

MID AND WEST WALES

A REGIONAL FRAMEWORK

FOR

**Service Development and the
Commissioning of Violence Against
Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual
Violence Services in Mid and West
Wales**

August 2019

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INTRODUCTION

This document provides an overarching framework for service development and the commissioning of Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence services in Mid and West Wales. The framework has been developed by the Mid and West Wales Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) Strategic Group in collaboration with independent consultants Rhian Bowen-Davies and Caroline Humphreys with a view to informing the responses to and commissioning of VAWDASV services in the region.

This framework is intended as a practical resource to support commissioners, strategic leads and specialist VAWDASV providers in Mid and West Wales by

- Promoting an understanding of the current VAWDASV commissioning landscape in Mid and West Wales;
- Supporting the implementation of 'Safer Lives, Healthier Relationships', the regional VAWDASV Strategy;
- Establishing a platform for the commissioning of VAWDASV services;
- Identifying opportunities and establish priorities;
- Considering governance and reporting arrangements.

This document should be read alongside 'Safer Lives, Healthier Relationships', the regional Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy which was published in November 2018 (hereafter referred to as MWW VAWDASV Strategy). It was developed in consultation with stakeholders and survivors of VAWDASV across Mid and West Wales and the following principles contained in the document have shaped and informed this commissioning framework¹:

- *An understanding of VAWDASV as gendered and both a cause and consequence of women's inequality. It should recognise the human right to live free from abuse and violence as the underlining principle to commission prevention, protection and support services;*
- *A commitment to provide all survivors, including children and young people, equal access to holistic, appropriately resourced, high quality, needs-led, strengths-based, gender responsive services across Wales;*
- *A commitment to engage with and be informed by survivors, including children and young people, to inform needs analysis, service design and whole system responses;*
- *An understanding of the expertise of the specialist VAWDASV sector to inform needs analysis, service design and whole system responses;*
- *A commitment to children's rights and recognition of the specific needs of children and young people experiencing or witnessing VAWDASV. Similarly, recognition of the rights of children and young people in preventing VAWDASV happening to or affecting them in the future;*
- *A commitment to collaborative and equal partnership across agencies to ensure the effective investment in responses to VAWDASV and enable integrated pathways of support that promote prevention and earlier intervention;*
- *Commissioning should be based on the principle that no survivor is turned away from accessing critical support services delivered by refuges, rape support centres, FGM and forced marriage*

¹ 'Safer Lives Healthier Relationships' Regional Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy 2018 <http://cysur.wales/home/regional-policies-procedures/>

units or other key services and interventions. This support should be based on survivors' individual needs and requirements, when they need to receive it, and reasonably close to where they live. This should include better access to integrated pathways of support to meet the needs of survivors experiencing multiple disadvantages;

- *Commissioning should not be done in silos – it is about mainstream provision and links with local authorities, health, education, probation, police etc.;*
- *Where good services are already being delivered, in accordance with recognised standards, commissioners should consider how best to facilitate service-continuity for the survivors accessing them, considering the resource implications of tendering so that a proportionate approach is taken to commissioning;*
- *Commissioning needs to recognise and value the experience, knowledge and understanding of specialist services staff, and facilitate their involvement through an agreed partnership delivery plan for service development, including specialist services they do not fund. This should include the routine use of co-production in assessing needs, mapping resources, service design and review;*
- *Commissioning should ensure that essential services and the costs of management and overheads should be met through a full cost recovery model, especially because many charitable funders rarely cover management costs and overheads.*

This framework has been informed by the views and experiences of local, regional and national stakeholders including 'relevant authorities' as defined by the Violence against Women Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015, wider statutory and voluntary sector partners and specialist VAWDASV providers in the region. The contents of this document draws upon Welsh Government statutory guidance and wider commissioning resources which set out relevant information and best practice in this area.

This is the first regional framework for service development and commissioning of VAWDASV services in Mid and West Wales and strategic oversight of its delivery will sit with the regional VAWDASV Strategic Group.

The Strategic Group recognise that this framework is a starting point for service development and commissioning of VAWDASV services in Mid and West Wales and will need to continue to evolve and develop in response to changing and emerging needs and priorities.

The remainder of this document is structured as follows:

- Section 1 – Contextual Information
- Section 2 – Commissioning – Expectations, Good Practice and Guidance
- Section 3 - The Commissioning and Procurement Landscape in Mid and West Wales
- The Way Forward

Boxes containing 'key messages' are used at the end of each section to bring together key findings and main points highlighted elsewhere in the text.

SECTION 1: CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

This section sets out key legislative and policy developments relating to VAWDASV at a national and regional level in order to establish an understanding of the requirements of Welsh Government and to highlight how these have been responded to at a local and regional level under the following headings:

- The National Context
- The Strategic Direction in Mid and West Wales
- Resource and Service Mapping in Mid and West Wales

It is evident that Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence is a dynamic and multi layered policy field made more complicated due to the split of devolved and non-devolved responsibilities between the Welsh and UK Governments. An examination of all the elements at play emphasises the complexity of the task involved to construct an effective, coherent response at a regional and local level.

Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence is highly complex involving large numbers and a wide demographic impacting on many areas of public service²

The National Context

The enactment of the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 requires the public sector in Wales to work together in a consistent and cohesive way to improve the outcomes for individuals and their families subjected to Domestic Abuse, Sexual Violence and Violence against Women.

Section 2 of the Act requires persons exercising relevant functions to have regard to the need to remove or minimise any factors which increase the risk of violence against women and girls and to exacerbate the impact of such violence. It is intended to provide a strategic focus on these issues and ensure consistent consideration of preventative, protective and support mechanisms in the delivery of services.

In May 2019, the Welsh Government published statutory guidance for the commissioning of VAWDASV and related services provided by relevant authorities. This guidance supports the implementation of the Act by providing a framework for commissioning of services to address VAWDASV to meet needs effectively and fairly across Wales³. The document states that the *key policy aims in implementing the Act are improvements to:*

- *promote awareness of, and to prevent, protect and support victims of violence against women, gender-based violence, domestic abuse and sexual violence;*
- *strengthen the strategic leadership and accountability for violence against women, gender-based violence, domestic abuse and sexual violence; and*
- *improve the consistency, quality and join-up of service provision in Wales*

² Tackling Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence; A collaborative commissioning toolkit for Services in Wales; Lloyds Foundation England and Wales (August 2016) pg 23

³ Welsh Government Statutory Guidance for the commissioning of VAWDASV Services in Wales (May 2019)

Welsh Government has encouraged organisations and relevant authorities to collaborate on a regional basis to address VAWDASV and the allocation of regional funding has further facilitated this transition. The regional footprint of Mid and West Wales complements the direction of travel of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

Developing a common regional perspective provides a foundation for an effective commissioning strategy⁴

In adopting a regional approach, the Mid and West Wales VAWDASV Strategic Group anticipate the following key outcomes⁵:

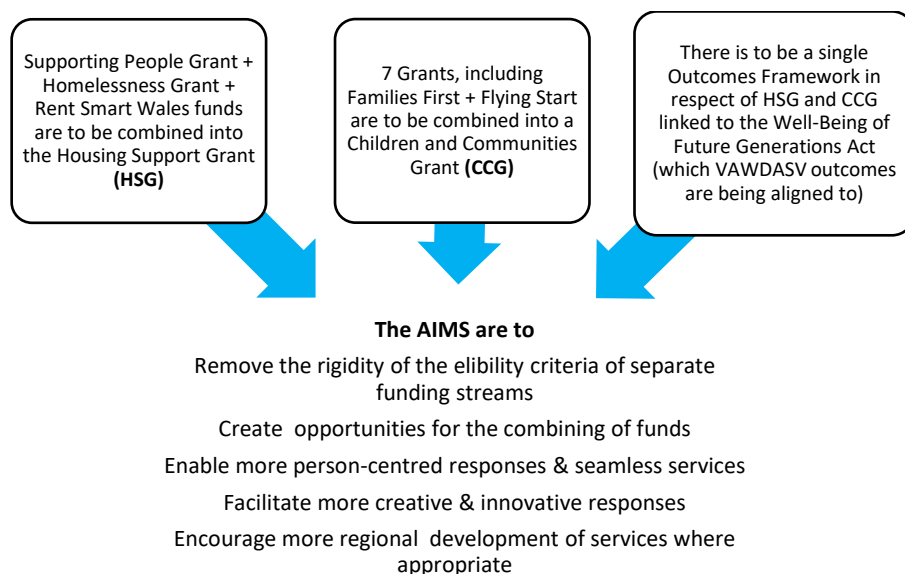
- *promote improved effectiveness in service design, procurement and contracting*
- *develop an agreed approach to address the specific challenges identified in the region including rurality and accessibility of services*
- *contribute to improvements in population outcomes across the region, and reduces the proportion of service users who experience negative outcomes from services*
- *provide common streamlined commissioning arrangements*
- *promote effective working relationships, trust and good communication between organisations*
- *common approaches to encourage better use of data and analysis and promote more effective strategic decision making, ultimately reducing the proportion of service users who receive inappropriate or ineffective services*
- *provide a reduction in duplication of commissioning activities*
- *cost savings and better investment due to pooling of budgets*
- *greater focus on funding to support the direct delivery of services as opposed to general co-ordination*
- *extension of reach of some services, and reduction of duplication of others*
- *strengthening accountability and co-operation of local and regional partnerships by encouraging areas to work together to prioritise their objectives and plan to address priority areas, which will help pave the way for implementation of the Act*
- *enhanced governance and improved strategic leadership*

In addition to above developments in respect of VAWDASV, changes are also underway in respect of other national funding streams whereby resources are distributed to local authorities to commission and/or grant fund a range of services, including VAWDASV services (specialist and non-specialist). The overall aim of the changes is to facilitate a more coordinated and collaborative approach across and range of grant funding.

⁴ Welsh Government Statutory Guidance for the Commissioning of VAWDASV Services in Wales (May 2019) pg19

⁵ Cwmpas: Mid and West Wales Safeguarding Adults Board 'Safer Lives, Healthier Relationship VAWDASV Strategy' July 2018 pg 7-8

Diagram 1: Changes to national funding streams



At the time of writing consultations are taking place with stakeholders to shape the detail and it is anticipated that the changes will be implemented from April 2020.

As well as the above changes the provision of sexual assault referral centres (SARC) have also been the subject of national scrutiny. In 2013, the Welsh Government commissioned a review of SARCs to examine the extent to which they fulfil the requirements of Public Health Wales service specifications, victims' needs, gaps in provision and the interdependency between SARCs and other services. The findings from the review formed the case for change and for a multi-agency review of sexual assault services across Mid, South and West Wales, led by the NHS Wales Health Collaborative.

A SARC regionalisation Project Board was established comprising representatives from health, the police forces and the third sector, to oversee the development of a service model which would provide a consistent, high quality approach to the delivery of services capable of securing the best outcomes for victims of sexual assault consistent with agreed clinical and operational standards. Following the Review the initial focus was on the immediate phase, (i.e. the period immediately following the report of an assault by the victim, whether recent or non-recent). The work identified a need to consider service reconfiguration and a detailed implementation plan has been developed to support the next phase of the project.

The implementation of SARC regionalisation presents both challenges and opportunities for Mid and West Wales and is a key strategic consideration in both service development and the commissioning of VAWDASV services in the region.

The Strategic Direction in Mid and West Wales

The MWW VAWDASV Strategy published in 2018 sets the vision, objectives and priorities for Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence. It outlines the policy and legislative context, prevalence and scale of VAWDASV in the region and provides an overview of population demographics, regional spend and current responses to VAWDASV.

The MWW VAWDASV Strategic Group is responsible for the strategic oversight and delivery of both the strategy and this framework and recognises that to achieve economies of scale and sustainability in the commissioning and delivery of services partners must work together across the region. In response to this, relevant authorities, statutory and voluntary sector partners in the region are committed to developing and implementing a 'one public sector' commissioning model. This vision is translated into Strategic Priority 6 of the strategy document which commits to ensuring that survivors are able to access the services that they need, delivered in the right place and at the right time in their recovery journey. Further detail is provided in the accompanying Strategic Delivery Plan (Appendix 1) which is updated annually.

