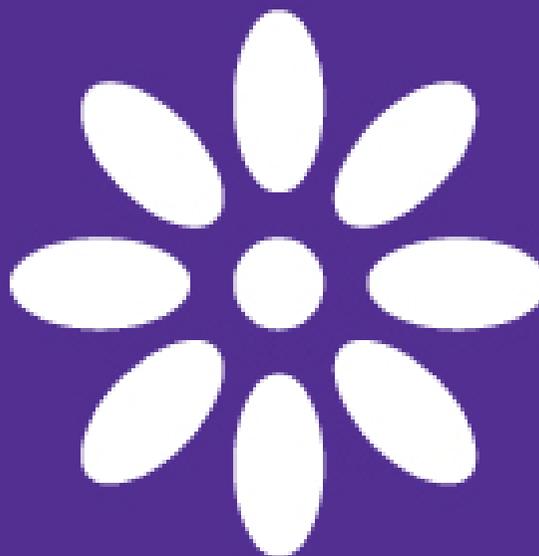




Cymorth i Ferched Cymru
Welsh Women's Aid

Rhoi Merched a Phlant yn Gyntaf
Putting Women & Children First

2015-2018 Strategic Plan





2015-2018 Strategic Plan

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Introduction: About Welsh Women's Aid

Welsh Women's Aid is the national charity in Wales working to end domestic abuse and all forms of violence against women. This document sets out Welsh Women's Aid's strategic plan and the priorities we intend to deliver over the next three years.

Established in 1978, we represent, campaign for, and support a federation of local independent charities delivering specialist domestic abuse and violence against women prevention services in Wales, as part of a UK network of provision. These specialist services constitute our core membership, and between them they provide lifesaving refuges, outreach, and community advocacy and support to survivors of violence and abuse - women, men, children, families - and deliver innovative preventative work in local communities.

We also deliver direct services including the Welsh Government funded Wales Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Helpline (from October 2015 the 'Live Fear Free Helpline'); the refuge and advocacy services in Colwyn Bay and Wrexham; and the national *Children Matter* preventative project which supports our members to help children and young people in every local authority in Wales.

We have been at the forefront of shaping coordinated community responses and practice in Wales, by campaigning for change and providing advice, consultancy, support and training to deliver policy and service improvements for survivors, families and communities.

As a national federation, our policy work, campaigning, consultancy, training and advocacy is all grounded in the lived experience of local specialist services and service users. Our success is founded on making sure the experiences and needs of survivors are central to all we do.

Our vision, mission, values and perspective

Vision: A world in which women and children live free from actual or threatened domestic abuse and all forms of violence against women.

Mission: To prevent domestic abuse and violence against women and ensure high-quality services for survivors that are needs-led, gender-responsive and holistic.

Values: The values and principles that inform our work are founded on gender equality, human rights and non-discrimination:

Feminism and equality: We work within a feminist ethos and as part of the movement for social justice, which advocates for and proactively attains women's rights on the grounds of political, social, and economic equality.

Empowerment: We advocate a rights-based approach and create a context in which women and children can achieve self-determination and empowerment, so they can flourish and reach their full potential.

Collaboration: We are committed to working together with survivors, our membership and with external partners, sharing knowledge and expertise to maximise every opportunity to make progress towards our vision.

Integrity: We keep survivors voices at the centre of our work, and hold ourselves individually and collectively accountable for our actions and act according to our beliefs and values at all times.

Excellence: Our services evolve in response to emerging needs, changing populations and new/revised ways of thinking about violence against women and children, and we are committed to ensuring we deliver the best that we can possibly achieve.



Perspective

Domestic abuse is the exercise of control by one person, over another, within an intimate or close family relationship; the abuse can be sexual, physical, financial, emotional or psychological. It is usually a pattern of behaviour, and happens regardless of sex, age, carer responsibility, class, disability, gender identity, immigration status, ethnicity, geography or religion. However the gender of the victim and of the perpetrator influences the severity, risk, and harm caused.

Domestic abuse is part of a continuum of **violence against women and girls** that is directed at women/girls because they are women/girls or are experienced disproportionately by women and girls as a group. These violence against women crime-types include rape and sexual violence; stalking; forced marriage; so-called 'honour-based violence'; female genital mutilation (FGM); trafficking and sexual exploitation including through the sex industry; and sexual harassment in work and public life.

Domestic abuse is defined by the UK government (Home Office) as:

'Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, 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. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to: psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional.'

'Controlling behaviour is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.'

'Coercive behaviour is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.'

