

Ymchwiliad ôl-ddeddfwriaethol i Ddeddf Trais yn erbyn Menywod,
Cam-drin Domestig a Thrais Rhywiol (Cymru) 2015

Post legislative inquiry into the Violence against Women,
Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015

Ymateb gan: Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr

Response from: Bridgend County Borough Council

- **To what extent the approach to tackling violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence is improving as a result of the obligations in the Act?**

1.1 It is our opinion that it is too early as local authorities have been awaiting the national strategy to be able to inform the local strategy. Given that we have only recently received the national strategy document and are now engaged in a consultation process, it will be sometime before the main objectives of the legislation become actions within local strategies and delivery plans.

1.2 The act has been useful in raising awareness of VAWDASV however, it is our opinion that the Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2015 has been more widely publicised and this has been the main focus for partners. A document from Welsh Government that aligns both pieces of legislation alongside the Future Generations Act would be very useful.

1.3 In relation to the NTF, while the supplementary guidance has been useful the rollout has been problematic due to IT issues and licences. Some issues surrounding the practicalities of training all staff as required by the legislation have yet to be resolved and the deadlines initially set by Welsh Government for completion of Group 1 were unachievable. Similarly the learning from Group 2 (pilot sites) is unlikely to be available until January 2017. This means the training delivery plan date of May 2017 may be unachievable also.

1.4 VAWDASV team at Welsh Government has undergone a number of significant staff changes since the legislation achieved Royal Assent this has affected the momentum of the delivery.

- **What are the most effective methods of capturing the views and experiences of survivors? Are arrangements in place to capture these experiences and to what extent is this information being used to help inform the implementation of the Act's provisions?**

2.1 In Bridgend, the commissioned service Calan DVS are responsible for collating service user feedback.

2.2 Service users views were sought on the recommissioning (2014-2015) of services using a mixed method approach, i.e. focus groups, semi-structured interviews, quantitative questionnaires – online and paper-based. Service user views are always sought when introducing a new or changing a service. Service user feedback is also undertaken through Supporting People reviews which are fed back to the service provider. Focus groups were awkward and repeating this method would require careful consideration.

2.3 Many survivors are unaware that the Act exists.

- **Whether survivors of abuse are beginning to experience better responses from public authorities as a result of the Act, particularly those needing specialist services?**

3.1 Given that the rollout of the NTF is still in its infancy and we are still awaiting statutory guidance in respect of Ask and Act along with the learning from pilot sites. Again it is too early to assess the impact.

- **Whether the National Adviser has sufficient power and independence from the Welsh Government to ensure implementation of the Act?**

4.1 It is not possible to assess the power and influence that this post has until there is a situation where a challenge has been brought to light. However, it is noted that the National Adviser has been proactive in meeting with local authorities and other bodies to raise awareness of the VAWDASV legislation and has offered to support in development of the local strategies.

4.2 The post is funded by Welsh Government.

4.3 What sanctions have been set in place for LAs or responsible authorities for non-compliance?

- **To what extent the good practice guide to healthy relationships is successfully influencing the development of a whole school approach to challenging violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence?**

5.1 This is again too early to assess. The take up of the Spectrum Project, although improving recently, take up has been slow.

5.3 The Estyn Thematic Review mentioned by Welsh Government to take place during 2016/17 has not as yet been undertaken? This review will be key to the success and focus of schools going forward.