The Strategy describes the 'one public sector' vision as a '*commissioning model rather than commissioning in silo; a consistent, collaborative and integrated approach to the commissioning of Domestic Abuse, Sexual Violence and Violence against Women services across the region; maximising resources available from a range of public service commissioners including Local Authorities, Health, Police and Police and Crime Commissioners and determining who is best placed to lead the commissioning of different service elements as part of an integrated, collaborative commissioning model*'⁶

As outlined in their terms of reference, the Strategic Group has clearly defined responsibilities for the commissioning of effective VAWDASV services and responses to meet local and regional needs in line with the priorities identified in the regional strategy.

In 2019, the Strategic Group commissioned a review of their governance and reporting arrangements and a number of recommendations were agreed to strengthen existing structures. The review provided an opportunity for members of the Strategic Group to reflect on progress to date and to collectively agree a way forward that will strengthen governance, accountability and leadership of VAWDASV in the region and ensure the delivery of priorities to improve the prevention, protection and support of individuals and families.

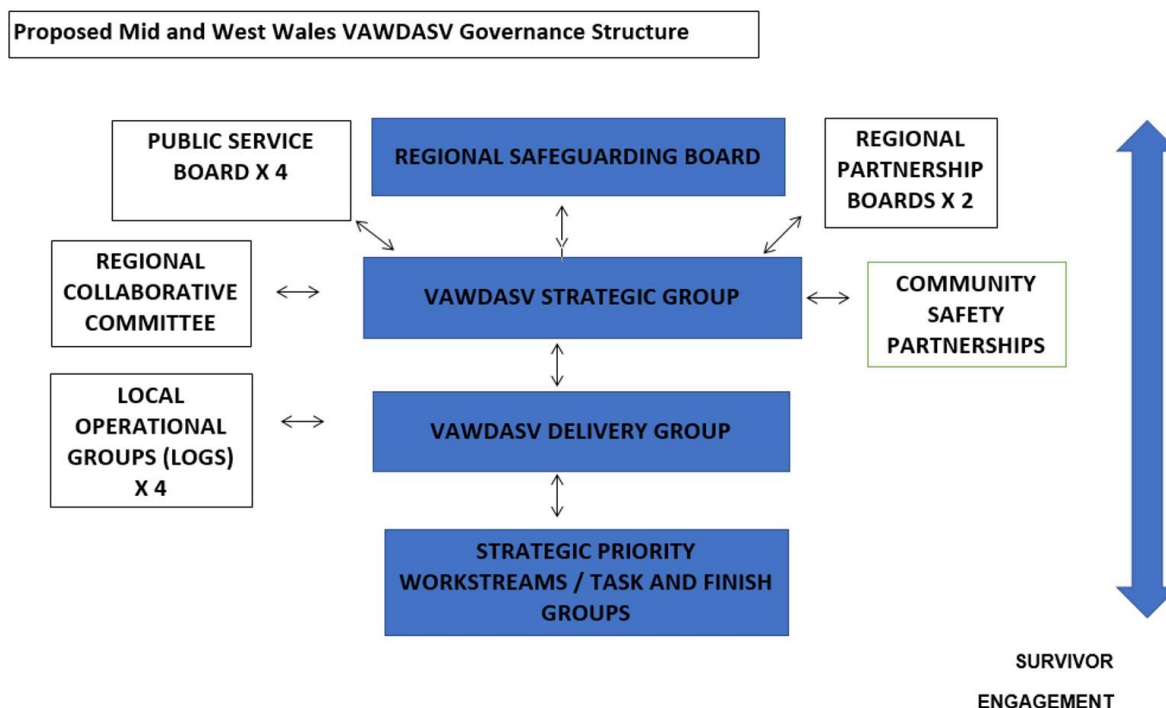
The review highlighted the need to prioritise

- **Strategic links** – strengthening reporting structures from the VAWDASV Strategic Group to other regional and local structures to maximize opportunities and improve synergy and alignment with regional priorities / programmes of work/ activity
- **Voice and influence** of the VAWDASV Strategic Group – a need to improve the proactivity of the Board in developing and influencing relationships with other Boards across the region

A revised governance structure, illustrated below, is being established to provide the strategic and operational infrastructure for delivery of the regional strategy;

⁶ Cwmpas: Mid and West Wales safeguarding Adults Board 'Safer Lives, Healthier Relationship VAWDASV Strategy' July 2018 pg 37

Diagram 2 – Proposed regional VAWDASV governance structure



In addition, in recent years there have been activities across the region to modernise services and approaches to funding in order to respond to the challenges and opportunities created by the national developments outlined above. This has involved mergers between specialist providers, activity to expand services through obtaining grants from external funders alongside work to rebrand services to provide clearer messaging about what is available and how it can be accessed.

Services and Resources in the Region

The map of services circulated with this report illustrates the services and responses to VAWDASV in Mid and West Wales (correct as of November 2018) including the following;

- Models of accommodation
- Community based services
- Early Intervention and Prevention initiatives
- Services for Children and Young People
- Perpetrator related services
- Public Service Initiatives
- Sexual violence and abuse services

A snapshot of funding in relation to specialist service provision in Mid and West Wales 2017/18 is provided in the MWW VAWDASV Strategy and is included as Appendix 2. In summary, it shows that in 2017/18, there was identifiable resources of approximately £2.9m for VAWDASV in the region. Resources committed by statutory authorities in providing universal services to survivors of VAWDASV are not disaggregated or included in this total and it remains a complex task to identify the totality of financial resources devoted to VAWDASV across the region.

Stakeholders identify the level of financial resources as the biggest challenge to delivering the MWW VAWDASV Strategy. The Strategy highlights the need for a fundamental change in understanding the cross-cutting nature and impact of VAWDASV to enable public services and the specialist VAWDASV

sector to think differently about how resources can be maximised to support the implementation of the strategy and how new resources can be levered into the area.

This document is the first step in working towards a consistent, collaborative and integrated approach to the commissioning of Domestic Abuse, Sexual Violence and Violence against Women services; maximising resources available from a range of public service commissioners including Local Authorities, Health, Police and Police and Crime Commissioner and determining who is best placed to lead the commissioning of different service elements as part of an integrated, collaborative commissioning model.

Contextual Information – Key Points and Challenges

- Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence is a dynamic and multi layered policy and funding field made more complicated due to the split of devolved and non-devolved responsibilities between the Welsh and UK Governments
- The Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 , together with the statutory guidance on commissioning sets the conditions and expectations for service developments in Wales
- There are a number of changes to centrally co-ordinated funding streams which aim to encourage multi disciplinary collaboration in order to develop more innovative, cross cutting and service user orientated responses. They also lay the foundations for regional activity
- Through the MWW VAWDASV Strategy the region has taken the first step to establish an agenda for commissioning and developing a range of services which can respond more fully to the spectrum of need
- Services and resources in the region are insufficient to meet the full range of needs articulated in the Strategy and there is agreement that that it will be necessary to work collaboratively and innovatively to address gaps and to respond to unmet need
- The strategy highlights the need for a fundamental change in understanding the cross-cutting nature and impact of VAWDASV to enable public services and the specialist VAWDASV sector to think differently about how resources can be maximised to support the implementation of the strategy

SECTION 2: COMMISSIONING – EXPECTATIONS, GOOD PRACTICE & GUIDANCE

This section explores the expectations in relation to the commissioning of VAWDASV services in Wales contained within the Welsh Government Statutory Guidance for the Commissioning of VAWDASV Services along with a consideration of how services are paid for and the resources that are available to support commissioners and service providers.

Commissioning and Procurement

There are a number of models and approaches used to illustrate commissioning with the majority describing a cyclical process with four phases: **analyse, plan, do** and **review**.

The diagram below uses these four phases combined with headings to illustrate the range of activities and considerations that may take place in each phase.

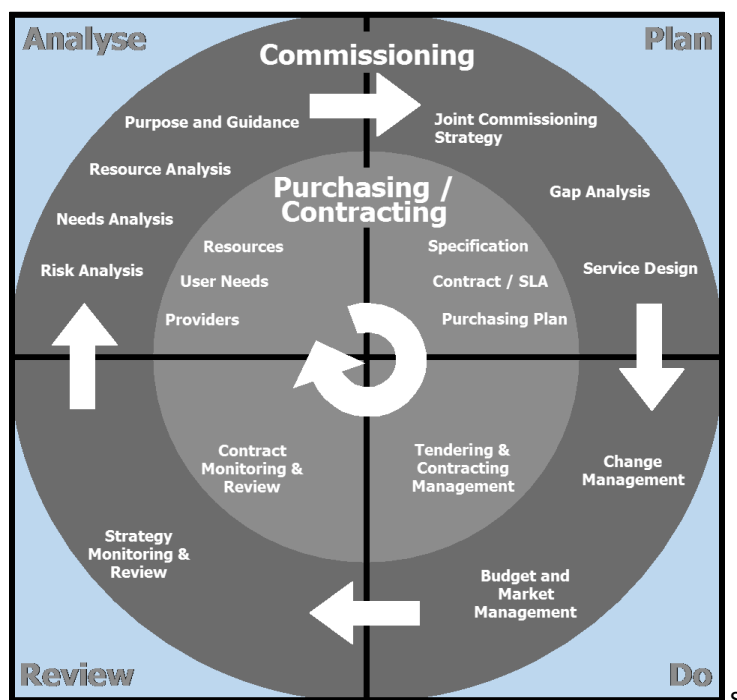
*'Commissioning is usually described as a cycle of how best to meet strategic objectives and service level objectives by identifying need, scoping the market of providers, drawing in expertise, designing a service, deciding how to resource the service, identifying the provider and monitoring the service delivery'*⁷

The guidance highlights the need for governance systems to identify the roles responsibilities relating to strategic commissioning⁸ and the diagram below provides a useful distinction to see the tasks in the inner ring under purchasing/contracting as representing the operational work of local/regional commissioners, albeit they may also undertake work in the outer ring in respect of their locality. The role of the regional VAWDASV Strategic Group sits in the outer ring of activities and is concerned to see the regional picture as well as to understand the regional and local interface.

Diagram 3: The Commissioning and Procurement Cycle

⁷ Welsh Government Statutory Guidance for the commissioning of VAWDASV Services in Wales (May 2019) pg 11

⁸ Welsh Government Statutory Guidance for the commissioning of VAWDASV Services in Wales (May 2019) pg 20



Source: Institute of Public Care, Oxford

Expectations

The Welsh Government statutory guidance sets out the requirements for the commissioning of VAWDASV Services on a local, regional and national basis. The aim of the guidance is to promote high quality collaborative commissioning that delivers more consistent and effective services to prevent VAWDASV and protect and support victims and survivors across Wales. The guidance applies to the commissioning of both specialist and non-specialist VAWDASV services, whether commissioned from the public, third or private sectors⁹.

'We need a cross cutting and integrated approach to ending all forms of VAWDASV'¹⁰

'Commissioning VAWDASV services cannot stand in isolation of other commissioned services'¹¹

The guidance encourages agencies to recognise that VAWDASV prevention is everyone's business and to work together to provide an effective commissioning and delivery framework that will ensure the well-being of those affected by violence and abuse, hold perpetrators accountable for their behaviour and contribute to the prevention of VAWDASV in local communities.

In order to achieve a joined-up and collaborative approach, the guidance is intended to assist the commissioning of any VAWDASV related services by commissioners from relevant authorities, Welsh

⁹ Welsh Government Statutory Guidance for the commissioning of VAWDASV Services in Wales (May 2019) pg5

¹⁰ Welsh Government Statutory Guidance for the commissioning of VAWDASV Services in Wales (May 2019) pg12

¹¹ Welsh Government Statutory Guidance for the commissioning of VAWDASV Services in Wales (May 2019)

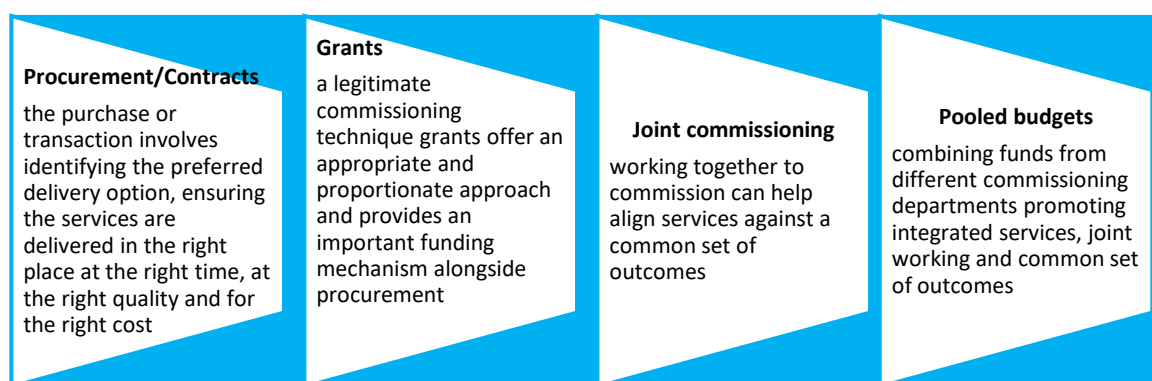
and UK Government departments and the criminal justice system working to achieve the purposes of the Act.

