

The South Wales Police Plan for
Tackling Violence
Against Women and Girls
2014 - 2017



In South Wales between 2012 and 2013:

There were **27,537** domestic
abuse incidents

There were **6,588** domestic
abuse-related crimes

There were **5,091** victims of
domestic abuse-related crime

Around **a third** of all 'violence
with injury crime' was domestic
abuse-related

A total of **2,242** high risk
Multi Agency Risk Assessment
Conferences (MARACs)
were heard

A total of **2,869** children
were involved in high risk
MARAC cases

There were **881** recorded
serious sexual offences

There were **53** recorded
honour-based violence
incidents

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Foreword

'Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls' is a key priority in the South Wales Police and Crime Reduction Plan. The South Wales Police & Crime Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner and Chief Constable are committed to ensuring that further progress is made in this area, building on the positive and proactive work that South Wales Police has already been conducting in recent years.

We recognise that in order to truly tackle this significant proportion of violent crime, it is important to consider the wider partner agency context. A number of statutory and voluntary sector agencies in South Wales are involved in tackling domestic abuse and the many forms of violence against women and girls. It is therefore essential for the police to work positively in partnership with these agencies and for all to work together to support victims.

In 2014 the Welsh Government will introduce legislation to 'End Violence Against Women & Girls, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence' in Wales. We are dedicated to ensuring that we are able to prepare the ground for the introduction of this legislation and we will work to embed a culture of understanding of violence against women and girls, domestic abuse and sexual violence throughout South Wales Police.

Our comprehensive thematic review into Violence Against Women & Girls in South Wales Police has led to the development of this joint plan. We are keen to positively deliver on the actions within the plan in order to work towards preventing violence against women and girls and providing the best possible response to victims.



**Rt Hon
Alun Michael JP**
Police & Crime
Commissioner



Sophie Howe
Deputy
Police & Crime
Commissioner



Peter Vaughan
Chief Constable
South Wales Police



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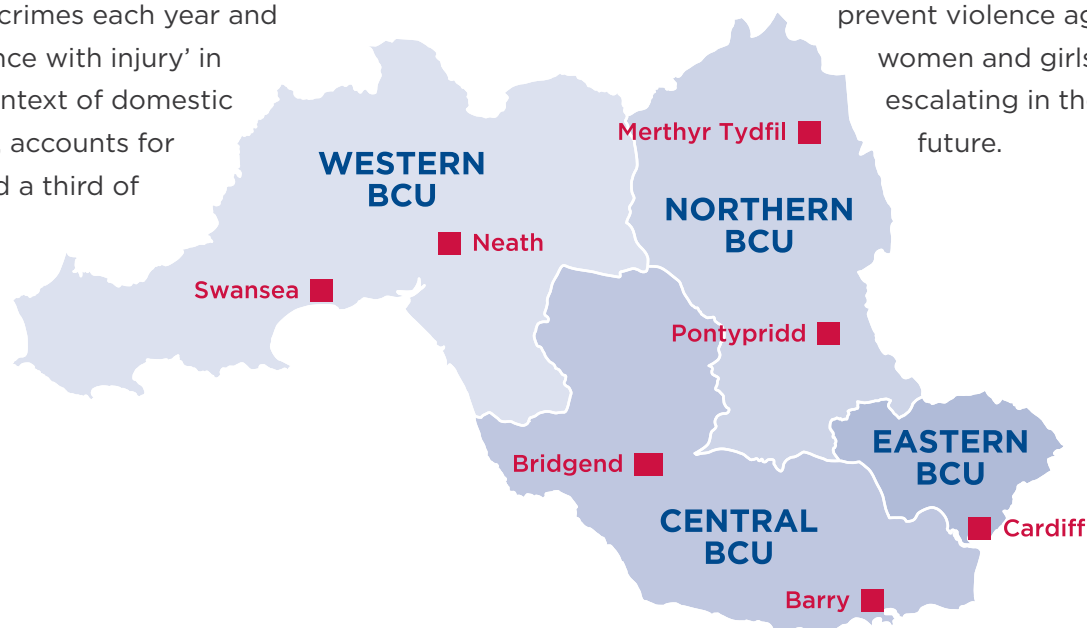
Introduction

South Wales Police provides a policing service to 1.3 million people, covering 42% of the population of Wales. It is the 8th largest police force in England and Wales. The force area and its four Basic Command Units (BCUs) span seven local authority areas - Bridgend, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Neath Port Talbot, Rhondda Cynon Taf, Swansea and the Vale of Glamorgan.

The area includes 63 of the 100 most deprived communities in Wales (and indeed Europe), and we recognise the relationship between areas of deprivation and the prevalence of domestic abuse. South Wales Police deals with more than 27,000 incidents of domestic abuse and more than 6500 crimes each year and 'Violence with injury' in the context of domestic abuse, accounts for around a third of

all violent crime in South Wales. These are just the incidents we know about. We recognise that there are many more incidents and crimes that are never reported to the police. Recent Home Office data for 2011 - 2012, shows that Wales and the East Midlands were the geographical areas where women were most likely to be the victims of domestic abuse in England and Wales, and incident numbers in these areas were above the England and Wales average.

Therefore, on behalf of the victims, survivors and potential victims of all forms of violence against women and girls in South Wales, we will work to identify and tackle the abuse and violence, support victims better, and prevent violence against women and girls from escalating in the future.



Tackling 'Violence Against Women & Girls'

Violence against women has been defined by the United Nations as 'any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life'. It may include but is not limited to:

- Domestic abuse
- Sexual violence, including sexual assault and sexual harassment
- Harmful practices
(including forced marriage, female genital mutilation, and so called 'honour' crimes)

Whilst it is acknowledged that men and boys can also be affected by these types of abuse and violence, it remains the case that women are disproportionately affected in terms of the numbers of incidents they experience and their levels of seriousness.

The Crime Survey for England and Wales found that between 2012 and 2013 there were an estimated 1.2 million female victims of domestic abuse and 700,000 male victims¹, with at least 29.9% of women and 17% of men in England and Wales having experienced it at some point². However women are much more likely to be high risk victims than men³, and women make up around 89% of all those who have experienced 4 or more incidents of domestic violence⁴. On average 2 women a week are killed by their current or former male partner⁵ and nearly 1 in 5 women will have experienced some form of sexual violence since the age of 16⁶.

These statistics highlight the prevalence of the violence that women and girls face every year and the clear need to tackle and address it.

The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) definition of domestic abuse is:

'Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass, but is not limited to, psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional abuse'.

The definition, which is not a legal definition, includes so called 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation and forced marriage, and it is clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group.

