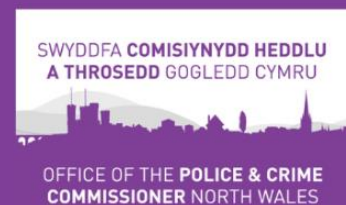


# North Wales without Violence

## North Wales Serious Violence Response Strategy 2024



# **North Wales Serious Violence Response Strategy**

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## Foreword

As Chair of the Safer North Wales Partnership Board, I am proud to present our first-ever Serious Violence Response Strategy—a landmark document that marks a turning point in our collective efforts to create a safer, more just region.

When Serious Violence occurs, and when people are living in fear of violence, the impact within our communities is devastating. This strategy, born from extensive collaboration among key stakeholders and our vital community partners, offers a bold and comprehensive blueprint for change.

Our vision is clear: a North Wales where violence holds no sway, where individuals feel safe and empowered, and where families thrive in a climate of respect and dignity. This overarching vision guides our strategic objectives to work together, hand in hand with our communities, to prevent and reduce serious violence in all its forms.

The pillars of this strategy are clear:

- Supporting and enhancing prevention and early intervention around violence against women and girls, domestic abuse, and sexual violence.
- Promoting contextual safeguarding to work with young children and young people vulnerable to exploitation and or modern slavery.
- Identifying and implementing improvements, best practice, and innovation as a partnership to serious violence
- Building a preventative approach in North Wales through an understanding of risk, adverse childhood experiences and trauma.

This strategy acknowledges the immense work already being done across our diverse partnership. We celebrate the dedication of police officers, firefighters, healthcare professionals, social workers, youth offending teams, probation officers, and countless others who strive daily to keep our communities safe. But we also recognise that together, we can achieve far more.

This is not simply a document it is a call to action. Let us build a North Wales where violence is not tolerated, where support systems are readily available and hope and opportunity prevail.

The road ahead may be challenging, but I am confident that through unwavering commitment, collaborative spirit, and a shared vision for a safer future we can write a new chapter for North Wales, a chapter free from the grip of violence and with the promise of a brighter tomorrow.

Together, let us build a North Wales without violence.



Ian Bancroft  
Chair Of Safer North Wales Partnership Board

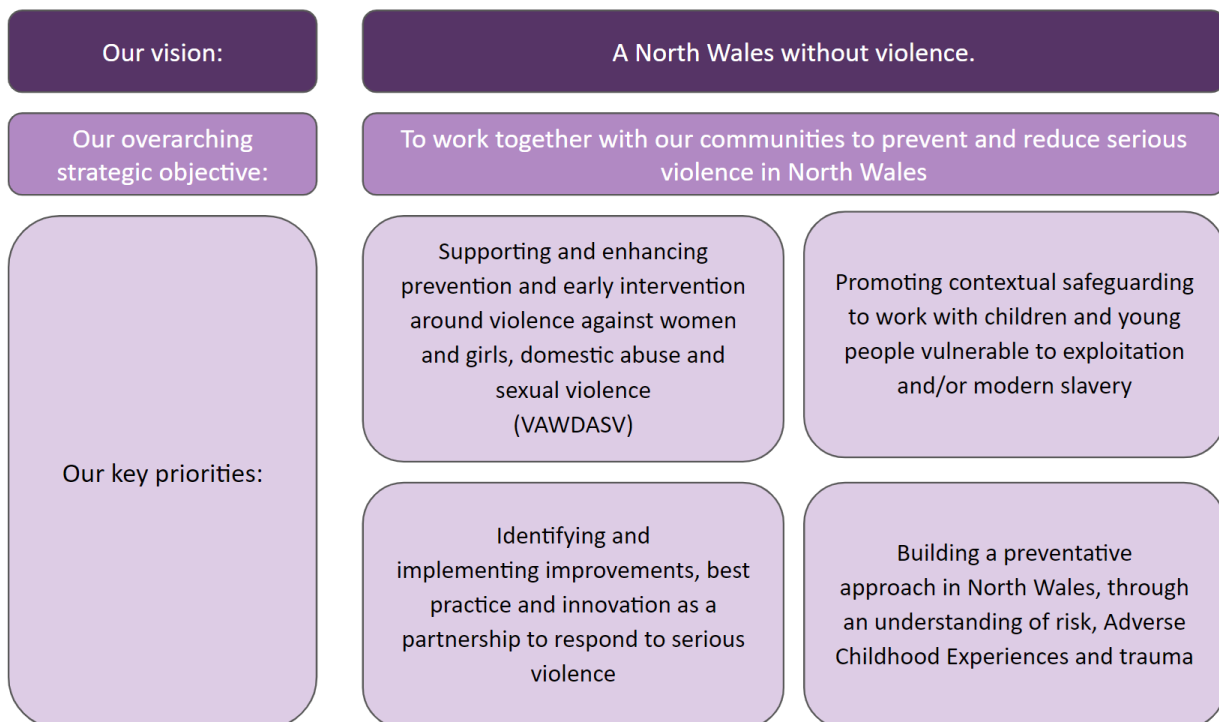


## Executive Summary

Serious violence has a profound impact on individuals and communities in North Wales. The 2024 Serious Violence Strategic Needs Assessment identified that in the 2022/23 financial year, 30,264 violence against the person offences were recorded by the police across the region. That amounts to 44 offences per 1,000 people. It is encouraging to note that this is a decrease on the year before, however it is important to remember that behind the statistics are individuals whose lives have been affected. Any level of violence is too high.