In recognising that the commissioning of VAWDASV services cannot sit in isolation from other commissioned services the guidance also provides an opportunity for commissioners to consider how, through wider commissioning activity, they can achieve improved early identification, prevention and responses to VAWDASV.

Paying for Services

There are various ways in which the services to address Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence in Mid and West Wales are currently, or could be funded. These include:

Diagram 4: Methods of funding services



The National Audit Office decision support tool¹² sets out a four-stage process for making decisions about which funding channel to use. The tool advocates for decision making on appropriate funding methods to take account of a number of factors, including legislative frameworks, policies and policy objectives, and principles such as value for money. It is also important to ensure equity of access to funding streams, particularly for small third sector specialist VAWDASV service providers.

Commissioners should consider the best forms of commissioning services to address violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence - for now and for the future. This may include consideration of safeguarding existing valued services, as well as co-production of innovative options. Commissioners should therefore seek to identify the method most likely to deliver the services that are needed – for example, through grant based funding or preferred provider partnerships. Procurement through competitive tendering is not the only commissioning option¹³.

There have been a number of discussions in Wales about how to ensure that any commissioning allows a level playing field, enabling the widest spread of providers to have the opportunity to be involved in delivery, increasing the number of good quality providers and getting the best value locally.

Adopting the ‘**simplest by default**’¹⁴ can help and this is supported by the EU’s light touch regime.

¹² <https://www.nao.org.uk/decision-support-toolkit/>

¹³ Lloyds pg 7

¹⁴ VCSE Health Review, 2016, www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-partnerships-and-investment-in-the-voluntarysector

The threshold for the new light touch regime is €750,000 (approximately £560,000), which is higher than previously. This means that contracts under this size do not need to go through a competitive tendering process and commissioners can be creative in their approaches, including using grant funding. The new directives clearly state that member states are free to secure the types of services outlined above in ways other than contracts, for example through grant funding.

According to Welsh Government guidance:

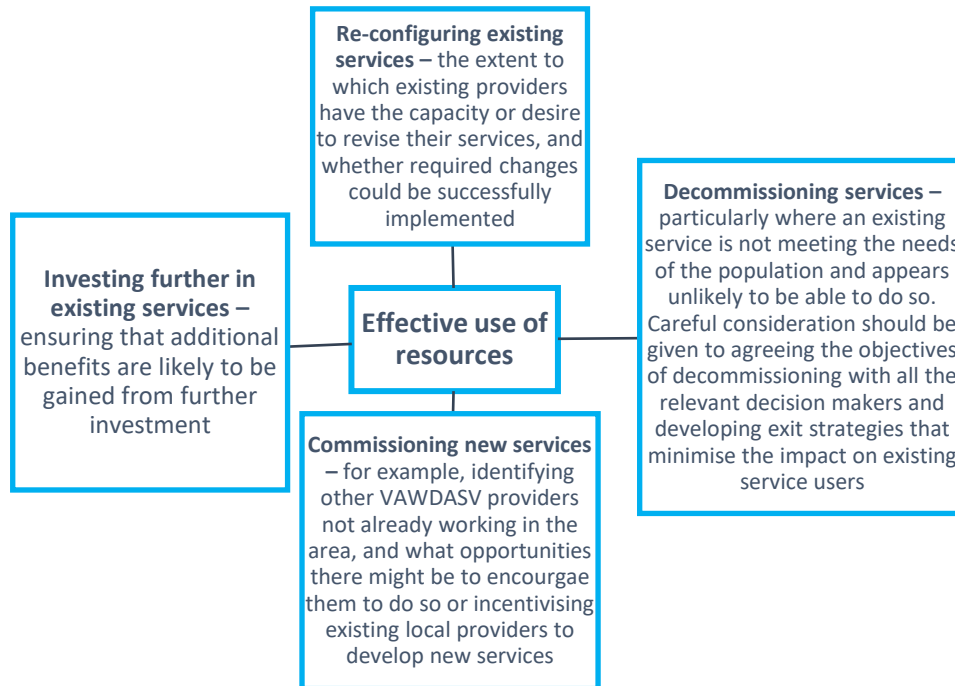
'The new rules are aimed to help strategic commissioners strengthen quality of service provision. Contracting authorities may take important elements into account through award criteria (not just price) such as quality, continuity, accessibility, affordability, availability and comprehensiveness of the services; the specific needs of different categories of users, including disadvantaged and vulnerable groups; the involvement and empowerment of users; and innovation. This should help authorities secure services according to local needs and ensure sustainability of services which is critical, with potential contract performance conditions including economic, innovation-related, environmental, social or employment related considerations' (Reg. 70)¹⁵

As well as making decisions about what services are needed and their design, the Welsh Government guidance highlights the importance to commissioners of considering the range of available methods of improving, delivering and funding public services and encourages the consideration of the following activities¹⁶:

Diagram 5: Effective use of resources

¹⁵ Public contracts regulations 2015 - overview and key changes, www.prp.gov.wales/docs/prp/toolkit/150226publiccontractsregulations2015.pdf

¹⁶ Welsh Government Guidance



The Role of Providers

It is important to be aware that current provider organisations can, and should be, involved at all stages of the commissioning cycle. This is in terms of information, resources, skills, decision-making, and consultation¹⁷

Welsh Government recognise the risk to third sector providers within a regional commissioning approach and state that the third sector must be engaged throughout the commissioning process to contribute constructively to the design, delivery and review of services and that it is particularly important to include specialist services who deliver VAWDASV services.¹⁸

The specialist sector can bring a breadth of knowledge, experience and expertise to inform commissioning activity in addition to the ability to attract

Third sector organisations have a key role in offering responsive, flexible and innovative services which are user-centred and community needs focussed. Services provided by third sector organisations also assist in achieving the priorities outlined in the Act and National Strategy. Welsh Government expect commissioners to safeguard and enhance the strengths and expertise of small community-based service providers when considering procurement options across the region¹⁹

¹⁷ Tackling Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence; A Collaborative Commissioning Toolkit for Services in Wales Lloyds Bank Foundation

¹⁸ Welsh Government Statutory Guidance for the commissioning of VAWDASV Services in Wales (May 2019) pg 13

¹⁹ Welsh Government Statutory Guidance for the Commissioning of VAWDASV Services in Wales (May 2019) pg 13

additional resources to support the delivery of strategic priorities.

The challenge to commissioners is to involve providers in the process in a meaningful way which recognises experience but doesn't afford an advantage to a single provider. In addition, it is sometimes necessary, due to the often limited funds to overcome the, to a degree understandable, scepticism of providers that a commissioning exercise will result in them being expected to deliver more for less.

The Role of Survivors

Regional commissioners must engage with survivors who have experienced all forms of VAWDASV when commissioning services for VAWDASV²⁰

Understanding how survivors of Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and sexual Violence use and experience public services (or don't use them) is key to improving the effectiveness of prevention, protection and support services and systems.

Consulting with survivors (who are currently or have previously used services) can draw on their experience of journeys towards recovery, including gaps in provision, and missed opportunities for intervention, support or action.²¹

Survivor voices and experiences were central in informing and shaping the development of the regional strategy which underpins this framework. The strategy recognises the vital importance of collaborating with survivors and service users who are 'experts by experience' in terms of what has worked for them, their pathways through services and how easy (or difficult) it has been to find the right service and move towards independence and freedom from abuse.

Stakeholders and survivors recognise the need for a mechanism to support and enable meaningful and integral engagement of survivors in decision making across the region. In terms of commissioning this could include designing specifications, driving innovation, needs assessment mapping and developing models of service²².

The strategy recognises that survivor engagement needs to be inclusive and consider any particular needs or issues that may be experienced by people with protected characteristics and who may be marginalised or excluded including BME people, children and young people, men, older people.

The strategy further recognises the need to engage wider than those who are, or have been engaged with services, enabling us to better understand experiences in the widest sense and barriers faced in the region.

²⁰ Welsh Government Statutory Guidance for the Commissioning of VAWDASV Services in Wales (May 2019) pg 12

²¹ Tackling Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence; A Collaborative Commissioning Toolkit for Services in Wales Lloyds Bank Foundation pg 31

²² Tackling Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence; A Collaborative Commissioning Toolkit for Services in Wales Lloyds Bank Foundation pg 31

Work to develop and resource a regional survivor engagement framework to strengthen existing mechanisms for engagement is prioritised within the strategic delivery plan 2019/20 and will be key in supporting survivor engagement in the implementation of this framework.

Quality Service Standards

Standards provide benchmarks for service providers, funders and commissioners about the extent and mix of services that should be available, who should provide them, and the principles and practice base from which they should operate.²³

VAWDASV specialist services operate within a framework of accredited quality service standards which provide benchmarks for service providers, funders and commissioners about the extent and mix of services that should be available, who should provide them, and the principles and practice base from which they should operate.²⁴

*'It is important to align the quality of services with the National Shared Core Standards.....Services should be commissioned based on relevant national standards for that service'*²⁵

In Wales, the Welsh Government has supported the development of Welsh Women's Aid National Quality Service Standards for specialist services, and there have also been shared core standards developed across accreditation systems delivered by Imkaan, Rape Crisis England and Wales, Respect, SafeLives and Women's Aid. These align Welsh Women's Aid National Quality Service Standards, Imkaan Accredited Quality Standards, Rape Crisis National Service Standards and SafeLives' Leading Lights Quality Assurance Accreditation as well as the key and critical outcomes for commissioners.²⁶

These standards and accreditation frameworks are also referenced and endorsed by the Home Office in their 'Supporting Local Commissioning' guidance. The guidance also clarifies their status;

*'The shared standards support commissioners to ensure the independent standards can be used both nationally and locally for joint commissioning purposes. They are not intended to 'standalone' but have been agreed as designated shared core standards, namely the minimum standards common to all member organisations'*²⁷

Equality and Accessibility

The Welsh Government guidance aims to ensure that commissioners consider the specific needs, issues and barriers that may be experienced by people with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, and who may be marginalised or excluded, including women, BME people, children and young people, older people, migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, disabled people and those who are LGBT+.

