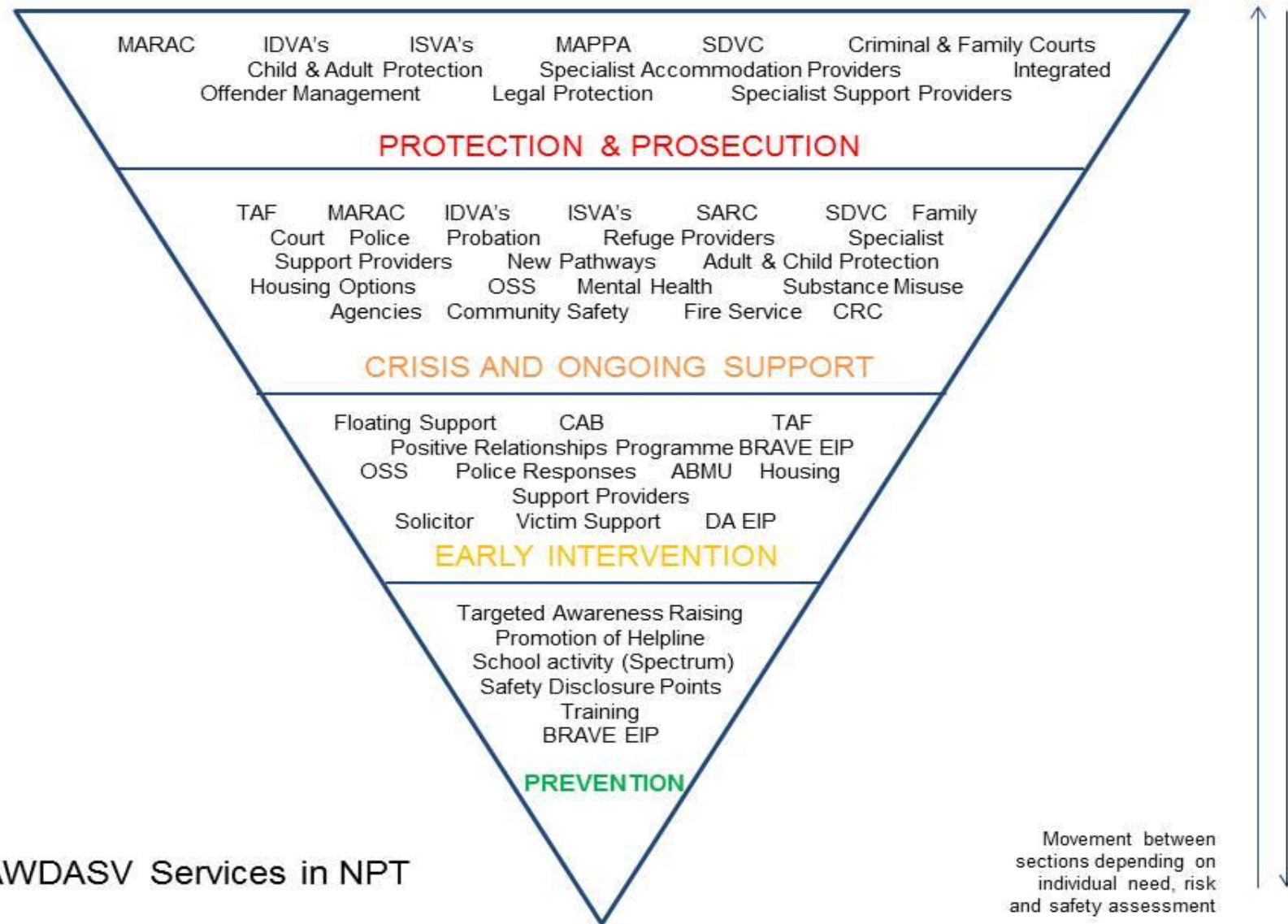
The refuge and safe house have provision for 8 and 3 families respectively. Both can accommodate either families (women and children) or single females. The project has 3 family support workers and one children and young person's worker.

At present there is no outreach worker in the Neath Port Talbot area but they have had the following referrals:

BAWSO Referrals for NPT	No Of Referrals
2013/14	3
2014/15	5
2015/16	4

In addition to services mentioned above, PTAWA provide the Video Interactive Guidance Project, Social Enterprise 'Material Girls' and Training opportunities.

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VAWDASV Services in NPT

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Resources to Address Domestic Abuse in NPT

The funding of services in NPT is complex. In the financial year 2016-17 revenue funding of £908,658 underpinned the delivery of services to survivors of domestic abuse.

Supporting People	Supporting People Programme Grant	£192,252	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 services providing 21 units of floating support
		£544,456	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7 services providing 43 units of fixed site accommodation, incl. cross border project
Community Safety	WG funding	£84,550	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Domestic Abuse Coordinator Post (DAC) 1 Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA) IDVAs support victims of Domestic Abuse who are at the highest risk of serious injury or homicide
	HO funding	£35,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 IDVA post (part funding) 1 0.5FTE Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) Coordinator
	Police & Crime Commissioner	£17,600 (of £57,000)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allocated towards IDVA post
	Crime Prevention Panel and ad hoc WG funding	£13,986	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target hardening - Security items for victims of Domestic Abuse
Families First	Welsh Government-Families First	£34,800	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Domestic Abuse Early Intervention Prevention Services (Provided by Calan DVS- Low level support for TAF families)

In addition, the majority of the rental income to fund refuge accommodation and move on accommodation is funded from Housing Benefit payments⁵.