In Wales, the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 includes definitions that apply to people of all ages, not just over 16:

- **Domestic abuse is defined by the Act** as *'abuse where the victim of it is or has been associated with the abuser; "abuse" means physical, sexual, psychological, emotional or financial abuse.* This definition applies to people who have been married to each other or in a civil partnership (or engaged), have lived together in an enduring family relationship, live in the same household or are relatives, they have or have had an intimate personal relationship with each other, and in relation to a child, each of them is a parent of the child or has, or has had, parental responsibility for the child.
- **Violence against women and girls is defined by the Act** as: *'gender-based violence, domestic abuse and sexual violence where the victim is female.'* Gender-based violence is defined as
 - (a) *violence, threats of violence or harassment arising directly or indirectly from values, beliefs or customs relating to gender or sexual orientation;*
 - (b) *female genital mutilation;*
 - (c) *forcing a person (whether by physical force or coercion by threats or other psychological means) to enter into a religious or civil ceremony of marriage (whether or not legally binding).*

'Violence against women' is defined by the United Nations, World Health Organisation, Crown Prosecution Service, UK Government and other international governments as: *violence directed at a woman because she is a woman, or involve acts of violence which are suffered disproportionately by women that*

"... results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life. Violence against women shall be understood to encompass but not be limited to:

(a) Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation;

(b) Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within the general community, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere, trafficking in women and forced prostitution;

(c) Physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the State, wherever it occurs.”¹

We endorse this definition, which firmly places violence against women and girls as a cause and consequence of gender inequality, a violation of human rights, and a result of an abuse of power and control.

Whilst these forms of violence and abuse are predominately experienced by women and girls, and perpetrated by men; men and boys can also be victims of these crime-types. Our perspective therefore locates domestic abuse and violence against women as a form of systematic discrimination, whilst also allowing for the recognition that men and boys may be victims of some of these forms of violence and for female perpetrators, in delivery of responses. We are committed to supporting women, men, girls and boys who experience violence and abuse; to challenging all those who perpetrate violence and abuse, and to preventing it from happening in the first place.

Although not all violence against women occurs within a context of traditional power relations, perpetrators’ behaviour stems from a sense of entitlement supported by sexist, racist, disablist, homophobic and other discriminatory attitudes, behaviours and systems that maintain and reproduce inequality.

The perspective that informs our strategy, policy and service delivery is founded on a gendered analysis which helps us understand what these crime types mean for women and girls, men and boys, including why the majority of those who perpetrate violence and abuse are men; how the experience of being a male victim/survivor or witness can be different; as well as the best ways to provide help and support.

Our perspective advocates a gender-responsive and trauma informed response, which is needs-led, strengths-based and enables survivors achieve independence and freedom. We know that many women who are survivors of abuse may also find themselves in conflict with the criminal justice system, as a result of their victimisation and experiences of severe and multiple disadvantage. Effective approaches to reduce and prevent violence and abuse must therefore also focus on preventing or diverting women and girls from being in conflict with the justice system.

Many actions taken as part of our response to domestic abuse and other forms of violence against women will also be applicable to men and boys because legislation, policies and procedures should provide protection and redress to all victims/survivors. However, where appropriate, specific actions may be needed, proportionally, to:

- Challenge the behaviour of men who use violence and abuse
- Support men where they experience violence and abuse
- Support boys who witness or experience violence or abuse
- Work with men as allies in challenging violence and abuse and helping to change the attitudes and actions of their peers.

¹ United Nations: ‘Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women’, General Assembly <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/48/a48r104.htm>

The problem: why our services are needed



Violence against women is extremely common, has devastating effects on women and their children, families and communities, and is under-recognised as a social problem. Yet globally, it is a problem of pandemic proportions: more women suffer rape or attempted rape than have a stroke each year, and the level of domestic abuse in the population exceeds that of diabetes by many times.² Every year in the UK 3 million women experience rape, domestic violence, forced marriage and so-called 'honour' crimes, female genital mutilation, stalking, trafficking and sexual exploitation.

There has never been a comprehensive survey across all forms of violence against women so there is no strong benchmark for measuring progress. There are experiences we know less about, including those of older women, disabled women, women in temporary accommodation and institutions including prison, and women with mental health problems. What research we have indicates the vast majority of violence against women is perpetrated by known men (partners, family members, neighbours, friends or colleagues) but it is also perpetrated by strangers.

- Whilst **1.4 million women** and **700,000 men (aged 16-59)** reported experiencing incidents of domestic abuse in 2013/14, evidence shows it is women as a group who face the highest risk of repetitive, escalating abuse, who are more likely to experience coercive control, to live in fear, and to be killed through male violence³.
- UK research on **teenage partner violence** found 3 in 4 girls and 1 in 10 boys encounter harmful behaviour in teen relationships: girls report greater incidence of abuse, experience more severe abuse more frequently and suffer more negative impacts, compared with boys. Of 88% of young people in an intimate relationship, 25% girls & 18% boys experienced physical abuse, 75% girls & 14% boys experienced emotional abuse & 33% girls & 16% boys experienced sexual abuse.⁴
- In the UK there is a 2.6% prevalence of **abuse and neglect of older people**; however interpersonal abuse is higher for women aged 66-74 and for women who are separated/divorced; 2 in 5 older women who are abused are also carers.⁵
- **Disabled women**, regardless of age, sexuality, ethnicity or class, may be abused or raped at a rate at least twice that of non-disabled women.⁶
- On average 2 women are killed each week in England and Wales through domestic abuse. In 2013/14 there were 183 female homicide victims of whom 84 women (46%) were killed by partners/ex-partners.⁷ In 2014, **150 UK women were suspected to have been killed by known men** (1 woman killed every 2.43 days).⁸
- 21.5% women report experiencing **stalking** since they were aged 16.⁹
- 79% of cases dealt with by the Forced Marriage Unit involved female victims; 21% involved male victims. It is estimated there are up to 100 victims of forced marriage a year in Wales.¹⁰

