

National Assembly for Wales: Communities and Culture Committee Inquiry into 'Domestic Abuse in Wales': Response by the Welsh Assembly Government

Recommendation	Welsh Assembly Government Response
<p>1. The Welsh Assembly Government to report on progress with implementing the Communities and Culture Committee's domestic abuse inquiry report by May 2009, and thereafter to publish and lay before the Assembly an annual report on the effectiveness of its strategy; how its action plan for implementation is progressing; and how the responsible Welsh Ministers are working with their UK Government counterparts on funding the delivery of domestic abuse services in Wales. Reporting should include detail on the specific areas indicated in the Communities and Culture Committee's report recommendations.</p>	<p>Response: Accept</p> <p>I will provide the Communities and Culture Committee with a report on progress by May 2009 and thereafter provide an annual report about the delivery of the national domestic abuse strategy by Cabinet Written Statement.</p> <p>Financial Implications – None.</p>
<p>2. The Welsh Assembly Government's domestic abuse strategy should better reflect the needs and circumstances of older people by ensuring that domestic abuse related publications make it clear that domestic abuse affects older people, for example in the use of</p>	<p>Response : Accept</p> <p>In future, where appropriate, our domestic abuse related publications will make it clear that domestic abuse affects older people, for example in our use of images.</p> <p>Financial Implications – None.</p>

<p>images.</p>	<p>Any additional costs, for new publications, will be drawn from existing programme budgets.</p>
<p>3. The Welsh Assembly Government should undertake work to identify the potential benefits and impact of extending the scope of its domestic abuse strategy to cover the abuse of older people perpetrated by anyone in care homes, day centres and other regulated settings.</p>	<p>Response: Reject</p> <p>Care homes and domiciliary care agencies are regulated under the Care Standards Act 2000 and registered and inspected by the Care and Social Services Wales. Any incidents of abuse in these regulated settings are covered by the already established protection of vulnerable adults (POVA) arrangements led and co-ordinated by local social services departments under the Welsh Assembly Government's guidance "In Safe Hands". There is potential for confusion by extending in some way the domestic abuse guidance and arrangements into these regulated services. The need for domestic abuse services to work closely with their local POVA arrangements is recognised and reflected in our guidance. To assist with this process, a new member with POVA expertise, joined the All Wales Domestic Abuse Working Group in January 2009. We will keep these arrangements under review to ensure that they are working effectively.</p> <p>Financial Implications – None.</p>

<p>4. The Welsh Assembly Government's domestic abuse strategy and all associated guidance should explicitly state that domestic abuse is an infringement of the rights of children and young people, and that access to help and support after experiencing domestic abuse is a right, as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.</p>	<p>Response: Accept</p> <p>All future publications will, where appropriate, carry explicit references about the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Domestic abuse, whether directed at, or perpetrated in a situation where it is witnessed by, children and young people is violation of their Rights as set out in Articles 3 and 6 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Under the Convention, the Welsh Assembly Government has a duty under Articles 19 and 34 of the Convention to protect children and young people from violence, abuse, and neglect by their parents or other adults. Under Article 39, WAG has a further duty to ensure that systems are in place to provide help and support for children and young people who have experienced or witnessed domestic abuse to help restore their self respect.</p> <p>Financial Implications – None.</p>
<p>5. The Welsh Assembly Government should work with local authorities to evaluate the extent to which available move on accommodation for women</p>	<p>Response: Accept</p> <p>I accept this recommendation. The Supported Housing</p>

<p>and families leaving refuge meets the needs. The Welsh Assembly Government should work with local authorities and other partners to ensure that effective strategies are in place to fill gaps in the provision of appropriate move-on accommodation. It should subsequently be included as a discrete section in the Welsh Assembly Government's annual domestic abuse report.</p>	<p>Policy Team will seek information from local authorities on the effectiveness of move on accommodation for women and families leaving refuges. This work will be taken forward through the development of the Supporting People Strategy and the Homelessness Plan.</p> <p>Financial Implications – None.</p> <p>It is expected that any additional costs will be drawn from existing housing programme budgets.</p>
<p>6. The Welsh Assembly Government should produce guidance directed at commissioning authorities, identifying the range and standards of services which should be provided to meet the needs of people affected by domestic abuse at an early intervention stage, at crisis point, and following crisis intervention. The guidance should cover the types of service identified in section 6.2.4 above. The guidance should be evidence based and reflect the different kinds and levels of need amongst people in different circumstances. It should also indicate what is reasonable in terms of how long people should have to wait to access different services.</p>	<p>Response: Accept</p> <p>This is a very wide ranging recommendation and it covers devolved and reserved matters.</p> <p>I have consulted the UK Government and they are developing national service standards for the domestic and sexual violence sector. This is an ongoing piece of work which forms part of their National Domestic Violence Delivery Plan. They have commissioned Women's Aid to develop service standards for both sectors and these are currently being developed and discussed. They are hoping that the standards will have a dual function; firstly to help local services to undertake a self-assessment against an agreed national standard; secondly to inform local planners and commissioners about what services they should be buying in order to support victims effectively. They are</p>

aiming to finalise the standards by end of March 2009. We will work with Welsh Women's Aid and the All Wales Domestic Abuse Working Group to see how best to adopt these standards in Wales. This work will be included in our new Strategic action plan and the Service Level Agreement we are going to negotiate with Welsh Women's Aid

Separately Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse, CAADA, has been developing national service standards for Independent Domestic Violence Advisors, IDVAs, which cover service provision, human resources, multi-agency work and governance and finance. The draft standards are being piloted in five projects in England and once this work is completed further roll out in England and Wales will be considered.