⁵ This is not shown in the figure quoted above

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Each of the three specialist providers of services are charities and access funding from a range of other sources that are shown below;

Recipient	Funding Provider	Amount	Purpose
Calan DVS	Big Lottery	£1.66m	BRAVE EIP Project
PTAWA	WCVA	£20,000	Social Enterprise
PTAWA	Trusthouse Grant	£19,888	VIG Project
PTAWA	Active Inclusion Fund	£40,000	Training and Employment
PTAWA	Big Lottery	£83,492	Positive Relationships Project
Hafan Cymru	Welsh Government	<i>Awaiting</i>	Spectrum Project

Resources and Service Mapping Conclusion

There is a range of good quality services available in Neath Port Talbot. However, there is acknowledgement that some of these services need modernisation, with opportunities to reduce cost. Additionally, there is a need to further develop Early Intervention and Prevention and Community Based Services to prevent and reduce the number of victims requiring crisis services. This will require a remodeling of existing provision, particularly accommodation and mental health support services, with a view to redirecting resources to intervene earlier and to support more victims to remain in their own homes. There is also a paucity of support available to perpetrators, which requires consideration.

There is good coverage of domestic abuse within education and youth settings, but there is an opportunity to bring more consistency in approach. Partners report significant activity to raise awareness of this agenda, but the approach could have greater impact if promotional activity was better coordinated and aligned with the other programmes of work set out in this strategy.

The area compares favourably in terms of criminal justice outcomes, however, there is scope for further improvement and the two Domestic Homicide Reviews will emphasise the importance of effective offender management, especially when perpetrators have been shown to demonstrate a pattern of escalating violence.

4. Consultation and Engagement

A range of means were put in place to allow partners and survivors to contribute to the development of this strategy from the outset. This has enabled a rounded view of what works well, where there are gaps in provision and opportunities for improvement to be formed. The information obtained has been used to inform this strategy, in particular the actions we need to take in order to meet our objectives.

A series of one to one interviews were held, an online survey was developed and the following focus groups were held;

- Survivors
- Providers
- Wider Stakeholders
- Commissioners

Survivor Feedback

A service user event was held in order to gather feedback from those who have experienced first-hand how our services currently operate and whether they are sufficient enough to meet the needs of those experiencing violence in their relationships.

We recognise the importance of routinely seeking this information from survivors, in order for us to continuously improve and ensure we are delivering person centered, accessible, effective services. The following themes emerged from the feedback provided by survivors:

Awareness Raising

- Awareness raising through TV campaigns and articles in women's magazines are really helpful, but more awareness raising needs to be done so that everyone knows they can get help and how

Children and Young People

- Male role models are helpful for Children Young People affected by Domestic Abuse

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- The impact on children is massive. What is out there is good, but more is needed particularly counselling and therapeutic support
- Groups for young people on safe AND healthy relationships were viewed as important to support prevention

Perpetrators

- Target hardening helps but you also need to be sure victims “really” feel safe and the ‘systems’ work
- Perpetrators need to be challenged and take responsibility, not the victim.
- Programmes for perpetrators are needed – why do the victims have to move away?
- The need for stronger Criminal Justice System responses to remove perpetrators was also acknowledged

Responses to Victims and Survivors

- Staffing levels and staff knowledge is not always as good as it should be. The quality of service is important and needs to be timely, flexible, needs-led, and consistent
- There is inconsistent practice across public services – victim-blaming, judging, punitive, unsafe responses highlighted vs ‘brilliant’ responses by some professionals (police, health visitors)
- If the case is high risk and has serious consequences there was a perception that police and Crown Prosecution Service responses are better
- Fear of seeking help from the police as social services get involved and there were concerns expressed about children being taken away
- Coercive control and mental torture is worse than physical harm-“bruises go away”. Agencies need to understand coercive control and take it seriously
- Not judging victims during the process was seen as a fundamental requirement

Support

- GP's are good if there is a continuing relationship. The appointment system does not allow this
- Peer support, training and volunteering opportunities are important for survivors

Accommodation

- Refuge is seen as a last resort, but can be 'life saving'. However, no other accommodation options are given and it feels like 'refuge, or nothing'.
- More options need to be available for victims in crisis. Restrictions to accessing accommodation create additional barriers.
- The mix of clients in temporary accommodation is not always appropriate and the Housing Benefit Single Room Rate for under 35's causes problems with move on or access to alternative accommodation.

Leadership

- Ongoing survivor involvement in local developments was highly valued.

One to One Interviews

20 Interviews were conducted. The feedback is summarised below:

Awareness Raising

- More targeted awareness raising is needed, particularly relating to perpetrator accountability and responsibility
- The need to increase awareness that Domestic Abuse is an important crosscutting theme that is everyone's responsibility

Children and Young People (CYP)

- There is a lack of funding for CYP services
- Provision outside of Team Around the Family needs to be adequately funded and the allocation of more funding is essential as there are not enough services available.
- Counselling services are needed
- Children need to be given a voice and be able to access services in their own right
- There is a need for improved child care support and holistic interventions to address overall well being

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- Education makes a vital contribution to the prevention agenda and the importance of their role in a community coordinated response to Domestic Abuse
- The need for male role models

Perpetrators

- Non mandatory perpetrator programmes are essential and need to be funded, as current programmes are only linked to the criminal justice system

Early Intervention & Prevention

- There was a strong commitment to the important role of prevention and early intervention and the need to further develop responses to support this agenda
- The IRIS Programme needs to be rolled out to all regions
- An intake and rapid assessment service should be developed and supported by a range of service options which can be accessed.
- The spectrum of services needs to be broader
- Needs led assessments, rather than risk led assessments, should be developed to support the prevention and early intervention agenda.

