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Bridgend County Borough Council



Swyddfeydd Dinesig, Stryd yr Angel, Pen-y-bont, CF31 4WB / Civic Offices, Angel Street, Bridgend, CF31 4WB

*Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg.
Rhowch wybod i ni os mai Cymraeg yw eich
dewis iaith.*

*We welcome correspondence in Welsh. Please
let us know if your language choice is Welsh.*



Cyfarwyddiaeth y Prif Weithredwr / Chief Executive's Directorate

Deialu uniongyrchol / Direct line /: 01656 643148 / 644099 / 643694

Gofynnwch am / Ask for: Democratic Services

Ein cyf / Our ref:

Eich cyf / Your ref:

Dyddiad/Date: Thursday, 14 March 2024

Dear Councillor,

CABINET COMMITTEE EQUALITIES

A meeting of the Cabinet Committee Equalities will be held Hybrid in the Council Chamber - Civic Offices, Angel Street, Bridgend, CF31 4WB / Remotely via Microsoft Teams on **Wednesday, 20 March 2024 at 09:30.**

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence
To receive apologies for absence from Members.
2. Declarations of Interest
To receive declarations of personal and prejudicial interest (if any) from Members/Officers in accordance with the provisions of the Members' Code of Conduct adopted by Council from 1 September 2008.
3. Approval of Minutes 3 - 16
To receive for approval the Minutes of 08/11/2023
4. Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse And Sexual Violence 17 - 44
5. Urgent Items
To consider any other item(s) of business in respect of which notice has been given in accordance with Rule 4 of the Council Procedure Rules and which the person presiding at the meeting is of the opinion should by reason of special circumstances be transacted at the meeting as a matter of urgency.

Note: This will be a Hybrid meeting and Members and Officers will be attending in the Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Angel Street Bridgend / Remotely via Microsoft Teams. The meeting will be recorded for subsequent transmission via the Council's internet site which will be available as soon as practicable after the meeting. If you have any queries regarding this, please contact cabinet_committee@bridgend.gov.uk or tel. 01656 643148 / 643694 / 643513 / .643696

Yours faithfully

K Watson

Chief Officer, Legal and Regulatory Services, HR and Corporate Policy

By receiving this Agenda Pack electronically you will save the Authority approx. £00.88 in printing costs

Councillors:

A R Berrow
JPD Blundell
HJ David
M J Evans
N Farr
P Ford

Councillors

J Gebbie
W R Goode
D M Hughes
M Lewis
J Llewellyn-Hopkins
RL Penhale-Thomas

Councillors

JC Spanswick
A Wathan
AJ Williams
HM Williams
E D Winstanley

DECISION RECORD OF A MEETING OF THE CABINET COMMITTEE EQUALITIES HELD HYBRID IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER - CIVIC OFFICES, ANGEL STREET, BRIDGEND, CF31 4WB ON WEDNESDAY, 8 NOVEMBER 2023 AT 09:30

Present

Councillor N Farr – Chairperson

HJ David

W R Goode

JC Spanswick

Apologies for Absence

J Gebbie, RL Penhale-Thomas and HM Williams

Officers:

Zoe Edwards

Consultation Engagement and Equalities Manager

Mark Galvin

Senior Democratic Services Officer - Committees

Angela Granville

HR Business Development Manager

Paul Miles

HR Service Centre Manager

Philip O'Brien

Digital Transformation and Customer Services Manager

Susan Roberts

Group Manager - School Support

Kirsty Williams

Partnership & CSP Manager

Nimi Chandrasena

Democratic Services Officer - Support

Title of Report	Apologies for Absence
Decision Made	Councillor J Gebbie, Councillor RL Penhale-Thomas and Councillor HM Williams
Date Decision Made	8 November 2023
Personal or Prejudicial Interests Disclosed	None

Title of Report	Declarations of Interest
Decision Made	Declaration of personal interests made below.
Date Decision Made	8 November 2023
Personal or Prejudicial Interests Disclosed	<p>The following members declared personal interests :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillor M J Evans – Item 5 : School Governor at Pencoed Comprehensive and Croesty Primary. Also has a child attending Pencoed Comprehensive School. • Councillor N Farr – Item 5 : Has grandchildren in one of the schools discussed mentioned in the report • Councillor A Williams – Item 5 : Has children attending one of the schools mentioned in the report • Councillor E Winstanley – Item 6 : Is an employee of Awen Cultural Trust who have delivered library events using Summer of Fun funding, and also a Food and fun session and partnered with Halo on delivering Feel Good for Life sessions. • Councillor R Goode – Item 6 : Holds a position as Head of the Terrence Higgins Trust Cymru which plays a large role in STI/HIV testing nationally. Highlighted World AIDS Day 2023 and Welsh HIV

	Testing Week
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Title of Report	Approval of Minutes
Decision Made	That the minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet Committee Equalities dated 12/07/2023 be approved as a true and accurate record. The following corrections to the minutes were noted : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chairperson of the meeting was Councillor Neelo Farr and not Councillor Rhys Goode • Councillor Jane Gebbie was present at the meeting
Date Decision Made	8 November 2023
Personal or Prejudicial Interests Disclosed	None

Title of Report	Community Cohesion Annual Report
Decision Made	The purpose of the report, presented by the Partnership & CSP Manager was to provide an annual update to Cabinet Committee Equalities on the work of the Welsh Government funded Community Cohesion Officer and the community cohesion work of Bridgend Community Safety Partnership. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A member stated that given tensions within communities in relation to events in the Middle East, that officers and members recognise work of the Community Cohesion Team and South Wales Police in dealing those issues. • A member also requested details highlighting the work done by the Community Cohesion Team in the last year. • A discussion between a member and the Partnership & CSP Manager took place in relation to the rationale behind seconding the Community Cohesion co-ordinator to Swansea rather than being based in Bridgend and also enquired about the steps behind effective recruitment to the post. It