In Wales it is particularly important that guidance to housing service commissioners takes account of this recommendation. The Supported Housing Domestic Abuse Guidance issued in 2006 is aimed at commissioning bodies and looks at the range of provision that is available for people fleeing domestic abuse. This document will be reviewed in the Autumn 2009 and will take into account this recommendation.

Financial Implications – None

In Wales any additional costs for producing and publishing

	new guidance will be met from existing programme budgets.
<p>7. The Welsh Assembly Government should assist organisations who wish to recruit volunteers by supporting domestic abuse organisations in the recruitment and retention of volunteers e.g. by publicising recruitment activities, by financially supporting the training of volunteers recruited by organisations that can demonstrate that they are making an effective contribution in tackling domestic abuse in Wales, including those that offer counselling, advice and information services and pet fostering schemes.</p>	<p>Response: Accept</p> <p>This can be taken forward through existing mechanisms. The Assembly Government funds the WCVA to develop and maintain a national volunteering website www.volunteering-wales.net. This provides up to date information on volunteering opportunities, classified by type and location. The Assembly Government also provides core funding to the network of volunteer centres under the same Agreement. In return the centres provide advice and guidance for volunteer-involving organisations, using common material, on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruiting and retaining volunteers • meeting duty of care requirements for safety of volunteers and clients • developing volunteer friendly policies and practice • involving volunteers with special needs <p>The Centres also provide an accredited programme for volunteer managers, based upon occupational standards.</p> <p>In the new domestic abuse strategic action plan we will include an action to raise awareness about the national volunteering website with domestic abuse organisations.</p> <p>Financial Implications – None</p>

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<p>8. The Welsh Assembly Government should work with its partners to produce an action plan which provides details of how its domestic abuse Strategy will be implemented. The action plan should include key delivery milestones and should explicitly set out how the Strategy will support work from the following groups affected by domestic abuse:</p> <p>Women, children and young people, men, older people, BME including women with no recourse to public funds, disabled, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual, carers, people with complex needs including those with mental health and/or substance misuse problems, who require specialist services such as 24 hour support in refuge, people in rural areas taking account of rural transport issues in funding decisions and Welsh speakers.</p>	<p>Response: Accept</p> <p>Work on an action plan began last Autumn and when I gave evidence to the Committee on 16 April 2008 I committed to developing an action plan by the end of March 2009.</p> <p>Financial Implications – Yes</p> <p>These will need to be considered, possibly with Cabinet Colleagues, as the strategic action plan is developed.</p>
<p>9. The Welsh Assembly Government should ensure that the needs of children and young people affected by domestic abuse are met. In particular, it should ensure that: All children and</p>	<p>Response: Accept</p> <p>A key priority for the Welsh Assembly Government is to support children in need including those affected by</p>

young people in refuges are supported by specialist workers; Children and young people moving on from refuge provision continue to be supported by specialist workers; All children and young people who are known by organisations to have been affected by domestic abuse, or who disclose that they have been affected by domestic abuse should have timely access to age-appropriate counselling, therapeutic, mental health, advice and advocacy services as required Provision is made for young men aged 14 to 18 to be able to stay with their mother or other carer when they need to leave the family home as a result of domestic abuse; Provision is made for young women aged under 18 who are victims of domestic abuse from their own partner; Provision is made for disabled children or the children of a disabled parent who needs to leave their home urgently. There is a need to address both the physical accessibility of refuges and to ensure that care packages can be re-arranged quickly after a move.

domestic abuse. Across ministerial portfolios we are taking steps to meet this priority. These steps include the following:

- Children in Need are entitled to an assessment of their needs under the Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families.
- Funding of £1m, £2.5m, £3m has been set aside over the period 2008-09 to 2010-11 to implement the Welsh Assembly Government's strategy for school-based counselling services.
- The Welsh Assembly Government has secured increased powers to legislate for vulnerable children through a legislative Competence Order on Vulnerable Children and Child Poverty. The LCO which received Royal Assent in December 2008 allows the Assembly Government to legislate for children and young people up to the age of 25 and to provide support to vulnerable families.
- The new advocacy framework announced by the Welsh Assembly Government last year will provide all children and young people with access to first line advocacy/support via a telephone helpline 7 days a week with referral to specialist integrated specialist advocacy service to be available to children in need or at risk. This is being developed for implementation later this year.

