

# Change that Lasts

## Transforming responses to domestic violence and abuse

### Executive Summary

Women's Aid (England) and Welsh Women's Aid have worked in partnership to develop a new, cross sector model response to domestic violence: Change that Lasts. We have reflected on the lessons learned from our shared experience thus far. In partnership with local services and key national stakeholders from many related fields, we have reviewed current approaches to tackling domestic violence and abuse and the systems in place and are proposing a cross-sector common approach that places the survivor at the heart and builds responses around her needs and the strengths and resources available to her.

**Change that Lasts is a strengths-based, needs-led model that supports domestic violence survivors and their children to build resilience, and leads to independence.**

**L**isten – always listen to survivors and place their needs at the centre

**A**sk & **A**ct – ask the right questions safely & act appropriately

**S**pecialist support – know when and how to refer to your local specialist service

**T**ools – provide clear procedures, roles, information and training across agencies

**S**ustained independence and freedom – work together for an independent future for survivors

Change that Lasts is about the process of ending violence and abuse. It does not assume that, in all cases, the survivor ends the relationship with the person who has abused her - rather the aim is to give survivors options and to help them to negotiate these, because staying with her partner is only an option at all if leaving is a viable option.

We recognise that this model must respond appropriately to all those who suffer domestic violence and abuse, irrespective of gender, while ensuring that the gendered nature and impact of both perpetration and victimisation are understood and addressed.

The aim of the model is to provide a framework that facilitates the shortest, and/or most effective route to safety, freedom and independence for each survivor based on their individual situation and the resources available to them.

### The key principles underpinning the development of Change that Lasts are that:

- i. Responses should build on and nurture the internal and external resources available to individual survivors, reducing their longer-term need to draw on public resources.
- ii. Every point of interaction with a survivor is an opportunity for intervention. It should not be missed, and should never add to the huge barriers survivors already face.
- iii. Supporting the non-abusing parent is likely to improve the safety and well-being of children and should always be fully explored
- i. Addressing the immediate safety needs of survivors and their children is important but should not be the sole focus of interventions.

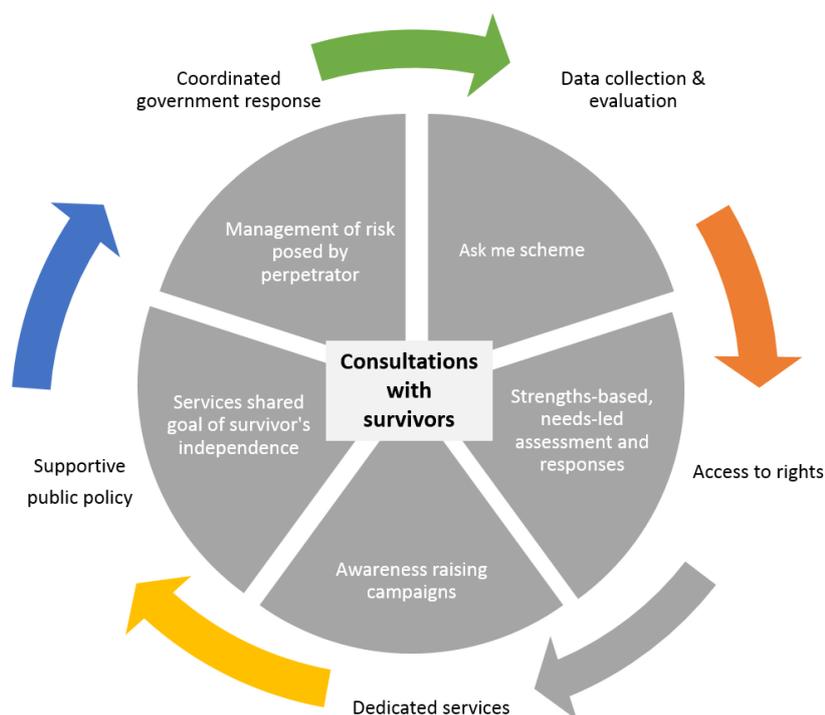
***We're demanding change. It's time to stop stigmatising women who've suffered domestic violence. We're not the ones at fault. Listen to us! Hear us!***

*Focus group participant*

## In summary, the key elements of the Change that Lasts model are that:

- The **voices of survivors** are central to the development and delivery of service responses
- Services work to a **shared goal of independence\*** for the survivor
- There is a shift from a risk based approach to one that starts with the **individual needs** of survivors, including their safety
- Survivors are supported to draw and build upon their individual **strengths and resources** – needs assessment and safety planning facilitate this
- Barriers to help are removed or reduced and **opportunities to access help** in the community are widened through local 'Ask Me' schemes and development of the 'Trusted Professional' role.
- Communities increase their **understanding of domestic violence** and abuse, and the role they can play in responding, through awareness campaigns with consistent key messages and clear signposting
- **Children are supported** to overcome the impact of abuse and survivors to help them in this process
- The **focus of risk shifts** to the perpetrator who is held to account and provided with opportunities to change behaviour

*\*Independence is defined as: Sustainable safety and wellbeing for themselves and their dependent children which can be maintained with maximum reliance on own resources (both personal and family/community), and minimum reliance on external resources, depending on individual circumstances and need.*



Women's Aid (England) and Welsh Women's Aid are continuing to work with stakeholders to develop the detail of Change that Lasts and its supporting resources, and to pilot and evaluate the impact of the model.