	<p>was stated that there were benefits to Bridgend from the secondment as they receive information that covers the Swansea and Neath Port Talbot areas, which have higher levels of Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities than in Bridgend so the team were able to see emerging trends from a regional picture that they could then act upon. It was also mentioned that given that the role was always advertised on short-term basis with short-term extensions, this had proven to be unattractive to the applicants.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members and officers commended the work done in subways and various parts of Bridgend to cover up hateful graffiti. • A member stated there was little mentioned about work done in relation to the LGBTQ+ community and wanted to know what work had been done in terms of empowering and engaging the community within the borough. • The Community Cohesion Officer responded that they endeavour to reach grassroots community groups through small grant funds to create awareness and engagement and cited examples of community groups that have benefited. She also mentioned their links with the Youth LGBTQ+ forum alongside South Wales Police which meet on a weekly basis. • <u>RESOLVED</u> : The Cabinet Committee Equalities noted the content and the updates within the report submitted.
Date Decision Made	8 November 2023
Personal or Prejudicial Interests Disclosed	None

Title of Report	Update on Racial and/or Discriminative Incidents Within Schools
Decision Made	<p>The purpose of the report, presented by the Consultation Engagement and Equalities Manager was to provide Cabinet Committee Equalities (CCE) with information on racial and/or discriminative incidents within schools, as monitored using the Racist Incident Report Form, along with initiatives to combat racism within schools.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A member stated that though the title suggested that the report was an update on Racial and/or Discriminative Incidents Within Schools, there was only information regarding Racial discrimination, he inquired the possibility of elaborating on other Discriminative Incidents as well as solely racial discrimination. • A member noted that Porthcawl Comprehensive recorded a significantly higher level of incidents than the other secondary schools in the borough as they had done in the previous year. He enquired what support had been provided to address the problem; had there been an impact on the support provided and was there a reason for the high level of incidents. • The Group Manager - School Support stated that the size of the school would have an impact on the numbers reported. She also stated that schools that have undergone training around discrimination were likely to have higher numbers reported than schools who had not undergone the training. She mentioned that they would seek the assistance of the Central South Consortium to cater for further training requirements. • The Group Manager - School Support informed the committee of the Diversity and Anti Racist Professional Learning conference on the 21st of November which the team had already alerted all schools to attend. She stated that she did not have any data regarding other hate/discrimination incidents reported but will obtain this information and take away an action from the meeting that all forms of discrimination will be reported upon in future, covering a wider scale. • It was noted that the question regarding reporting only racism and not other aspects of discrimination was raised in 2022 with an assurance that subsequent reports regarding the subject were to include all forms of discrimination. • A member suggested that given the figures of the age groups of pupils where incidents had been

reported, it would be beneficial to have training conducted within primary schools. The Head of Education and Family Support responded that whilst she agreed there was a need, the challenges they face was the cost attached to the training. Funding was only available for fixed time periods and schools had difficulties in releasing their teachers to undergo training due to sickness levels and staff shortages. There were however checks in place by way of audits which the schools undertook.

- The Group Manager - Transformation and Customer Services and the Cabinet Member for Education both informed the committee to record any kind of discrimination that comes to their attention under the Discrimination Incident Report form on the BCBC my account page (https://bridgend-self.achieveservice.com/en/AchieveForms/?form_uri=sandbox-publish://AF-Process-96142699-6f19-4055-8f87-35687ae8429e/AF-Stage-1fd9d647-ec04-4182-a5c7-20f229a50083/definition.json&redirectlink=/en&cancelRedirectLink=/en) as this would assist in the reporting of figures.
- The Chairperson added that it would be useful to have data on the level of reporting of incidents from schools and mentioned that it could possibly be looked at by Team Bridgend, meetings of which head teachers within the borough were invited to. He agreed with the Head of Education and Family Support that they would look to obtain this information as well as an update from Team Bridgend in this regard.
- A member mentioned that as a governor of Brynteg Comprehensive, she would discuss with fellow governors what the school is doing in relation to the 'Show Racism the red card' campaign.
- The Group Manager - School Support stated that they would liaise with the Central South Consortium to establish how many schools had undergone the relevant training
- It was suggested that there needed to be a linking in of information between the Equalities and Education teams when reporting figures in relation to incidents at schools.

	<u>RESOLVED</u> : The Cabinet Committee Equalities noted the content and the updates within the report submitted.
Date Decision Made	8 November 2023
Personal or Prejudicial Interests Disclosed	None

Title of Report	Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report
Decision Made	<p>The purpose of this report, presented by the Consultation Engagement and Equalities Manager, was to provide Cabinet Committee Equalities with an update on the work completed within the Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) 2020 – 2024 for the period 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A member stated that it had been mentioned that Council had promoted 33 campaigns via Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and the BCBC website, she inquired the outcomes of those campaigns, how the success of the campaigns were measured and what improvements could be done in relation to campaigns to be held in the future. The member asked if the committee could be provided with the information so that there is better understanding of the success of such campaigns. • The Consultation Engagement and Equalities Manager stated that within the Community and Engagement communications team they were able to analyse data by looking at the share rate by partners and followers on social media. She stated they conduct promotional awareness and monitor any interaction. The Consultation Engagement and Equalities Manager stated that the measure of such data, would vary dependent on the event. • The Group Manager - Transformation and Customer Services added that they would be able to provide data in the future as to campaigns generated and their individual success rates. • The Chairperson referred to page 31 where it was noted that three workshops had been held with 24 delegates attending, she noted her disappointment at the attendance and enquired if these courses could be made mandatory.