- Funding of 1.8m ring fenced funding in 2008/9 rising to £2.3m in 2009/10 has been made available for CAMHS. Three regional CAMHS networks are operating across Wales.
- As children in need disabled children are entitled to an assessment of their needs under the Assessment Framework. The assessment should also address the needs of their parents/carers.
- We are taking forward a measure to provide targeted services to vulnerable children and their families. Integrated Family Support would be available to parents where substance misuse, mental health problems/ illness (including learning disability) and domestic abuse may place the child in need or at risk.
- The Welsh Assembly Government is funding the Fostering Network Wales to extend the Support Care Project. A key focus of 2008-9 will be assisting three additional fostering services to set up Support Care schemes to support families of children in need, including disabled children.

Through the Supporting People framework there is already funding available for children who are staying within a refuge setting. All refuges funded through Supporting People receive a children's allowance which is ongoing funding.

	<p>This ensures that the support needs of dependant children are addressed and support is provided. Total Supporting People funding for Domestic Abuse services is approx £10million. This includes funding via a children's allowance. This service is complemented by the recently introduced funding from the Domestic Abuse budget for one children's co-ordinator and 8 peripatetic children's workers (7 covering Welsh Women's Aid refuges and 1 covering Black Association of Women Step Out refuges). As part of our new Service Level Agreement with Welsh Women's Aid we will include a requirement to provide evidence of the extent to which this vital peripatetic service is meeting the needs of children in refuges.</p> <p>The issues around young men aged between 14 and 18 being able to stay in a refuge with their mother will be addressed in the review of the Supporting People Domestic Abuse guidance.</p> <p>Through the Supporting People Strategy there will be a review of the current service provision which will take into account the physical accessibility of refuges.</p> <p>Financial Implications – None</p> <p>Costs will continue to be met from existing programme budgets.</p>
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<p>10. The Welsh Assembly Government should work with CAFCASS and relevant voluntary sector organisations to: identify cases where children have been abused during contact visits or where mothers have been abused as a result of contact arrangements, take action to minimise the risks to children and women associated with contact arrangements in future.</p>	<p>Response: Accept</p> <p>CAFCASS CYMRU very much recognises the potentially damaging effects of domestic abuse on children and families. The priority given to identifying domestic abuse and assessing its risk and impact is reflected in the organisation's Domestic Abuse Resource Pack which was formally implemented on 1st October 2008. For example, the Pack introduces systematic screening of all new private law cases for issues of Domestic Abuse, and where domestic abuse is identified emphasises the need for in-depth assessment around risks and impact. The Pack also focuses on safety planning where domestic abuse is known, and the need to be aware and where necessary refer people to appropriate local support services. We are confident that effective implementation of the Domestic Abuse Resource Pack will assist in reducing risks to children and women associated with contact arrangements and Family Law proceedings in future.</p> <p>If, during the period of CAFCASS CYMRU involvement, a child had been allegedly "abused" during a contact visit, the practitioner, exercises their statutory duty to make a child protection referral to Social Services, and to inform the Court through a Risk Assessment Report (s16A of The Children Act 1989). Likewise, a safeguarding response is exercised where a mother has been allegedly "abused" during contact. In both scenarios, the practitioner would be mindful of the approach that contact should only take place if it is safe and in the child's best interests, and would advise the Court</p>
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	<p>accordingly.</p> <p>Financial Implications - None.</p>
<p>11. The Welsh Assembly Government should provide a more cohesive and resourced response to the needs of women with no recourse to public funds (NRPF) under Home Office Immigration rules, and request that the UK Government change the NRPF rules. Until such time as the NRPF rules are changed, it should: Identify ways to raise awareness of the ‘domestic violence rule’ and communicate it within information and awareness-raising activities on domestic abuse, monitor the time taken for the Home Office to adjudicate decisions under the domestic abuse rule in Wales to assess the cost relating to NRPF, consider a formula for support for bodies supporting women with NRPF, consider commissioning research to monitor the incidence and response to women with NRPF over the next two years, ensure that women with NRPF are considered</p>	<p>Response: Reserved matter for the UK Government</p> <p>Whilst I support the position of the Committee on this point this is a reserved matter.</p> <p>I am aware that in March 2009, the Home Office announced a scheme where victims of domestic violence who have no recourse to public funds may be eligible to receive support for their housing and living costs. Under the scheme, victims of domestic violence whose applications for Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) are successful may qualify for a contribution towards these costs.</p> <p>Under the scheme, it is proposed that once the application is received by UK Border Agency (UKBA), they have made a commitment to decide the ILR applications within 20 working days of receipt, provided that all the required supporting information has been provided with the application.</p> <p>The Home Office has been working closely with the UKBA to reduce the time taken to decide DV applications. As part of the work linked to the NRPF Scheme, the Home Office</p>