Responses to Victims & Survivors

- Third party reporting centres should be developed to support early intervention. People should be able to report anywhere, anytime and to any service

Support

- There is a lack of Mental Health support services, which is urgent given the number of survivors impacted by mental health
- Lack of services for older persons impacted by DA, particularly those isolated in rural communities

Criminal Justice System

- The criminal justice system contribution to this agenda needs to be improved
- Confidence levels in both police responses needs to be improved to support increased reporting of incidents

Leadership & Governance

- The newly devised governance structure and Leadership Group is welcomed and is recognised as a good progress
- Mechanisms for service user feedback are lacking
- Creative ways of hearing survivor 'voices' need to be developed
- Service users and survivors need to be empowered to contribute to the strategic agenda
- Third sector specialist providers need to be directed to adopt a consortia approach

Commissioning

- Supporting People (SP) allocations do not match need, given the absence of accurate needs assessments
- A commitment to pooling budgets is needed to enable a much more strategic response to this agenda
- There is a lack of mainstream core funding
- Funding contributions to the agenda need to be extended
- Sustainable 3-5 year contracts are needed
- There is untapped potential of the third sector to use their own resources to access additional funds and support match funding requirements for certain tenders
- Transparency and flexibility is required and is essential to the commissioning process
- There is no consistency in the commissioning process.
- SP funding needs to be able to better support the prevention agenda and be less housing focused
- Outputs and returns on Supporting People spend overall were queried relating to value for money
- The varying SP unit cost of specialist providers

Data

- Available data is not easily accessible and there is no consistency in how this was collated, or how it was used to inform strategic or service development
- There are no current adequate needs assessment processes. What is available is well under developed and therefore there is no reliable evidence base
- A comprehensive resource mapping exercise is required to support a gap analysis and the production of a borough wide service directory
- Lack of clarity about how existing data is reported, where, and what is done with this information
- Joining up third sector data information systems to achieve more meaningful information
- The need for improved, consistent and common data collection
- Data needs to be further broken down to enable more informed analysis and understanding
- Statutory sector data requirements from partners need to be clearly defined
- A clear and consistent performance and outcomes framework needs to be developed for all partners. These outcomes need to be able to measure what victims and survivors want, not the 'system'

Accommodation

- 'Rules' operating in accommodation services need to be reviewed
- Housing has a critical role to play in the prevention agenda and this requires improved knowledge and understanding of which housing models are proven to be particularly effective
- More interventions need to be developed that focus on enabling victims to remain in their own homes. This also reinforces that better court remedies are essential
- Specialist community based accommodation which is safe and physically secure needs to be developed

High Risk Victims

- Action plans that emerge from the MARAC process are not adequately monitored.
- More Independent Domestic Violence Advisers are needed

Providers

Awareness Raising

- Awareness raising through workforce policy development and training
- Engaging with the Private sector landlord forum
- Arranging delivery of targeted work sessions e.g. relationship grooming, sexual exploitation etc.
- More awareness raising work and a coordinated approach to campaigns

Children & Young People (CYP)

- More services for CYP
- Mentors and a 'buddying' system for young people

Perpetrators

- A greater focus on perpetrator work locally

Early Intervention & Prevention

- Financial support through BOND schemes to access Privately Rented Accommodation before violence escalates
- Early identification through organisations assessment processes
- Referrals to specialist services become common practice

Responses to Victims & Survivors

- Introduce a requirement on partners and local services to actively identify and record any issues relating to Domestic Abuse
- Targeted training for non-specialist partners

Support

- Advocacy and advice

- General drop in services
- Referrals and signposting to specialist services
- Co-working with clients with multiple needs

Criminal Justice System

- Referrals and signposting to specialist services
- Legal advice and support readily available
- Consider the option of a Clinical mental health nurse in the court service
- Increased Target hardening and tenancy enforcement
- Improved information sharing

Commissioning

- Closer partnership working and formalising of partnerships links through joint funding bids

Data

- Standardised data collection

Accommodation

- Provision of accommodation with support

Wider Stakeholders

This focus group was attended by 36 delegates representing the Local Authority, Health, Police, Education, Housing, Specialist Providers and third sector.

Awareness Raising

- Visible information is needed everywhere, to increase awareness and reporting

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- Inclusive community events are needed
- Work is needed to challenge attitudes

Children & Young People

- Education and early intervention with children and young people is paramount
- Clarity about what statutory services are required to provide e.g. minimum service provision required, particularly relating to children and young people

Perpetrators

- Integrated tiered interventions for perpetrators (low/medium-upstream interventions)

Early Intervention & Prevention

- The use of digital technology to offer multiple opportunities to request services
- The development of a peripatetic outreach service to provide immediate responses and assistance

Responses to Victims & Survivors

- The importance of training to support early awareness and recognition and provide informed responses to the issues

Support

- Multiple access points and disclosure points better meets the identified population need and accommodates geographical considerations

Leadership & Governance

- The importance of survivor involvement strategically, role models and community champions

Commissioning

- The strategy needs to be properly funded (including core funding) if actions are to be achieved
- A sustainable funding plan needs to be developed which spans a five year period
- Survivor representation needs to be included in the commissioning process

Data

- Further research to identify the needs of specific groups / minority groups

Accommodation

- Shared assessment for refuge at the point of crisis and prior to refuge allocation

Commissioners

Early Intervention & Prevention

- DA services should be resourced to focus more on early intervention

Leadership & Governance

- Outcomes need to feature in all commissioning plans and strategies. Without this, the incentive to address it will be weak

Commissioning

- Overall there was a sense of commissioning practices being underdeveloped and uncoordinated at both a regional and local level and the associated perception of a post code lottery across the region, depending on who leads and who engages in partnerships.
- There is a need for clear and unequivocal corporate leadership on the prioritisation of this agenda as an overarching priority
- The 'common commissioning unit' at the council seems to solely focus on adult social care and children's commissioning, which doesn't make connections with other issues e.g. Supporting People, Substance Misuse, Community Safety

Data

- The absence of any comprehensive needs mapping since 2011
- Lack of data to inform an evidenced base gaps analysis of services
- Underdeveloped recording and corporate coordination of outcomes

High Risk Victims

- MARAC doesn't focus on perpetrators and how to interrupt or prevent abuse as part of the safety planning, as much as it could
- IDVA caseloads are too high
- MARAC cases are increasing and there was a perception that every case identified is sent through the 'high risk' route because there is no comprehensive early intervention provision

Analysis of Consultation & Engagement

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There were a number of common themes that emerged from the engagement work, which are drawn out below, as well as specific issues attributable to particular stakeholders:

Themes	Gaps / Concerns	Survivors	Providers & Partnership	Wider Stakeholders	Commissioners
Awareness Raising	Gaps				
	More awareness raising needed	✓	✓	✓	
	Inclusive community events			✓	
	Need to challenge attitudes			✓	
Children & Young People	Gaps				
	Male role models / Mentors	✓	✓		
	Counselling & Support Groups	✓	✓		
	Children need to have a voice		✓		
	Concerns				
	Lack of clarity on role of statutory services		✓		
	Additional funding needed for CYP services		✓		
Perpetrators	Gaps				
	Increased Target Hardening	✓			
	Perpetrator Work	✓	✓	✓	
	Concerns				
	Stronger Criminal Justice Responses	✓			
Responses To Victims	Gaps				
	All victims being able to report anywhere at anytime	✓	✓		
	Agencies need to understand coercive control	✓			
	All partners need to record and report		✓		
	Training for non-specialist services		✓	✓	

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	Concerns				
	Inconsistent practices across Public Services	✓			
	Services need to be timely and flexible	✓			
	Presumption that Police and CPS responses are better for High Risk victims	✓			
Support	Gaps				
	GP systems don't allow for continued support	✓			
	Improved access to Mental Health support		✓		
	Services in rural areas		✓		
	Services for older people		✓		
	More drop in services		✓	✓	
	Peer support and training	✓			
	Concerns				
	Improved partnership working for victims with complex or multiple needs		✓		
Accommodation	Gaps				
	More options for victims in crisis	✓	✓		
	Increased focus on assisting victims to remain in their own home, when safe	✓			
	Community based accommodation	✓			
	Shared assessment at Crisis point		✓		
	Concerns				
	Restrictions to accessing accommodation creates barriers	✓	✓		
	Single Room Rate Housing Benefit makes move on difficult	✓			
	Mix of residents is not always appropriate	✓			

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Leadership	Gaps				
	Survivor Involvement	✓	✓	✓	
	Consortia approach for providers		✓		
	Domestic Abuse to feature in all commissioning plans and strategies				✓
Early Intervention & Prevention	Gaps				
	More EIP services		✓		
	IRIS style programme		✓	✓	
	Needs led assessments		✓		
	Bond Scheme for Victims		✓		
	Increased online presence, use of digital technology to support victims			✓	
	Concerns				
	Referrals to specialist providers are not common practice		✓		
Criminal Justice System	Gaps				
	Accessible, rapid legal advice		✓		
	Mental Health advocate at Court		✓		
	Concerns				
	More target hardening needed				
	Improved information sharing is needed		✓		
	Lack of wider CJS involvement with this agenda		✓		
Commissioning	Gaps				
	Commitment to pooled budgets		✓		
	Mainstream core funding		✓		
	3-5 year funding contracts		✓		

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	More focus on EIP services		✓		
	Joint funding bids		✓		
	Concerns				
	SP allocations not matching needs		✓		
	Untapped potential of 3 rd sector resources				✓
	Transparency and flexibility of funding is needed		✓		
	SP funding must be value for money		✓		
	Varied costs across SP services		✓		
Data	Gaps				
	Needs mapping	✓	✓		
	Clarity of data use		✓		✓
	Common data collection		✓		
	Performance Outcomes Framework		✓		
	Concerns				
	Data collection should be more consistent		✓		
	Further analysis of data is needed		✓		
	Data collection is not centred around victims needs		✓		
High Risk Victims	Gaps				
	Focusing on perpetrators at MARAC and prevention		✓		
	Concerns				
	MARAC actions planned should be monitored		✓		
	More IDVA's are needed		✓		
	Concern that some cases go via MARAC as there is a lack of EIP services				

5. Vision

*“To prevent and eradicate gender based violence by promoting: equality; safety; respect; and, independence to enable **everyone** to live free from abuse and the attitudes that perpetuate it.”*

Having a co-ordinated community response ensures that all relevant organisations effectively respond to these issues, both within their own agencies and in collaboration with other partners, to prevent harm, reduce risk and increase immediate and long-term safety for people living in Neath Port Talbot.

This agenda affects all services including children and adult services, housing, the police, health, probation, civil and criminal courts, voluntary and community organisations. We maintain that it is everyone’s responsibility to address all forms of Domestic Abuse by identifying and supporting survivors and their children and holding perpetrators accountable, whilst offering opportunities to change their behaviour.

Our response to these issues highlights the diversity and needs of people affected and the most significant priority is to keep survivors at the centre of our work.

We recognise that violence and abuse affects people regardless of their age, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender, class and marital status.

Violence in relationships may have a range of consequences including homelessness, mental health, problematic substance misuse, child protection issues, physical injury and offending behaviour.

6. Aims & Key Principles

In line with the requirements of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, our aims and key principles within this strategy have been developed to meet the following 5 ways of working which will help us to work together better, avoid repeating any past mistakes and tackle some of the long term challenges we are facing

Long Term

- To ensure there is a strong focus on education and work with young people with the aim of eradicating violence and abuse over the long term
- To work with communities and employers to bring about a cultural shift in attitudes towards violence and abuse so that it is no longer tolerated or considered acceptable
- To provide services that offer best value for money

Early Intervention & Prevention

- To refocus funding and remodel services so that victims and perpetrators can access help and support at the earliest possible time and to prevent cases reaching a point of crisis

Involvement

- To ensure our service delivery is person centred
- To ensure the voices of people affected by violence and abuse are heard and that more opportunity is created to develop services that are evidence based and include survivor involvement

Integration

- To adopt a holistic approach so that the wellbeing of people affected by violence and abuse is considered in service responses
- To ensure this work is recognised as everyone's business

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Collaboration

- Continue to build and develop a confident, strong partnership
- To develop regional and national collaborative approaches where this is more effective than a local response
- To develop a collaborative commissioning model for all Domestic Abuse services in the NPT area

7. Overarching Framework & Strategic Objectives

The purpose of the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 is to; improve arrangements for the **prevention** of VAWDASV, improve arrangements for the **protection** of victims of VAWDASV and to improve **support** for people affected by VAWDASV.