² Department of Health (2010) Taskforce on health aspects of violence against women and children

³ Office of National Statistics: 'Chapter 4: Violent Crime and Sexual Offences – Intimate Personal Violence and Serious Sexual Assault', 12 February 2015, <http://goo.gl/hJnvoK>

⁴ Barter, C, McCarry, M, Berridge, D & Evans, K 2009, 'Partner exploitation and violence in teenage intimate relationships'. NSPCC/University of Bristol, <http://goo.gl/A8oCY2>

⁵ O'Keeffe, M., Hills, A., Doyle, M., McCreddie, C., Scholes, S., Constantine, R., Tinker, A., Manthorpe, J., Biggs, S., Erens, B., June 2007, 'UK Study of Abuse and Neglect of Older People, Prevalence Survey Report'. National Centre for Social Research/King's College London, <http://goo.gl/jZKcHF>

⁶ Magowan P. 2004, 'The impact of disability on women's experiences of domestic abuse: an empirical study into disabled women's experiences of, and responses to domestic abuse'. ESRC – independent scholarship PhD research

⁷ Office of National Statistics: 'Chapter 2 - Violent Crime and Sexual Offences – Homicide', 12 February 2015, <http://goo.gl/0m15Mq>

⁸ Karen Ingala Smith: 'Counting Dead Women', 2014, <http://kareningalasmith.com/counting-dead-women/2014-2/>

⁹ Office of National Statistics: 'Chapter 4 - Violent Crime and Sexual Offences – Intimate Personal Violence and Serious Sexual Assault', 12 February 2015, <http://goo.gl/hJnvoK>

¹⁰ Home Office/Foreign&Commonwealth Office: 'Forced Marriage Unit', 2014, <http://goo.gl/2qX9oR>

- Women are five times as likely as men to be victims of serious **sexual assault**; 3.7 million women in England and Wales have been sexually assaulted since the age of 16 and across the UK¹¹ there are upwards of five million adult women who experienced some form of sexual abuse during childhood.¹² Approximately 124,000 women, men, boys and girls over the age of 16 in Wales have been the victim of a sexual offence.¹³
- 137,000 girls and women are living with consequences of **FGM** in the UK and 60,000 girls under the age of 15 are at risk of FGM in the UK. It is estimated there are 140 victims of FGM a year in Wales.¹⁴
- 85 per cent of women in **prostitution** reported physical abuse in the family and 45 per cent report familial sexual abuse. It is also estimated that up to 5,000 children and young people are involved in prostitution at any one time in the UK, and of these, there is a female to male ratio of 4:1.¹⁵
- 80% of the 600,000 to 800,000 people **trafficked** worldwide each year are women and girls. In the UK, between 4,000 and 10,000 women are trafficked into the country every year;¹⁶ and 95% of women trafficked into prostitution suffer physical and sexual abuse, with the same number experiencing symptoms of trauma similar to those suffered by torture victims. However the true extent and nature of trafficking internationally and nationally remains largely unknown.¹⁷
- Studies on **sexual harassment** showed that one in two women have experienced such abuse; European surveys on violence against women found prevalence rates for sexual harassment were four times those for domestic abuse.¹⁸
- **Most women involved in the criminal justice system** will have experienced domestic abuse, sexual violence, exploitation or other forms of violence against women, and their offending is often related to this. These women also face severe and multiple disadvantage including mental ill-health, problematic substance use and homelessness, and become trapped in a vicious circle of crime, violence and offending.¹⁹
- **Prison doesn't work for women.** Women released from custody having served a sentence of less than 12 months are more likely to reoffend than those who received a community order; in 2008 the difference in proven reoffending rates was 8.3%. 51% of women leaving prison are reconvicted within one year – for those serving sentences of less than 12 months this increases to 62%. For women who have served more than 10 previous custodial sentences the reoffending rate rises to 88%.²⁰
- The **cost** of providing public services (including health, legal and social services) to victims and the lost economic output of women affected by violence runs to billions of pounds each year. An indicative figure for the minimum and overlapping cost of violence against women and girls is between £37-£40 billion annually.²¹

Domestic abuse and other forms of violence against women has a huge human, social and economic cost that impacts on every aspect of life and every public service. It is legitimised and condoned by the inequality between women and men and by attitudes towards women. These attitudes in turn prevent individuals, public agencies and other institutions from responding adequately or listening to victims and survivors.