- The Group Manager - Human Resources and Organisational Development provided clarity in relation to numbers who had attended. He explained steps undertaken to create awareness of the courses and informed the committee that he would come back at a later date with an answer to the possibility of listing particular courses as being mandatory.
- The Chairperson referred to page 34 in relation to awareness raising tables were organised by Community Safety Partnership and enquired how these sessions were promoted within the communities and if they knew how well they was attended.
- The Partnership & CSP Manager stated that they promote Community Safety Partnership tables around Borough by way of a list of contacts and venues where they can make the arrangements to hold partnership tables. Special attention is paid to ASB hotspot areas but they also try to reach venues across the borough to make sure that awareness is raised reaching a wider audience. They were confident that the Tables were held in spaces that they knew to have gained good engagement, for example, supermarkets, leisure centres, libraries, community centres, bus stations, churches, drop-in centres and food pantries. Additionally, the team liaise with the Communications team in advance of these sessions to publicise the events.
- A member referred to page 48 and enquired what had been done to promote recruitment from ethnic minority backgrounds as they do with disabled backgrounds. The Chairperson also queried if there were statistics available on how many employees there are within the authority with protected characteristics.
- The Group Manager - Human Resources and Organisational Development stated that they commit to a workplace culture that recruits, retains and develop staff from all backgrounds representing the community. The recruitment system is an open and transparent process where applications are accepted from all suitable applicants for the role, equal opportunities being a feature of the recruitment process. Interviews and recruitment are taken based on merit, without any reference to information around equalities. Recruiting managers are not aware of this information and it is held securely within HR.
- The Chairperson stated that there had been a recent appointment to a senior role within Social Services and Wellbeing directorate and the successful candidate was from the BAME community, and this links in with the recruitment process mentioned above.

	<u>RESOLVED</u> : The Cabinet Committee Equalities noted the update on the work completed within the Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) 2020 – 2024 for the period 2022 - 2023
Date Decision Made	8 November 2023
Personal or Prejudicial Interests Disclosed	None

Title of Report	Development of Strategic Equality Plan 2024 - 2028
Decision Made	<p>The purpose of this report, presented by the Consultation Engagement and Equalities Manager, was to provide Cabinet Committee Equalities with an update on the development of the Strategic Equality Plan 2024-2028, ahead of Cabinet approval to commence public consultation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members inquired what work had been undertaken to reach out beyond the groups mentioned and the authority's usual process of general consultation, which is online and shared through social media and they cited examples such as those who had disabilities and those who lived in smaller valleys, where it was sometimes difficult to engage in online consultations. The Consultation Engagement and Equalities Manager responded that there had been work undertaken to establish external links with supporting organisations allowing the team to reach out to their users A member inquired about the new toolkit mentioned under Objective 4, that had been developed to support a more consistent and effective approach to consulting and engaging with the communities. The Group Manager - Human Resources and Organisational Development responded that the consultation team do not get involved in every consultation that goes on across the Council. There are however, key corporate consultations that the Consultation Engagement and Equalities Manager and her team lead on. The Team have developed a corporate toolkit which is available on the Internet to all staff. He stated that the consultations undertaken by the central team, are kept on record and evaluation is conducted after every consultation is undertaken. This exercise looked at

	<p>the levels of engagement and participation and the Group Manager stated that the information can be made available to the committee, if that was deemed required.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED</u> : That Cabinet Committee Equalities noted the content of the report prior to seeking Cabinet approval to commence a public consultation on the draft Strategic Equality Plan 2024-2028.</p>
Date Decision Made	8 November 2023
Personal or Prejudicial Interests Disclosed	None

Title of Report	Urgent Items
Decision Made	None
Date Decision Made	8 November 2023
Personal or Prejudicial Interests Disclosed	None

The Meeting Closed at 11:31

Meeting of:	CABINET COMMITTEE EQUALITIES
Date of Meeting:	20th MARCH 2024
Report Title:	VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, DOMESTIC ABUSE AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	REPORT OF THE CHIEF OFFICER – FINANCE, HOUSING AND CHANGE
Responsible Officer:	VAWDASV MANAGER PARTNERSHIPS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIPS MANAGER
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	THERE IS NO IMPACT ON POLICY FRAMEWORK AND PROCEDURE RULES
Executive Summary:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Assia Domestic Abuse service in Bridgend is meeting the purpose of the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV), (Wales) Act 2015. • The service is delivering against national strategic aims for the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region. • Information contained in this report covers from April 2021, when the Assia service was established, to December 2023. • The report demonstrates the positive impact the service is making and the ways in which Assia are trying to engage and support a diverse range of people.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an annual update to Cabinet Committee Equalities on:
- The services provided by the in-house Assia Domestic Abuse Service
 - Information regarding the range of domestic abuse related services delivered by our third sector partners.

2. Background

- 2.1 There are several UK wide, national and local strategies and directives in relation to the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) agenda. The UK Government defines domestic abuse as:

“Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality”.

There are many different forms of domestic abuse, these include but are not limited to:

- coercively controlling behaviour emotional / psychological abuse
- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- financial abuse
- harassment and stalking.

Domestic abuse may also include a range of behaviours that, when viewed as isolated incidents, do not seem much. If they involve a pattern of behaviour that results in you feeling fear, alarm or distress, it is abuse.

- 2.2. At a Welsh level, there is the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV), (Wales) Act 2015. The purpose of the Act is to improve:
- (a) Arrangements for the prevention of gender-based violence, domestic abuse and sexual violence.
 - (b) Arrangements for the protection of victims of gender-based violence, domestic abuse and sexual violence.
 - (c) Support for people affected by gender-based violence, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

- 2.3 Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) also works to deliver the Cwm Taf Morgannwg (CTM) VAWDASV Strategic Aims as set out in the local VAWDASV strategy required under the VAWDASV (Wales) Act 2015.