<p>as a priority for both health and social services in future partnership working arrangements.</p>	<p>is committed to reducing DV case clearance timescales. This will only happen to an appreciable measure if the quality of DV applications submitted to UKBA improves going forward.</p> <p>The proposals under the new scheme will strengthen the way in which domestic violence abuse cases are considered, enabling those victims who are vulnerable to access additional support. The Home Office is still working on the detail of the scheme and there is no date set yet for its introduction.</p> <p>The Welsh Assembly Government has been liaising with the UK government about the introduction of this scheme and key stakeholders particularly WWA and BAWSO have been kept informed of progress. Both governments remain committed to finding a long term solution to support victims of domestic abuse who have no recourse to public funds and will continue to work both within the statutory and voluntary sector to find ways to support this group of women.</p> <p>In Wales we do not see the need for new research but will continue to work with the Domestic Abuse working Group and key third sector BME stakeholders to ensure there is adequate support for this group of women.</p> <p>Financial Implications – None</p> <p>Any funding implications will be a matter for the UK Government.</p>
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<p>12. The Welsh Assembly Government should work with the UK Government to secure funding for an “Access to Justice” pilot project focusing on vulnerable older witnesses.</p>	<p>Response: Accept</p> <p>I have contacted the UK Government about this recommendation. It has been agreed that the government-wide Domestic Violence Virtual Unit, which includes my officials, could consider this recommendation as part of the development of the 2009-10 UK DV Delivery Plan. Consideration would also be needed in relation to other vulnerable victims. An action relating to this issue will be included in our new strategic action plan.</p> <p>Financial Implications – Yes</p> <p>These will need to be considered by the UK Government.</p>
<p>13. The Welsh Assembly Government to take a lead in generating public debate on the ‘social contract’ and what it is reasonable to expect of carers in Wales. The needs of carers to be taken into account in particular in the implementation of recommendations 6, 8 and 9 of this report.</p>	<p>Response: Accept in Principle</p> <p>I welcome the contribution the Carers UK research on the social contract makes. On the broader debate on how care and support systems should be organised and funded in the future we are already consulting on the fairly broad issues to establish the general principles and objectives which will shape a more detailed Green Paper that will be published around the spring 2009. The consultation on the paper "Paying for Care in Wales: Creating a Fair and Sustainable Future" ends on 28 February 2009. We would welcome and encourage consultation responses from carers and carers organisations to ensure that their views and perspectives are taken fully into account in the development of our Green</p>

	<p>Paper</p> <p>We have also introduced into the Assembly our proposed Carers Legislative Competency Order (LCO) that will provide an impetus for further improvements to the arrangements to support carers and promote their well being. The proposed LCO is now proceeding through the Assembly's and Westminster's scrutiny processes and we hope that it will be formally approved in the summer 2009.</p> <p>Financial Implications – None</p>
<p>14. The Welsh Assembly Government should fund work to evaluate the preventative work currently being undertaken with children in schools and other educational settings throughout Wales. This research to be carried out as a matter of urgency. On the basis of its findings, the Assembly Government to issue guidance to schools and other voluntary and statutory organisations that work with children and young people that sets out the key components of an effective prevention programme.</p>	<p>Response: Accept</p> <p>I agree that this research needs to be completed during 2009/10 and once a research report is available I will consider the second part of this recommendation.</p> <p>Financial Implications – Yes</p> <p>This will be included in SJLG's or DCELL'S research plan for 2009/10. This will be met from existing budgets.</p>

<p>15. The Welsh Assembly Government should fund work to evaluate the availability of: support services to children who disclose domestic abuse as a result of preventative work in schools and youth settings, the adequacy of current arrangements for the training of teachers and other professionals working with children and young people, particularly in relation to the handling of domestic abuse disclosures. The aim of this research is to identify gaps in provision, to highlight best practice to be shared across Wales and to identify where additional funding or support is needed to enable statutory and voluntary sector providers to work together to deliver support services consistently.</p>	<p>Response : Accept</p> <p>Consultations with young people in Wales and throughout the United Kingdom consistently tell us that what they want when they are unhappy, afraid or distressed is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a variety of resources that are easily accessible and meet individual need; and • time to be listened to by an adult who shows them respect, is competent and respects confidentiality. <p>Evidence shows that a counselling service which provides support within an overall school strategy can be highly effective in promoting young people's welfare, supporting their learning and alleviating and preventing the escalation of mental health problems. Counsellors work with children and young people to help them cope with social, emotional and psychological problems. These problems may arise for a number of reasons that include domestic abuse which is a presenting and developing issue for many young people accessing counselling, this information is able to be captured anonymously from sessions with counsellors.</p> <p>The implementation of the School-based Counselling Strategy which will establish a universal service for all children and young people that is safe, accessible and of a high standard will provide school pupils someone to turn to when they need help or support.</p> <p>Within the £6.5m earmarked for the implementation of the</p>
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	<p>strategy, funding has been identified for a national evaluation in year 2 and 3.</p> <p>I will consider whether there is need for further evaluation as part of the work flowing from dealing with recommendation 14.</p> <p>Financial Implications – None</p>
<p>16. The Welsh Assembly Government should work with partner organisations to develop a national information strategy to support the implementation of the domestic abuse strategy. The strategy should: Support the implementation of workplace policies in public sector organisations in Wales, identify the ways in which the following types of information will be effectively publicised, details of support services available to people affected by domestic abuse, advice on sources of legal advice, materials which challenge attitudes about the acceptability of violence and abuse and domestic abuse related myths. The Welsh Assembly Government and its partner organisations should involve representatives of particular groups, for example, those from BME</p>	<p>Response: Accept</p> <p>This is a wide- ranging recommendation and I will task the Domestic Abuse Working Group to provide me with advice on how best to implement it. This Group includes a number of organisations representing BME communities. These organisations regularly support us in ensuring that information we disseminate is targeted appropriately. I will ensure that my future annual reports cover this recommendation ie our strategic action plan will include actions on this issue which will include the use of our website</p> <p>Financial Implications – Yes</p> <p>There may be some additional costs associated with this recommendation eg if it becomes necessary to provide guidance in different languages or formats. These costs will be met from existing budgets within SJLG Department.</p>