To help tackle serious violence across England and Wales, the Government published its Serious Violence Strategy in 2018, with the Serious Violence Duty coming into effect in January 2023 for all areas in England and Wales. This Duty focuses on bringing partners, including the police, local authorities, fire and rescue services and specified health and criminal justice agencies, together to tackle serious violence and its root causes in local areas.

In North Wales, the requirements of the Serious Violence Duty will be met as a region. There is much to be proud of across existing partnerships and there is a strong history of collaboration across agencies, and as a partnership, there is a confidence of what can be achieved through our strategic objective of working together with our communities to prevent and reduce serious violence in North Wales. This objective, along with our four key priorities set out below, have been collaboratively developed to help us on the journey towards our ultimate vision: North Wales without violence.



## The Serious Violence Duty and the Public Health Approach

Introduced as part of the Police Crime Sentencing and Courts Act 2022, the Serious Violence Duty requires specified authorities to work together to prevent and reduce serious violence in their local area. This Duty is supported by [national guidance](#), finalised in December 2022. The guidance includes a chapter specifically on delivery in Wales, due to its unique Partnership and delivery context. In this strategy, partners in North Wales will set out how we intend to meet the Duty. The core elements of the Duty are:

- to establish a local serious violence Strategic Needs Assessment
- to prepare, publish and implement a strategy to prevent and reduce serious violence,
- to review and revise the strategy as required

The Duty requires the following ‘specified authorities’ within a local government area to collaborate and plan to prevent and reduce serious violence: Police, Probation, Youth Offending Teams, Fire and Rescue, Health, Local Authorities.

Wales has made positive contributions to serious violence prevention, including the development of the public health approach and the Wales Violence Prevention Unit. The underpinning idea behind the Duty is taking a public health approach. In Wales, we have already signed up to the Memorandum of Understanding between Public Health Wales, Policing in Wales and criminal justice partners.

This Memorandum of Understanding supports an approach to serious violence focussed on recognising the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES), working together to keep communities safe and preventing reoffending and further harm to victims through the use of a trauma-informed approach.<sup>1</sup> The Wales Violence Prevention Unit’s Wales Without Violence Framework will also support North Wales to develop primary and secondary prevention strategies to support this public health approach.

The [Wales Against Violence Framework](#) includes an explanation of the public health approach and its benefits for reducing and preventing serious violence. It sets out the cyclical process of implementing the public health approach, comprising four stages of work:

- First, it notes that areas should **know the facts** about violence by working to understand and define the problem.
- Next, areas should **explore the solutions** by assessing evidence of ‘what works’ to prevent violence by reducing risk factors and increasing protective factors.
- Areas should then **implement and evaluate** interventions to address serious violence, using and informing the available evidence base. Interventions should be spread across the three levels of primary, secondary and tertiary prevention and include targeted and

<sup>1</sup> <https://phw.nhs.wales/services-and-teams/early-action-together/>

universal programmes.

- The fourth stage is to **adapt and scale up what works**, building on the findings of evaluations to scale up effective police and programmes, and continuing to assess the local picture of serious violence to inform ongoing work.

Throughout this strategy, each priority will be compared to the Wales Against Violence Framework to show how it aligns with the nine strategies within the framework (these strategies are set out on page 19) - these strategies focus on how partners can influence change on an individual/relationship, community and society level.