CTM aims were as follows:

Aim 1 – Increase awareness of violence against women, domestic abuse, and sexual violence across the CTM population.

Aim 2 – To break the generational cycle of VAWDASV behaviour in families by promoting healthy relationships in children and young people.

Aim 3 – Hold perpetrators to account for their actions and support them to change their behaviour.

Aim 4 – Ensure services are designed and commissioned to meet the needs of the CTM population.

Aim 5 – Ensure that services are fit for purpose and quality assured.

The CTM VAWDASV regional Strategic and Commissioning Partnership developed its aims to be consistent with the VAWDASV National Strategy and to meet local need.

The CTM VAWDASV Delivery Plan is included as appendix i.

- 2.4 At BCBC's Cabinet meeting on 22 October 2020, it was agreed to:
- Bring the externally commissioned support for the community domestic abuse service in house when the contract expired in April 2021.
 - Approve the development of an integrated first point of contact / support in the community service for all victims of domestic abuse, based on need as well as risk.
- 2.5 This decision was informed by a comprehensive Needs Assessment completed early in 2020.

- 2.6 Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment (TUPE) applied to the team delivering the existing contract. A series of meetings with the commissioned provider, BCBC Human Resources and Trade Unions were held to ensure that affected staff had all the information needed to decide whether to transfer to BCBC.
- 2.7 Six members of staff transferred to the new service and joined the four existing Independent Domestic Abuse Advisors (IDVAs), one of whom was with an agency and the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) co-ordinator who was already in post.
- 2.8 A VAWDASV service manager was recruited who commenced the role in July 2021 along with a MARAC and VAWDASV Business Support Officer.

3. Current situation / proposal

- 3.1 The new in-house service started on 1st May 2021 and a restructure of services was implemented April 2022, following recruitment and union consultations within the restructure process. The restructure introduced a new framework and process for the service that would ensure an improvement to the previous key findings. All members of the team now work to the same framework, processes, policies and procedures ensuring a consistent structured approach.
- 3.2 The Assia Suite's drop-in service remains in Civic Offices. Due to the limitations of the locality, the service now works across the borough in other locations including, but not limited to: Hartshorn House, Pyle Life Centre, Garw Valley, Probation offices and Department for Work and Pension offices, such as Job Centres. This ensures ease of access within local communities.
- 3.3 Assia has a dedicated High Risk (HR) service that ensures all HR victims / those submitted through Public Protection Notices (PPNs) take a priority and are easily identifiable. Medium Risk (MR) and Standard Risk (SR) are picked up by the triage service that works very closely with and alongside the HR team. This ensures better communication in the team, continuity, and consistency of support as risk changes. IDVAs that work across any service within the team have regular Case Reviews, line management supervision and clinical supervision.
- 3.4 Every person within the team that are dealing directly with victims are fully IDVA qualified and accredited, and any new team members who do not hold the qualification complete the training. The team may have separate specialisms and / or dedicated roles but all receive the same in-depth training. This ensures that the team can fully support each other during times of sickness and / or leave.
- 3.5 The service is going through the Safe Lives 'Leading Lights' Accreditation. This is the mark of quality for domestic abuse services and is increasingly being recognised by commissioners and funders across the UK.

The Leading Lights accreditation programme offers services, partner agencies and commissioners a set of standards for supporting victims of domestic abuse.
- 3.6 Referrals to the service have increased, this is in part due to increased awareness of domestic abuse and the services available within the borough.

	April 2021-March 22	April 2022 - March 2023	April 2023 - Dec 2023*
Total referrals accepting support	1505	2330	1307
Total referrals	1767	2891	1948

*information as end of quarter three.

- 3.7 The difference between referrals and referrals accepting support includes repeat referrals where the victim is already accessing support from the Assia service. Repeat referrals / incidents can be a high number.

Some referrals are not appropriate as there is no current domestic abuse and no relevant risk identified so these referrals are signposted appropriately to the service that is most appropriate.

Where the service is unable to make contact, all known agencies are contacted to see if anyone else is working with the individual (or family). When all avenues are exhausted a letter is sent out advising of the service and all contact details along with a safety plan.

It should also be noted that the support offered is not mandatory and service users must want to engage.

- 3.8 There has been a real focus on dedicated IDVA roles within Assia as it is recognised that it is not a one size fits all service and there are bespoke support needs.
- 3.9 At a recent Safe Lives review it was identified that the service lacked an Older Persons IDVA, (the older persons service supports victims 60 years plus in line with the Older Persons commissioner, although will consider 55 plus due to the additional complexities posed). Due to the complex nature of abuse within older people, including cases with dementia and where the perpetrator may be the carer, this service works closely with Adult Safeguarding and New Pathways, a crisis and sexual abuse support service, who also have an older person's independent sexual violence adviser (ISVA) for sexual abuse. The numbers are lower within this service, but cases are often more complex.
- 3.10 There is a dedicated Court IDVA who works very closely with the Criminal Prosecution Service, Witness Service and Court Officers and supports all victims through the Criminal Justice System. The remote evidence suite in Maesteg has been a real success and has been welcomed by victims that have utilised it, including for civil cases and family court where there is a history of post separation abuse.
- 3.11 A CHIDVA (Childrens IDVA) supports all children up to the age of 15 who have experienced of familial abuse. The CHIDVA is based in Safer Merthyr Tydfil (SMT, who act as the regional strategic lead for VAWDASV) and the Assia service has recently recruited a dedicated Child and Young Person (CYP) worker who can work with any young people that fall through the gap, such as those identified as not in education, employment or training (NEETS), those affected by intimate abuse and