¹¹ Walker, A., Kershaw, C. and Nicholas, S., 2007, 'Crime in England and Wales 2008/09'. Home Office Statistical Bulletin, July 2006, <http://goo.gl/hbHdp5>

¹² Based on data: Ministry of Justice, Home Office & the Office for National Statistics, 2013, 'An Overview of Sexual Offending in England and Wales', <https://goo.gl/8EDwtl>

¹³ Report from the Sexual Violence Against Women sub-group, 2010, 'Responding to violence against women and children – the role of the NHS', <http://goo.gl/OhePvM>

¹⁴ Macfarlane, A., Dorkenoo, E., 'Female Genital Mutilation in England and Wales: Updated statistical estimates of the numbers of affected women living in England and Wales and girls at risk: Interim report on provisional estimates', 2014, London: City University

¹⁵ Home Office: 'Paying the Price: a consultation paper on prostitution', July 2004, London, <http://goo.gl/Kva1yK>

¹⁶ Townsend, M., (2007) 'Sex slaves' win cash in landmark legal deal The Observer

Coy, M., Lovett, J. & Kelly, L. (2008), 'Realising Rights, Fulfilling obligations: a template for an integrated strategy on violence against women for the UK', <http://goo.gl/SuhMjA>

Brighton & Hove; 'Preventing Violence Against Women & Girls: An Integrated Strategy & Action Plan, 2012-2017', <http://1url.cz/i8cZ>

¹⁸ Jaspert, M., Brown, E. and Condon, S. (2003) Les violences envers les Femmes en France: Une Enquête Nationale, Paris : La Documentation Française; Schroettle

Schroettle, M. and Muller, U. (2004) Health, Well-Being, and Personal Safety of Women in

Coy, M., Lovett, J. & Kelly, L. (2008) 'Realising Rights, Fulfilling obligations: a template for an integrated strategy on violence against women for the UK', <http://goo.gl/SuhMjA>

¹⁹ Home Office: 'A report by Baroness Jean Corston of a Review of Women with Particular Vulnerabilities in the Criminal Justice System', 2007, <http://goo.gl/LVzcBd>

²⁰ Prison Reform Trust (2012) 'Women In Prison', <http://goo.gl/JEO4RK>

²¹ HM Government: 'Call To End Violence Against Women and Girls'. 2010, <https://goo.gl/srmgK5>

Barriers to achieving change include:

- Misogyny throughout all levels of society and systems.
- Lack of shared understanding of the problem and solutions.
- Lack of agreement on what is a good outcome.
- Current dominant model centres on defensible decision-making by agencies not needs/best outcomes for survivors.
- Widespread systemic failure to identify or meet needs or to conserve and build upon women's own resources.
- Statutory agencies do not understand VAW / DV particularly coercive control.
- Lack of high profile champions for ending violence against women and girls.

The challenges we face over the next 3 years

Like other organisations in both the third and public sectors, our services nationally and locally face a challenging and changing future over the next few years, as a result of, amongst other things:

- Declining government and public authority expenditure;
- Public policy priorities and legislative changes, brought about by the Westminster election results in 2015 and pending Welsh Government elections due in 2016;
- Impact of technology on our service delivery;
- Proposed changes to Wales local authority structures and boundaries;
- New commissioning, financing and evaluation methods.

During periods of change in what has become an increasingly competitive environment, we remain firm in our vision and mission so that survivors of abuse across Wales benefit from local, specialist, high-quality services and so that we work towards the eradication of domestic abuse and violence against women in the medium to long term. We will prioritise the delivery of more effective support, leadership and collaboration during this period, and the provision of an influential voice for the domestic abuse/violence against women third sector and for survivors in Wales.

We have also reflected on the lessons learned from our experience thus far. For the past decade, there has been an increasing adoption of a risk-based model for service responses to domestic violence and abuse. However, there is also a growing literature that highlights the limits to such an approach, and recognition of problems in service responses. The 2014 HMIC investigation into police responses to domestic violence and abuse has provided evidence of problems in the criminal justice system response, and there are also indications that the current response is not reducing the rate of domestic violence. A focus on risk has been accompanied by a reduction in needs-led responses, and a growing crisis of unmet need. In addition, some service responses have been criticised for marginalising and disempowering survivors themselves.

In partnership with local services and key national stakeholders from many related fields, and survivors themselves, we have reviewed current approaches to tackling domestic violence and abuse and the systems in place. During this process a number of key questions have been raised. These include:

- Is the current approach making women and children safer in a lasting way?
- How do we support women and children to live lives free from violence and abuse?
- What changes should be made to improve the current situation to deliver better longer term outcomes and thereby actually reduce the numbers of women and children victimised?
- How can any changes be made against the continuing backdrop of austerity?
- Is there a way of better directing the available resources?
- What can we learn from other social policy arenas?