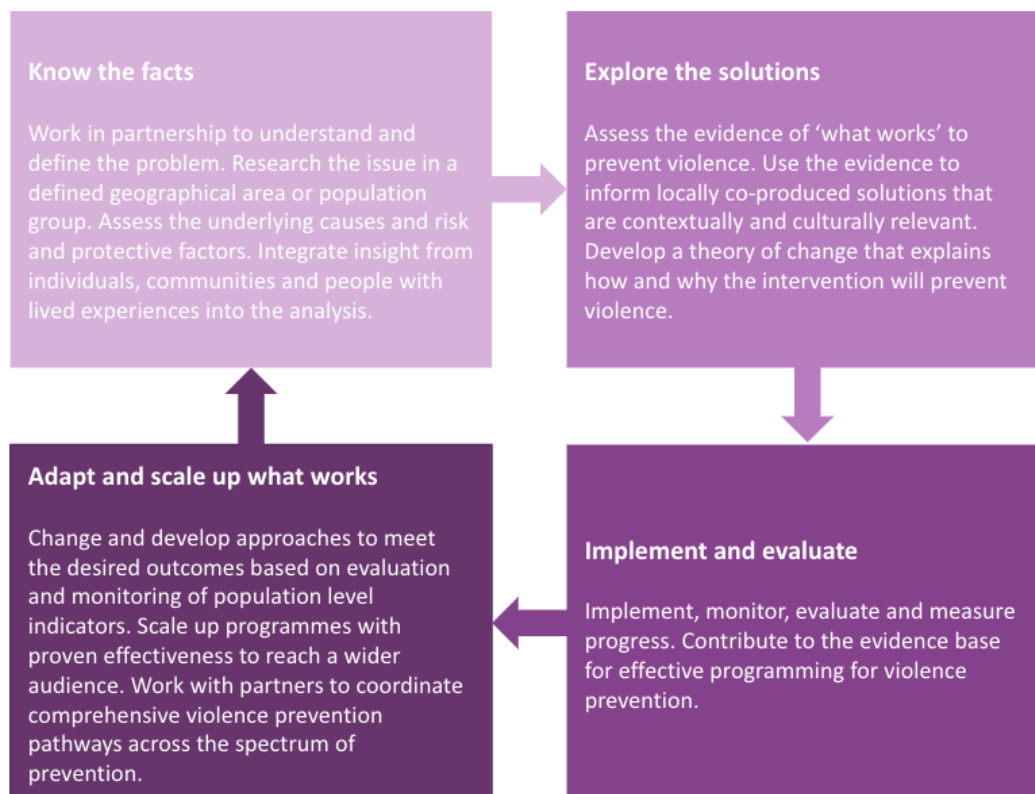


Fig. The steps of a public health approach<sup>2</sup>

In addition to the four steps to ensuring a public health approach to serious violence, the Wales Without Violence Framework also sets out nine key violence prevention principles that were identified in collaboration with children, young people and professionals across Wales. These nine principles are:

1. Recognise that violence is preventable;
2. Build partnerships for prevention;

<sup>2</sup> Wales Without Violence, *A Shared Framework for Preventing Violence among Children and Young People*. <https://waleswithoutviolence.com/the-framework/handbook/>

3. Coproduce<sup>3</sup> the solutions;
4. Uphold children’s rights;
5. Take a trauma informed approach<sup>4</sup>;
6. Use an intersectional lens<sup>5</sup>;
7. Integrate multi-agency data into decision-making;
8. Take an evidence-based approach;
9. Be proactive in involving communities.

The Partnership supports these nine principles and we are already working to ensure that our work aligns with each of them. The priorities set out in this strategy, as well as the supporting actions, are intended to further progress our alignment with these principles.

Partners in North Wales will also be using other legislative and policy frameworks to support a whole-system multi-agency approach to serious violence, including the the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, and the Violence against Women and the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015. This will be unlocked by utilising our strong partnerships in North Wales including but not limited to:

- Safer North Wales Partnership Board
- Vulnerability and Exploitation Board
- North Wales Criminal Justice Board
- North Wales Adult Safeguarding Board
- North Wales Children Safeguarding Board
- Community Safety Partnerships
- Public Service Boards

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<sup>3</sup> Coproduction is the involvement of the people who the strategy or interventions are designed to support, in this case the local communities in North Wales, in the design and creation of those strategies or interventions.

<sup>4</sup> A trauma informed approach is centred around the understanding that exposure to trauma can impact on the way in which individuals respond to and interact with the world around them.

<sup>5</sup> An intersectional lens involves looking at the effect of characteristics in combination, rather than in isolation.