Prevention

We are committed to preventing violence in relationships from happening, by challenging the attitude and behaviours which foster it and intervening early, where possible, to prevent its recurrence.

The prevention of violence is central to agendas on public health; reducing crime and the harm caused by serious violent crime; safeguarding children and adults with support needs; promoting education, learning and skills development; and promoting equality.

Prevention involves education to change attitudes and perceptions (to reduce the incidence of a problem among a population before it occurs) and can be targeted, at broad population groups, such as school-age children or members of a particular community.

Protection

We are committed to ensuring those who experience any form of violence are appropriately protected, eliminating the risk of further harm to victims and their children.

We want **anyone** experiencing these issues to be aware of the support that is available locally and we want to be confident that all professionals within our area are equipped with the knowledge to effectively respond to any disclosures.

Support

We are committed to providing high-quality support for survivors and their families, ensuring services meet their needs and prioritise their safety, to enable them to achieve independence and freedom from abuse.

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It is vital that survivors receive the right support, at the right time, to enable them to take action that is right for them.

Strategic Objectives

The objectives within this strategy are derived from those of the recently published National Strategy. Having similar Objectives within Neath Port Talbot will enable us to demonstrate how we will support the Welsh Government in achieving its policy objectives regarding Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence.

Objective 1

Increase awareness and challenge attitudes of Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence in Neath Port Talbot

Objective 2

Increase awareness in children and young people of the importance of safe, equal and healthy relationships and that abusive behaviour is always wrong.

Objective 3

Increase the focus on holding perpetrators to account and provide opportunities to change their behaviour based around victim safety

Objective 4

Make early intervention and prevention a priority

Objective 5

Relevant professionals are trained to provide effective, timely and appropriate responses to victims and survivors

Objective 6

Provide victims with equal access to appropriately resourced, high quality, needs led, strength based, gender responsive services across Neath Port Talbot

Objective 7

Increase focus on improving the recognition of, and responses to all forms of Domestic Abuse in all Criminal Justice proceedings

Objective 1

Increase the reports of Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence in Neath Port Talbot, through awareness raising and challenging attitudes

Current Position

Within Neath Port Talbot the longstanding Prevention, Education & Awareness Raising Group (PEAR) has been refocused by the new Leadership Group to provide a more co-ordinated and strategic approach to its work – it has been renamed the Communications & Engagement Group.

As the PEAR, the group were responsible for;

- the development and implementation of a programme of awareness raising of all Domestic Abuse services
- raising awareness of the impact of Domestic Abuse on victims
- organising, promoting and undertaking prevention campaigns and initiatives

Whilst the Group undertook invaluable work and has hosted a series of successful events within Neath Port Talbot, the group was largely operational, with little strategic focus.

Whilst local providers were involved with the PEAR Group, they also hosted their own awareness raising campaigns and events.

Moving forward, it is essential that we deliver universal awareness campaigns, to raise awareness and increase peoples understanding about Domestic Abuse, including the help and support that is available locally, regionally and nationally.

We need to consider survivors' feedback when shaping future awareness raising campaigns, taking into account any situations where they sought help but faced adversity and felt misunderstood or not listened to. This will help us to understand where we need to focus our efforts in terms of awareness raising, not only for members of the community but also for the services and / or organisations they approached for help who were unable to provide appropriate support or advice.

Raising awareness in the community in general is vital. Communities need to recognise domestic abuse and the harm it causes, be supportive of survivors and be able to provide information about the help that is available. This is critical since much support to victims comes from these sources, not from service providers. A positive and knowledgeable response from the immediate network surrounding victims and their children is critical to increasing the likelihood of early intervention.

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Whilst some employers within the partnership have Domestic Abuse Policies in place, we now need to extend this. Recently work has been done, at a local level, providing support to employers in developing Domestic Abuse Policies thus enabling them to best support anyone experiencing Domestic Abuse within their organisation. It is essential that we raise awareness with local employers of the need to adopt these policies and how to develop them.

What actions will we take to achieve this objective?

We will;

- Complete the work to broaden the role of the Communications & Engagement Group, to provide a partnership response to awareness raising activities, challenging attitudes and preconceptions surrounding Domestic Abuse.

The Group will;

1. Develop a Communications Plan to publicise the key messages, using all relevant media channels
 - Continue to raise awareness of all forms of Domestic Abuse, with a coordinated and consistent approach to all campaigns across the partnership
 - Ensure events are inclusive and accessible to **all** individuals within NPT
 - Increase the focus on challenging deep rooted attitudes that tolerate domestic abuse
 - Publicise referral pathways so that they become well known to public and professionals
 - Actively promote the Live Fear Free Helpline, the Safer Wales Dyn helpline and the National Respect helpline as a source of specialist information for survivors, perpetrators, professionals and anyone who is concerned about someone's safety
 - Ensure support services for Children and Young People affected by Domestic Abuse are actively promoted
 - Raise awareness of domestic abuse with local housing providers, including private landlords
2. Develop a list of available services for adults and children within the borough and incorporate this information into the developing Information, Advice and Assistance service. (NPT Community Directory)
3. Involve local survivors in the work of the group, to ensure their views and experiences are taken into account when planning future campaigns.

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4. Encourage local employers to implement workplace strategies on how to support members of staff who are affected by Domestic Abuse.

Objective 2

Increase awareness in children and young people of the importance of safe, equal and healthy relationships and that abusive behaviour is always wrong.

An overview of available research into the effectiveness of interventions around domestic abuse⁶ found that the majority of preventative approaches involved targeting young people and adults through community or school based activities. This would include, for example, work in schools and communities with children and young people, between the ages of 5-25 years on healthy relationships.