²³ Kelly & Dubois, 2007

²⁴ Welsh Government Statutory Guidance for the Commissioning of VAWDASV Services in Wales (May 2019) pg 14

²⁵ Home Office Violence against Women and Girls Services Supporting Local Commissioning (December 2016) 4.3.3

²⁶ Tackling Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence; A Collaborative Commissioning Toolkit for Services in Wales Lloyds Bank Foundation pg 52

²⁷ Welsh Government Statutory Guidance for the Commissioning of VAWDASV Services in Wales (May 2019) pg 15

The provision of services in Welsh is a key principle underpinning the MWW VAWDASV Strategy and the Welsh Government commissioning guidance states that:

'Commissioning bodies must ensure that service provision through the medium of Welsh is embedded into the procurement process and is linked to needs assessment by clearly specifying which services are required in Welsh (or bilingually), in line with the Welsh Language Standards that apply to it as an organisation. The Welsh Language Standards that apply may differ from organisation to organisation. Commissioning bodies may be required to run a tender exercise bilingually if it meets certain conditions set out by the Welsh Language Standards'.²⁸

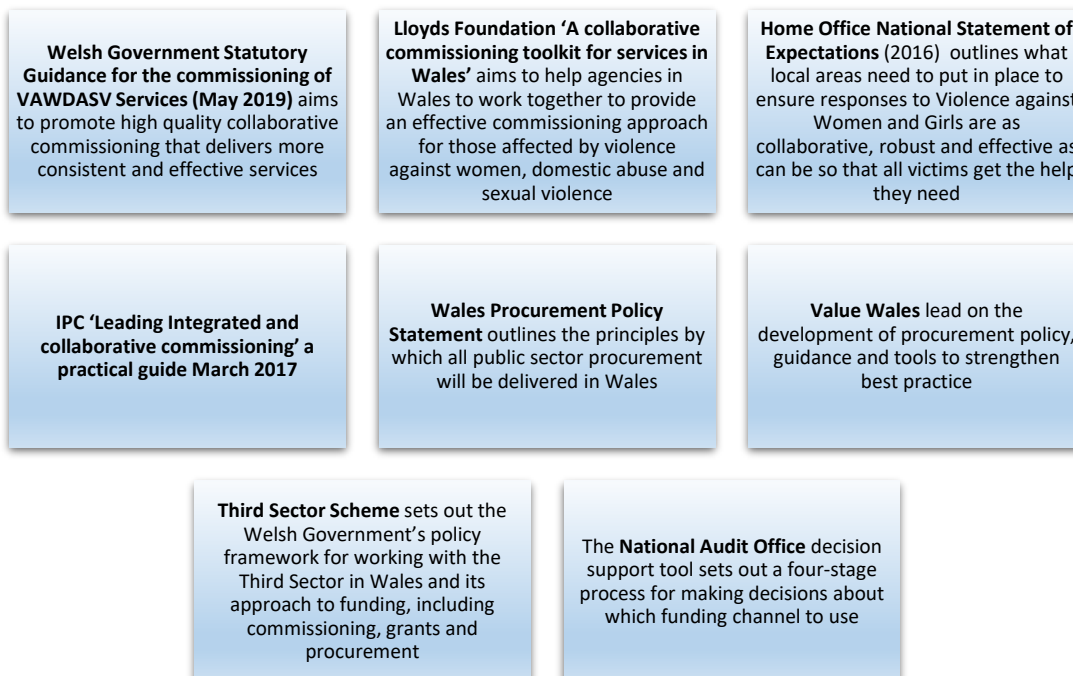
In the development of the MWW VAWDASV Strategy stakeholders and survivors recognised the need for development of a service model whereby eligibility criteria to access a service is based on the need to access rather than the level of risk, complexity or availability.

Ensuring accessibility of provision should be a key outcome of commissioning and Equality Impact Assessments should be considered an essential, continuous part of the commissioning process.

Resources to Support the Commissioning and Procurement of Services

A range of guidance and information documents exist to support effective commissioning and procurement practice

Diagram 6: Resources to support commissioning activity



The internet links for the above are included as Appendix 3.

²⁸ Welsh Government Statutory Guidance for the Commissioning of VAWDASV Services in Wales (May 2019) pg 22

Commissioning: Expectations, Good Practice and Guidance – Key Points and Challenges

- It is clear that the effectiveness of VAWDASV services is extricably linked to other services (specialist and non-specialist, commissioned and non commissioned). Furthermore, that improvements in the prevention of and support for individuals and families can be achieved not only through VAWDASV services but through commissioning, contract arrangements and influencing practice with non VAWDASV service providers
- Therefore there are opportunities for the VAWDASV Strategic Group to pursue and progress service improvements in a range of ways, of which the commissioning of VAWDASV services is just one element
- Commissioning and procurement is a complex area and the particular approach to be taken will depend upon an analysis of need and agreement about the chosen service model before an appropriate commissioning and procurement route can be established
- There are a range of methods to pay for services and a need to find the one that is most appropriate to the improvement that is being sought
- The views of providers and survivors are pivotal to developing fit for purpose, sustainable service improvements. Their participation should be sought from the outset as services are adapted or new service models considered
- There are a number of available resources to support decision making in this area

SECTION 3: THE COMMISSIONING AND PROCUREMENT LANDSCAPE IN MID AND WEST WALES

The purpose of this section is to consider the current commissioning landscape for VAWDASV in Mid and West Wales and to also situate this within the context of wider, non VAWDASV commissioned services. It sets out some of the key observations and challenges underpinning six areas:

- Principles for Commissioning VAWDASV Services in the Region
- Establishing a Shared Understanding of the Big Picture within the Region
- Local and Regional Commissioning activity
- Joint Commissioning and Pooled Budgets
- Gaps and Priorities
- Governance, Leadership and Collaboration

Observations and challenges for each area are summarised at the end of the section.

Principles for Commissioning VAWDASV Services in the Region

The MWW VAWDASV Strategy sets out the challenge to the region in respect of what it is seeking to achieve in terms of commissioning activity. It contains the core principles referenced in the introduction to this document which are based on the following stakeholder and survivor feedback in relation to the commissioning of services and the stability, consistency and continuity of funding in the region;

- *Development of an integrated outcomes framework agreed by all commissioners to ensure consistent, meaningful and comparative reporting*
- *Adopt commissioning models that allow for flexibility and development to meet changing needs rather than prescriptive funding that limits creativity / innovation and results in services that are restricted in the services they can provide*
- *Provide stability to the sector in terms of the duration of the contract(s) and funding for the lifetime of the contract for Domestic Abuse, Sexual Violence and Violence against Women services*
- *Development of a service model whereby any eligibility criteria associated with accessing service provision is based solely on a need to access rather than a level of risk, complexity or the availability of services*
- *Recognise the full range of funding mechanisms available to commissioners. There are significant resource requirements for regional commissioners and service providers if the full tendering process is followed. Regional commissioners still have the opportunity to grant fund; funding services through providing grants can be a simpler and more straightforward process than working through a complex procurement process.*
- *Involvement of survivors as integral to the commissioning process*
- *Recognition and acknowledgement of the expertise of the specialist Domestic Abuse, Sexual Violence and Violence against Women sector as partners in the commissioning process*
- *Acknowledgement of the opportunities within the specialist Domestic Abuse, Sexual Violence and Violence against Women sector to attract additional funding aligned to the strategy*

- *The need for increased regional collaboration across the public and third sector to identify and secure additional resources*
- *All Public Services acknowledging their role as commissioners of services*
- *Recognition of the need for services and interventions across the continuum of support and developing a sophisticated commissioning model that not only enables a shift in resource allocation but also maximises opportunities to increase investment through alignments with other priorities in the region*
- *Recognition of the diversity of communities across Mid and West Wales and the importance of equality and diversity to be integral to commissioning of services*
- *The challenges of rurality to be recognised when commissioning services – acknowledgement of the true cost of delivering services in rural areas*
- *The need for equitable investment of resources across the region*
- *The need to develop a Regional VAWDASV Resource and Funding Plan (including capital spend) to better understand the short, medium and long-term investments required and the risks associated with existing arrangements*

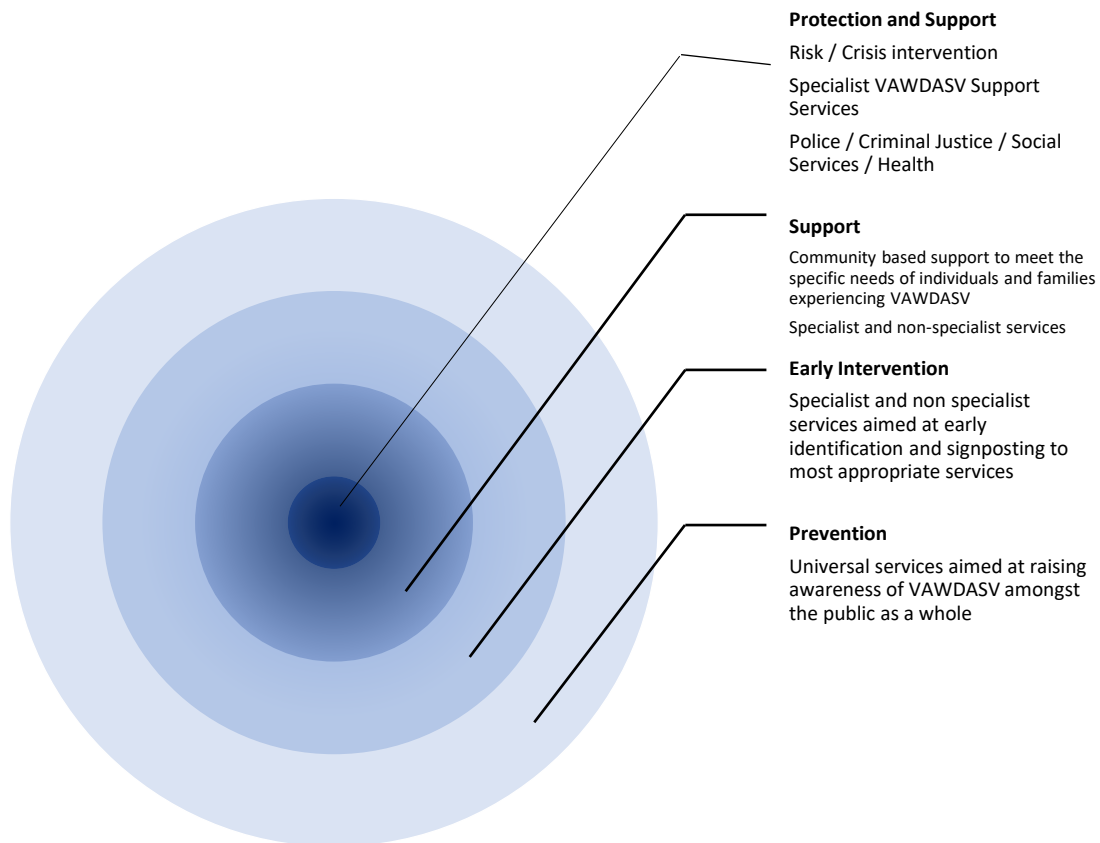
Establishing a Shared Understanding of the ‘Big Picture’ within the Region

The MWW VAWDASV Strategy provides commissioners and providers of VAWDASV services in Mid and West Wales with a shared understanding of the complexity of needs and the spectrum of services needed in response to VAWDASV.

The diagram below is an attempt to reflect and encapsulate this view in order that all the agencies involved with commissioning **and** those that provide relevant services (with varying degrees of knowledge about VAWDASV) can adopt it as a common way of seeing the spectrum of need and responses and the contribution they make and can make within it.

Diagram 7: Sphere of Service Types

The term specialist services used in the diagram below and throughout this document is that defined at length in the Welsh Government commissioning guidance. It begins that *‘These services are provided by specialised staff with in-depth knowledge of VAWDASV and have a gendered and intersectional understanding of VAWDASV’* (full definition can be found on page 14 of the Statutory Guidance and Appendix 4 of this document).



Services can be provided into four broad types:

Inner Ring - Protection and Support

Responding to individuals and families who are at risk and are in need of an immediate and specialist response and protection. Organisations responding in this category will include Police, criminal justice processes, Health, Social Services and VAWDASV specialist providers such as:

- those providing refuge services
- the SARC
- IDVA and ISVA services

Second Ring - Support

There are a suite of community-based services which are crucial to providing support that prevent people reaching a crisis and providing services post crisis to support recovery. These services may be provided by specialist VAWDASV agencies and other specialist agencies such as:

- Representatives of different local authority departments, including community safety, safeguarding, social services (children & adult) housing, supporting people, and education
- Practitioners from health trusts, including mental health services and sexual health services, health visitors, community nurses and midwives (adults & children)
- Community based work delivered by VAWDASV specialist providers prior to a crisis being reached and/or support post crisis to support recovery
- Voluntary sector organisations whose work brings them into contact with survivors, such as those working with drug and alcohol, people with mental health issues, counselling services

- Voluntary sector organisations who provide services to specific groups: older people, people with a disability, LGBT services, BME service providers

Third Ring - Early Intervention

These services are those which involve the opportunity for early intervention and include organisations / services responding in an appropriate and targeted way to people experiencing VAWDASV as needs are identified. It may include specialist VAWDASV and non specialist services and include relevant authorities as a result of the National Training Framework and Ask and Act, Ask Me, IRIS and Inspiring Families

Outer Ring - Prevention

Universal services are preventative and in the widest sense are directed at the public as a whole. They are aimed at raising levels of awareness and ensuring that should people need services at a point in the future they have knowledge about what they or those around them are experiencing and information about where to go for help and support. Such preventative work could include national and local campaigns, community based initiatives, whole school approaches to VAWDASV and workplace policies.

The sphere of service diagram should be read in conjunction with the diagram included in the MWW VAWDASV Strategy 'An Integrated Response to VAWDASV – An continuum of support' provided as Appendix 5 to this document.

The sphere is intended to illustrate the complexity of need and the 'all age' spectrum of services required to respond to VAWDASV and to provide a consistency of language between the two documents (i.e. this document and the MWW VAWDASV Strategy). It offers a means of framing discussions around commissioning activity and the provision of services generally.