In Wales, the context in which we will deliver our services will also change over the next three years. In April 2015, the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 was enacted. This is the first law of its kind in the UK to provide a strategic focus to improve the public sector response in Wales to gender-based violence, domestic abuse and sexual violence. The Act and associated statutory guidance aims to ensure consistent consideration of preventative, protective and supportive mechanisms in the delivery of services. The main provisions in the Act are:

- a duty on Welsh Ministers to prepare and publish a National Strategy aimed at ending gender-based violence, domestic abuse and sexual violence;
- a duty on Welsh Ministers to appoint a National Adviser on Violence against Women and other forms of Gender-based Violence, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence;
- a duty on Local Authorities and Local Health Boards to jointly prepare and publish strategies aimed at ending gender-based violence, domestic abuse and sexual violence;
- provision to focus on violence against women, whilst ensuring the Act extends to all female and male victims of gender-based violence, domestic abuse and sexual violence;
- provision for Welsh Ministers to issue statutory guidance to relevant authorities on how they may contribute to ending gender-based violence, domestic abuse and sexual violence, including on workplace policies, the commissioning of services and multi-agency collaboration; and
- the power for Welsh Ministers to publish indicators that can be used to measure progress towards achieving the purposes of the Act.

We will support implementation of the Act and accompanying Welsh Government programme of education measures, alongside other statutory guidance, whilst ensuring that the interests and experiences of our member services and of survivors remains at the centre of any approach to improve practice and prevent violence and abuse.

We believe that a more effective response to domestic violence and abuse, including earlier and more appropriate intervention to disclosure, would have a positive impact across social policy and services. In addition to responses, there also needs to be more effective ways of preventing domestic violence and abuse and protecting children and families from its long-term effects whilst also placing interventions with perpetrators as a priority within a whole family and community approach to prevention. We want to create change that lasts, through advocating a strengths-based, needs-led model of intervention that supports survivors and their children to build resilience, and leads towards independence and freedom.

Our priorities over the next 3 years

Our resultant strategy and priorities are the culmination of decades of learning from services delivering practical, emotional and therapeutic support to women and children and work with a variety of stakeholders.

Our work needs to be focussed on supporting our member services and on those areas where we can make the best contribution to ending violence and abuse. This includes making sure that survivors get the help and support they need, through providing training, guidance and toolkits, that support professionals to provide effective and appropriate support to survivors of violence and abuse; and using our influence and networks to ensure survivors voices are heard and remain at the centre of any existing or developing interventions. This also includes working towards a future where the lives of women and children are not blighted by violence and abuse, by enhancing the ability of communities and professionals to end violence and abuse; working with children and young people to prevent violence and abuse and promoting innovative work on prevention.

We will continue to campaign for survivors' voices and experiences to be at the heart of practice and policy responses to domestic abuse and all forms of violence against women. Survivors are the experts. Recognition of the service user as expert is an approach also being adopted by many in the health sector and is also informed by extensive research and experience of delivering services in other policy areas, such as the services that have been developed for women involved in the criminal justice system through women's community projects and

women's centres. Women centred approaches are important to understand for policy and service plans designed to improve life outcomes for women with multiple disadvantage, whether these relate to criminal justice, health, housing and homelessness, substance misuse or abuse.

Our priority areas of work over the next three years, will focus on the following areas:

Prevention:

We will raise awareness; promote best practice to achieve prevention through education, public service delivery and in communities; campaign for gender equality and to challenge attitudes to reduce social tolerance of domestic abuse and all forms of violence against women. We are an accredited *Agored Cymru* centre and we will deliver specialist training to a range of professionals across Wales so that they can better support and meet survivors' needs and reduce the risk posed by perpetrators.

Provision, protection and support:

We will support specialist services across Wales to build their capacity, deliver high-quality support, and keep up to date on policy and practice developments. We will also represent and provide services with a voice locally, regionally, nationally, and at a UK and international level. We will provide national access to specialist help, information and support through our national domestic abuse and sexual violence helpline, and manage and coordinate the Wales system of access to emergency refuge provision for survivors (as part of the UK Refuges Online system).

We will also continue to provide refuge, advocacy and support for women and children in Colwyn Bay and Wrexham. It is not our intent to take more services into direct management, and we will do all we can to ensure that our federation of specialist services across Wales are supported to deliver independent, high-quality, needs-led and gender-responsive services.

Partnership working:

Nationally and locally through the work of member services, we will involve survivors in developing and reviewing services, and will support women who have experienced abuse to become more involved in our work. In doing so, we will continually improve our understanding of survivors experiences and how best to meet their needs.

We will deliver consultancy, advice, guidance, support and training to promote coordinated community responses to violence and abuse, including supporting and advising commissioners where needed, on effective, evidence-based service models to achieve change that lasts. We will work across Wales with specialist services, national and local government, health, housing, education, criminal justice, and community advice and support services, to make sure they meet needs, maximise safety, and work to end domestic abuse and all forms of violence against women in all that they do.

