

PLVAW 20

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: Port Talbot & Afan Women's Aid

Response from: Port Talbot & Afan Women's Aid



Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee

Post Legislative Enquiry

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The Committee will be looking at progress made in the implementation of the Act's provisions and its impact to date. In particular, the Committee will be considering:

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?

Since the implementation of the Act we have seen significant improvements to the leadership arrangements for VAW, DA and SV in Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council. However it remains unclear at this stage if all parts of the local authority are committed to the tackling VAW, DA and SV in a way that is set out within the legislation e.g. Supporting People and Children Services.

There are grave concerns that the Supporting People team will soon announce their intention to commission generic floating support services and it is unclear at this stage whether domestic abuse services will be included or not.

Likewise in NPT, funding for specialist children and young people's services have been lost, aside from a small resource within the TAF team. There have been occasions at MARAC where the partnership has been unable to refer children who are in need of services.

It is essential that the Government focuses its intention on the pending commissioning guidance, as commissioning decisions are being made locally which affect VAW, DA and SV services. The guidance should explicitly discourage commissioning of generic services and furthermore promote the need for specialist children's services.

We are also fortunate in this area to be part of the ABMU Ask and Act pilot. The ABMU Steering Group meets on a regular basis and appears to be achieving its aims. While there was a short delay in rolling out training to staff, it is not seen to be a problem in the long term.

As a pilot, it is important to utilise this time to trial and test the model appropriately in order to provide best practice models to the rest of the country.

Consideration must be given to ensuring that specialist services are fully funded and able to support those impacted by VAW, DA and SV without lengthy delays. There is a very real risk that Ask and Act will create a bottleneck of vulnerable families who have been identified as at risk or need but are unable to access the support they need. Sustainable funding/resource for specialist services must be agreed before the roll out of Ask and Act.

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?

No changes have been made to the reporting requirements of our services. National indicators should be set and reported on to evidence any outcomes or impact from the legislation. There should also be arrangements in place to regularly feedback service user voices and opinions.

Consideration should be given to externally evaluating service user responses in the Ask and Act pilot areas.

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

As above – consideration should be given to fully evaluating service user responses in Ask and Act pilot areas, once it has been fully implemented. We are already starting to capture information of whether referrers have received Ask and Act training but wider consultation is needed to identify if there has been real change.

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

I would hope that this is the case but it is unclear at this stage. The National Advisor should have powers to audit and seek clarification on commissioning of VAW, DA and SV services.

Furthermore, training as set out within the National Training Framework should be made mandatory.

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

To our knowledge there have been no developments on this to date within NPT, although it has been recognised.