Commissioners, specialist and non-specialist providers are aware that commissioned services are only one element of providing a whole system approach and a holistic response to people who experience and live with the consequences of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

In addition, there is an acute awareness that having the appropriate amount and type of services in the outer rings of the sphere can lead to more effective use of the support/crisis services and make for better, more sustainable outcomes for service users.

A whole system approach offers the opportunity to adopt an 'invest to save' approach through a holistic view of services; investing in the prevention elements of the sphere be these universal services, specialist services, non VAWDASV services, commissioned or non commissioned activity. It also accords with Welsh Government expectation that the prevention element is 'everyone's business' .

Data and Outcomes

The MWW VAWDASV strategy identifies the need to improve core processes relating to VAWDASV including the development of a clear outcomes-based performance framework that collates coordinated and consistent data from across organisations and policy areas.

The MWW VAWDASV Strategy commits the VAWDASV Strategic Group to

- identifying regional outcomes and indicators to measure progress and success in the delivery of the Strategy which will help people understand the difference being made and the extent to which the priorities are being achieved
- clarifying alignment between the outcomes / indicators of the strategy and wider regional and local programmes of work so that opportunities to integrate and corroborate measures of success can be identified
- developing a comprehensive data set which will standardise data collation across wider policy areas and services

There is a recognised need to better understand existing data and how best to use it to inform the development and quality of supporting systems and services. There is an opportunity to triangulate data from across different departments and sources to create a robust picture of need.

Outcomes frameworks are currently different; Supporting People, Families First (being aligned through HSG/CCG) VAWDASV (national indicator development and alignment within national outcomes frameworks). There is an opportunity to influence the standardisation of outcomes reporting as a result of what is happening nationally. An existing task and finish group is already considering this work as part of the Strategic Delivery Plan for 2019/20.

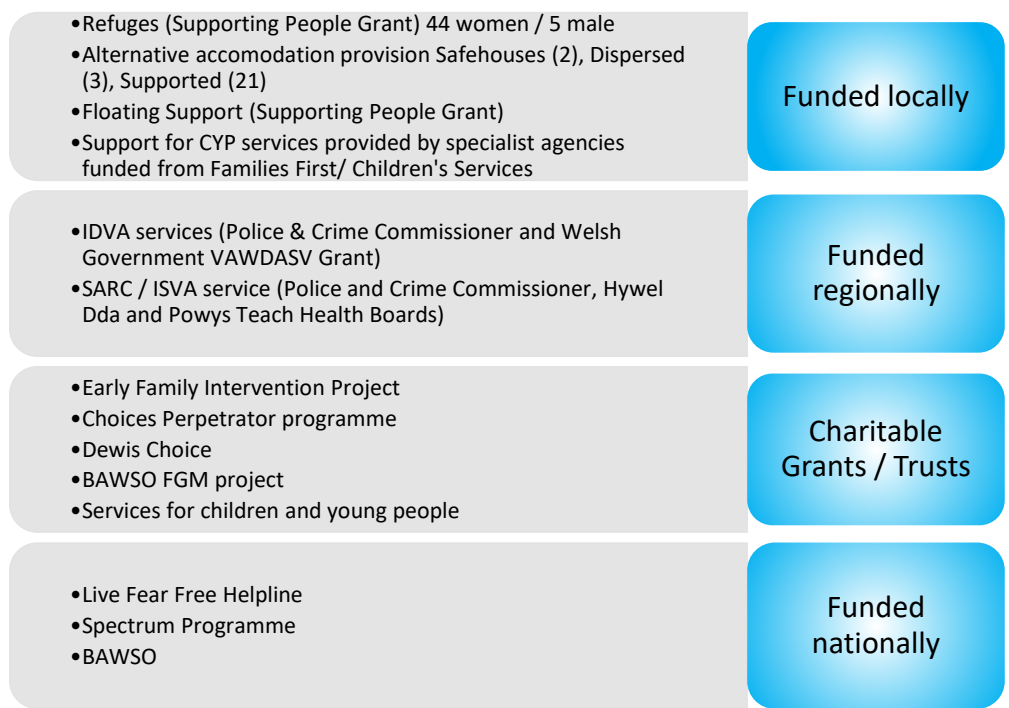
Local and Regional Commissioning and Procurement Practice in Mid and West Wales

The diagram below seeks to highlight the dominant characteristics of the current commissioning and procurement practices across the region.

Diagram 8: Commissioning and Procurement practices in the region

There is variation in commissioning and procurement practices across the local authorities in the region	There is joint discussion between the local authorities about service development and a good basis for further collaboration	There are some examples of pooling resources within local authorities in the region e.g. Powys Supporting People / Children's Services DA contract
On occasion there is a disconnect between procurement rules and what is seeking to be achieved by the commissioning activity	The primary funding source for commissioning specialist VAWDASV services is the Supporting People Programme Grant which funds refuge provision and floating support/dispersed units	There is experience of regional joint commissioning in respect of the IDVA service led by the PCC in partnership with Local Authorities
There is use of short term contracts and roll over contracts as opposed to conducting a formal commissioning process	Limited funds creates a conflict between protecting existing services and funding new models of provision	Monitoring & reporting takes place primarily at a local level in respect of Supporting People funded services to varying degrees and using different methods
Current funding is directed predominantly towards crisis, responsive service models rather than a preventative / invest to save approach	There is support for 'steady state'; recognising the knowledge and expertise of existing providers and the importance of continuity and sustainability of local providers	There are examples of 'commissioners' also being 'providers' of services and the dilemmas and complexities this presents

Diagram 9: How VAWDASV services are currently funded and examples of provision (not an exhaustive list)



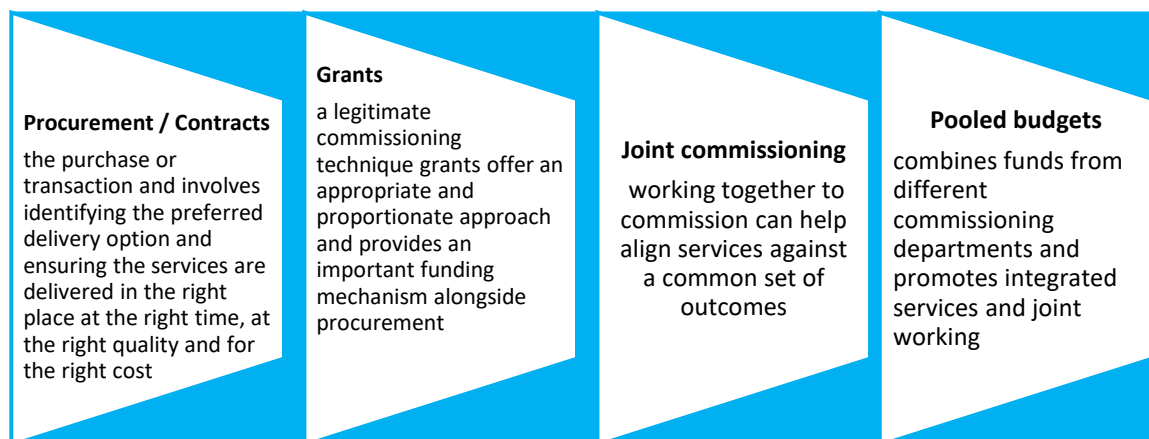
The above two diagrams highlight a number of issues and challenges:

- The current profile shows that the majority of services are commissioned locally, with Supporting People Grant being the dominant resource (see Appendix 2)
- The 'steady state' approach to recommissioning/re-contracting existing services has led to a continuation of the same service models and there is a need to revisit how these services sit within the overall spectrum of services illustrated in the MWW VAWDASV Strategy (appendix 5)
- To date the focus of commissioning activity in the region has been toward crisis and support related services i.e. those which sit in the inner ring of diagram 7. To a large degree this has been driven by the eligibility criteria of the predominant funds available in the region alongside a lack of resources generally.
- There is a variation in the Supporting People Grant commissioning and procurement activities across the four local authorities. While the need for local autonomy is a given, there is also a need to be sure that systems and processes have enough commonality to accommodate any future wants to pool budgets and/or jointly commission services at a regional level.
- Addressing the considerations below would prepare the ground for joint endeavour at a regional level;
 - An agreed 'common approach' for specified services
 - An overarching standard specification for defined services
 - Authority and opportunity to align contract timelines
 - Consistency of duration of contracts
 - Use of standard contracts for similar services
 - Common procurement approaches
 - Full cost recovery approach
 - Unified approaches to assessing and mapping need
 - Standardised outcomes reporting mechanism
 - Developing and adopting a proportionate, robust and workable approach for data collection
 - Using similar approaches/tools to review and monitor services

Joint Commissioning and Pooled Budgets

The diagram below sets out the four broad ways of funding services. Currently the opportunities afforded by joint commissioning and the pooling of budgets is under utilised at both a local and regional level. In addition, the use of grant funding successfully applied for by the specialist sector does not feature prominently as part of strategic discussions to address service gaps.

Diagram 10: Funding routes



Current guidance on commissioning and procurement advocates increasing the pooling of budgets (often involving joint commissioning activity) to promote the integration of services and development of a common set of outcomes. There is support within the VAWDASV Strategic Group and stakeholders generally to increase the diversity of VAWDASV services. This will require embracing an assortment of commissioning and procurement methods including pooling budgets potentially at both a local and regional level.

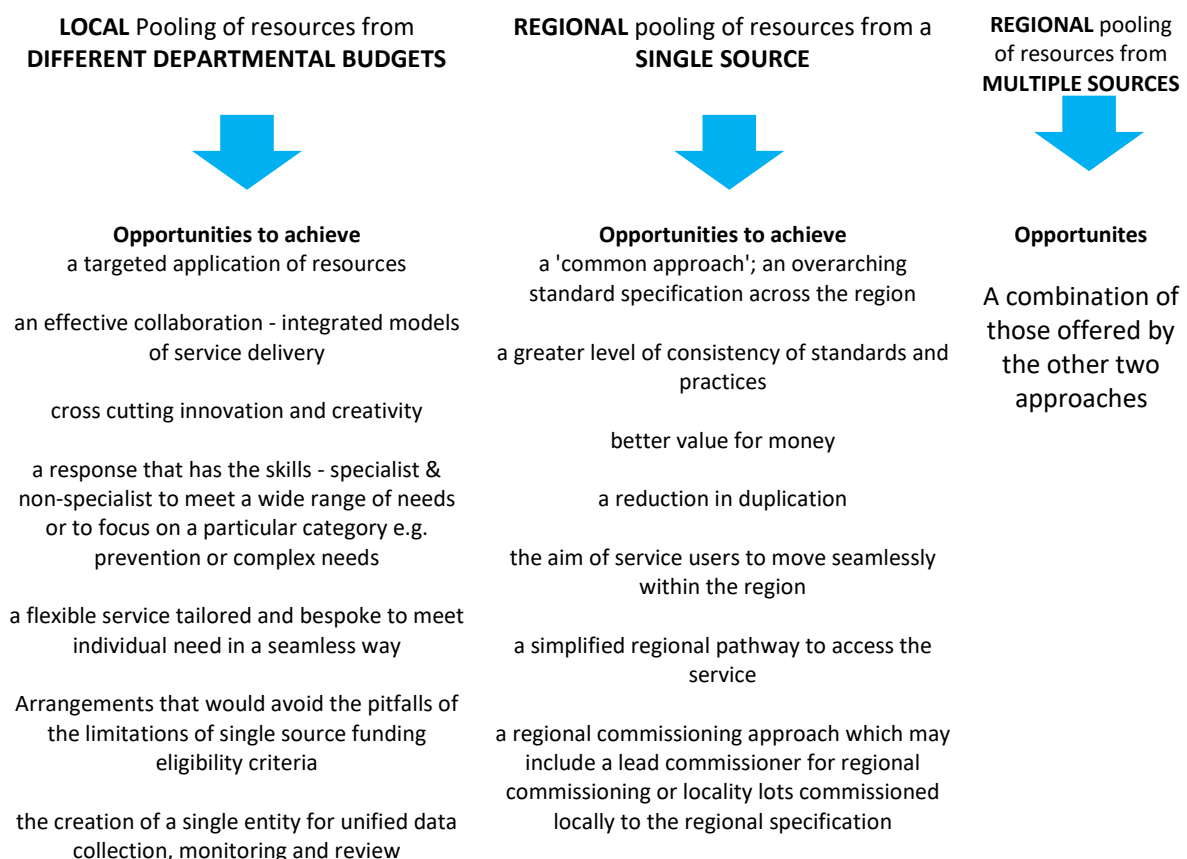
One of the challenges of pooled resources is the autonomy of individual funding streams with their own terms, conditions and criteria and in seeking to overcome these challenges there is a need for the VAWDASV Strategic Group to influence other strategic forums to encourage buy in to the commissioning approach being adopted for VAWDASV.