Promoting 'Change that LASTS': Transforming responses to violence against women

Our decades of experience and evidence of research has taught us that services and partnerships struggle to help survivors who experience multiple disadvantage; that a focus on high-risk and on domestic abuse means needs are often being ignored and services are delivered in silos; and a lack of gender-responsive services leads to unhelpful and unsafe practice.

To create **change that lasts** we need to create a needs-led, whole-family and community approach to violence against women prevention that places survivors, families, communities and holistic specialist services at the centre of any response. Informed by this approach, the state response should build on survivors' resources and provide for long-term resilience by offering the minimum necessary journey to safety, independence and freedom.

To prevent violence against women we need a better way: ***by placing survivors' needs at the centre of our approach we can provide help earlier and make sure its effects last.***

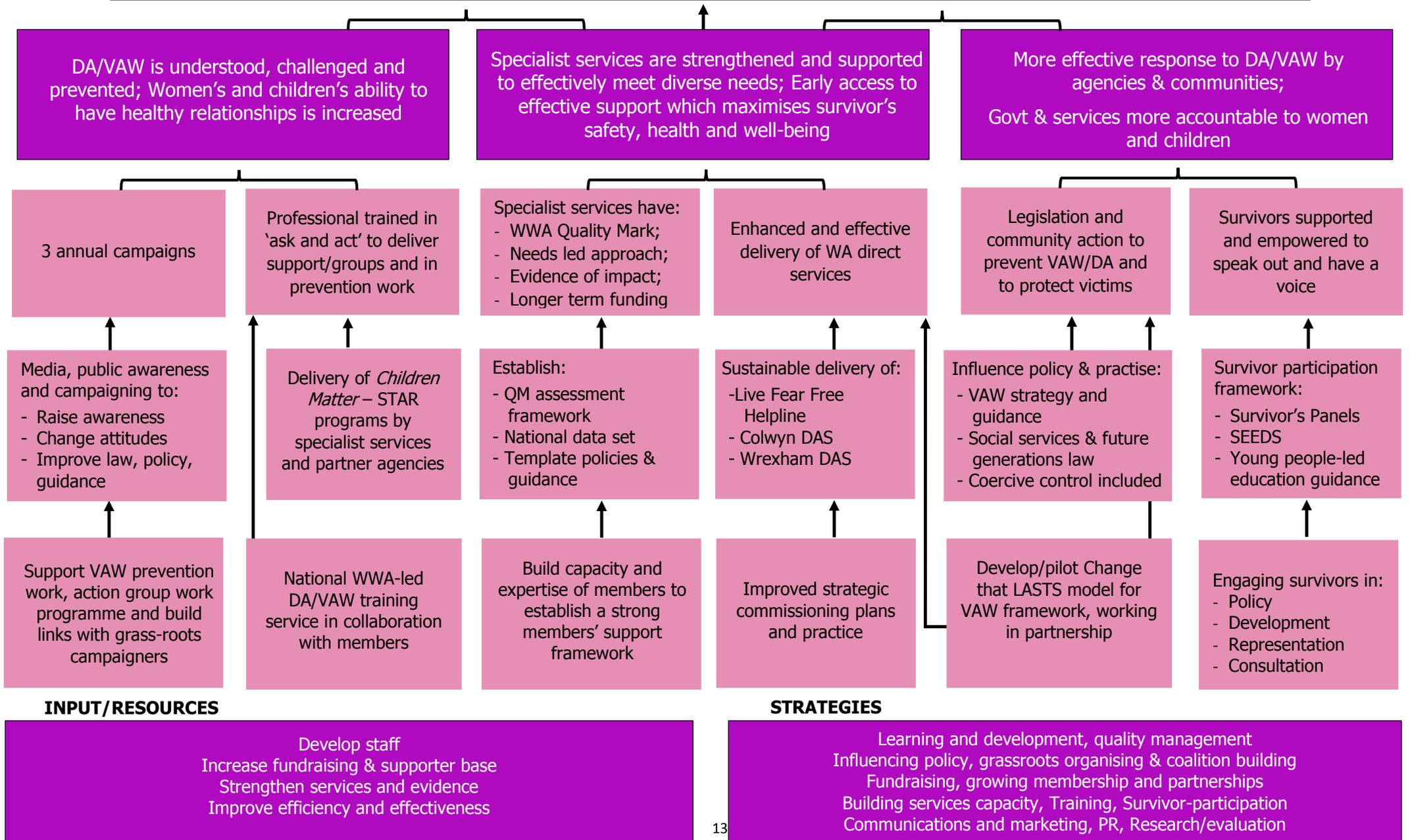
- **Listen** - listen to survivors and place their needs central
- **Ask & act** - ask the right questions safely & act appropriately
- **Specialist support** - refer to your local specialist service
- **Tools** – provide clear guidance, information and training
- **Sustained independence & freedom** - work together for an independent future for survivors