This definition of domestic abuse refers to any domestic incident in the home, between any family members.

However it is acknowledged that within the 'violence against women and girls' context, the most serious, repeated forms of domestic abuse usually take place between intimate partners, as it is a form of abuse based on power and control, with repeated, habitual use of intimidation to control a partner. The fact that on average two women a week are killed by a male partner or former partner highlights the importance of addressing intimate partner violence. Domestic abuse within this plan is therefore considered with intimate partner abuse in mind.

The Police & Crime Commissioner accepts that the 'violence against women and girls' approach requires a certain mindset shift in policing, where the Association of Chief Police Officers definition is used, and must continue to be used, throughout operational proceedings of domestic abuse. Policing must be provided equitably to all, and this of course includes providing a service to male victims of domestic abuse. There is no expectation that South Wales Police should provide a less than positive service to male victims or to other family members experiencing abuse.

However, the focus on women and girls within this plan is consciously being made to attempt to address the inequality that exists for women and girls who are victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence.

Whilst the priority of 'tackling violence against women and girls' fits within the wider violence reduction agenda within South Wales Police, the specific focus on it as a distinct area of work enables us to address the disproportionate effect of this type of violence on women and girls, the under reporting that exists, the need to increase the confidence of victims to report these matters to the police, and the need for partners to work together for a victim-centred approach.

¹ Office for National Statistics (2013) Focus on violent crime and sexual offences 2012/13, Chapter 4: Intimate Personal Violence and partner abuse

² Smith, K., Osborne, S., Lau, I. et al (2012) Homicides, Firearm offences and intimate violence 2010/11: Supplementary Vol 2 to Crime in England and Wales 2010/11. London.

³ Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (2014) Everyone's Business: Improving the police response to Domestic Abuse.

⁴ Walby, S. and Allen, J. (2004) Home Office Research Study 276: Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault and Stalking: Findings from the British Crime Survey. Home Office Research, Development & Statistics Directorate.

⁵ Coleman & Osborne (2010); Povey (2005); Home Office, 1999, Department of Health, 2005.

⁶ Office for National Statistics (2013) Focus on violent crime and sexual offences 2012/13, Chapter 4: Intimate Personal Violence and partner abuse

The South Wales Police ‘Violence Against Women & Girls’ Thematic Review

The South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner, in partnership with South Wales Police, completed a thematic review of Violence Against Women and Girls in South Wales in 2013. This comprehensive review of the police and partner response to domestic abuse, sexual violence and other forms of violence against women and girls, examined where we were, where we had come from and where we needed to be in order to improve both the police and partner response to this agenda in South Wales.

The review involved an analysis of data and evidence available, and included consultation and engagement with victims, practitioners, academic experts and strategic leads in this area.

The findings have led to the development of this plan, which outlines the actions we will take to tackle violence against women and girls in South Wales.



The South Wales Police Approach to Violence Against Women & Girls

The Public Protection Unit

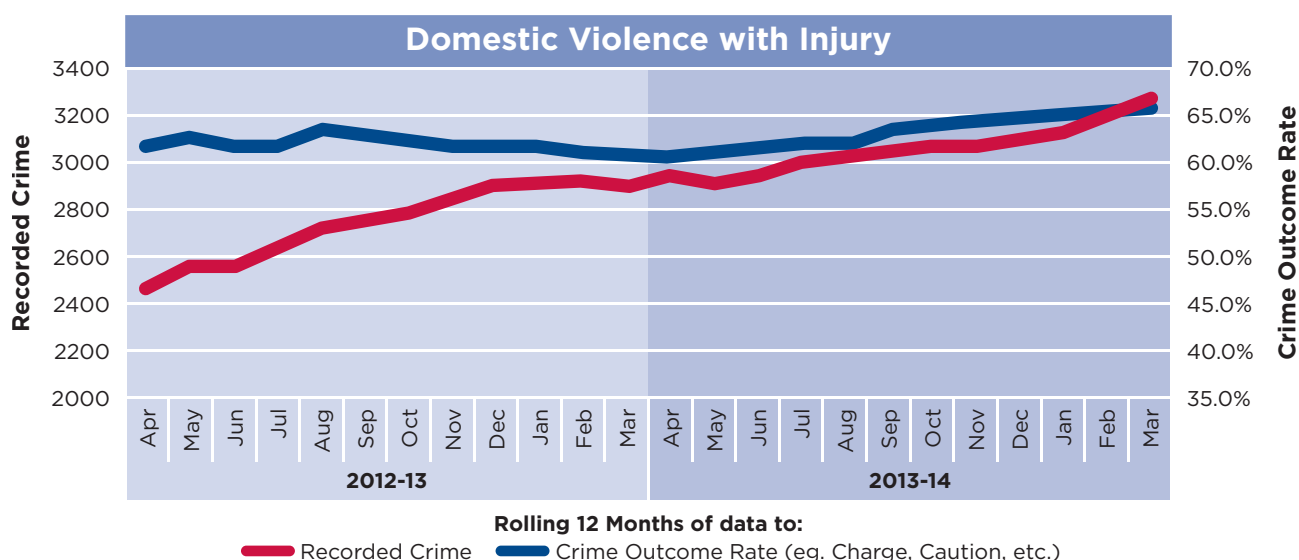
The South Wales Police Public Protection Unit provides strategic oversight of domestic abuse and sexual violence cases across the force. There are also Public Protection departments in each of the four Basic Command Units (BCUs), handling cases and providing operational support to victims. South Wales Police has made a significant investment in recent years in ensuring that victims receive the best possible service. This has included, for example, an increase in the number of officers in Public Protection and the recruitment of specialist domestic abuse risk assessors.

Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence

South Wales Police has a Positive Action Policy in relation to domestic abuse. This means that in all cases, officers must take robust action to assist victims, treating each case with empathy, offering practical advice and ensuring appropriate referrals to relevant partners are made.

Officers must consider the incidents holistically, focusing efforts from the outset, on safeguarding the victim and other vulnerable people such as children, then gathering evidence in order to charge and build a prosecution case that does not rely entirely on the victim's statement. It means that all cases of domestic abuse must be vigorously investigated and that there is a need for action at every stage of the police response. Recent South Wales Police data shows that for every 100 domestic abuse crimes recorded in South Wales Police, 96 arrests were made, which is well above the average rate for most forces. This highlights the proactive nature of the positive action approach, and these positive rates have recently been commended by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC).

South Wales Police has made a significant investment in training officers and staff on domestic abuse. This has not only included training on risk assessment and response, but has included comprehensive training for call handlers working in the Public Service Centre to understand likely threat, harm and risk to a caller.