There are three broad, distinct manifestations of pooling finances/resources:

- Local pooling of resources (financial or human) from different departments within the same local authority e.g. Supporting People, housing, social services, preventative services, CCG and HSG
- Regional pooling of resources from a single source e.g. Supporting People Programme Grant held at local authority level
- Regional pooling of resources (financial or human) from multiple sources which may operate within either coterminous or non-coterminous areas of operation e.g. Police and Crime Commissioner, Police, Housing, Health, Social Services, National Probation Service.

This method of commissioning and procuring services affords a number of opportunities but also poses challenges to commissioners and other involved parties and the diagram below highlights some of the issues involved in taking this approach under the approaches outlined above.

Diagram 11 Pooling budgets within and across localities within a region



built in options/specialisms within particular locations that could be accessed by anyone in the region

Opportunity for unified approaches: data collection, monitoring & review

greater

opportunities for providers to collaborate and build capacity

Challenges

Bringing the right parties together to confirm the need, write the specification and agree the appropriate contributions

Carefully constructing the specification to ensure that the service is properly targeted and fit for the intended purpose

Deciding whether commissioning & procurement is the right way to proceed (and if so to agree a lead organisation) or to explore alternative options

Branding and presenting the service in a way that the purpose is clear to the public

Identifying a lead department in terms of management of the service, data collection, monitoring, reporting etc

Establishing robust governance and oversight of the service via an agreed set of outcomes that meets the needs of respective funding routes

Challenges

Achieving agreement in respect of need, the specification, procurement process, contract length

ensuring that large contracts do not necessarily favour large generic providers at the expense of small local providers who have a track record of delivery in an area

Ways to address this include;

- breaking the specification into lots
- slowing down and simplifying the tender process
- ensuring the procurement process gives weight to and is robust enough to recognise local knowledge, specialist expertise and good practice
- layered approach to testing tenders

Achieving high level buy in at a strategic level from all parties to secure the resources

Ensuring that local elements of the service can maintain a local identity and be visible at a local level

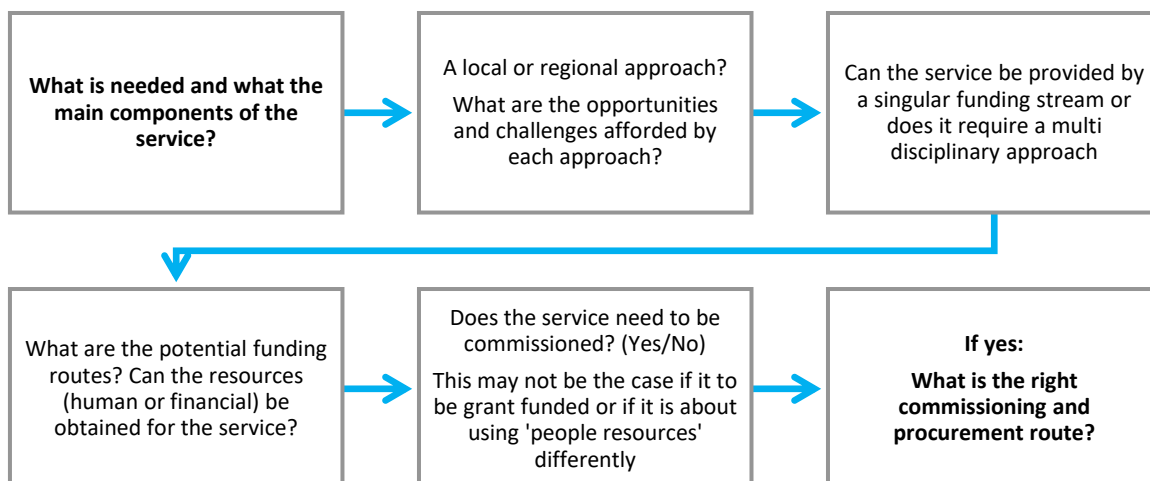
A need for buy in from the providers in respect of systems and process e.g. service standards, data collection and outcomes in respect of monitoring and review
Importance of establishing robust governance and oversight of the service

Challenges

A combination of those offered by the other two approaches

Before embarking on a competitive tendering process, it is imperative to carefully consider whether there is greater benefit in grant funding existing providers. In doing so there is a need to match the right commissioning and/or procurement approach to suit what is needed. This will involve asking a series of questions:

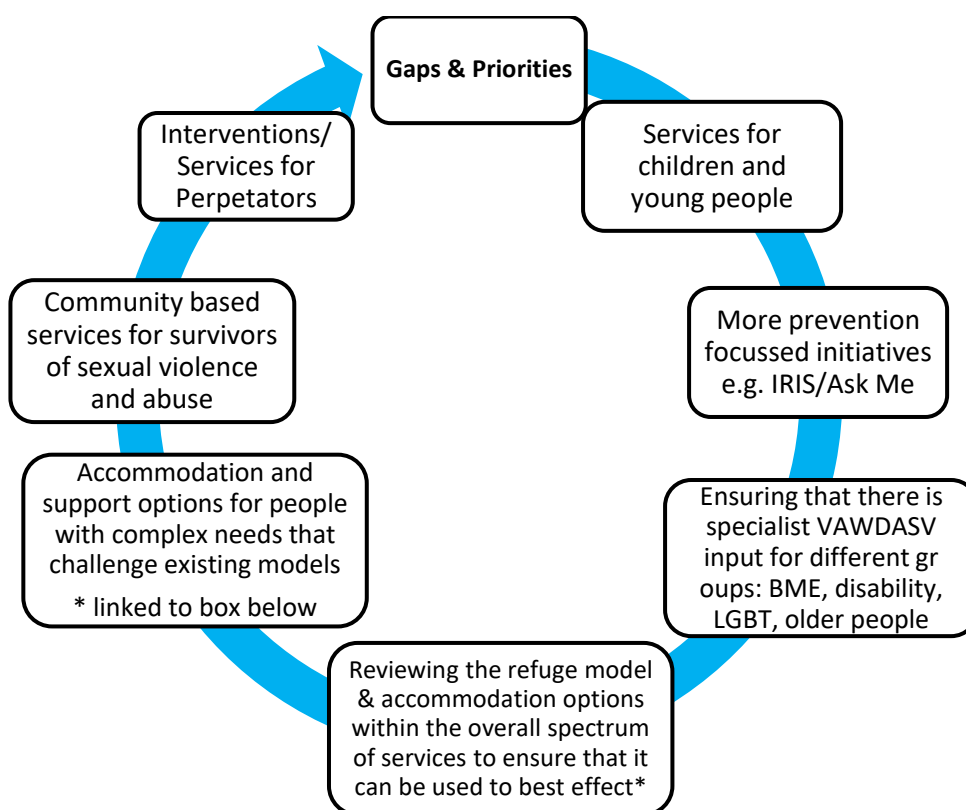
Diagram 12: Key questions to ask to find the right commissioning approach



Service Gaps

The gaps and priorities identified below are consistent with those identified by stakeholders and survivors in the development of the MWW VAWDASV Strategy. The purpose of this section is to summarise these in order to assist the Strategic Group to establish a view and agree which of these they wish to pursue. Any of the gaps or priorities highlighted are capable of contributing to and enhancing the existing ‘all age’ spectrum of services and it is for the VAWDASV Strategic Group to determine which of these they wish to prioritise and progress.

Diagram 13: Service Gaps



The gaps and priorities are very different in nature and reflect opportunities across the spectrum of services. The work that is required by the VAWDASV Board to progress them is not purely about commissioning but is likely to require one or a combination of the following activities which may or may not be combined with commissioning activity:

- **Researching** - mapping need, testing the effectiveness of existing models, looking at new models of service, survivor and provider consultation
- **Initiating** - looking at new funding streams and different ways of working
- **Influencing** - dialogue with wider strategic decision makers and commissioners to shape other services in respect of practice and application of resources

In a whole system approach that responds to the full spectrum of VAWDASV needs it is necessary to give equal weighting to commissioning and non-commissioning related activity. Both routes are capable of bringing about change to improve outcomes for individuals and families who have experienced VAWDASV and there is a need for a range of activity to achieve progress.

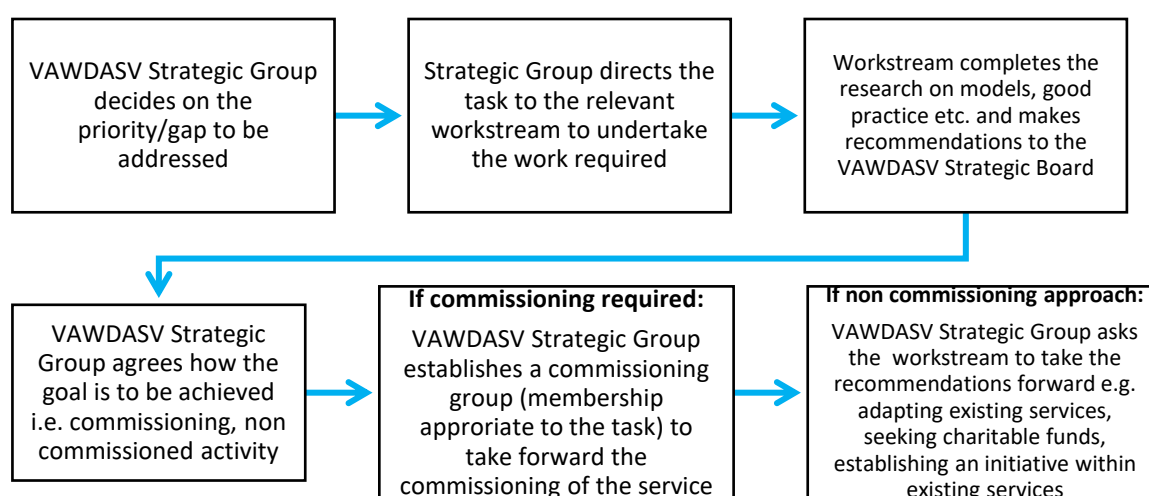
Governance, Leadership and Collaboration

The VAWDASV Strategic Board has the strategic oversight for this framework and determining how it will be operationalised within the revised governance structure.

In order to advance a regional approach to commissioning the process of doing so needs to be fit for purpose. The structure recently adopted by the VAWDASV Strategic Group provides an opportunity to clarify how commissioning should happen (see diagram 2).

The Workstreams are the vehicle whereby ideas for commissioning and service development in general will be advanced as described below. These groups should be dynamic and fluid and will need a membership appropriate to the task. These groups should be creative and innovative and in order to address the issue at hand it is envisaged that they may undertake research, visit other services, engage with survivors and service providers.