A forthcoming Welsh Government review of resources for working with children and young people identified the Hafan Cymru Spectrum programmes in schools and the Welsh Women's Aid Children Matter 'STAR' suite of programmes as being those in Wales that best meet established good practice criteria for achieving a whole school/community prevention approach.⁷

Current Position

Within NPT the following initiatives are delivered to children and young people;

- Spectrum
- BRAVE
- All Wales School Liaison Core Programme
- Positive Relationships Programme
- Higher Education Awareness Raising Events
- Crucial Crew

What actions will we take to achieve this objective?

We will;

- Ensure all schools adopt a suitable programme, adhering to the WG statutory guidance on creating a 'whole school approach' to preventing Violence.
- Ensure all school aged children have participated in a programme that addresses the sensitive and challenging issues of violence to develop the resilience of children and young people to sustain healthy relationships

⁶ NICE (2013) Review of Interventions to Identify, Prevent, Reduce and Respond to Domestic Violence prepared by the British Columbia Centre of Excellence for Women's Health.

⁷ Welsh Government (2016 forthcoming) Whole education approach - education resources guide and toolkit

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- Promote the Home Office campaign 'Disrespect Nobody' to challenge abuse in teenage relationships
- Work in partnership with Schools, NPT Youth Service and the Youth Justice Team

Objective 3

Increased focus on holding perpetrators to account and provide opportunities to change their behaviour based around victim safety.

We are committed to taking action to reduce the risk to victims, ensuring that perpetrators are provided with opportunities for change in a way that maximises safety.

Perpetrator Interventions and Programmes

Research shows that when perpetrators are prepared to find help they most frequently access GPs, and are also likely to be in contact with Relate, social services, Samaritans, alcohol or drugs services, hospitals, solicitors, welfare services at work, and use websites to access help.⁸

This research also indicates that where perpetrators went to their GP, they attempted to position themselves as depressed or in need of psychological or psychiatric care, without a focus on, or acknowledgement of, their unacceptable behaviour. Alcohol, drugs, depression and 'jealousy' rather than violence were often presented as the problems requiring 'treatment'.

Male perpetrators are also more likely to seek help at some kind of 'crisis' moment, usually when the partner gives them an ultimatum or actually leaves, or where there are child contact issues. However, this is also when they are likely to be especially dangerous and/or homicidal, and safety for the women and children concerned therefore has to be a priority for any agency intervening with the men at this time.

Reducing a perpetrator's substance use may reduce levels of physical injury but has not been shown to reduce the actual occurrence of domestic violence (i.e. non-physical abuse such as psychological and sexual violence).

Couples-counselling or other therapy is also not appropriate if domestic violence is currently being perpetrated in the relationship. There can be significant dangers of colluding with abuse by reinforcing that the perpetration of abuse stems from communication problems between couples or lack of anger management. For similar reasons, restorative justice is not appropriate in cases of intimate partner domestic abuse.

⁸ Hester, M. and Westmarland, N. (2006) *Service Provision for Perpetrators of Domestic Violence*, University of Bristol; HM Government (2010) '*Call to End Violence Against Women and Girls*', Home Office

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The case for commissioning and delivering community-based perpetrator programmes has been set out by Respect⁹ and the largest UK research into programme effectiveness was published recently.¹⁰

Accredited programmes typically have linked safety and/or support services for partners and ex-partners of programme participants and have a minimum time period required for the best possible chance of effective and sustained behaviour change.

Perpetrator programmes are far more than a behaviour change programme. As well as their services for victims (and sometimes children), they also provide a point of reference for advice for other organisations on perpetrators, and write reports for family court proceedings, children's services, CAFCASS (Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service), criminal courts, and child protection conferences. This represents a substantial contribution to informed decision making by a wide range of agencies that are intervening in domestic abuse.

Current Position

A Perpetrator Programme Development Task & Finish Group has recently been established, involving local providers, to identify accredited programmes and assess their effectiveness and suitability for adoption in NPT as well as identifying how such programmes might be funded.

Current perpetrator programmes across NPT are very limited:

Positive Relationships Project

Port Talbot and Afan Womens Aid operate the Positive Relationships Project. In 2015/16, 124 people were supported through engaging in a range of services including: a community based programme designed to help perpetrators analyse and change abusive behaviours; community based workshops with fathers; couples workshops designed to inform individuals about healthy relationships, safety, trust; and RESPECT programmes with young people.

⁹ The Respect document, published in 2010 – 'Domestic Violence Perpetrators: Working with the cause of the problem' – is available at http://www.respect.uk.net/data/files/lobbying/lobbying_tool_with_refs_30.11.10.pdf

¹⁰ <https://www.dur.ac.uk/resources/criva/ProjectMirabalexecutivesummary.pdf>

Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC)

The Domestic Abuse One Stop facility is utilised by CRC to undertake one to one work with low to medium risk offenders to tackle the causes of their behaviour.

What actions will we take to achieve this objective?

We will work with the Police and Crime Commissioner to;

- Identify perpetrator programmes that can be implemented in the NPT area, that meet the needs of people who pose a low, medium or high risk.
- Develop funding and appropriate implementation plans for the chosen accredited perpetrator programme
- Ensure we have a suitable referral pathway, to encourage referrals, use and attendance of the programme

Objective 4

Make early intervention and prevention a priority – To reduce the number of repeat victims and reduce the number of high risk cases

Preventing violence and intervening at the earliest possible stage to prevent its occurrence is the fundamental building block to an effective strategy.

The need to minimise reactive interventions once a crisis has occurred is pivotal to the ambition to end violence.

We know that adults in Wales who were physically or sexually abused as children or brought up in households where there was domestic abuse, alcohol or drug abuse are more likely to adopt health-harming and anti-social behaviours in adult life. Research is identifying the long-term harm that can result from chronic stress on individuals during childhood. Such stress may arise from the abuse and neglect of children, but also from growing up in households where children are routinely exposed to issues such as domestic abuse, or individuals with alcohol and other substance use problems. It is critical therefore, for the long term health and welfare of our nation that we intervene early to reduce and prevent the incidence of violence, reducing the harm to victims and their children.