All domestic abuse incidents are classified as either a grade 1 or grade 2 response when a call is taken, meaning that an officer response must either be immediate (grade 1) or within one hour (grade 2).

In terms of sexual violence, South Wales Police has a team of Sexual Offence Liaison Officers who are specifically trained to deal with victims of sexual crime at the first point of contact. They deal with the investigation and detection of sexual offences and the safeguarding of all sexual offence victims. They are able to provide a consistent and sensitive approach to all sexual violence investigations.

Most recent data from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) shows that South Wales Police is currently the third best performing force in England and Wales in relation to sanction detection rates for adult rape. Sanction detection rates for child rape are also above the national average in South Wales Police. The force works proactively to achieve these outcomes and the figures reflect the positive work being carried out.

Partnership Working and Information Sharing

South Wales Police is committed to sharing information with partners in order to ensure that victims are fully risk assessed and safeguarded by taking on board any information that partners may hold. After the risk assessment process the force is engaged fully with the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) process for high risk cases. This process brings together partners including the police,

social services, education and the voluntary sector to discuss individual high risk domestic abuse cases, assigning actions across the agencies to assure victim safety.

Between April 2012 and April 2013, a total of 2,242 cases were heard at MARACs across the force area. A total of 70% of these referrals came from the police, whilst the other 30% of referrals came from partner agencies. We recognise that the police are likely to be the last port of call for many victims and so we would like to see an increase in referrals from other partner agencies, which would demonstrate attempts to identify domestic abuse and other forms of violence against women and girls at an earlier point.

South Wales Police has also been working hard to secure the commitment of partners to establish a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). This will bring partners together in a permanent location to provide a more efficient, coherent and comprehensive approach to the safeguarding of vulnerable victims, including children within domestic abuse settings. The hub will be piloted in Northern BCU (Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf), with the aim to launch during 2014.

This information-sharing and partnership process will seek to complement and enhance the well-established safeguarding and referral pathways that already exist through South Wales Police's sharing of the Domestic Abuse risk assessment forms with other agencies.

The Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs) in South Wales enable statutory

and voluntary sector partners to provide rape and sexual assault victims with an appropriate service, even where victims do not wish to report to the police. Where victims do report to the police, South Wales Police officers are able to refer all sexual violence victims to a SARC where they can be sensitively responded to.

South Wales Police also works closely with schools to educate young people about domestic abuse and sexual violence. Engagement with the All Wales School Liaison Core Programme has helped to develop lesson plans on healthy relationships, sexual consent and Child Sexual Exploitation for delivery to schools by School Community Police Officers. Safer relationships and domestic abuse content has also been included on the School Beat website, which can be accessed by children, parents and teachers. In addition, School Community Police Officers deliver assembly sessions on issues including sexual consent, assault and rape.

South Wales Police has also worked with schools on the issue of 'sexting', with lessons being delivered on this subject from 2014. The well-received sessions to schools have explained the definition of consent and the possible criminal record consequences of sexting. An important outcome of the work with schools has been the increase in the number of disclosures that children have made to officers and staff about inappropriate behaviour.

Data Collection

South Wales Police previously recognised that more could be done to adopt a

problem-solving approach to tackling offences of violence against women and girls, particularly domestic abuse. One of the key developments to address this has been South Wales Police's development of a 'Domestic Abuse Management Information Tool'. This technology enables a daily report to be extracted from the South Wales Police database highlighting all domestic abuse occurrences every morning. The information in the tool is filtered into categories that are broken down by geographical areas and categories of victims. It makes it easier to see domestic violence and abuse as a pattern of coercive control, rather than as a series of isolated incidents. The tool also enables repeat victims and perpetrators to be easily identified each day.

'Honour'-Based Violence, Forced Marriage and Female Genital Mutilation

The portfolio for Honour-Based Violence, Forced Marriage and Female Genital Mutilation is held within the Justice and Partnerships department of South Wales Police and there are officers with specialist knowledge in this area. Training on these issues has been conducted across the force for some years, and in 2013 South Wales Police worked in partnership with a nationally-respected organisation in the field to produce a three-day training course, which was delivered to selected South Wales Police officers.

The course was designed to equip officers to understand the concept of and motives for, honour-based violence and forced marriage abuse. It also outlined how to identify incidents and victims and provide a

response, how to understand the barriers faced by victims, and how to conduct risk assessments, safety planning and provision.

The training has led to an increase in the number of officers capable of identifying and conducting risk assessments for honour-based violence and forced marriage cases and has also provided greater BCU and force resilience in dealing with these issues.

South Wales Police, along with the other Wales police forces, signed a joint Female Genital Mutilation protocol with the Crown Prosecution Service in March 2014. This is intended to ensure that when we receive female genital mutilation referrals, the prosecution and investigation will be co-ordinated between agencies in order to progress appropriately. The protocol includes agreements on process, including victim and witness care. We will ensure that the protocol is understood and promoted throughout the force.



South Wales Police Data

The information presented in this section provide a snapshot of the current data available on violence against women and girls in South Wales Police.

South Wales Police Domestic Abuse Data for 2012 - 2013

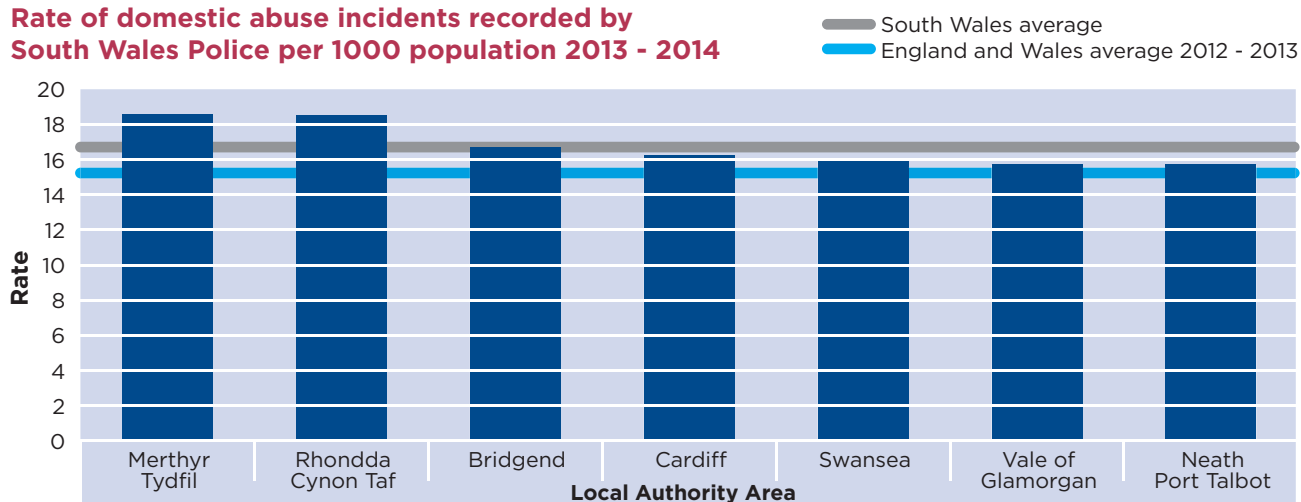
Domestic Abuse Data	Totals for 2012 - 2013
Incidents of Domestic Abuse	27,537
Number of Domestic Abuse-Related Crimes	6,588
Number of Victims of Domestic-Abuse Related Crime	5,091
Number of Repeat Victims of Domestic Abuse-Related Crime (2 or more domestic abuse-related crimes within 12 months up to end of reporting period)	893