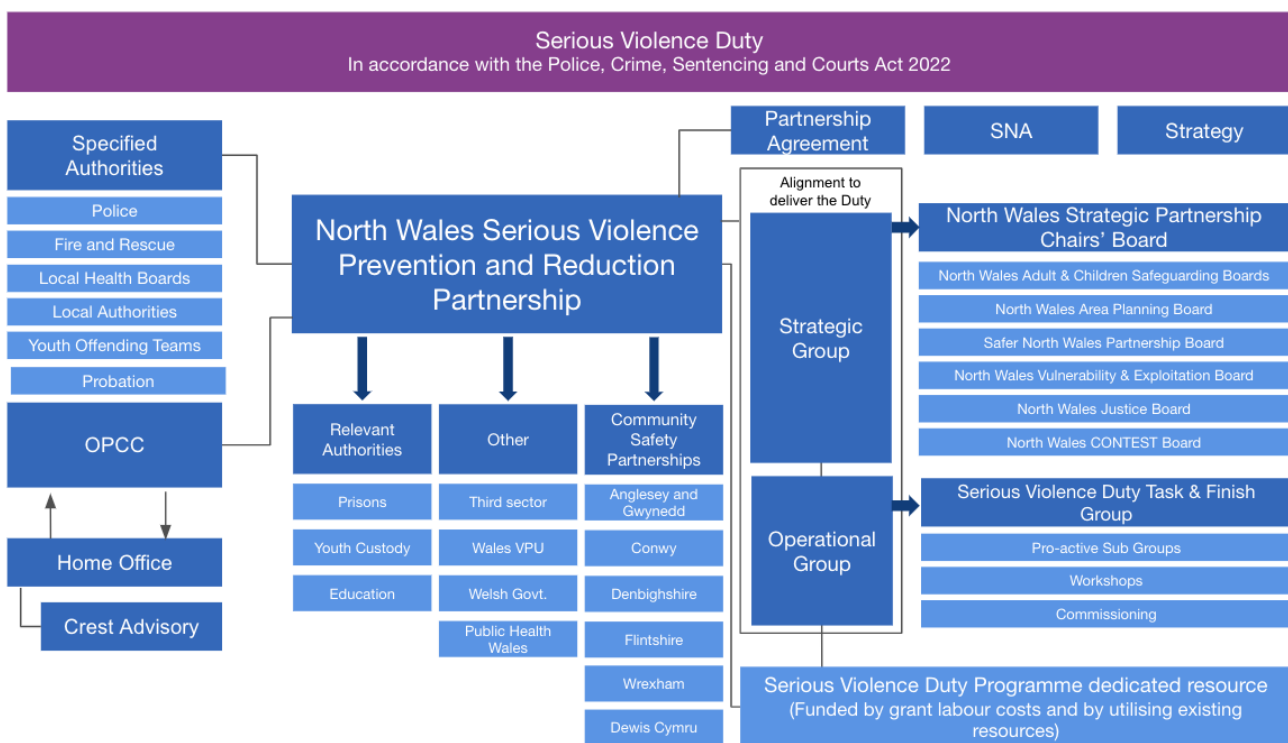


# The response to serious violence in North Wales

Since the Wales Violence Prevention Unit (VPU) was established with funding from the Home Office in 2019, its mission has been to prevent all forms of violence across Wales. The VPU seeks to tackle violence through the implementation of a public health approach to violence. The VPU published a violence SNA for North Wales in July 2022, commissioned by Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board Public Health team.

North Wales will be meeting and delivering the Duty at a police force area-level, the boundaries of which align with those of the Health Board, North Wales Fire and Rescue Service, and the Probation service. The Duty requirements are being delivered via the North Wales Serious Violence Reduction and Prevention Partnership. The North Wales Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner will be the grant holder and take on the lead convenor role, supporting the North Wales implementation of the Serious Violence Duty. The Safer North Wales Partnership, which sits within the wider North Wales Serious Violence Reduction and Prevention Partnership, holds the partnership portfolio for Serious Violence and Serious and Organised Crime and Community Safety, and oversees the Duty. It involves both specified and relevant authorities in its membership.

A Serious Violence Duty Steering Group was commissioned by the Safer North Wales Partnership in October 2022 in response to the requirement of the Serious Violence Duty. Other partnership boards are also involved in the Serious Violence Duty response such as the Adult and Children Safeguarding Boards, the Vulnerability and Exploitation Board, the Local Criminal Justice Board, and the area planning board for substance misuse. There is an overarching Strategic Partnership Chairs Board to coordinate these efforts.



## Progress to date in North Wales

There has already been significant progress made towards meeting the Duty requirements in North Wales. Key actions completed so far:

### *Governance*

- **Agreement of the partnership structure** to meet the requirements of the Serious Violence Duty
- Work is ongoing to encourage partners to present knowledge and **experience on good practice** at partnership meetings.
- A **Data Subgroup** has been formed and meets fortnightly to explore opportunities in relation to data tools
- Numerous **presentations** have been made to relevant Boards and partners to **raise awareness of the Duty and the responsibilities of partners**

### *Evidence*

- **Joint Readiness Assessment** completed to understand readiness and maturity across the partnership to meet the Duty
- Development of an **up-to-date Strategic Needs Assessment**. The Wales Violence Prevention Unit and Public Health Wales previously produced a robust violence Strategic Needs Assessment in January 2023
- A **'Professionals Survey'** created to understand what serious violence means to organisations and partnerships and how it presents in their roles, organisations, and communities was circulated in Autumn 2023
- A **Children and Young People North Wales Serious Violence Survey** was conducted in 2023 to gather the views and experiences of children and young people relating to violence in North Wales

### *Interventions*

- **Intervention mapping** to support understanding of 'as is' delivery
- A **community asset mapping inventory** was commissioned and completed by Crest Advisory in September 2023
- **Non-labour funding** has been allocated by the Partnership to support preventative interventions for children and young people in 2023/24
- The **Futures without Violence fund** has been used to award grants to prevention and reduction initiatives

## Existing interventions

The Partnership has undertaken an ongoing piece of work to map existing interventions taking place across North Wales. As well as identifying any gaps in the current service provision, the mapping exercise highlights how much work is already being done in the serious violence prevention and intervention space across the Partnership.