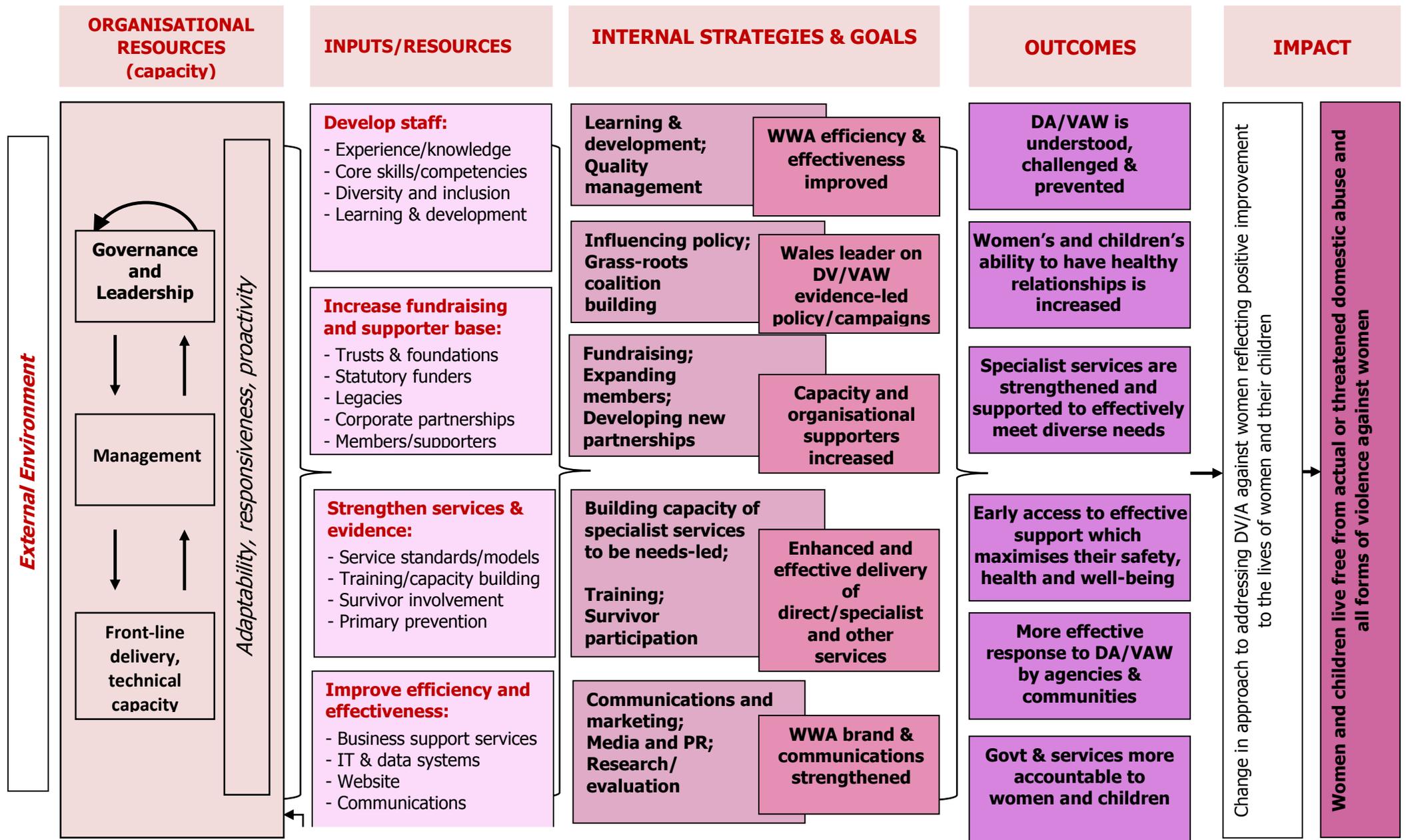
Principles to achieve lasting change include understanding different routes survivors take to freedom and supporting them to support their children, responding holistically to all survivors, having a greater focus on perpetrators, amplifying survivor and community resources, focussing on long term outcomes and prioritising prevention of all violence and abuse. We recognise that this model must respond appropriately to all those who suffer domestic violence and abuse, irrespective of gender, ensuring that the gendered nature and impact of both perpetration and victimisation are understood and addressed.

The results we want to achieve: our theory of change



Women and children live free from actual or threatened domestic abuse and all forms of violence against women





Organisation Culture: Quality standards, survivors/members central, team work & shared approach, celebrate success, risk tolerance

Our people, resources and members

The Strategic Plan has been developed in consultation with staff, managers, members, service users, and the Board of Trustees. It has been developed having regard to Welsh Women's Aid charitable objects, funder requirements and the priorities and activities identified for our future direction, by member services that deliver specialist domestic abuse and violence against women services.



Governance

Welsh Women's Aid is governed by a Board of Trustees of highly skilled company directors who ensure the organisation is legally compliant, financially responsible and drives and monitors our strategic vision and policy. Trustees have overall responsibility for all aspects of our work. They ensure we have robust governance, accountability and financial systems and procedures in place, accompanied by risk management procedures that demonstrate the measures we take to make sure we remain a safe and viable investment. As a federated charity, the Board comprises up to 12 Trustees and we ensure that there are at least 4 members who are drawn from our core membership of specialist services.