South Wales Police Violent Crime with Injury Data

	Domestic Abuse 'Violence with Injury'	All 'Violence with Injury'	% Domestic Abuse	Ratio 1:x
Apr-Sep 2013	1,626	4,522	36%	2.8
2012 - 2013	2,892	8,532	34%	3.0
2011 - 2012	2,407	7,728	31%	3.2
2010 - 2011	2,566	8,512	30%	3.3
2009 - 2010	2,909	9,331	31%	3.2
2008 - 2009	2,606	10,103	26%	3.9

This data shows that 'domestic abuse violence with injury' accounts for around a third of all violence with injury within South Wales Police.

Rate of domestic abuse incidents recorded by South Wales Police per 1000 population 2013 - 2014



South Wales Police Domestic Abuse and Serious Sexual Offences (Crime Numbers by Basic Command Unit)

Domestic Abuse (Violence with Injury)	Northern BCU	Eastern BCU	Central BCU	Western BCU	South Wales Police
2013-14 (PYE*)	779	920	543	880	3,123
2012-13	677	856	508	851	2,892
2011-12	651	630	515	611	2,407
Serious Sexual Offences	Northern BCU	Eastern BCU	Central BCU	Western BCU	South Wales Police
2013-14 (PYE*)	228	276	150	290	944
2012-13	173	267	161	280	881
2011-12	162	220	160	185	727

*PYE = Projected year end data

South Wales Police Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Data

Measures	2011 - 2012	2012 - 2013
Recorded Violence with Injury - domestic related	2,379	2,892
Recorded Violence with Injury where the victim is female - domestic related	Not Available	2,275 (78.6%)
Recorded Serious Sexual Offences	727	881
Recorded Serious Sexual Offences where the victim is female	632 (86.9%)	759 (83.8%)
Recorded Honour-Based Violence incidents	39	53
Recorded Honour-Based Violence incidents where the victim is female	Not Available	40 (75.4%)
Recorded female genital mutilation incidents	None reported	None reported



Our Actions & Outcomes

The comprehensive thematic review process that has been led by the Deputy Commissioner and Assistant Chief Constable (Specialist Crime) has enabled the Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner and Chief Constable to understand the areas where South Wales Police and partners are doing well on violence against women and girls, and where further attention and enhanced partnership working is needed.

The outcomes we are working towards through the delivery of the Violence Against Women & Girls Plan are:

- **To increase the reporting of ‘violence against women and girls’ by ensuring that all individuals and partner agencies feel confident to report**
- **To reduce the number of repeat victims of ‘violence against women and girls’ by identifying and intervening at an earlier point**
- **For women and girls who have experienced ‘violence against women and girls’ to have a more positive criminal justice outcome**

- **For women and girls to have a voice in how South Wales Police responds to gender-based violence**

- **To improve South Wales Police’s understanding and response to victims in relation to ‘hidden’ violence against women and girl issues i.e. Honour-Based Violence, Forced Marriage and Female Genital Mutilation**

Partnership working and information sharing will underpin the success of all of these outcomes. Therefore work with relevant agencies will be an overarching priority in order to progress the work.

We are committed to taking forward this work through 3 key areas of action that have been highlighted throughout the review process and are built upon in the next section:

Improving Identification and Intervention

Ensuring a Victim-Centred Approach

Encouraging Prevention

Improving Identification and Intervention

Our thematic review process has highlighted the need for early identification and intervention mechanisms for all forms of violence against women and girls. This would prevent an escalation of seriousness and a reduction in the number of people who are repeat victims.

South Wales Police data shows that during 2012-2013, there were 27,537 incidents and 5,901 victims of domestic abuse crimes in the force area. A total of 15% of the victims of domestic abuse crimes were repeat victims. The total number of children involved in the 2,242 high risk MARAC cases held between 2012 and 2013 was 2,869 - highlighting the extent of the impact that domestic abuse has on children in South Wales.

These statistics only represent the incidents that are actually reported to South Wales Police. Sitting underneath these cases are many more that have not been reported, some of which other agencies may be aware of. The importance of encouraging other agencies to refer those at risk to the police and/or into the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) process cannot be overstated.

Although the number of repeat victims in South Wales Police compares positively with other Welsh forces, we would wish to see the percentage of repeat victims decrease. Early identification and intervention, particularly in standard and medium risk cases, should ultimately lead to a decrease in the number of victims that experience serious cases of domestic abuse and should lead to a reduction in the number of repeat victims.

The Key Issues:

It is widely known that under-reporting exists for all forms of violence against women and girls. For example, women experience an average of 35 incidents of domestic violence before reporting to the police⁷ and it is estimated that just 1 in 10 rapes are reported to police. There is a clear need to not only increase confidence in individuals to report to the police, but also the need for agencies to increase their referrals to the police and to share intelligence that may prevent cases from escalating in seriousness.

“Sometimes you just want someone to ask you. You don't know how to bring up that you're a victim of abuse but you're hoping for an opportunity to tell someone who will understand.”

Domestic Abuse Survivor South Wales

Our review has found that there are likely to be many opportunities for partner agencies to 'Ask and Act' when working with women that may be the victims of domestic abuse, with some opportunities being missed. There is also a need for agencies to increase their awareness of the importance of referring into the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) process. The police are making most referrals into MARAC and we have found that there are

⁷ Yearnshaw (1997) and www.cps.gov.uk/news/articles/domestic_violence_-_the_facts_the_issues_the_future

low numbers of MARAC referrals being received from the Health sector and other agencies, even though these agencies are likely to have early contact with possible victims. This may partly be due to the lack of identification of abuse when victims present for routine medical appointments or even for emergency treatment, with women not necessarily being asked key questions that enable them to disclose their abuse. We welcome the recent National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) Guidance that encourages a better health response to domestic abuse, and we are keen to build on this impetus with the health sector. Research conducted by 'Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse (CAADA)', suggests that victims who are identified through Health agencies and referred to Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs) from the Health sector, are more likely to include vulnerable, hard to reach groups - including pregnant women, those still living with the perpetrator, and those with substance misuse or mental health issues. Victims referred from Health also experience a shorter length of abuse than victims who are identified by the criminal justice system or who self refer.⁸ This research shows the significance of engaging with the Health sector to encourage early identification.