<p>communities or backgrounds, to ensure that information is accessible, both in terms of the language or format in which it is produced and the places it is publicised, and appropriate to each target group. It should subsequently be included in the Welsh Assembly Government's annual domestic abuse report.</p>	
<p>17. The Welsh Assembly Government should provide the Committee with a joint Ministerial report on current arrangements to ensure that workers within the following settings are competent in identifying and supporting people affected by domestic abuse (both in the provision of direct services and by referring to or signposting specialist services): Primary and secondary health care settings, local authority housing departments and social housing landlords, schools and other educational and youth settings, Family court, local authority social service departments. The Welsh Assembly Government should also liaise with the UK Government to identify arrangements for the training of police officers, magistrates and other criminal</p>	<p>Response: Accept</p> <p>My Department will produce a detailed report during 2009/10 setting out how the workers identified by the Committee are competent in identifying and supporting people affected by domestic abuse. I will ensure that my cabinet colleagues with an interest are content with the report before it is submitted to the Committee. What I can say, even at this early stage, is that a lot of good work is already taking place in Wales. One example is the work of CAF/CASS Cymru. CAF/CASS CYMRU, in its interface with the Family Court, recognises the destructive nature of domestic abuse to both children and families, and this is reflected in the recent implementation of the Domestic Abuse Resource Pack (see response to recommendation 10).</p> <p>Apart from being made aware of the contents of the Resource Pack (e.g. systematic screening and assessment, safety planning, referrals to support agencies and useful links), practitioners will also be required to evidence compliance with the policy and procedure contained within</p>

justice workers. Further progress reports to be included in the Welsh Assembly Government's annual domestic abuse report.

the Pack. Practitioners are regularly reminded of their safeguarding responsibilities and are made aware of recent research information around domestic abuse and its effects through training, Branch meetings and 1 to 1 supervision sessions.

I have already liaised with the UK Government about reserved matters. It reports that all CPS prosecutors in England and Wales have already completed the mandatory domestic violence training programme. All prosecutors, associate prosecutors and caseworkers were trained between 2005-08. The training programme was revised in December 2008 and is available on the Infonet. It will be available by April 2009 in an electronic interactive version on the Prosecution College. The revised training materials will be used to update CPS prosecutors, associates and caseworkers in England and Wales. New staff will use these materials as part of their induction course, together with a one-day training programme based on awareness training and case studies at Group level.

The Judicial Studies board are currently updating and revising the training pack for magistrates, "Domestic Violence: An Ordinary Crime?" Further legal support materials on bail, case management and sentencing in domestic violence cases are also being produced. The updated materials are being piloted in early 2009 and available in electronic format from April 2009. The materials are designed to be suitable for use as a standalone

