

P-05-882 Transforming the response for older people experiencing domestic abuse – a call for action, Correspondence – Interested party to Committee

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To whom it may concern,

I have worked within the field of Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) for over a decade and my current role has strategic responsibility for the implementation of the Mid and West Wales (MWW) Regional 'Safer Lives, Healthier Families' VAWDASV Strategy.

My first introduction to the Dewis Choice Project was at a professional development training conference run in partnership with the Office of the Older Peoples Commissionaire and Social Care Wales. Professor John Williams spoke at the conference and I was struck by the wealth of expert knowledge and awareness within the project for this area of work, where previously so little was known or understood.

Immediately I was able to make links with the project and the work of the MWW Regional VAWDASV Strategy. There has recently been a Domestic Homicide Review completed within the MWW Region, where key learning identifies the need for work around raising awareness of adult to parent abuse and the support mechanisms currently available.

The MWW Regional VAWDASV Strategy also identifies the need to further understand the needs and experiences of older people who have experienced all forms of VAWDASV. The contributions made from the project in the development of the Welsh Government and Older People's Commissioner for Wales' information and guidance document on domestic abuse: Safeguarding older people in Wales is just one example of the essential work the project is doing to address this.

I work very closely with Adult Safeguarding within my role and this document is instrumental in the development of services and the awareness of practitioners, to better support and respond to older people experiencing abuse, in achieving better outcomes for themselves and their families.

When I visited the project and met with John Williams and Sara Wydall, I was amazed at the extent to which survivor engagement and participation is core and imbedded within the project. Within the MWW Regional Strategy survivor engagement is identified as a priority. The work that the Dewis Choice Projects does to engage with survivors, will be key learning for us to develop and embed a

meaningful framework for the engagement of survivors throughout Mid and West Wales.

The impact that the Dewis Choice Project has had for older people who have experienced abuse and their families is unmeasurable. The project has also agreed to be part of the Regional VAWDASV Partnership responsible for the implementation of the MWW VAWDASV Strategy. This input is invaluable with the comprehensive data and information the project's research has to inform and design the regions approach to supporting older people within our communities.

As I mentioned earlier, the project also has considerable knowledge and learning for us as a region to imbed within our workforce development and the design of key interventions including how this work is specified and commissioned.

The project has already designed and delivered specialist Independent Domestic Violence Advisor training on working with older victims of domestic violence (OPVA) which included members of our MWW Regional IDVA Team.

It is my observation that the work and research the project is producing has and will continue to have, a profound and ground breaking impact on the understanding and awareness of the abuse experienced by older people, as well as the development and improvement of the responses and support available to the older people and their families within our communities.

Yours sincerely

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