Our discussions with victims have shown that missed opportunities to identify domestic abuse can also be true in the police sector itself, with victims feeling there is a need to ensure all officers have appropriate training to attempt to identify

potential risk that may not be obviously apparent from the outset.

Our research has found that there are at least 110,000 social housing premises in the South Wales force area, many of which are located in areas of social deprivation. Our mapping research shows there are higher levels of domestic abuse in our areas of deprivation. For example, Merthyr Tydfil has the highest number of high risk cases with a ratio of 65 per 10,000 of the female population. There are likely to be many opportunities in the Housing setting where domestic abuse victims can be identified and referred to appropriate agencies.

Our review has also confirmed that a challenge remains in terms of encouraging the reporting of 'hidden' issues of violence against women and girls from individuals and partners to the police. These include honour-based violence, forced marriage cases and female genital mutilation. There are likely to be information sharing issues surrounding this, where third sector and other agencies may be aware of risks or potential cases but are not confident to share the information or feel unable to.

Victims of 'hidden' violence against women and girls can often be at serious risk of harm and their cases could show a rapid escalation of seriousness, rather than a gradual series of events. Awareness of the issues needs to be raised across sectors, and victims need to know that they will be supported and made safe, as well as being encouraged to report.

It is estimated that as many as 6,500 girls are at risk of female genital mutilation within the UK every year. However, despite the fact it has been against the law in the

⁸ CAADA (2012) 'A Place of Greater Safety': Insights into Domestic Abuse:1.

UK since 1985, there had been no UK prosecution until early 2014. A UK Home Affairs committee inquiry was launched in December 2013 to consider some of these issues and to see how female genital mutilation prosecutions can increase in the UK. We will be keen to work with any recommendations arising from the inquiry.

More also needs to be done to encourage the reporting of domestic abuse among

some black and minority ethnic communities. All communities need to be aware that they can report to a police service that will take care of them and offer them appropriate support. South Wales Police not only needs to raise awareness to communities that the 'hidden' types of violence are wrong and should be reported, but must also ensure that victims receive appropriate, culturally-sensitive support.



Our Actions

In order to improve identification and early intervention of Violence Against Women and Girls, we will implement the following actions.

Encouraging early reporting and intervention in the Health Sector

We will make strong links between South Wales Police and the Health Boards in order to increase the number of domestic abuse, female genital mutilation and other violence against women and girls issues that are reported to the police, and therefore the number of victims who are routed into support services at an earlier point. Through a Health Liaison project led by the Police & Crime Commissioner, this will involve encouraging 'Ask & Act' processes in Maternity and Accident & Emergency services, firming up processes for referral of victims to appropriate services and the police where appropriate. The project will also look to encourage MARAC referrals from Health, and will work to make stronger links and awareness of the need for early intervention and reporting across the sector. We will work with our partners in Health and other sectors to jointly introduce the IRIS (Identification and Referral to Improve Safety) project in the Cardiff & Vale area where case volumes are high. This project, which has proven successful in other parts of the UK, trains up GPs and practice staff to identify and refer domestic abuse victims to appropriate services. Results in other areas have shown that the project has led to positive referral increases, ultimately meaning that victims are assisted at earlier points of their abuse. The project has also demonstrated a significant cost saving to Health. At the end of the project we will



look to see how the process can be embedded and made sustainable across the force.

Information Sharing

We have found that there is a clear need for improved information sharing mechanisms between different partner agencies. Our review established that many agencies hold information on victims and perpetrators but are not necessarily sharing this information with others. Sometimes this is due to a lack of clear process for doing so, and sometimes it is because agencies are simply unaware of how valuable their information could be if shared.

Our review established that South Wales Police officers are very keen to encourage partners to share more information with them and to provide any information that may change their view of risk of a particular victim or case. The onus should not rest entirely with the police and so we will work to encourage partners to readily share more with South Wales Police and to understand why this may not be happening in some cases.

Multi Agency Working

South Wales Police and the Police & Crime Commissioner will support the development of stronger multi agency working mechanisms with other statutory and voluntary sector agencies working in the field of violence against women and girls. We will strongly support the introduction of the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) to be piloted in the Northern division of the force, and will encourage partners in each area of the force to establish the same or similar mechanisms. As well as protecting those at high risk, a multi agency approach encourages early intervention in standard and medium risk cases, which we are committed to.

South Wales Police will also develop a protocol on the sharing of information about risk with other agencies, to include the need for partners to act on the information and provide information back to South Wales Police in a timely manner. This will allow the police to act on further information and/or reassess risk where necessary, with the aim of providing early intervention at every opportunity.

Encouraging the reporting of 'hidden' issues and cultural awareness

South Wales Police will work to encourage greater awareness and understanding of honour-based violence, forced marriage and female genital mutilation across the force and among partner agencies.

There is a particular need to encourage female genital mutilation referrals from individuals, the Health sector and the Education sector, where there may be suspicions or concerns. We will conduct publicity in this regard and look to advertise

support lines such as the NSPCC female genital mutilation national helpline. South Wales Police will also look to build links with minority communities and schools in specific areas to develop clear messages about reporting and support available.

South Wales Police will also work to encourage the reporting of domestic abuse among other minority groups where reporting is low. For example, we will encourage reporting within certain minority ethnic groups (including among gypsies and travellers), where it is not always culturally acceptable to disclose such abuse. We will also encourage reporting from lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

Liaison with Registered Social Landlords (RSLs)

South Wales Police and the Police & Crime Commissioner will look to increase its partnership activity with Registered Social Landlords (RSLs). This is with the acknowledgement that there are high numbers of people living in social housing in the South Wales Police area, many of whom are living in areas of deprivation where domestic abuse is more likely. The activity should include the scoping of RSLs' approach to domestic abuse across South Wales. We will work to develop an agreed, consistent RSL protocol for dealing with domestic abuse in the area, to be taken forward in conjunction with Welsh Government.

We will also consider what further information South Wales Police could be sharing with the Social Housing sector in relation to domestic abuse and other forms of violence against women and girls. Efforts will be made to consider where the sector could add value to South Wales Police practices.