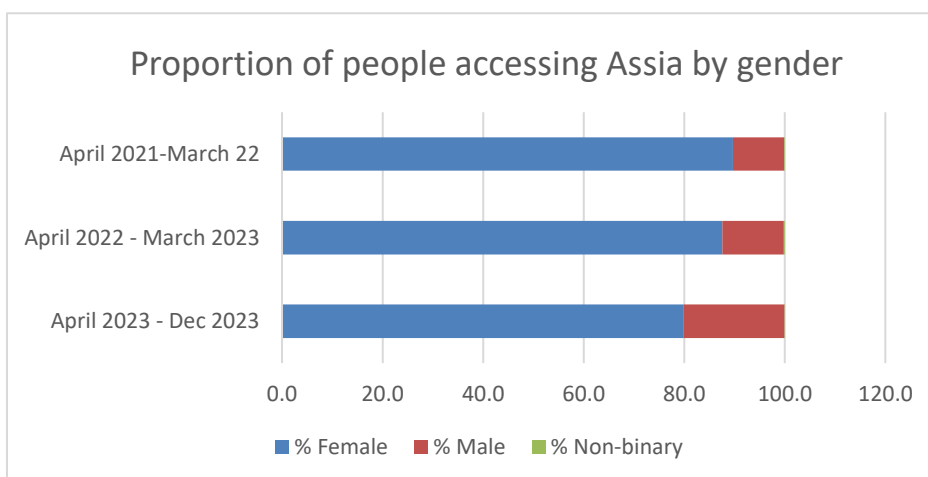
also those that are displaying unhealthy behaviours that could potentially form into perpetrator traits.

3.12 A service with Bawso to support black minority ethnic and migrant victims was also trialed within the county borough, but the referrals did not warrant the service. The Assia team are all IDVA qualified and trained in female genital mutilation and honour-based violence (HBV). There is a dedicated IDVA who completes HBV risk assessments if needed. The service continues to link in with Bawso for training, advice and guidance to ensure the team are up to date with emerging themes. Links are also in place with Opoka, a service working to help women and children in the Polish community improve health, well-being, financial stability, and happiness by stopping domestic violence and abuse.

There is also a translation service in place.

3.13 The service has a dedicated Male Victim IDVA and it is largely down to this dedicated role that engagement with male victims has been more successful, and more male victims are now accessing support, including a male victim focus group.

	April 2021-March 22		April 2022 - March 2023		April 2023 - Dec 2023*	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Female	1350	89.7	2040	87.6	1043	79.8
Male	153	10.2	286	12.3	263	20.1
Non-binary	2	0.1	4	0.2	1	0.1
Total referrals accepting support	1505		2330		1307	



*information as end of quarter three.

As can be seen from the information above, the proportion of males accessing the service has almost doubled from 10.2% to 20.1% between April 2021 and December 2023.

- 3.14 Assia has recently run a Male Victim Focus Group, consisting of six sessions and had 23 attendees. The intention was for the group to be victim-led, and so the first session focused on identifying what the participants wanted to get out of the meetings.

The focus group decided that they would like to see what other agencies were in Bridgend that could specifically help them and what they could offer within the community for additional support. Guest speakers gave an overview of their services and what programmes, activities, and support that they had to offer in the community, including Connecting Dads, Employability, BAVO Community Navigators and Men's Shed.

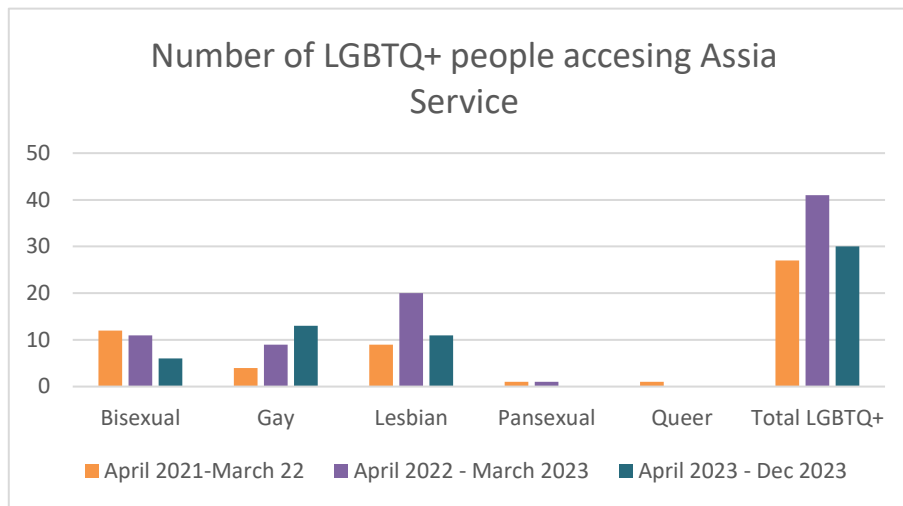
- 3.15 The feedback in relation to the focus groups was very positive and there were good discussions around issues with child contact, how male victims often feel judged by professionals and feel that females have an advantage as their perception is that the male is automatically assumed to be the perpetrator.

One male victim was the recipient of a negative comment from a police officer when he reported the abuse. The comment was "Are you a man or a mouse?", which in turn prevented him from reporting again. This led to the focus group discussing toxic masculinity, and social perceptions of relationships and domestic abuse.

