# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **TITLE**  | **Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence - Annual Report 2023-24** |
| **DATE**  | **25 November 2024** |
| **BY** | **Jane Hutt, Cabinet Secretary for Culture Social Justice Trefnydd and Chief Whip** |

I am pleased to announce, the publication of the statutory Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence annual progress report for 2023-24, as required by the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015.

The report highlights the progress the Welsh Government has made towards its goal to end gender-based violence in Wales. It covers the work completed between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024, with reference to the six objectives set out in the VAWDASV National Strategy 2022-2026.

The publication of our annual report coincides with the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and I am pleased to join the global community in recognising the need to eradicate violence against women in all its forms and to honour the resilience of survivors everywhere.

Throughout the last year, we have continued our Blueprint approach to deliver the Strategy. The VAWDASV National Partnership Board, which I co-chair alongside PCC Emma Wools, on behalf of Policing in Wales ensures that devolved, non-devolved agencies, non-governmental organisations, specialist services and survivors are working together towards a future where everyone can live free from fear and harm.

In autumn 2023, we reported our early progress on the Blueprint high-level actions. This year I have integrated the reporting of our strategy and the blueprint to demonstrate the significance of the Blueprint approach

I would like to highlight just a few examples of progress over the last year:

* Our ‘Sound’ campaign, which has won multiple awards, is a successful example of how wmen and boys across Wales can be engaged in the discussion to end violence against women and girls. The campaign uses recognisable, positive and influential male role models to highlight positive behaviour and focus on problematic behaviours to abuse such as love bombing, gaslighting and controlling and coercive behaviours. To date, over 380,000 men and boys - that's over 95 per cent - in the target age across Wales have seen the Sound campaign.
* We have funded the Bystander Intervention Training Initiative pilot, *Lead the Change*. This 3-year pan-Wales pilot, is being delivered by Kindling Transformative Interventions and Plan International UK and has been delivered to over 250 participants. We will evaluate the pilot when it concludes.
* Our Survivor Scrutiny and Involvement panel, led by our National Advisers, Yasmin Khan and Johanna Robinson, is fully established and is made up of a diverse group of survivors covering the whole spectrum of abuse and violence. This panel enables those with lived experiences to shape policy direction and scrutinise the National Strategy, the blueprint, and the progress of the workstreams.
* Our Sustainable Whole-System Approach workstream launched an all-Wales multi-agency survey and subsequent seminars, gathering information on the strengths and challenges in several areas including the development of needs assessments, partnership arrangements, delivery against the VAWDASV Act and commissioning.
* The workplace harassment workstream finalised a literature review on workplace sexual harassment, considering the scale and severity of the problem, survivor impact and the intersection with protected characteristics. The workstream also launched a conference series for public sector leaders and key partners across Wales to address workplace sexual harassment.
* The findings of a Perpetration Intervention Mapping Survey have been analysed and the final report shared with stakeholders. The workstream is now developing an interventions directory using the information gathered through the survey. The directory will provide professionals with information about perpetration interventions available in their region and across Wales.
* The Children and Young Persons workstream commissioned a report with Welsh Women’s Aid on “I’m a survivor too: how can you help me?” which made recommendations for the Blueprint and wider stakeholders. A rapid mapping exercise also has taken place and outlines the child voice mechanisms and forums currently available in Wales, including the referral pathway. The workstream has also agreed a reporting process for the Peer-on-Peer Sexual Harassment Plan.

Today, on the International Day of Elimination of Violence Against women, and during the 16 days of activism that follow, I will renew my pledge to eradicate abuse in all its forms and make Wales the safest place in Europe to be a woman.

Wales will not be a bystander to abuse.