The Board is assisted in fulfilling its role by sub committees on governance, employment and HR, and finance and fundraising. Sub committees scrutinise our financial, human and physical resources and risk management, and compliance with equalities, Welsh Language Scheme, data protection, safeguarding and other aspects of our work.

In 2015, the Board embarked on a skills audit and began the process of recruiting additional Trustees to the Board, to maximise capacity and complement the skill-set of existing Trustees.

Management and resources

Our services for the sector are built on the skills and commitment of our staff. Our highly experienced Chief Executive Officer and her team of senior managers and staff, across Wales, work to deliver this strategic plan. We are committed to recruiting and retaining a skilled and diverse workforce, and their work is underpinned by our staff learning and development strategy, that ensures that all staff are supported in fulfilling their part in meeting our objectives. Every member of staff and volunteer is supported to maximise their potential, and to understand their duties and obligations in delivering excellence in service delivery.

We welcome and value the expertise of service users, volunteers and staff, and our member services and encourage involvement and participation across service development, delivery and review processes. Our performance management and quality assurance framework provides a helpful direction of travel towards identifying, defining and building the capabilities that an organisation needs to be able to demonstrate to be sustainable. It ultimately ensures all our services are accessible, safe, accountable, and measurable in terms of the impact we have on enabling the changes clients want to see in their lives.

The breadth and diversity of our work must be underpinned by effective support, management and facilities to ensure efficient services and accountability to funders. We provide the following support to underpin all activities:

- Governance: overall management, quality assurance, risk management
- Finance: payroll, PAYE, pensions, invoicing, budgets, management accounts, grant payments, audit
- Human resources: recruitment, HR policies, personnel records and procedures, staff learning and development
- Facilities management: buildings, office accommodation and maintenance, office equipment, meeting facilities, health and safety, security, welfare facilities, ICT and maintenance of hardware, network and software.

The cost of these services is apportioned to each post and charged to the appropriate budget, following the normal cost recovery methodology approved by Welsh Government and in accordance with accounting requirements.

A key priority for 2015/16 is to review our organisational structure, to maximise our efficiency and effectiveness and ensure we continue to deliver financial and social value for our investors, for our clients and our local communities. This includes strengthening our business support infrastructure to help us better deliver our project work and direct services to our clients.

Our members

Our federation of specialist domestic abuse and violence against women services, in the third sector across Wales, constitutes our core membership and hold a voting right.

During this period we also plan to expand our membership categories to ‘supporter organisations’ and supporter individuals’ whilst retaining our core membership. The latter will comprise independent domestic abuse / violence against women organisations in the third sector or those for whom domestic abuse is their core business, which agree with our mission and vision, and meet our membership requirements. The intention is that this core membership remains available for specialist third sector service providers only.

Our funding

Our work is supported by a variety of funders, and by the funds that we generate from our activities and services. We welcome the continued support we receive from Welsh Government, other bodies, and the support of individual donors. An analysis of current income sources shows that there is scope to diversify sources of funds, in order to create a viable and sustainable organisation.

Our Board is determined to ensure that we secure maximum benefit and value for money for our funders, for our membership, and for survivors of abuse, their families and communities across Wales. We will explore more effective and efficient means of collaborating with specialist services, for example, by developing national partnerships to tender collaboratively for funding where appropriate, and to centrally contract key services that would be of particular benefit to smaller, specialist services amongst our members.

Our budget

Our budget for 2015/16 has been set at £1.5m and we employ 50 people. Funding is received from Welsh Government to deliver core services and support our members in delivering services to survivors of violence and abuse. We also deliver services directly in North Wales including refuge provision and other support services as well as through the national Wales Live Fear Free Helpline.

Our accounts are logged with the Charity Commission and further information from our audited accounts and annual report can be accessed through their website or the Welsh Women’s Aid website.

Welsh Women's Aid Members – Specialist Services, in 2015/16:

Aberconwy Domestic Abuse Services

Amman Valley Women's Aid

Anglesey Domestic Abuse Service (Gorwel/Tai Eryri)

Atal Y Fro

Bangor & District Women's Aid

BAWSO

Clwyd Alan Housing Association (CAHA) Women's Aid

CALAN Domestic Violence Services (DVS)

Cardiff Women's Aid

Carmarthen Women's Aid

Cyfannol Women's Aid

Domestic Abuse Safety Unit (DASU)

Glyndwr Women's Aid

Hafan Cymru

Llanelli Women's Aid

Montgomeryshire Family Crisis Centre

Newport Women's Aid

North Denbighshire Domestic Abuse Service (NDDAS)

Port Talbot Women's Aid

Radnorshire Women's Aid

RCT Women's Aid

Safer Wales

Swansea Women's Aid

West Wales Women's Aid