	<p>programme or integrated into other training programmes.</p> <p>All probation service areas have access to a training package associated with the implementation of the accredited domestic abuse perpetrator programmes. This includes 1.5 days domestic abuse awareness training for front line staff and partner agencies; and role specific training for offender managers, women safety workers and facilitators of the group work element of the programme. All relevant staff are also trained to use the SARA risk assessment tool. HM Prison Service is currently developing a training qualification for offender supervisors which will include a module on domestic abuse.</p> <p>It is the responsibility of each police force to ensure that officers and staff are effectively trained in domestic abuse. ACPO has issued guidance on the investigation of domestic abuse cases and the ACPO lead for Domestic Abuse has been engaging with the National Police Improvement Agency (NPIA) regarding refresh of current modular training. NPIA has carried out a consultation period, which is to be extended to encompass the voluntary sector, but key areas for refresh will be around Honour Based Violence, Stalking and Harassment, Risk identification, assessment and management and DVCVA 2004 (non-molestation and civil and criminal law interface). Training is still being undertaken within individual Forces to the current modular system.</p> <p>Financial Implications – None</p>
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	<p>There are no immediate financial implications arising out of this recommendation. In relation to devolved matters if gaps in provision are identified then funding implications would have to be considered.</p>
<p>18. The Welsh Assembly Government should undertake an evaluation of the availability and efficacy of community perpetrator programmes delivered by voluntary sector organisations which are open to self confessed perpetrators of domestic abuse who have not been convicted of an offence. On the basis of its findings the Assembly Government should issue guidance to service commissioners which identifies the components of effective practice and sets out minimum standards for such programmes. The Welsh Assembly Government should work with its partner organisations to ensure that only service providers who can meet the required standards and deliver an effective service are funded to provide such services. The evaluation and guidance to be completed by May 2009. It should subsequently be included in the Welsh</p>	<p>Response: Partially accept</p> <p>We are currently piloting and evaluating a community perpetrator programme delivered by the NSPCC. This work will be completed in 2010. This means that the timeframe of May 2009 suggested by the Committee will not be achieved. On a wider front the Children and Adoption Act 2006 which came in to force in December 2008 enables Courts to direct or order parents to attend activities to help them improve or maintain contact with their child or children. One of the activities available to the Courts is attendance at domestic violence (DV) perpetrator programmes which address that individuals' violent behaviour and where successful completion of such a programme may assist the court in the consideration of future contact between a child and a perpetrator. My officials are part of a small group, set up by officials from the Directorate for Children's Health and Social Services, that is developing a service specification for these new programmes. One of the tasks of this group will be to look at accreditation of these programmes in line with the standards being developed under my response to recommendation 6 and in particular CAADA.</p>

<p>Assembly Government's annual domestic abuse report.</p>	<p>Financial Implications – Yes</p> <p>Funding for the NSPCC pilot programme and its evaluation is being met from existing SJ&LG budgets. Financial implications arising from the new requirements of the Children and Adoption Act 2006 will be met from existing CAFCASS CYMRU budgets.</p>
<p>19. The Welsh Assembly Government should undertake a review of all funding streams which are potentially available to statutory, voluntary and other providers of services for people affected by domestic abuse, including Supporting People, by May 2009. The review should include an assessment of whether the current potential funding mechanisms facilitate the provision of the range of services necessary to support people affected by domestic abuse at an early intervention, crisis and post crisis stage. The review should also assess the impact of funding mechanisms on the recruitment and retention of staff to provide those services.</p>	<p>Response: Reject</p> <p>Most of the funding for domestic abuse service providers comes from the Social Justice and Local Government and Housing Departments. I am not convinced that a review, at this point in time, will provide much new information about the effectiveness of the funding. The timescale for such a review is, in any event, unrealistic for such a major piece of work.</p> <p>The Welsh Assembly Government budget for 2009/10 was approved in December 2008. We have already informed service providers, funded via the Domestic Abuse Budget Expenditure Line, about their budget allocations for the next 3 years. This is in line with our Voluntary Sector Scheme and enables service providers to deal with recruitment and retention issues with a great deal of certainty.</p> <p>Financial Implications – None</p>

<p>20. The Welsh Assembly Government should provide core funding for key services for children and young people affected by domestic abuse including: Children and young people workers in refuges, Outreach workers for children and young people who have moved on from refuge accommodation, counselling, advocacy, mental health services (CAMHS). Sustainable core funding should be secured by May 2009.</p>	<p>Response: Accept</p> <p>I accept that the Welsh Assembly Government must continue to prioritise support for children and young people affected by domestic abuse. My response to recommendation 9 sets out the considerable ongoing support that we are providing for all the services mentioned in this recommendation. All the support I identified in my response to recommendation 9 is very important but I would particularly draw the Committees' attention to the Children and Families measure to be introduced into the NAFW shortly. This will provide Integrated Family Support to parents where domestic abuse may place the child in need or at risk. This is a significant development in our aim to support children and young people in families affected by domestic abuse. The timescale for this important work and its effective evaluation will extend beyond the timescale in the Committee recommendation.</p> <p>Financial Implications – None</p> <p>As set out in my response to recommendation 9.</p>
<p>21. The Welsh Assembly Government to ensure timely implementation of the recommendations of the Committee's previous Inquiry into voluntary sector funding in Wales, in particular to</p>	<p>Response: Accept</p> <p>Good progress has been made. A full update on implementing all of the recommendations arising from the Committee's Inquiry into the Assembly Government's</p>

<p>review progress on recommendations 8-14 which relate to the provision of accessible and sustainable funding, and report an update to the Communities and Culture Committee at the earliest opportunity and no later than May 2009.</p>	<p>funding of the voluntary sector will be given during the Plenary debate on the Annual Report on the Voluntary Sector Scheme, on 24 February 2009.</p> <p>The WCVA and other Third Sector partners are assisting with the implementation.</p> <p>Financial Implications – None</p> <p>The implementation of the recommendations is being met within existing resources.</p>
<p>22. The Welsh Assembly Government should work with relevant UK Government departments, as a matter of urgency, to ensure that all key partners in funding Sexual Assault Referral Centres, Specialist Domestic Violence Courts and Independent Domestic Violence Advisers are core funded to the extent that these services will be sustainable over the long-term.</p>	<p>Response: Accept</p> <p>These are primarily reserved matters so I will continue to work with the UK Government.</p> <p>The Home Office has confirmed that the issue of sustainable funding for SDVCs and IDVAs are being addressed in England and Wales through the National SDVC Steering Group. The cross-government Domestic Violence Virtual Unit has agreed to raise the issue through the Inter-Ministerial Group on Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence in spring 2009.</p> <p>The UK Government has supported the establishment and development of the SARC network since 2003-04, a further £1.6m will be available in 2009/10. However, the UK Government believes that in order to be</p>