Ensuring a Victim-Centred Approach

There are many statutory and voluntary sector service providers for victims of domestic abuse and other forms of violence against women and girls across South Wales. Our review highlighted that there is little doubt that South Wales Police and our partners are passionate about reducing violence against women and girls and delivering a quality service to victims and survivors.

No two victim experiences of domestic abuse, sexual violence, forced marriage, honour based violence or female genital mutilation will be the same, and it is essential to ensure that the services provided to victims reflect the differing needs of individuals. Above all it is essential to ensure that victims receive a quality service from the police and partners when they report abuse, that they are appropriately made safe, and that they are sensitively supported throughout their criminal justice journey, with the aim of securing a positive criminal justice outcome.

The Key Issues:

Co-ordination of services

Our review found that there is likely to be some duplication of effort across domestic abuse services, and confusion over funding arrangements and their co-ordination. It also found that there are varied levels of support services for victims across our force area. In particular it is clear that Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA) numbers are very different across local authority areas in South Wales but that IDVA numbers do not necessarily equate to case quantities.

Victims and survivors have told us that there is a clear need for a consistent end-to-end service throughout their case journey and that if agencies were more joined-up, it would be likely that their journey would be supported more effectively. There is little doubt that there is a need to provide the best possible consistency of approach for victims.

We have found that there is a shared lack of understanding amongst victims and even agencies, about all of the services available for domestic abuse victims, particularly for those of standard to medium risk. The options available need to be made much clearer for all, if intervention from police and partners is to achieve our aim of reducing the number of repeat victims. There is also a need to better understand service provision for children who are the victims in domestic abuse settings.

Leadership and Accountability

Our review has found that there is a need for strategic oversight of domestic abuse and 'violence against women and girls' that brings voluntary and statutory partners together at a force-wide level. This provides opportunities for co-ordination of effort, sharing of information, reducing duplication and sharing of good practice - all with the aim of ensuring the best possible service for victims.

Officer and Staff Training

South Wales Police has delivered training to many of its frontline officers on the issues of violence against women and girls. Police officers and police staff require a clear understanding of domestic abuse and other

forms of violence against women and girls, including an awareness of honour-based violence, forced marriage and female genital mutilation. There remains a challenge in terms of ensuring that all officers and relevant police staff have the level of awareness required in order to encourage early reporting, early intervention and an appropriate victim-centred response, including the need to work to gather appropriate evidence to support a victim's case.

“I called the police a number of times but was afraid to tell them the whole story. Then one day an officer used words I could relate to and I felt able to tell her everything.”

**Domestic Abuse Survivor
South Wales**

During our review, victims and practitioners told us that the police should receive enhanced training on language and communication skills. These were seen as crucial skills in the ability to gain information from potential domestic abuse or sexual violence victims, giving them the confidence to disclose incidents and risk. It was also felt that there was a real need for police officers to have an understanding of how victims deal with issues of domestic abuse and the effects of often long term exertion of power and control, as well as the impact of family and finance on a victim's approach to dealing with their abuse experience. Domestic abuse victims have also told us that it is important to include

them as speakers in future training, to create more impactful learning sessions that are more likely to lead to positive changes in the work setting. The input of violence against women and girls 'experts' was also considered important for future training.

Finally, cultural awareness has been seen as essential to thread through any domestic abuse and violence against women and girls training, to encourage an increased understanding of the different beliefs, attitudes and experiences across minority groups and ethnic backgrounds.

Victim Satisfaction

Practitioners and victims involved in the review process confirmed that it can be very difficult and often inappropriate to measure victim satisfaction among victims of violence against women and girls. This presents a particular challenge to South Wales Police as it works to ensure that its service and intervention is victim-centred. South Wales Police wants victims of these forms of abuse to have a voice in how they receive their service and support, but there are no established mechanisms for measuring how well victims feel their needs are being met.

The review has established that there are options to scope what information may be gathered through other avenues - for example via Women's Aid, Victim Support or Sexual Assault Referral Centres. It is clear that careful and sensitive options for finding out what victims feel about their experience need to be considered for the future.

Our Actions

In order to ensure a victim-centred approach to Violence Against Women and Girls we will implement the following actions.

Service Mapping

We will commission a thorough mapping exercise, which scopes all domestic abuse

services being delivered and offered in South Wales within statutory and voluntary sectors. The analysis will also scope the numbers of cases and victims in order to assess demand versus provision in each area of the force. This will provide a better understanding of what is and is not available for victims of standard, medium and high risk, and where service provision may need to be improved or amended to



meet victim needs. It will also highlight areas of duplication in service. We will also seek to better understand available service provision for children who are victims within a domestic abuse setting and we will consider both the police and partner response to children. The outcome of the mapping exercise will be used to inform the joint commissioning process of victim services, which the Commissioner will be responsible for from April 2015 and beyond, and can bring together different sectors and agencies to provide the best possible response to victims.

Victim Referral Processes

South Wales Police will consider the ways in which domestic abuse victims could be referred to appropriate services at the earliest opportunity by its own officers and staff. For example, through early referral of standard and medium risk victims to the All Wales Domestic Abuse Helpline for advice and support, and by considering the best ways to sensitively advise victims or potential victims of the service options available to them.

Victim-Centred Officer and Staff Training

South Wales Police will conduct a Training Needs Analysis of domestic abuse and sexual violence training currently delivered in order to ensure there is sufficient content providing a victim-centred understanding of domestic abuse and violence against women and girls. Consideration will be given to how to include the input of victims, partner agencies and field experts, as well as clear focus on the importance of

communication, language and motivational interviewing, and the importance of gathering all possible evidence to support a victim's case.

The Measurement of Victim Satisfaction

We will work with partner agencies to develop mechanisms for measuring the victim satisfaction of domestic abuse and other forms of violence against women and girls. There are no current ways in which this can be measured and we recognise that this needs to be developed sensitively. We will establish options for measuring satisfaction rates and views of personal experience of police intervention.

Strategic Oversight

In order to co-ordinate an effective victim-centred service, we will establish a strategic South Wales Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Forum. This will bring together statutory and voluntary sector agencies in order to establish co-ordinated action for improvement and a clear structure of accountability. The Forum will also enable good practice to be shared.

Consideration will also be given to ways in which strategic leadership on violence against women and girls is delivered on a Wales-wide level.

Encouraging Prevention

Our review has emphasised the need for enhanced education and awareness-raising on violence against women and girls, and this is needed amongst the general public and within statutory and voluntary sector agencies themselves. This would greatly contribute to the future prevention of violence against women and girls, and would encourage reporting with confidence as people would be made aware of the options available to them if they are experiencing abuse or suspect it is happening to someone else.