- 3.16 Building on this, the service is setting up more sessions from the 9 April 2024 and will be looking at engaging representatives from agencies and partners where the group can discuss their experiences for the representative to hear and feedback to their service. These will include but not be limited to: Police, Social Services, Legal Services, Cafcass, Compass Programme, Myriad Programme, Citizen's Advice Bureau, Men's Shed, Gingerbread, BAVO Community Navigators.
- 3.17 Commissioning on a regional basis has taken place with New Pathways and Barod. The New Pathway worker offers sexual violence support and stabilisation work to identified victims that need ongoing trauma work around their experiences whilst the IDVA stays in situ to continue with the specialised domestic violence work.
- The Barod role is a VAWDASV worker who will work with both victims and perpetrators where there are substances involved, ensuring we are addressing all needs and working holistically.
- 3.18 All staff are trained to support members of the LGBTQ+ community seeking support and work very closely with the Myriad programme where appropriate / required to ensure specific needs are being met. Myriad are a 'by and for' service for LGBTQ+ victims of domestic abuse to support recovery and resilience.

	April 2021-March 22	April 2022 - March 2023	April 2023 - Dec 2023*
Bisexual	12	11	6
Gay	4	9	13
Lesbian	9	20	11
Pansexual	1	1	0
Queer	1	0	0
Total LGBTQ+	27	41	30

*information as end of quarter three.



As shown by the information above, the proportion of service users who identify as LGBTQ+ is relatively low, but this information is reliant on disclosure and is not mandatory.

- 3.19 The service also works with perpetrators. High Risk cases are considered for 'DRIVE', which works with high-harm, high-risk and serial perpetrators of domestic abuse to prevent their negative actions and protect adult and child victims. Through the intervention, the perpetrator is engaged to identify and manage triggers and understand healthy relationships to disrupt and change abusive behaviours. Each perpetrator is looked at as an individual as opposed to completing a one size fits all programme. There is a dedicated DRIVE IDVA who works very closely with the service.
- 3.20 Medium Risk cases are considered for 'Driving Change' for perpetrators who recognise that their behaviour in intimate relationships is abusive and/or violent and want to change this, and Standard Risk cases considered for the Change that Lasts Early Perpetrator Response (CLEAR) services with the IDVA service working closely with them to meet the needs of those who have identified that their behaviour is causing concern and are motivated to do something about it, but are not yet disclosing or taking responsibility for their abuse. This means earlier intervention and support for families.
- 4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)**
- 4.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh Language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales the Council must consider

the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. This is an information report, therefore it is not necessary to carry out an Equality Impact assessment in the production of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

- 5.1 The Assia Domestic Abuse Service demonstrates the sustainable development principle by ensuring that by meeting the needs of the present it does not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs this is evidenced through the five ways of working:
- **Long term** – the service seeks to understand and mitigate the long-term implications of domestic violence on victims and their children.
 - **Prevention** – delivering a service based on need as well as risk offers longer term support to prevent future incidents of domestic abuse. It also aims to prevent medium and standard risk victims escalating to high risk.
 - **Integration** – the project contributes to the wellbeing goals: an equal Wales, a Healthier Wales, and Wales of Cohesive communities and to the Wellbeing objectives. The Assia Domestic Abuse Service feeds into the regional VAWDASV service and the work is also integrated into that of the Community Safety Partnership.
 - **Collaboration** – the success of the service depends on collaboration with partners, in particular South Wales Police, National Probation Service, Cwm Taf Morgannwg Health Board
 - **Involvement** – the views of stakeholders and service users are regularly sought and used to inform and review delivery models.

6. Climate Change Implications

- 6.1 There are no Climate Change implications linked to this report.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

- 7.1 In considering how we tackle violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence, Bridgend County Borough Council is ensuring that all people living in the county borough are safe and protected.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 There are no financial implications resulting from this information report.

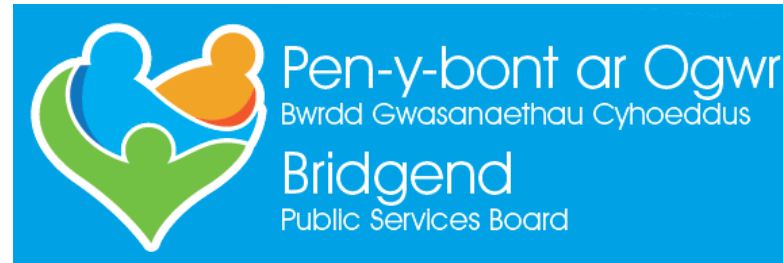
9. Recommendation

- 9.1 That Cabinet Committee Equalities note the content of this update report.

Appendices

- i. CTM VAWDASV Delivery Plan

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Cwm Taf Morgannwg
Violence against Women,
Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence
Delivery Plan
2022-26

Objective 1 Challenge the public attitude to violence against women, domestic abuse, and sexual violence across the Welsh population through awareness raising and space for public discussion with the aim to decrease its occurrence.

Planned action	Lead agency or person	Time scales	Outputs /outcomes	Progress report
Participate in the development and dissemination of national. VAWDASV campaigns For victims and perpetrators	VAWDASV Regional Adviser & partner agencies	Ongoing	Evidence of dissemination of resources	
Identify plan and deliver local campaigns and awareness raising activity, Using promotional mechanisms appropriate to the target audience.	VAWDASV Regional Adviser & partner agencies	March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding week • White ribbon 10 days of action • Sexual violence week • New pathways CSA awareness raising campaign. • New pathways 30th Anniversary conference 	
Service providers ongoing awareness raising of VAWDASV through active social media.	New Pathways Llamau RCT DAS SMT	ongoing	Quarterly reports	

Objective 1 Challenge the public attitude to violence against women, domestic abuse, and sexual violence across the Welsh population through awareness raising and space for public discussion with the aim to decrease its occurrence.