As of September 2023, the mapping exercise identified 126 interventions funded by a range of organisations and funders, including but not limited to: local youth justice services, the probation service, the Welsh Government Substance Misuse Action Fund, and the North Wales Police and Community Trust (PACT).

These interventions run across all three levels of intervention<sup>6</sup> according to the public health approach, including:

- 45 interventions focused on the primary intervention level
- 3 focused across the primary and secondary levels
- 15 focused on the secondary level
- 22 across the secondary and tertiary levels
- 11 focused on the tertiary level
- 12 interventions that span the primary, secondary and tertiary levels

As well as covering all three levels of intervention, the mapping exercise also confirms that the interventions cover a range of thematic areas, the most common of which are:

- Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence (VAWDASV) (33 interventions)
- Anti-social behaviour (15 interventions)
- Youth violence (13 interventions)
- County lines (12 interventions)
- Knife crime (12 interventions)

While the majority (71) of these interventions focus on children and young people, there are also a significant number (32) focused on adults, both as victims and perpetrators of crime. A minority of interventions (8) were targeted at professionals such as GPs and staff of licensed premises. As well as focusing on different age groups, some interventions offer specialist interventions aimed at specific cohorts, such as children and young people with incarcerated parents or serial perpetrators of domestic abuse. Most (58) of these interventions are commissioned across North Wales, with the minority being commissioned at a local authority level.

## Views of practitioners

The Partnership recently conducted a Serious Violence Professionals Questionnaire, completed by 73 professionals working in the serious violence space. This questionnaire provides valuable information on current work to prevent and reduce serious violence, as well as giving practitioners the opportunity to share their views on what the main strategic priorities should cover.

When asked what types of serious violence should be prioritised, common themes were domestic abuse, sexual violence, weapon enabled violence, and violence associated with drug dealing or substance misuse.

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<sup>6</sup> The three levels of intervention are: primary (intervention before a problem arises, to prevent it from happening at all); secondary (intervention early after a problem arises); and tertiary (intervention in an ongoing issue to reduce additional harm)

There were a variety of answers on what the current gaps in provision and interventions are, including references to needing to intervene with individuals at a younger age, a focus on healthy relationships education in schools and greater join up between partners.

“Perhaps not necessarily a “gap” but there is potentially a lack of communication between partners. This is due to increased volumes in workload and reduced resources requiring all professionals to be stretched thinly. This causes gaps in provision, reduces efficiency, therefore ultimately increases risk.” - Survey respondent

“Greater awareness in schools.” - Survey respondent

“Maybe [there should be] more on healthy relationships earlier on-early intervention and parental support especially for those families who [sic] have endured a significant amount of ACES- both parent or child.” - Survey respondent

“We need a room in each school for us to be able to set up a drop-in room and to do healthy relationship work in every secondary school.” - Survey respondent

“[We] need to work with youths much sooner/younger.” - Survey respondent

When asked for ideas and suggestions on what could be done to prevent and reduce serious violence, the most commonly mentioned topic was education. Other frequently mentioned themes included work with parents, better mental health provision and tackling poverty and inequality.

“Continuing the work/understanding around ACES and prevention work is a must for all agencies to be able to respond and get ahead of problems with limited resources.” - Survey respondent

“Tackling inequality within communities.” - Survey respondent

“From my professional experience there are large delays in arresting and questioning suspects of domestic abuse once the victim has reported them.” - Survey respondent

“More money invested in education and welfare to prevent the causes.” - Survey respondent

## Definition of 'serious violence' in North Wales

The North Wales Serious Violence SNA states that violence is characterised by “the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation”.

North Wales' SNA and strategy focuses on interpersonal violence. This is violence that occurs between family members, intimate partners, friends, acquaintances and strangers. It includes child maltreatment, youth violence, intimate partner violence, sexual violence, elder abuse and violence against women and girls. It is both predictable and preventable (WHO, 2020).

North Wales' definition of serious violence covers a range of offences, including:

- Homicide and near miss homicide
- Knife and weapon crime
- Modern slavery and SOC
- Violence against women and girls
- Domestic violence
- Rape and serious sexual offences
- Night time economy violence
- Violent acquisitive crime

It is important to note that the definition of serious violence in North Wales is broad and it will be most effective for the partnership to focus efforts on key strategic priorities where the evidence has identified the greatest need and scope for an effective response, acknowledging that not all components of the definition will be specifically represented in those priorities. Priorities will change and evolve over time in response to new information and best practice evidence.