We have also identified the importance of tackling violence against women and girls at its source, by working to change perpetrator behaviour. Without addressing perpetrators, domestic abuse will not truly be prevented from happening.

The Key Issues:

Education & Awareness

South Wales Police sanction detection rates for adult rape are among the best in England and Wales, and for child rape cases are also above the national average.

However, despite the positive outcomes at this early stage of the criminal justice process, our review highlighted that South Wales rape cases are often resulting in jury acquittal. In short, whilst the South Wales Police area is doing very well in terms of rape detections, it is later in the criminal justice process that cases are falling, and this may well be hindering victim confidence to report in the knowledge that they will be believed. Rape prosecutions across the UK remain very low in number, with just 7% of

rapes reported to the police leading to a conviction in 2011-2012. We know there are difficulties in establishing the reasons for high numbers of jury acquittals at court and there are likely to be many. However our review highlighted the importance of wider understanding and awareness of sexual violence amongst the general public, where rape 'myths' and victim blaming can continue to prevail.

Public campaigns are important in order to raise awareness and understanding of violence against women and girl issues. They should include an understanding of the need for victims to report, how they can report and where they can go for help and advice. They should also include awareness-raising amongst the general public of domestic abuse, sexual violence and consent issues, including that all aspects of violence against women and girls are wrong.

The thematic review has also highlighted the need to more widely publicise the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (Clare's Law), which went live across England and Wales in March 2014. It gives individuals an opportunity to find out about a partner's criminal history if abuse is taking place or suspected. Take-up of this opportunity may reduce the number of people that go on to experience domestic abuse and we therefore regard it as a priority awareness issue.

Education in schools is also extremely important in preventing people from becoming victims and perpetrators in the future. It also enables young people to recognise domestic abuse and other violence against women and girls incidents

they may witness or experience in their homes or other settings. Given that the domestic abuse definition has recently been extended to 16 and 17 year olds, and that there is a greater risk of being a victim of domestic abuse for those aged 16 - 24 than for any other age group⁹, there is a clear need to raise awareness among young people.

The review found that take-up of the All Wales School Liaison Programme module relating to healthy relationships (which covers domestic abuse), is discouraging in some areas of the force. Although take-up is increasing, it currently stands at around 50%, and it is not mandatory for schools to opt to deliver these sessions. School awareness work is a key aspect of prevention and there remains a challenge as to how take-up can be increased across the Education sector.

Perpetrators

Domestic abuse perpetrator programmes are extremely important in managing the levels of violence against women and girls, as are programmes to change the behaviour of those that may be at risk of perpetrating. Working to change the behaviour of perpetrators should lead to an eventual decrease in abusive behaviour and a reduction in incidents and victims of violence against women and girls. Ultimately this should form part of any actions to tackle and prevent violence against women and girls. Appropriate and sensitive family intervention may also be the preferred

approach in some instances where the victim favours this approach and where the level of risk can be managed.

However, perpetrator work is under-developed and more work is needed to identify what works and where real outcomes are being seen.

Integrated Offender Management (IOM) Cymru is undertaking a specific piece of work on this subject, which South Wales Police will seek to engage in.

Our Actions

In order to encourage prevention of Violence Against Women and Girls, we will implement the following actions.

Education and Awareness

We will develop clear communication plans for informing the public about violence against women and girls, including the ways to report abuse and violence, the use of the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (Clare's Law), the support that is available to victims and the clear and strong message that all forms of violence against women and girls is wrong.

“Looking back, I think I was too young to understand I was in an abusive relationship. Young people should be taught about abuse so that they can recognise if it may be happening to them or someone they know.”

**Domestic Abuse Survivor
South Wales**

⁹ Smith, K., Osborne, S., Lau, I. et al (2012) Homicides, Firearm offences and intimate violence 2010/11: Supplementary Vol 2 to Crime in England and Wales 2010/11. London.

We will also look to work more closely with schools in relation to the delivery of the All Wales School Liaison Programme modules on violence against women and girl issues, encouraging take-up and communicating the importance of take-up.

We will ensure that the South Wales Police work on sexting in schools continues, and will work to consider if the contents of the programme could be developed into a form of parental awareness-raising.

Perpetrator Programmes

Using our academic partners, we will commission a literature review of existing perpetrator programmes and their success. An analysis of current programmes is required, including where they are adding value, followed by the co-ordinated

development of agreed programmes that can operate in South Wales.

We will also discuss plans for perpetrator programmes in the area with the Wales Probation Trust and Welsh Government. Agreement also needs to be reached on how the success of the programmes will be measured and monitored over time.

We will link in with the perpetrator programme work currently being carried out by Probation, Integrated Offender Management (IOM) Cymru and South Wales prisons, and consider how best to use the outcome findings in a co-ordinated way across South Wales. Family intervention options should also be explored with the relevant agencies such as Probation and the Welsh Government.



Measures of Success

The table below illustrates the measures we will use to assess progress against our outcomes.

Outcomes	Proposed Indicators	Measure of Success
To increase reporting from individuals and agencies To improve our response to victims of hidden violence against women and girls	Number of incidents of domestic abuse (broken down by incident type where possible)	Increase in incidents to reflect increased confidence
	Number of incidents of sexual offences	Increase in incidents to reflect increased confidence
	Number of honour-based, female genital mutilation and forced marriage incidents	Increase in incidents to reflect increased confidence
	Recorded online harassment offences	Increase in incidents to reflect increased confidence
	Recorded street harassment offences	Increase in incidents to reflect increased confidence
	Recorded violence with injury from sex workers (this is not currently collected and work is required to establish how this information could be recorded)	Increase in incidents to reflect confidence and partner working
	Number of new victims of domestic abuse and serious sexual offences	Increase in new victims to reflect confidence to report (as opposed to more repeat cases)
	Number of domestic abuse referrals from Health to MARAC	Increase in referrals
	Number of referrals from partner agencies (this is not currently collected and work is required to establish how this information could be recorded)	Increase in referrals

The table below illustrates the measures we will use to assess progress against our outcomes.