Planned action	Lead agency or person	Time scales	Outputs /outcomes	Progress report Q2 23-24
Deliver bystanders intervention training to those working in nighttime economy and college /sixth form students.	BCBC – Kirsty Williams	Sept 2023	Performance report Numbers trained	
Work with gender-based harassment in public spaces workstream to understand the scale and causes of the issue. Identify what works to change culture and provide support to protect women.	Member of workstream TBC			
In RCT a project team will be providing a grass roots” Community Domestic Abuse Project aimed at raising awareness of domestic abuse across local communities	Rachel Gronow	Sept 2023 to March 2025	Outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased awareness of DA • A reduction in the space to commit DA Quarterly reports	

Objective 2 increased awareness in children, young people, and adults of the importance of safe, equal, and healthy relationships and empowering them to positive personal choices.

Planned action	Lead agency or person	Time scales	Outputs /outcomes	Progress report
Continue to deliver the spectrum programme in schools across the region, And improve the uptake of the programme.	Hafan Cymru and identified school leads across the region	ongoing	Performance data to be provided quarterly	
All Wales Schools Programme will continue to deliver inputs to raise awareness of violence including domestic abuse. and sexual exploitation/violence.	SWP	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in awareness of Domestic Abuse and safety (hidden hurt), internet safety, sexting, sexual exploitation, and consent. Reduction in Crime and disorder amongst CYP 	
Establish a CYP subgroup to identify across the region what programmes are being delivered in schools, colleges, PRU and youth groups.	VAWDASV Regional Adviser & partner agencies	March 2024	A scoping report of activity to be provided to VAWDASV Steering Group.	Dates for first meeting sent out

Objective 2 increased awareness in children, young people, and adults of the importance of safe, equal, and healthy relationships and empowering them to positive personal choices

Planned action	Lead agency or person	Time scales	Outputs /outcomes	Progress report
CYP IDVA's present in Merthyr, RCT & Bridgend are supporting children to recover from exposure to domestic abuse, increase their resilience and promote the development of healthy relationships.	RCTCBC and SMT	Ongoing until March 2025	Outcome Increased resilience of CYP Quarterly monitoring reports	

Objective 3 Increase the focus on holding those who commit abuse to account and supporting those who may carry out abusive or violent behaviour to change their behaviour and avoid offending.

Planned action	Lead agency or person	Time scales	Outputs /outcomes	Progress report
Representatives of CTM VAWDASV steering group to work with Partner agencies, PCC, Welsh Government and blueprint workstream to develop, commission and implement a range of perpetrator interventions for DA and SV	VAWDASV Regional Adviser PCC perpetrator oversight group VAWDASV Regional Adviser & attendees of perpetrator work groups	ongoing		Blueprint group is currently scoping all interventions being offered. RA working with various groups to try to fund the CLEAR intervention.
Deliver perpetrator interventions. DRIVE, Driving change Clear	SMT	ongoing	Performance data	
Support the development and promotion of CARA. (An early intervention project) Across the CTM region	PCCO	ongoing	Performance data in relation to CTM region	

Objective 3 Increase the focus on holding those who commit abuse to account and supporting those who may carry out abusive or violent behaviour to change their behaviour and avoid offending.

Planned action	Lead agency or person	Time scales	Outputs /outcomes	Progress report
Deliver interventions perpetrator interventions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building Better Relationships (Accredited) • Stepwise Structured Intervention and Skills for Relationship toolkit 	HMPPS	Through out 23-24	Performance data indicating completions/non-completions/barriers	
HMPPS to use reportable incidents, to adapt risk management plans and/or take enforcement action whilst perpetrators are subject to licence supervision.	HMPPS	March 2024	Performance data/qualitative narrative to capture this action.	
Promote the use of MAPPA Level 3 management to ensure that domestic abuse perpetrators who may require specific multi-agency risk management contribution are referred to this forum.	South Wales MAPPA Operational Group	March 2024	Monitoring data	

Objective 3 Increase the focus on holding those who commit abuse to account and supporting those who may carry out abusive or violent behaviour to change their behaviour and avoid offending.

Planned action	Lead agency or person	Time scales	Outputs /outcomes	Progress report
Utilise fully the 4 Remote Evidence Suites to provide a space in which DV and SV victims feel safe to participate in court proceedings.	Remote evidence suite providers	ongoing	Quarterly performance data	
New pathways to pilot a small peer to peer problematic behaviour project – CTM region 10 clients	New pathways	March 2024	Performance data/report	
New Pathways ISVA service – supporting victims to hold perpetrators to account through the criminal justice service.	New pathways	ongoing	No. of victims supported	

Objective 3 Increase the focus on holding those who commit abuse to account and supporting those who may carry out abusive or violent behaviour to change their behaviour and avoid offending

Planned action	Lead agency or person	Time scales	Outputs /outcomes	Progress report
<p>SWP to Identify and disrupt offenders of VAWDASV across the CTM region, Through partnership working in the</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • night -time economy • Marac • Mid Glam BCU Domestic Abuse Offender Managers. 	SWP	ongoing	Data relating to reported offences, positive outcome rates	
<p>SWP to embed ISVA framework and Rape Investigation Teams in order to better support victims. Use of Preventative Orders will continue to be used to deter perpetrators.</p>	SWP	Ongoing	Quarterly progress updates	

Objective 4 Make early intervention and prevention a priority.

NB In the CTM region it is felt that many of the activities delivered under strategic objectives 1 & 2 also contribute to this objective.

Planned action	Lead agency or person	Time scales	Outputs /outcomes	Progress report
To continue to deliver Operation Encompass notifications to schools and liaise across the LAs to ensure consistency in approach.	SWP, Education Welfare departments	ongoing	Performance data Agreed framework	
Safer streets activity Improved CCTV coverage Employ taxi marshals. Provide Women's self-defence classes	BCBC -Kirsty Williams	September 2023	Performance report	
New pathways to provide sexual violence training for school staff.	New Pathways	March 2024	Performance data	
IRIS to continue to be provided in GP practices across the region enabling earlier identification of DA victims.	IRIS providers	ongoing	Performance data	

Objective 4 Make early intervention and prevention a priority.