## Living in North Wales

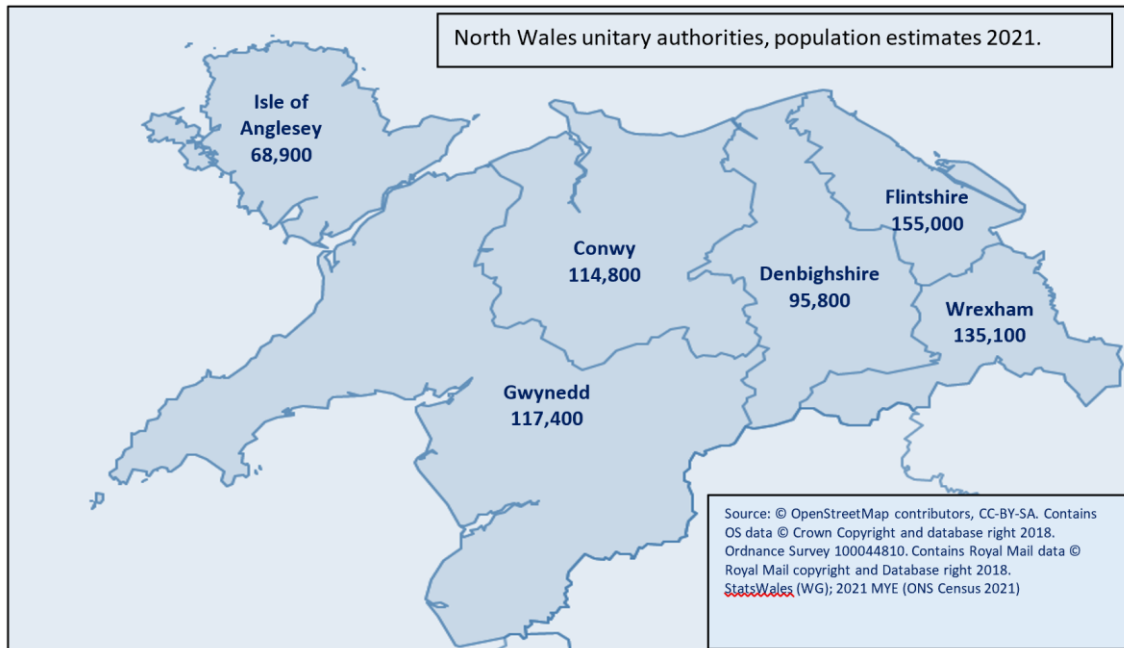
North Wales has a strong regional culture and sense of community, reflected in the effective Partnership arrangements. The beauty of the area, including its mountains and beaches, continues to attract large numbers of tourists every year. North Wales is also home to two universities: Bangor University and Wrexham University, both drawing students from across Wales, the UK, and internationally to live and study in North Wales. The increased populations of young people near the universities may influence the rates and types of violence present in these areas.

There are both built and natural environment contexts specific to North Wales. Holyhead Port and the A55 running through the region to Liverpool/Merseyside and onto Manchester, provide an infrastructure for modern slavery and human trafficking routes as well as county lines operations. They also demand highly effective cooperation between North Wales Authorities and neighbouring areas/Ireland to ensure an up to date picture of risks and intelligence around serious violence and related offending (e.g. county lines), and to assist in the investigation of live incidents.

The physical geography of the area also provides challenges in terms of law enforcement and delivery of prevention services. For example the open coastline to the west and mountainous relief to the east provide a challenging environment for travel and communication, and present barriers to some people in terms of accessing services.

The population is sparse and distributed across a large area which results in further access challenges given the lack of public transport. In addition, as a popular tourist destination, there is a transient population particularly in the summer months which can add complexity to policing and prevention activity. Levels of poverty and deprivation are relatively high in North Wales which is compounded by challenges in accessing services as a result of population density and transport.

Fig. Map of North Wales showing the six local authorities and their 2021 population estimates



As with other areas of Wales, the additional language spoken adds to the cultural richness of North Wales. Ensuring that communication and service delivery are provided in both English and Welsh is embedded practice across the Partnership. Furthermore, the culture and community ties across North Wales provide a strong foundation for an effective response to serious violence by drawing on existing networks to share best practice, and leveraging community responses to drive prevention activities.

## What does serious violence look like in North Wales?

A Serious Violence Strategic Needs Assessment for North Wales was completed in January 2024. The Needs Assessment was produced in partnership with members of the 'Serious Violence Duty Steering Group', its 'Data and Evidence Sub-group' and many other relevant and other authorities. The Needs Assessment uses data from a five year period from 2018/19 to 2022/23 and focuses on levels of violence, the prevalence of risk and protective factors, the demographics of the offending population and the cost of violence in Wales. The SNA uses data from a range of sources, including local police data, published government statistics and health data.