sustainable, SARCs should be resourced primarily at a local level because health and policing budgets are devolved to local areas. Sources of funding for SARCs include police forces and LHBs, Police Authorities, hospitals, local authorities, local Community Safety Partnerships, Local Criminal Justice Boards and donations from businesses and private benefactors. In England National Service Guidelines on developing SARCs have been produced jointly by the Home Office and Department of Health which strongly encourage those who commission health and police services to invest in SARCs in line with local assessments of need. In addition the new Home Office expert team will assist in ensuring local partners are engaged in areas that do not have plans for a SARC.

In Wales the Minister of Health and Social Services has established a Cross Departmental Officials' Group on Sexual Assault Referral Centres SARCs. This Group will, in due course, be advising the Minister on:

- Any legislative or structural changes needed to deliver all of the foundations for full public partnership in support of SARCs in Wales;
- The action needed to address the identified gap in health and social care policy to facilitate health and social care input to SARCs;
- The linked policy and commissioning issues arising from services for the examination of children who may

	<p>have been sexually abused;</p> <p>Financial Implications – None</p> <p>The financial implications on reserved matters will be a matter for the UK Government.</p>
<p>23. The Welsh Assembly Government should evaluate the efficacy of multi-agency planning structures and the role of the domestic abuse co-ordinator in all parts of Wales in terms of: Service planning and commissioning; Information sharing; and Risk management. In particular, the Welsh Assembly Government should evaluate the extent to which Community Safety Partnerships are acting as an effective driving vehicle for the local implementation of the strategy.</p> <p>The findings of this evaluation should be disseminated to all partner agencies with advice on what works.</p>	<p>Response: Accept</p> <p>This evaluation requirement will be added to the 2009/10 research plan for Social Justice and Local Government Department. It will focus on the role of the domestic abuse co-ordinator and how their work assists Community Safety Partnerships in the implementation of our domestic abuse strategy.</p> <p>Financial Implications – Yes</p> <p>The cost will be met from within existing budgets.</p>
<p>24. The Welsh Assembly Government to ask Community Safety Partnerships to: Demonstrate what they are doing to</p>	<p>Response: Partially accept</p> <p>CSPs already provide, via the domestic abuse co-ordinators,</p>

<p>tackle domestic abuse in their area; provide details of the resources committed to tackling domestic abuse by each statutory partner, demonstrate how citizens and domestic abuse service providers have been involved in action planning to tackle domestic abuse, demonstrate any work with the criminal justice system to support early intervention programmes and highlight any obstacles to effective working, particularly in relation to links between domestic abuse and substance misuse. If Community Safety Partnerships do not comply with the request, the Assembly Government should consider how joint powers with the Secretary of State contained in the <i>Crime and Disorder Act 1998</i> could be used to require Partnerships to take these actions.</p>	<p>quarterly and annual reports about their activities to tackle domestic abuse as a condition of their grant. As part of our work in developing a new strategic action plan we are working with the CSPs to develop new key performance indicators for domestic abuse co-ordinators. We will discuss with CSPs, at an event planned for February 2009, the feasibility of them providing the additional information suggested by the Committee.</p> <p>The requirements in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 for Community Safety Partnerships to produce three yearly audits and strategies and to report annually to the Secretary of State on a partnership's work and progress were repealed in 2007. In their place, the UK Government introduced national standards for partnership working which placed a range of statutory obligations on CSPs including minimum standards on community consultation and engagement, a duty to prepare an annual strategic assessment (a document identifying local crime and community safety priorities) and a partnership plan which sets out the approach for addressing those priorities. Beyond the minimum statutory requirements, partnerships have flexibility to deliver in their own way. When preparing a strategic assessment, partnerships have a duty to seek the views of the public and people who represent the interests of many different groups which may include the domestic abuse service providers. It is for individual CSPs to determine whether domestic abuse is a local priority.</p> <p>I understand that the UK Government has not introduced a</p>
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	<p>compliance regime to oversee the implementation of the minimum standards. In place of nationwide mandates from Government, there has been an increasing onus on partnerships to understand the full breadth of crime and community safety issues in their area and be able to demonstrate effective action to address them. Beyond the statutory requirements, partnerships have the flexibility to deliver in their own way. Since the introduction of the minimum standards the UK Government has been focusing on supporting partnerships to implement them in a number of ways including publishing effective practice guidance and a strategic assessment toolkit so that partnerships can identify their own areas for improvement. These documents have been published are available on the Home Office Website (http://crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk)</p> <p>Financial Implications – None</p>
<p>25. The Welsh Assembly Government should ensure that senior health service representatives play a full part in multi-agency attempts to tackle domestic abuse, particularly through Community Safety Partnerships, identifying and helping to overcome</p>	<p>Response: Accept.</p> <p>The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (as subsequently amended) places a statutory duty on Local Health Boards to work with other partners to formulate and implement a crime and disorder strategy. I agree that new guidance would remind senior health service representatives of this</p>