Planned action	Lead agency or person	Time scales	Outputs /outcomes	Progress report
Work with gender-based harassment in public spaces workstream to Build an evidence base on causes of gender-based harassment, how to change culture and what works to support women	Representative for blueprint group to be considered	ongoing		

Objective 5 Relevant professionals are trained to provide effective, timely and appropriate responses to victims and survivors.

Planned action	Lead agency or person	Time scales	Outputs /outcomes	Progress report
Partner agencies to develops local responses to VAWDASV NTF framework to drive up performance and to ensure consistency of delivery across agencies.	RCTCBC BCBC MTCBC CTM UHB	ongoing	Narrative report	Statutory organisations need to develop training plans. a task group needs to consider alternative mechanisms for delivery of ask and act partner agencies beginning work on group 6 resources
VAWDASV group to monitor the performance data for NTF, all groups quarterly.	VAWDASV regional adviser to collect from RCTCBC BCBC MTCBC CTM UHB VAWDASV service providers	ongoing	Performance data	
Further development of the VAWDASV pages on Safeguarding Board website to assist professionals to know what services are available and how to access them	Beth Melhuish	DEC 2023	Updated website	

Objective 5 Relevant professionals are trained to provide effective, timely and appropriate responses to victims and survivors.

Planned action	Lead agency or person	Time scales	Outputs /outcomes	Progress report
Scope existing VAWDASV training that is provided across the region to ascertain sustainability, sufficiency and identify gaps in training programme.	Task and finish group	Dec 2023	Report for VAWDASV steering group	
Probation Service to expand Domestic Homicide Training licences to more practitioners including new staff.	HMPPS		Review with Training and Development Team	
Probation Service to build upon their Domestic Abuse risk assessment and risk management. practitioner resources.	HMPPS		Review development of work products with Effective Practice Team to ensure movement with expertise and legislation change.	

Objective 5 Relevant professionals are trained to provide effective, timely and appropriate responses to victims and survivors.

Planned action	Lead agency or person	Time scales	Outputs /outcomes	Progress report
Probation Service to ensure that all practitioners working with domestic abuse perpetrators are trained in using the Spousal Assault Risk Assessment to ensure robust and accurate assessment.	HMPPS	ongoing	Performance reports for CTM region	
Probation Service to monitor completion of mandatory Domestic Abuse e-learning for all staff.	HMPPS	Throughout 23-24	Probation Delivery Unit to provide performance data	
South Wales Police to continue to provide VAWDASV training to police officers and frontline staff. To include all new officers Force training days for response teams Neighbourhood policing	SWP and partners	Throughout 23-24	Performance reports for CTM region	

Objective 5 Relevant professionals are trained to provide effective, timely and appropriate responses to victims and survivors.

Planned action	Lead agency or person	Time scales	Outputs /outcomes	Progress report
Hafan Cymru to continue to provide inset days for school staff	Hafan Cymru	ongoing	Quarterly reports	
Organisations to review their policies and procedures in line with direction from the Blueprint workstream on workplace harassment.	Individual VAWDASV partner agencies/organisation	March 2024	All policies reviewed	

Objective 6 Provide all victims with equal access to appropriately resourced, high quality, needs-led, strength-based, inter-sectional, and responsive services across Wales.

Planned action	Lead agency or person	Time scales	Outputs /outcomes	Progress report
Representatives of CTM VAWDASV steering group to work with blueprint workstreams to develop, commission and implement a range of interventions for DA and SV for CYP and older people.	VAWDASV Chair Regional Adviser Workstream members from CTM region	ongoing	Report and recommendations to VAWDASV steering group	
Add to existing CYP scoping work to identify. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what services we have • what interventions are provided? • what geographic region is covered? • Accreditation standards etc Links to CYP blueprint workstream	Regional Adviser	March 2024	Report and recommendations to VAWDASV steering group	

Objective 6 Provide all victims with equal access to appropriately resourced, high quality, needs-led, strength-based, inter-sectional, and responsive services across Wales.

Planned action	Lead agency or person	Time scales	Outputs /outcomes	Progress report
Implement recommendations made from review process e.g., DHR, APR etc and soon to be SUSR.	Chair of VAWDASV group	ongoing	Actions incorporated into delivery plan	
Implement changes to MARAC as recommended by MARAC quality assurance group.	Chair of MARAC QA Group	ongoing	More effective MARAC	
HMPPS to implement the Unwanted Prisoner Scheme in 2022 (victims, members of the public can contact HMPPS to request that telephone number is blocked for serving prisoners causing harassment)	HMPPS		Review implementation progress, promote service and establish extent of use via Service Integration Team.	

Objective 6 Provide all victims with equal access to appropriately resourced, high quality, needs-led, strength-based, inter-sectional, and responsive services across Wales.

Planned action	Lead agency or person	Time scales	Outputs /outcomes	Progress report
Probation Service to embed Domestic Abuse Support Officers into case management information exchange to promote victim support.	HMPPS		Improved interface to improve support and responsiveness to victims. Qualitative	
Probation to pilot expanding Victim Contact Scheme to victims of coercive and controlling behaviour, regardless of sentence length.	HMPPS		Strategic Victim Lead to implement delivery plan and review. Intention is to broaden the support offered to victims and specialise support.	
Use existing service user engagement mechanisms and networks to ensure that the voice of service users influences policy and service development.	Service providers	ongoing	Evidence of service user involvement	
Support the development and promotion of the Police Perpetrated VAWDASV pilot service	PCCO	ongoing	Performance data for CTM region	