### Serious violence trends and crime types

In the 2022/23 fiscal year, 30,264 Violence against the Person (VAP) offences (with and without injury) were recorded in North Wales, at the rate of 44.05 per 1,000 population. This is a decrease on the 2021/22 figures, but is still higher than 2020/21 and the years before. Some of this increase is likely due to improvements in police recording practices and changes to offence types, such as the introduction of new criminal offences for stalking and coercive and controlling behaviour.

<b>Violence with injury</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● In the 2022/23 fiscal year, Violence with Injury offences increased by a very small percentage (0.34%), from 7325 offences in 2021/22 to 7350 in 2022/23.</li><li>● For 2022, the highest rate of recorded 'violence with injury' offences was seen in Denbighshire followed by Conwy and then Wrexham. Isle of Anglesey had the lowest rate of recorded 'violence with injury' offences.</li></ul>
<b>Domestic abuse</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● National reporting identifies that North Wales domestic abuse combined incidents and crimes has been at a rate of 27 per 1,000 population for the last 2 financial years, this is at a rate higher than the 'Wales and England' average of 24 per 1,000 population. For domestic abuse crimes only, the rate is 19 per 1000 population (2022/23) compared to the 'Wales and England' average of 15.</li><li>● Domestic Abuse is known to be underreported and is evidenced through other services and datasets which have shown large increases in referrals to IDVAs, increased demand for the Live Fear Free helpline, and increased numbers of cases discussed at MARACs. Domestic abuse is identified as a concerning theme within offender cohorts such as the probation service and Youth Justice and is also</li></ul>



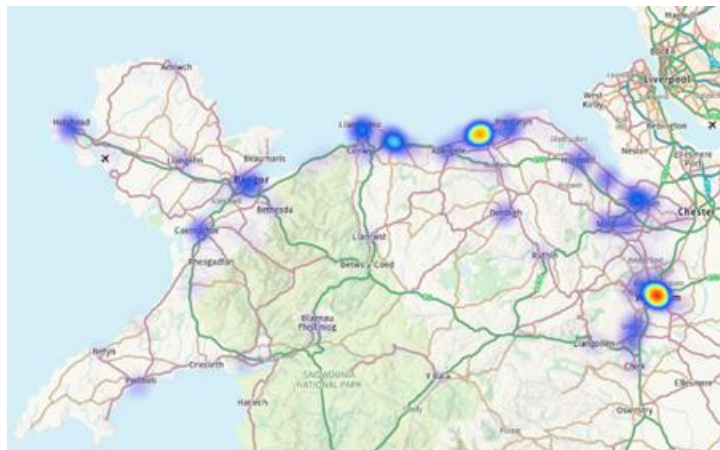
	highlighted by other professionals including social care and housing.
<b>Weapon-related offences</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● For the year ending March 2023, North Wales had one of the lowest rates of offences involving a knife or sharp object in the UK, with 44 incidents per 100,000 population, compared to the Welsh average of 49 and the English average of 89. Only 1.5% of all violence against the person offences in North Wales were recorded as involving a bladed implement.</li> <li>● Firearm offences are very rare in North Wales, with firearms being used as a threat far more often than they are discharged. There were no firearm discharges recorded in North Wales during 2022.23, and only one so far for 2023/24.</li> </ul>

### Where does serious violence take place?

Nearly half (48%) of all violence with injury in 2022/23 occurred in a dwelling, while 32% occurred in a public/open place (mainly street/road). Hospitality venues accounted for 9% of offences.

There is a noticeable correlation between areas of deprivation and violence. For example, Rhyl and Wrexham were identified as hotspot areas for violence against the person offending and were also mentioned as areas of greater deprivation. The Partnership understands that the areas of greatest need may change and we are committed to adapting to changes when needed.

*Fig. Map showing Violence Against the Person hotspots in North Wales, financial years 2021 and 2022*