<p>barriers to NHS involvement in the domestic abuse agenda. In order to facilitate this, the Welsh Assembly Government should issue guidance to Local Health Boards and NHS Trusts clarifying the implications of data protection legislation within this setting. This guidance should also be made available to medical and nursing bodies. The guidance to be issued by May 2009.</p>	<p>requirement.</p> <p>The responsibility for developing this guidance, on data protection/sensitive information, rests with DHSS- Information Services Division. Some work is already being done by the 'Informing Health Care Project'. It is unlikely that the new guidance will be available by May 2009 but I will keep the Committee informed of progress.</p> <p>Financial Implications – Yes</p> <p>This will be met from existing DHSS budgets.</p>
<p>26. The Welsh Assembly Government should work with the Equality and Human Rights Commission to identify ways in which the Gender Equality Duty and other equality legislation might be used to progress action to tackle domestic abuse within key public bodies.</p>	<p>Response: Accept</p> <p>We have already commenced a dialogue on these matters with the Equality and Human Rights Commission. Kate Bennett, National Director for Wales Equality and Human Rights Commission, provided advice on these matters to the Working Group on Domestic Abuse on 12 March 2008. I will ensure that this co-operation continues.</p> <p>The Equality Bill is UK Government legislation. The Welsh Assembly Government is working with the Government Equalities Office to ensure Welsh interests are represented in the Bill. Wales will be consulting in due course on its own specific duties for equality.</p>

	<p>As part of that work we shall be discussing this issue with the EHRC.</p> <p>Financial Implications – None</p>
<p>27. The Welsh Assembly Government should ensure, by May 2009, that: NHS Trusts in Wales with A&E departments have information systems which are capable of identifying repeat attenders, and particularly repeat attenders who are injured. Basic data collection should be followed up with practical action, for example, by having a nurse with responsibility for analysing the information collected to identify victims followed by support and referral to relevant organisations. An audit of domestic violence activity is undertaken as part of the rolling programme of clinical audits in NHS trusts with A&E departments</p>	<p>Response: Accept.</p> <p>In Wales not all Trusts use the National PAS. In view of this it will not be possible to complete this work by May 2009. However, as a first step, we will aim to complete an impact assessment and identify costs by then.</p> <p>Financial Implications – Yes</p> <p>There will be costs, especially for front-line staff, associated with this recommendation. These will be considered by the Minister for Health and Social Services once the impact assessment is complete.</p>
<p>28. The Welsh Assembly Government should undertake a programme of research to inform service design and commissioning practice in a number of</p>	<p>Response: Partially Accept</p> <p>This recommendation impacts on devolved and reserved matters.</p>

<p>'under-researched' areas including: the needs of older people affected by domestic abuse, the needs of carers affected by domestic abuse, the sexual health needs of women affected by domestic abuse, evaluation of community based perpetrator programmes for domestic abusers who have not been convicted of an offence, evaluation of preventative and awareness raising programmes aimed at children and young people</p> <p>The Welsh Assembly Government should work with the UK Government to identify scope for undertaking research into levels of charging in domestic abuse cases and an independent evaluation of the MARAC approach.</p>	<p>In relation to devolved issues we already have a research and evaluation plan for this agenda. Recent evaluations include a review of the 24 Help Line and an evaluation of Welsh Women's Aid. We are currently evaluating the NSPCC pilot perpetrator programme and my response to recommendations 14 and 23 indicated that further evaluations will be added to the research plan. When research plans are drawn up for future years I will ensure that the Committee's findings are taken into account in future research plans.</p> <p>The UK Government has confirmed that there are no current plans to commission an independent evaluation of MARACs. The UK Government made a commitment in the Tackling Violence Action Plan 2008-2011 to roll-out MARACs nationally by 2011. It is collecting data in England and Wales through the Coordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse (CAADA) charity. The UK Government will continue to review this information to ensure that MARACs are operating effectively.</p> <p>On the issue of levels of charging in domestic abuse cases this work is already undertaken annually. The first Violence against Women Crime Report was published in December 2008, including details of charging in domestic violence, rape and sexual offences. It is planned that an annual report covering charging, prosecutions and convictions will be published each December. The report publishes data at a national level, with prosecution and conviction data by Area.</p>
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	<p>Charging data by Area is available on request. Data can also be aggregated for Wales as a whole if needed.</p> <p>Financial Implications – None</p> <p>The SJLG Department research plan is funded from existing resources.</p>
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