Diagram 14: Commissioning Pathway within the VAWDASV Strategic Group

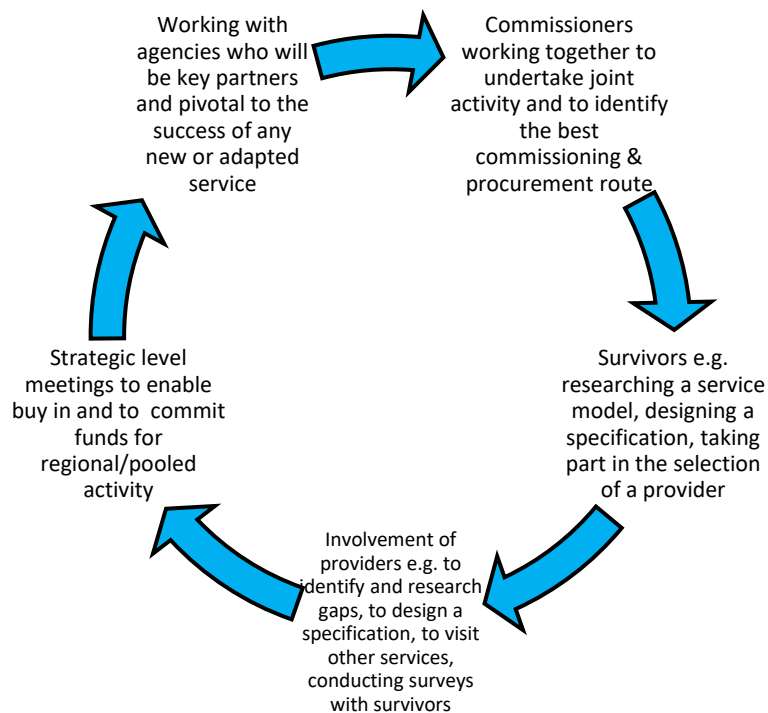


The recent review of the VAWDASV Strategic Group’s governance and reporting structures creates an opportunity to think differently about meetings. In order for the challenge of commissioning services to be taken forward there is a need for:

- People across different disciplines to receive relevant information so that they feel informed and able to contribute and influence. In terms of commissioning, all relevant stakeholders will need to be enabled to understand the requirements of different funding streams and related stipulations
- Meetings should create space for engagement and connectivity
- Members of the Strategic Group will need a clear understanding of their roles, responsibilities and expectations both in relation to commissioning and wider delivery of the strategy
- In order to be influencers and shapers, decision makers and commissioners who are involved will need clear leadership and direction about how they interface with the Strategic Group and their own organisation
- In terms of service development and commissioning activity the leadership of the Strategic Group will need to ensure that there is communication with and buy in from parallel and related strategic structures particularly where commissioning involves pooling of budgets and/or regional commissioning activity which will need high level approval

The new governance structure for the VAWDASV Commissioning Group also creates opportunities for the region to think about how they support organisations to come together to explore working more collaboratively. Joint work in respect of commissioning will need to take place in many different forms and on different levels to aid collective action in respect of service development, regional commissioning and/or pooling of budgets both within and outside of meetings:

Diagram 15: Examples of inclusive activity and collaboration



Ensuring collaboration is effective will require capacity building and an approach which takes account of:

- Knowledge and understanding of VAWDASV for commissioners across a range of disciplines
- The capacity for commissioners to invest time in relationship building and to establish participative and inclusive approaches
- Capacity building for providers, particularly smaller providers to ensure that they can fully participate on an equal footing
- Support for survivors to effectively and meaningfully engage with commissioning and service development activity

The commissioning landscape in Mid & West Wales – Key Points & Challenges

Principles for Commissioning Services in the Region

- The MWW VAWDASV Strategy sets out an ambitious agenda for change in respect of commissioning and service development. There is a need to strengthen and diversify approaches to commissioning to respond to the challenge set out in the MWW VAWDASV Strategy

Establishing the ‘Big Picture’

- Membership of the Regional VAWDASV Strategic Group should adopt a common understanding of the full ‘all age’ spectrum of services/whole system approach; how services knit together and what they are seeking to achieve in the widest sense. Historically there has been a focus on crisis type services as opposed to what might be termed preventative, early intervention or community based resources
- An aim of the VAWDASV Board alongside other strategic frameworks is to redress this balance. This will involve looking at ways to maximise existing funding in the region alongside using a range of service commissioning and procurement mechanisms and identifying ways of influencing the strategic priorities and practice of other commissioners

Local and Regional commissioning and procurement activity in Mid and West Wales

- The limited funds and the want to safeguard existing services has led to a ‘steady state’ approach in terms of commissioning and procurement practices. It is a legitimate approach to value long term provider/funder relationship which is recognised in the Welsh Government statutory guidance and the Lloyds Foundation Toolkit. However, at the present time this is not always articulated within a formal structure of commissioning as part of an integrated, planned approach
- At the present time the Region is not taking advantage of the full range of funding routes or commissioning approaches available
- There is significant variation in commissioning and procurement practices across the region. This is an impediment to joint commissioning activity and a consideration of common approaches to systems and processes which would help to prepare the ground for combined commissioning activity
- The ‘steady state’ approach to recommissioning/re-contracting existing services has led to a continuation of the same service models and there is a need to revisit how these services sit within the overall spectrum of services illustrated in the strategy

- The Lloyds Foundation Toolkit offers a number of ways of commissioning and procuring services that acknowledges local, skilled long-standing commissioner/provider relationships

Joint commissioning and pooled budgets

- There is a need for the VAWDASV Strategic Board to provide clear direction in relation to the commissioning of relevant services as well use their influence to shape how services across the spectrum of services are funded / commissioned
- It is important that any pooling of resources takes place when there is a logic to do so i.e. when it affords the opportunities outlined in Diagram ? and should be underpinned by evidence of need and research

Service Gaps

- In line with the strategic delivery plan the VAWDASV Strategic Board will need to identify which of these priorities they wish to progress albeit all of them are capable of bringing about improvement
- Addressing the priorities / gaps are essential to providing an effective spectrum of VAWDASV service response as part of a whole system approach
- In order to progress the priorities and gaps identified, a range of preparatory activity is required to inform the VAWDASV Strategic Board of the preferred service models and commissioning options

Governance, Leadership and Collaboration

- The VAWDASV Strategic Group needs to clearly articulate the new governance structures to all stakeholders. The workstreams are the dynamic area where service delivery options and commissioning activity should be explored and progressed. These should be multi agency, fit for purpose groupings which research, debate and gather relevant information to address service gaps and priorities creatively both within and outside of meetings and make recommendations to the Strategic Group
- It will be necessary to work with strategists and practitioners from across different sectors. It is impossible and not meaningful to work with all parties all of the time but rather to make the dialogue pertinent to the issue
- There is a need to combine expertise. It is important that there is dialogue and collaboration between commissioners, specialist and non-specialist providers, service users and those developing and managing existing statutory and third sector services to assess and map need and to plan and deliver services
- Ownership will need to be achieved in the wider membership of the Strategic Group in order to ensure that there is buy in and that the solutions are properly networked from the outset
- Attention will need to be given to ensure that all members of the VAWDASV Strategic Group are well informed and have the capacity to understand the issues and participate fully in discussions
- Regional commissioning and/or pooling of funds will require buy in from other strategic partnerships and the leadership within the VAWDASV Regional Group will need to ensure effective communication and influence to achieve commitment for joint funding initiatives

THE WAY FORWARD

Making an effective response to meeting needs in the area of Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence is a complex and challenging arena. It can involve a range of organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors who have a range of remits and responsibilities. In addition, services (specialist and non-specialist) are resourced by a range of different funding streams each with different eligibility criteria and requirements as well as distinct outcomes and performance frameworks. A skilled response is dependent on co-production and meaningful partnership working and on adopting a range of approaches to achieve progress. There is a need to safeguard existing services as well ensuring their fitness for purpose alongside seeking new innovative solutions that can respond to the full range of needs.

Commissioning activity is a crucial element and Welsh Government are seeking to encourage localities and regions to be creative and innovative in this area. This will mean working differently and harnessing skills to embrace new ways of working including pooling resources, adopting a regional perspective and capacity building to ensure that all relevant partners feel informed, involved and able to influence.

The MWW Strategic Group already have a Strategy in place and have recently reviewed their governance and structural arrangements. Together with this Framework they are well placed to respond to the challenge of meeting VAWDASV needs in the region.

The Structures to Operationalise this Framework

The new VAWDASV Strategic Group structure will be the vehicle to progress service development and commissioning activity and to oversee the tasks delegated to the workstreams. Progress in this area will depend on several key factors:

- The importance of the right level of representation at the Strategic Group; people able to make decisions, at the right level within their organisation, able to influence and spread knowledge across their service area and link with other Strategic Boards and service delivery mechanisms
- The Strategic Group should be confident about their role as commissioners and influencers of service development. It will be necessary for them to set priorities, direct workstreams, receive recommendations and drive change
- They should ensure that workstreams feel they have permission to work creatively and outside of traditional meeting settings e.g. going on visits, undertaking research, holding mini consultations etc
- For that to happen workstreams will require clear roles, responsibilities and expectations. They should be seen as the 'doers', people who can make things happen and they should have permission to address their briefs effectively
- It will be important for service development to be a two-way process and that the workstreams feel able to make requests of the Strategic Group where necessary e.g. to seek buy in from other strategic forums, programmes of work
- As well as workstream activities the Strategic Group should seek to work with partners outside of the group and in particular commissioners of non VAWDASV services to ensure that prevention of and the early identification and response to VAWDASV becomes embedded in their commissioning practices and service responses

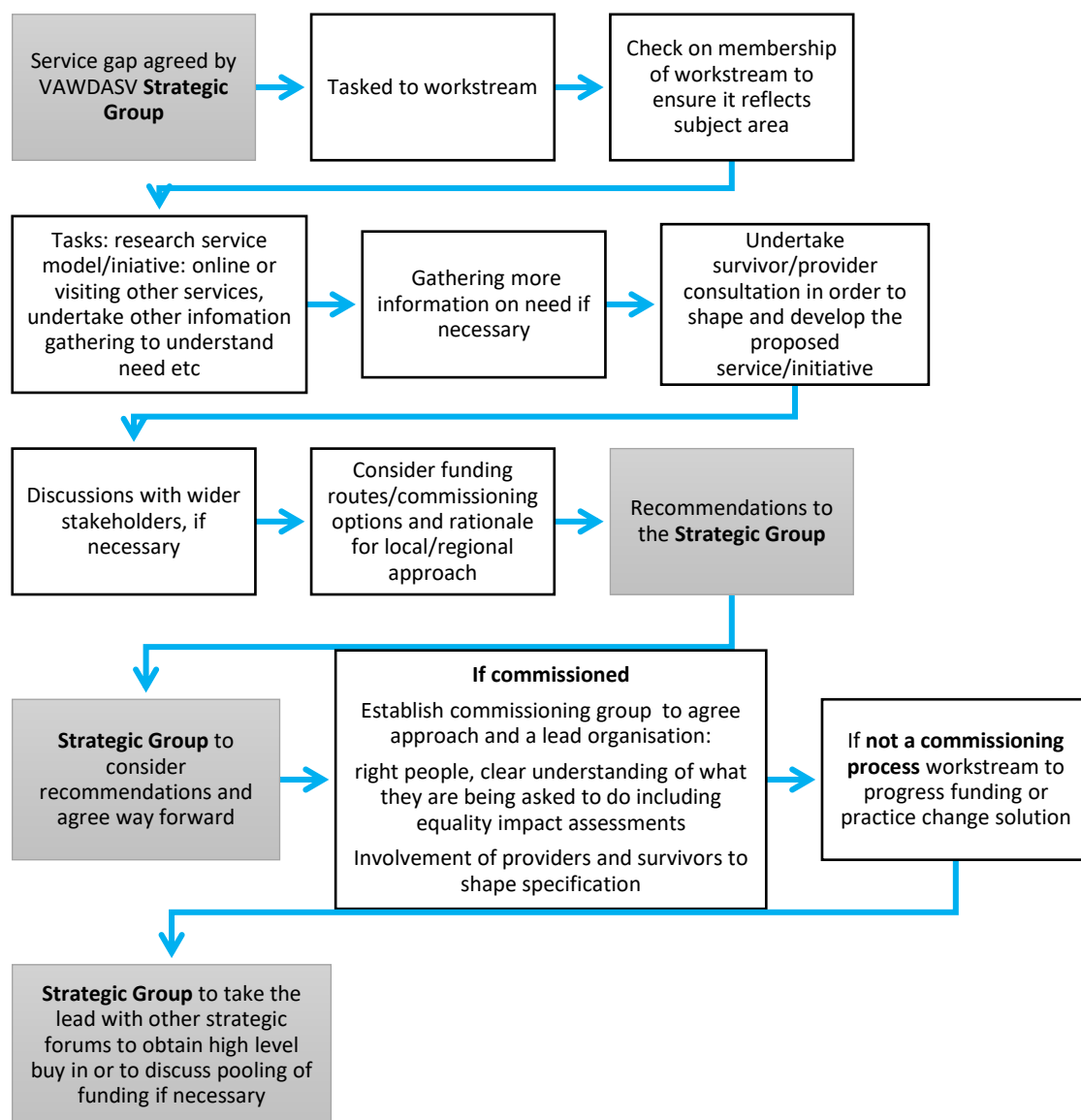
Key Stages in the Commissioning Process

All gaps and priority areas for service development should initially be debated in the VAWDASV Strategic Group and a decision made by the membership as to which of these will be progressed. All of the service gaps identified in this framework are capable of resulting in service improvements. It is

advised that the Strategic Group should not pursue more than 2 service development opportunities at any one time. The Strategic Group will be responsible for allocating the task to a workstream and they may do this by tasking an existing workstream or, if capacity in these groups is already committed, they may establish a new one to progress the work.