Early Identification in Health & Social Care Settings

There is evidence to show that early identification in healthcare and social care settings, leading to referral routes to specialist services, improves disclosures and referrals to support amongst survivors. In GP settings for example where indicators trigger targeted enquiry about domestic abuse, this leads to improved discussion and disclosure. There is moderate evidence that universal screening for domestic abuse in pregnancy, when supported by staff training and support, improves practices, disclosure and documentation of domestic abuse.

The IRIS programme of intervention (Identification and Referral to Improve Safety) is an evaluated service model that can be effectively jointly commissioned by health providers, to enable specialist domestic abuse support workers (advocate/educators) to be co-located in GP and other healthcare settings. These workers, located in and managed by a specialist domestic abuse service, ensure health professionals are skilled in early identification, which enables an immediate response for survivors that links them into a specialist service.

Current Position

A high proportion of funding is focused on medium / high risk victims. More focus is needed on prevention and early intervention to avoid violence escalating and victims needing the high risk services or crisis interventions.

What actions will we take to achieve this objective?

We will;

- Develop an Early Intervention and Prevention service model which will then be used as the basis for remodeling and recommissioning services
- Work with Supporting People, Area Planning Board, Community Safety and Families First commissioners to refocus funding in line with the new service model
- Seek out further funding opportunities to support the expansion of early intervention and prevention interventions for adults and children and young people
- Conduct research to identify unidentified need
- Work with local services to better understand the needs of Male Victims, LGBT victims and older people and identify any gaps in current provision

Objective 5

Relevant professionals are trained to provide effective, timely and appropriate responses to victims and survivors

Current Position

A National Training Framework Sub Group has been developed involving representatives from Training & Development, Community Safety and the Ask & Act Project Lead from ABMU. The group is responsible for the development of the training plan for roll out across the authority – identifying those who require varying levels of the training and how this will be rolled out, whilst learning from the experiences of the ABMU pilot and sharing best practice.

With the roll out of the National Training Framework it will undoubtedly increase referrals into local services and we need to be clear of a referral pathway for all professionals to follow. The VAWDASV Leadership Group will have an important role to play in how we overcome any issues that may arise as a result of this.

What actions will we take to achieve this objective?

We will;

- Develop and implement a Training programme that will secure compliance with the National Training Framework
- Develop and publish referral pathways to enable professionals to respond effectively to any disclosures or identification of all forms of Domestic Abuse
- Complete the 'Ask & Act' project being piloted by the ABMU Health Board and increase the number of people identified and referred by health workers, including GP surgeries and Primary Care settings.

Objective 6

Provide all victims with equal access to appropriately resourced, high quality, needs led, strength based, gender responsive services across Neath Port Talbot

Current Position

Current services within NPT are detailed in Chapter 3 of this strategy. A high proportion of funding supports high risk victims and whilst services are county borough wide, access points are principally in the two main towns of Neath and Port Talbot

We have 3 specialist DA providers in the area, offering refuge accommodation, move on accommodation, floating support, advocacy and advice. The DA One Stop Shop in Neath offers a walk in service, operated by the local providers and a recent grant application will enable similar provision to be developed in Port Talbot.

The Council's Housing Options Service, also based in Neath, and offers a walk in service for anyone in housing difficulty, including those experiencing Domestic Abuse.

What actions will we take to achieve this objective?

We will;

- Work with all of those who commission services to ensure commissioning activity is better informed, more joined up and value for money so that specialist services in NPT meet victims' needs
- Prioritise a review of accommodation support to develop a new service model which enables earlier intervention, more people to be supported in the community and in their own homes whilst also delivering a saving of 10% of the current budget
- Submit a bid to the Home Office for Transformation Funding that can extend safe disclosure and access to specialist services from the town centres to those living in valley communities
- Work in partnership to ensure housing allocations appropriately consider victims of Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence
- Further develop links with specialist providers who can meet the needs of people affected by sexual violence and other forms of violence such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Work in partnership to ensure victims with complex needs have increased opportunities for reporting and accessing appropriate support

Objective 7

Increase focus on improving the recognition of, and responses to Domestic Abuse in all Criminal Justice proceedings

An integral element of this strategy is justice and protection for survivors and their families according to their needs, within a criminal and civil justice framework and also within a wider social context.

Prosecution

It is well documented that many victims do not report Domestic Abuse related crimes to the police¹¹ and, that a significant proportion of those who do withdraw their complaints¹².

There needs to be greater confidence in the Criminal Justice System (CJS) in order to increase reporting and as a result, increase victims access to safety, support and justice and reduce the risk of re-victimisation.

A number of studies have shown that in the policing context, perceptions of fairness and decent treatment were at times more important than effectiveness and outcomes in determining satisfaction and confidence. Victims want to be treated with respect and dignity. Research also highlights that the outcomes and sentence are highly influential on victims' views of the CJS¹³.

The majority of perpetrators are men and boys. As most cases never come to the attention of the Criminal Justice System, there are few sanctions for their behaviour. Therefore, a drive to improve criminal justice system services, ensuring a renewed focus on prosecuting and convicting perpetrators is essential to driving victim and wider public confidence.

Family Courts

For specialist service providers supporting victim the Family Court process has long been a cause for concern. Whilst improvements have been made in the criminal courts, there is an increasing need for the Family Courts to follow in their footsteps. Domestic Abuse is an issue in 70% of cases in the family courts across England and Wales. Providers have expressed concerns of victims having to participate in mediation with the perpetrator, needing to represent themselves at Court and sometimes being cross examined by the perpetrator during the process.

What actions will we take to achieve this objective?