Outcomes	Proposed Indicators	Measure of Success
A Reduction in the number of repeat victims	Number of repeat victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence	Reduction in the number of repeats to reflect earlier successful intervention
	Percentage of high risk domestic abuse victims	Reduction in the percentage to reflect earlier successful intervention
	Average number of domestic abuse incidents in last 6 months for the Top 10 repeat high risk victims	Reduction in number to reflect intervention
For victims of violence against women and girls to have a more positive criminal justice outcome	Percentage of domestic abuse crimes resulting in conviction	An increase in percentage convictions
	Percentage of domestic abuse crimes where an arrest is made within 24 hours	An increase in percentage to reflect early intervention and action
	Bail Measures	A reduction in bail times to reflect charging decisions
For women and girls to have a voice in how we respond to gender-based violence	Victim satisfaction of police and partner response	An understanding of victim views to enable appropriate intervention and victim support measures to be put in place

Actions and Monitoring

The detailed actions we will deliver under each key area are listed in the Action Plan at Appendix A.

Progress of the actions will be monitored through regular updates to the Commissioner's Strategic Board and through the South Wales Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Forum that will be established.

Conclusion

Through the implementation of our 'Plan for Tackling Violence Against Women & Girls', we aim to see real, positive changes for victims, including their increased confidence to report, early intervention to help them through their experience, and a reduction in the number of women and girls who repeatedly experience abuse or violence.

We will work positively with our statutory and voluntary partners to deliver our actions as we recognise that violence against women and girls is everyone's issue. It must be addressed and we are committed to diligently tackling it in South Wales.



Appendix A

The South Wales Police Plan for
**Tackling Violence
Against Women and Girls**
2014 - 2017
Action Plan



Improving Early Identification and Intervention

Improving Early Identification and Intervention		Lead Responsibility	Timescale for Completion
1	Deliver a Health Liaison project to encourage 'Asking and Acting' processes in Maternity and A&E services in South Wales	Police & Crime Commissioner	May 2016
2	Within the Health liaison project, encourage Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) referrals from the Health sector	Police & Crime Commissioner	May 2017
3	In conjunction with partners, introduce the 'IRIS' project (Identification & Referral to Improve Safety) in an agreed GP cluster area of Cardiff and the Vale.	Police & Crime Commissioner	May 2016
4	Support the introduction of the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) to be piloted in Northern BCU.	South Wales Police (Public Protection and Northern BCU)	April 2015
5	Assess how the potential for a Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) approach in Northern BCU could be rolled out across the force area	South Wales Police (Public Protection and Northern BCU)	June 2017
6	Develop a protocol on the sharing of information around risk with other agencies, including the need for partners to act on the information and provide information back in a timely manner	South Wales Police (Public Protection)	October 2015
7	Encourage greater awareness and understanding of honour-based violence, forced marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM) across the force and among partner agencies	South Wales Police (Justice & Partnerships)	September 2016 and beyond
8	Explore options for roll out of the Honour-Based Violence / Forced Marriage training recently provided	South Wales Police (Justice & Partnerships)	May 2015
9	Encourage FGM referrals from individuals, the Health sector, Education sector and other agencies	South Wales Police (Justice & Partnerships) Police & Crime Commissioner	May 2017
10	Look to advertise FGM support to the public e.g. through advertising the NSPCC national FGM helpline	South Wales Police (Justice & Partnerships) Police & Crime Commissioner	May 2015

11	Encourage the reporting of domestic abuse from minority groups where reporting is low e.g. LGBT people and certain minority ethnic groups, including gypsies and travellers.	South Wales Police (Public Protection, Corporate Communications, Justice & Partnerships, Equality & Diversity)	May 2017
12	Increase partnership activity with Registered Social Landlord (RSLs) and scope RSL approach to domestic abuse across South Wales	Police & Crime Commissioner South Wales Police (Public Protection)	September 2015
13	Develop an agreed, consistent RSL protocol for dealing with domestic abuse, to be taken forward with Welsh Government	Police & Crime Commissioner South Wales Police (Public Protection)	May 2016
14	Consider what further information the force could share with the Housing sector in relation to domestic abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls	South Wales Police (Public Protection)	October 2015

Ensuring a Victim-Centred Approach

Ensuring a Victim-Centred Approach		Lead Responsibility	Timescale for Completion
15	Commission a mapping exercise of the domestic abuse and sexual violence services in South Wales, assessing demand versus provision. Review to include exploration of service provision for children.	Police & Crime Commissioner	June 2014
16	Consider ways in which South Wales Police officers and staff could refer domestic abuse victims to appropriate services at the earliest opportunity (e.g. links with All Wales Domestic Abuse Helpline)	South Wales Police (Public Protection)	October 2014
17	Establish a strategic South Wales Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence Forum to bring together statutory and voluntary sector partners	Police & Crime Commissioner	June 2014
18	Consider ways in which strategic leadership on violence against women and girls could be delivered on an all-Wales level	Police & Crime Commissioner	September 2015
19	Assess the internal structures for dealing with domestic abuse, honour-based violence, forced marriage and FGM. Consider the most appropriate structure for victims and communicate this with voluntary sector partners.	South Wales Police (Justice & Partnerships, Public Protection)	May 2015
20	Conduct a training needs analysis of domestic abuse training for officers and staff. Ensure training is victim-centred and includes communication and language skills, as well as victim and expert input.	South Wales Police (Public Protection, Learning & Development Services)	May 2015
21	Work with partner agencies to develop mechanisms for measuring victim satisfaction in relation to domestic abuse and other forms of violence against women and girls	South Wales Police (Public Protection) Police & Crime Commissioner	May 2015

Encouraging Prevention

Encouraging Prevention		Lead Responsibility	Timescale for Completion
22	Build links with minority communities and schools in defined areas, to develop clear messages about FGM, honour based violence and forced marriage. Utilise appropriate officers and voluntary sector to engage with specific minority communities on increased awareness and understanding.	South Wales Police (Justice & Partnerships)	May 2017
23	Commission a literature review of perpetrator programmes using our existing academic partner contract	Police & Crime Commissioner	December 2014
24	Link with the perpetrator programme work being carried out by Probation, Integrated Offender Management (IOM) Cymru and South Wales prisons, to consider how best to use the outcome findings across South Wales	Police & Crime Commissioner South Wales Police (Public Protection)	October 2015
25	Develop Communication Plans for informing the public about Violence Against Women and Girls. Include ways to report, support available, Clare's Law and the strong message that all forms of violence against women and girls are wrong	Police & Crime Commissioner South Wales Police (Corporate Communications, Public Protection, Justice & Partnerships)	From May 2014 - 2017
26	Work with the All Wales School Liaison Core Programme and Welsh Government on encouraging school take up of modules relating to domestic abuse and sexual consent	Police & Crime Commissioner South Wales Police (Public Protection, Justice & Partnerships)	May 2016

The South Wales Police Plan for

Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls

2014 - 2017



South Wales
Police and Crime Commissioner
Comisiynydd yr Heddlu a Throsedd
De Cymru