The workstream should receive a clear brief from the Strategic Board and will undertake all the relevant work to develop options, service models, costings, proposed funding routes and commissioning options to present recommendations to the Strategic Group as described in the template below:

Diagram 16: Service development template



The Strategic Group should look outside of VAWDASV structures to advance the service development recommendations and seek to link with other programmes of work in the region for possible alignment of priorities, funding as well as looking for good practice/models of service in Wales and beyond to inform proposals and recommendations.

Supporting Systems and Processes

This framework highlights good practice and expectations to strengthen and align commissioning practice for VAWDASV in Mid and West Wales. The role of the Strategic Group is to make this a reality and embed the commissioning practice and approach across the region with a focus on the following:

- Undertaking commissioning in line with principles contained in the strategy
- A consideration of when it makes sense to commission regionally as opposed to locally and the appropriate means to do that
- Utilising at appropriate points the expertise that is available from specialist service providers and survivors. This may include consultations, involvement in writing a specification for a service, survivors being involved at the interview stage etc.
- Aligning current local commissioning practices in order to prepare the ground for regional commissioning and service development activity generally
- Actively seeking opportunities for pooling funds and joint commissioning (not just VAWDASV funding but also identifying opportunities with other funding streams)
- Working with providers to identify opportunities for grant funding
- Consideration and unification of the approach to awarding tenders; the process, pace, testing of tenders and the weighting given to the content and the quality versus cost element. It will also be important to maintain a level playing field to enable providers of all sizes to participate equally in the process
- A key consideration for commissioning should be to undertake the activity on a Full Cost Recovery Model
- Discussing the detail of specifications; how they are designed so that they offer flexibility and opportunity to evolve services during lifetime of contract rather than restrict
- Aligning timelines of contracts including the ability to break timeline of contracts to allow for joint commissioning / pooled resources
- Using resources and VAWDASV expertise to aid the process
- A consideration of Equality and Diversity in its widest sense at key points in the process to include protected characteristics, the Welsh language (and other languages) and Rurality
- Developing a clear outcomes-based performance framework that collates coordinated and consistent data from across organisations and policy areas that enables measurement of impact / extent to which achieving desired change

The overall purpose of commissioned and non-commissioned activity is ultimately to improve the range of services available for individuals and families experiencing VAWDASV in Mid and West Wales. In developing these approaches, it will be vital to remain cognisant of the big picture and the principles underlying the MWW VAWDASV Strategy which is to improve prevention and early intervention and ensure that an awareness of VAWDASV and provision to respond to the effects and consequences of VAWDASV become 'everyone's business'. The challenge to the VAWDASV Strategic Group is to forge change and act a catalyst and influencer to bring about a whole system response.

Appendix 1

Mid and West Wales VAWDASV Strategic Delivery Plan 2019/20 (condensed version)

Priority area	Intended outcome	Actions required	Workstream Lead
Governance and Leadership	<p>Review existing governance arrangements around the VAWDASV Board including reporting structures to other regional and local boards.</p> <p>An agreed set of regional indicators that measure the progress and success of this strategy</p> <p>A consistent regional data set to support and inform the regional indicators</p>	<p>Identify and strengthen local and regional reporting structures</p> <p>Develop regional outcomes and indicators to measure the progress of this strategy</p> <p>Review current VAWDASV related data collation throughout the region</p>	Avril Bracey/ Natalie Hancock
Survivor Engagement and Communication	<p>A consistent framework for survivor engagement established for Mid and West Wales</p> <p>Increased awareness and understanding of Adult to Parent Violence amongst professionals and members of the public</p>	<p>Review any existing frameworks and good practice relating to survivor engagement</p> <p>Work with existing survivor groups to maximise opportunities for engagement and better understand how they wish to be engaged</p> <p>Draft a recommended framework for survivor engagement for agreement by the VAWDASV Strategic Group</p> <p>Analyse existing data relating to adult to parent violence</p> <p>Scope existing services and resources providing information and support regarding Adult to Parent violence</p> <p>Recommendation to VAWDASV Board to</p>	TBC

	<p>A regional communication strategy; an agreed regional approach to communication and awareness raising of VAWDASV and Equality</p>	<p>inform gaps in provision and areas for development</p> <p>Review existing VAWDASV and Equality communication plans in the region</p> <p>Map available resources / evidence to inform regional approach</p> <p>Develop a VAWDASV and Equality key dates calendar and key campaigns, themes and messages</p> <p>Learning from DHRs to be included within Regional Communication strategy</p>	
<p>Early Intervention and Prevention</p>	<p>Full analysis of healthy relationships education in formal / non-formal educational establishments across the region</p> <p>A regional reporting model to Welsh Government meetings requirements of the Act</p> <p>Analysis and recommendations for a regional model to imbed the 'Bystander' initiative within colleges and universities across the region</p> <p>Good practice and evidence base for community-based prevention and early intervention</p> <p>Embedding domestic abuse, sexual violence and violence against women into regional safeguarding</p>	<p>Education Safeguarding managers from the four Local Authorities to carry out a mapping exercise and analysis including development of a monitoring framework</p> <p>Work with Welsh Women's Aid to consider and make recommendations to the Strategic Board for a regional implementation plan based on pilots.</p> <p>Literature review of evidence and good practice relating to VAWDASV community based early intervention and prevention models</p> <p>Regional safeguarding Board policies and</p>	<p>Alastair Birch</p>

	<p>thresholds ensuring a consistent response across the region</p> <p>Increase opportunities for informal, community-based responses to VAW-DASV via the implementation of the Ask me project across Mid and West Wales</p> <p>Pembrokeshire to become an early adopter site for IRIS in Mid and West Wales</p>	<p>procedures sub group to review existing threshold documents to strengthen understanding and inclusion of VAWDASV</p> <p>Suggested implementation plan to look at 'Ask Me' to be delivered across Mid and West Wales to be presented to the board</p> <p>Discuss proposed project implementation plan with IRIS for Pembrokeshire to become an early adopter site</p>	
Holding Perpetrators to Account	<p>Recommendation report to board outlining the findings and identified opportunities for earlier intervention with perpetrators.</p> <p>Academic report outlining a consistent framework of arrangements for the response to and management of perpetrators across the region.</p> <p>Established mechanism to monitor and scrutinise the use of DVPNs and DVPOs in cases of Domestic Abuse and the use of prosecutions using section 23 (3) (b) of the Criminal Justice Act 1998 cross Mid and West Wales.</p>	<p>Subgroup to formulate a clear action plan to address priority 3.</p> <p>Subgroup to support the work of Dyfed Powys Police in their force wide review including commissioned analysis of data in relation to perpetrators across the region</p> <p>Establish a reporting mechanism from Heddlu Dyfed Powys Police to the Mid and West Wales VAWDASV Strategic Board in relation to the use of DVPOs and DVPNs and 'victimless prosecutions' across the region</p>	Christine Harley (Priority 3 Subgroup)
Provide effective, timely and appropriate responses to victims and survivors.	<p>An agreed regional approach to the Implementation of Ask and Act</p>	<p>Collate the individual training plans of relevant authorities and develop an overarching regional plan</p>	David Richards (Regional Training Subgroup)

	<p>Prioritise GPs for Ask and Act training to increased earlier identification of individuals who are experiencing VAWDASV and appropriate response</p> <p>Understanding of the current multi agency VAWDASV training provision in the region to inform regional training plans</p>	<p>Develop Regional Training Consortium</p> <p>Training plan for the phased delivery of Ask and Act to GPs initially in Pembrokeshire</p> <p>Mapping of current VAWDASV training available in the region</p>	
VAWDASV Commissioning	<p>Produce a practical document to support and inform commissioning throughout the region including analysis of existing commissioning arrangements and recommendations to inform a progressive move towards a Regional Commissioning Plan.</p>	<p>Commissioned analysis of current commissioning arrangements cross referenced against the strategic priorities. Analysis to Identifying commissioning opportunities and priorities to establish a platform for the commissioning of VAWDASV services.</p>	Chris Harrison

Appendix 2

Snapshot of funding for VAWDASV in Mid and West Wales 2017/18 taken from the Mid and West Wales VAWDASV Strategy

Funding Source	Amount 2017/18	Purpose of the grant	Eligibility	Regional / Local
Welsh Government Supporting People Programme Grant	£1,621,603 £55,522	Housing related support to help vulnerable people to live as independently as possible	Women experiencing domestic abuse Men experiencing domestic abuse	Local Authority footprint
Welsh Government – VAWDASV Team	£313,400	Implementation of the Domestic Abuse, Sexual Violence and Violence against Women Act		One LA as the banker for the region
Welsh Government – Families First	£95,300	Via Local Authorities to deliver a range of services to improve outcomes for children, young people and families. An emphasis on early Intervention, prevention and providing support for whole families		Local Authority footprint
Police and Crime Commissioner	£200,000 £142,339	IDVA Services Sexual Violence and Abuse Services	High risk victims of Domestic Abuse Victims of sexual violence / abuse	Regional service Regional service
Welsh Government - direct funding to providers	£195,000	Direct funding for domestic abuse and sexual violence services		Per organisation
UK Government	£36,799	Sexual violence and abuse services		

Trusts and Foundations	£329,000 approx.			Per organisation

Appendix 3

Resources Internet Links to support Commissioning and Procurement activity:

[https://www.lloydsbankfoundation.org.uk/VAWDASV%20Toolkit Wales web.pdf](https://www.lloydsbankfoundation.org.uk/VAWDASV%20Toolkit%20Wales%20web.pdf)

<https://gov.wales/third-sector-scheme>

<https://www.nao.org.uk/decision-support-toolkit/>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/violence-against-women-and-girls-national-statement-of-expectations>

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-05/statutory-guidance-for-the-commissioning-of-vawdasv-services-in-wales.pdf>

[https://ipc.brookes.ac.uk/publications/pdf/Leading Integrated %26 Collaborative Commissioning.pdf](https://ipc.brookes.ac.uk/publications/pdf/Leading%20Integrated%20Collaborative%20Commissioning.pdf)

Appendix 4

Definition of VAWDASV Specialist Services from Welsh Government Statutory Guidance for the Commissioning of VAWDASV Services in Wales (May 2019) pg 13/14

VAWDASV specialist services are distinguished from generic services that provide support or interventions for survivors or perpetrators in the third and/or public sector.

These services are provided by specialised staff with in-depth knowledge of VAWDASV and have a gendered and intersectional understanding of VAWDASV. In Wales, VAWDASV specialist services are defined as organisations whose:

- *services are delivered independently from the state (i.e. third sector) and whose core business it is to support survivors and/or perpetrators and/or children and young people impacted by any form of VAWDASV (i.e. rape and sexual assault including child sexual abuse, non-recent child sexual abuse, domestic abuse, sexual harassment, forced marriage, FGM, sexual exploitation including through the sex industry, trafficking and modern day slavery and so-called 'honour' based violence); and*
- *delivery is needs-led and gender-responsive, recognising the continuum of violence against women and ensuring interventions and prevention work connects VAWDASV to wider patterns of sex and other intersectional inequalities, including ethnicity, class, gender identity, age, ability, sexuality, religion and belief; and understanding and service delivery is informed by analysis of VAWDASV being gendered and a cause and consequence of inequality between women and men, which intersects with factors such as ethnicity, age, class, sexuality and disability to impact on experiences of abuse and routes to recovery. VAWDASV specialist services recognise that these forms of violence are entirely preventable, they happen to women and girls disproportionately because they are women and girls as a means of social control, which maintains and reproduces unequal power relations and presents an obstacle to achieving equality and human rights for women and girls; and*
- *specialist services differ from 'general support' services in that the organisations/ services have a gender and culturally responsive and holistic service delivery model, in accordance with the UK quality standards frameworks for such services, and are run by and for the communities they serve. In doing so they offer a uniquely empowering experience particularly to women and children and to BME communities, as the client group is reflected in staffing, management and governance structures of these organisations.*

Appendix 5

An integrated response to VAWDASV – A continuum of support taken from ‘Safer Lives, Healthier Relationships’ Mid and West Wales VAWDASV Strategy November 2018

An Integrated Response to VAWDASV A Continuum of support