¹¹ Statistical bulletin: Crime in England and Wales, Year Ending December 2012, Office for National Statistics

¹² CEDAW Thematic Shadow Report on Violence Against Women in the UK, Sen and Kelly (2007)

¹³ Victims' views of court and sentencing (October 2011). Commissioner for Victims and Witnesses in England and Wales

Neath Port Talbot Healthy Relationships For Stronger Communities Strategy

We will;

- Finalise the review of High Risk Victim support services (including IDVA and MARAC arrangements and assessment processes) with input from specialist providers, to further improve outcomes; to reduce the number of repeat victims; and to identify how we can intervene effectively much earlier
- Maximise the use of the remote evidence facility at the OSS for vulnerable victims and witnesses in Domestic Abuse.
- Further strengthen our partnership to ensure wider CJS and Youth Justice partners participate in the development and delivery of this Strategy
- Monitor the use of protection orders for a range of violent offences to promote wider take up and better enforcement of breaches
- Working in partnership with the Police and Courts, identify what needs to change to better support victims, including victimless prosecutions and how evidence is gathered.
- Increase awareness with local solicitors and legal reps of the importance of recognising all forms of Domestic Abuse and providing appropriate responses in family court situations

8. Leadership & Governance

The strategic direction and oversight of the Healthy Relationships for Stronger Communities Strategy is held by the VAWDASV Leadership Group, which is accountable to the Safer Neath Port Talbot Community Safety Partnership (CSP).

The Public Services Board will provide challenge and support to the Community Safety Partnership in progressing this Strategy.

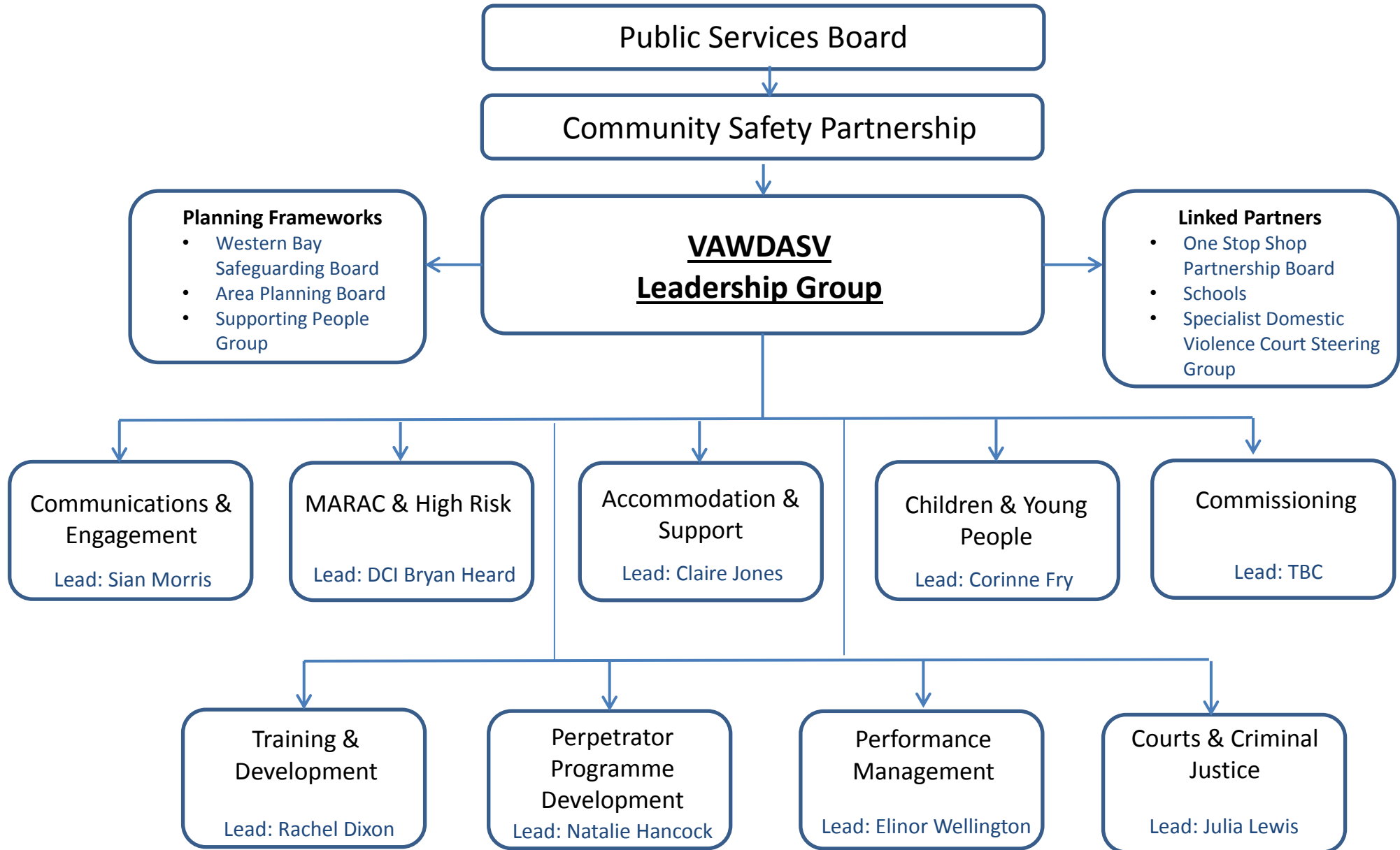
The Leadership Group will establish annual priorities drawn from this Strategy that will be progressed through clearly agreed actions plans. Those action plans will be enabled by the following:

We will;

- Develop a collaborative commissioning model
- Implement a survivor involvement mechanism
- Establish an outcomes based performance framework
- Establish a mechanism to monitor and evaluate the strategy and its effectiveness

The diagram overleaf illustrates the newly developed governance structure around this strategy for 2017-18;

Neath Port Talbot Healthy Relationships For Stronger Communities Strategy



Membership of the VAWDASV Leadership Group

- NPTCBC
 - Community Safety
 - Childrens Services
 - Commissioning
 - Adult Safeguarding
 - Substance Misuse
 - Education
 - Training and Development
- ABMU
- South Wales Police
- Port Talbot & Afan Women's Aid
- Calan DVS
- Hafan Cymru
- BAWSO
- Tai Tarian
- Police & Crime Commissioner
- Probation
- Welsh Women's Aid
- Welsh Ambulance Service
- Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service