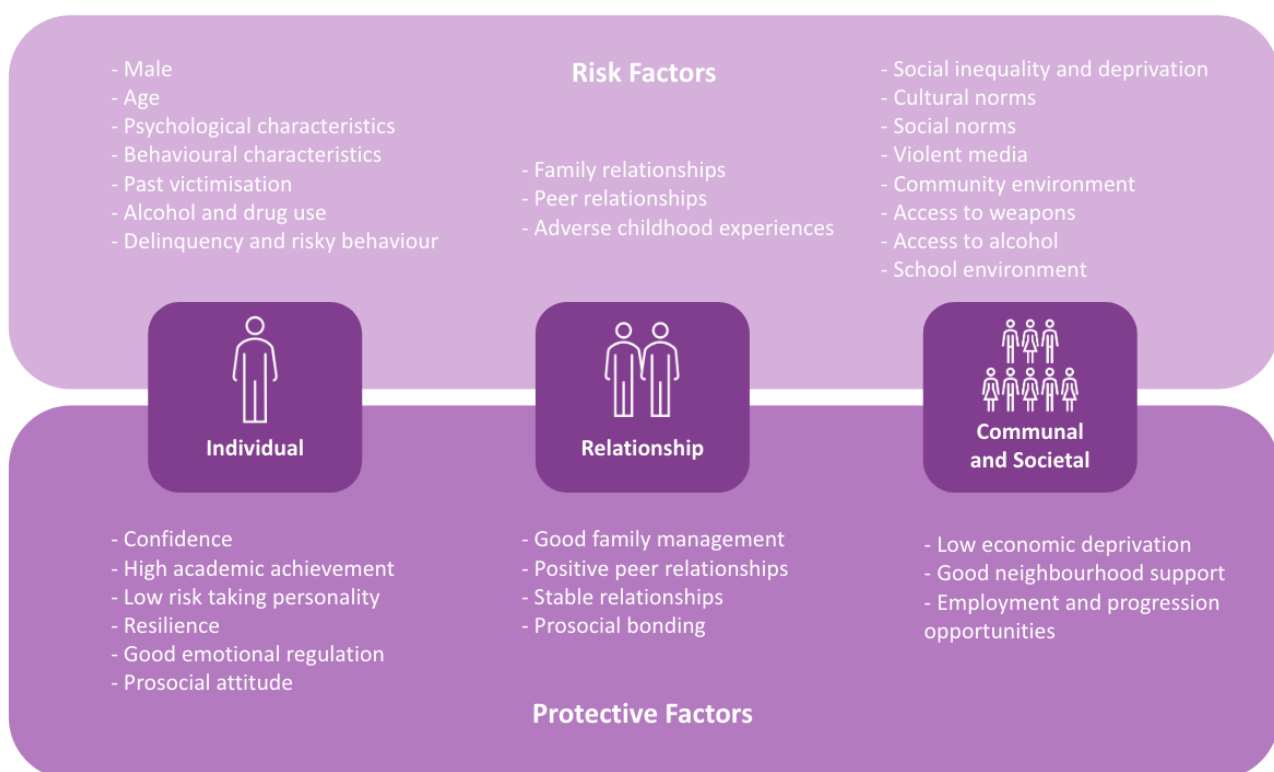
### Who is involved?

Women and men are equally likely to be victims of violence with injury, however women make up the majority (60%) of victims of violence without injury. It should also be noted that gender can have a noticeable impact on the types of offences experienced, with women being more likely to be victims of offences within the home, while men are more likely to be victims of offences in public spaces.

Men make up the majority of offenders (71% for violence with injury and 68% for violence without injury). Data provided by the Youth Justice Service in North Wales shows that 74% of their cohort in 2022/23 were male and 24% were female, however the proportion of female offenders has grown over the analysis period. Within the cohort known to Youth Justice Services, the most common age was 16 for males and 15 for females.

## Causes and risk factors of serious violence

*Fig. Diagram showing risk and protective factors at the individual, relationship and communal/societal level*



Nearly a quarter (23%) of violence with injury offences had a flag for offender substance misuse, 10% were flagged as not affected by drink and drugs, and 66% were unknown.

Between April 2021 and August 2022, 308 individuals were linked to active County Lines in North Wales. Over half (55%) of these were local and 45% were from outside of the force.

## Views of children and young people

The Partnership has also recently conducted a Children and Young People Survey, with 377 respondents. This survey helps to monitor children and young people's feelings of safety in North Wales, as well as identifying the prevalence of particular issues and thoughts on serious violence.

One of the questions in the survey asked about the participants' feelings of safety in their local community. The majority of respondents (81%) answered that they feel safe in their local community (at least most of the time), 14% said they feel safe sometimes, and 5% said they do not feel safe.

When asked whether they have ever been a victim or, witnessed or committed violence, 20% of respondents said they had been a victim, 29% said they had witnessed violence and 1% said they had carried out an act, or acts, of violence.

Survey respondents gave a variety of views when asked what they thought the main causes of violence to be.

"Because they may be drunk or angry and maybe they need to talk to someone about their problems to avoid it" - Survey respondent

"Out of fear, needing to be 'popular', to fit in and peer pressure." - Survey respondent

"A lot of people act out this way because of peer pressure and also home life" - Survey respondent

"I believe in some cases, people will commit violence due to what they experienced at a young age. Whether that was violence at home or witnessing it online or in person. If they are taught incorrectly at young, then they may not understand non-violent ways of handling situations." - Survey respondent

## The North Wales vision

Our vision is a North Wales without violence. Our overarching strategic objective is to work together with our communities to prevent and reduce serious violence in North Wales, as set out in the Serious Violence Duty 2022.

To support this strategic objective, the priorities for the Partnership are:

Supporting and enhancing prevention and early intervention around violence against women and girls, domestic abuse and sexual violence (VAWDASV)

Promoting contextual safeguarding to work with children and young people vulnerable to exploitation and/or modern slavery

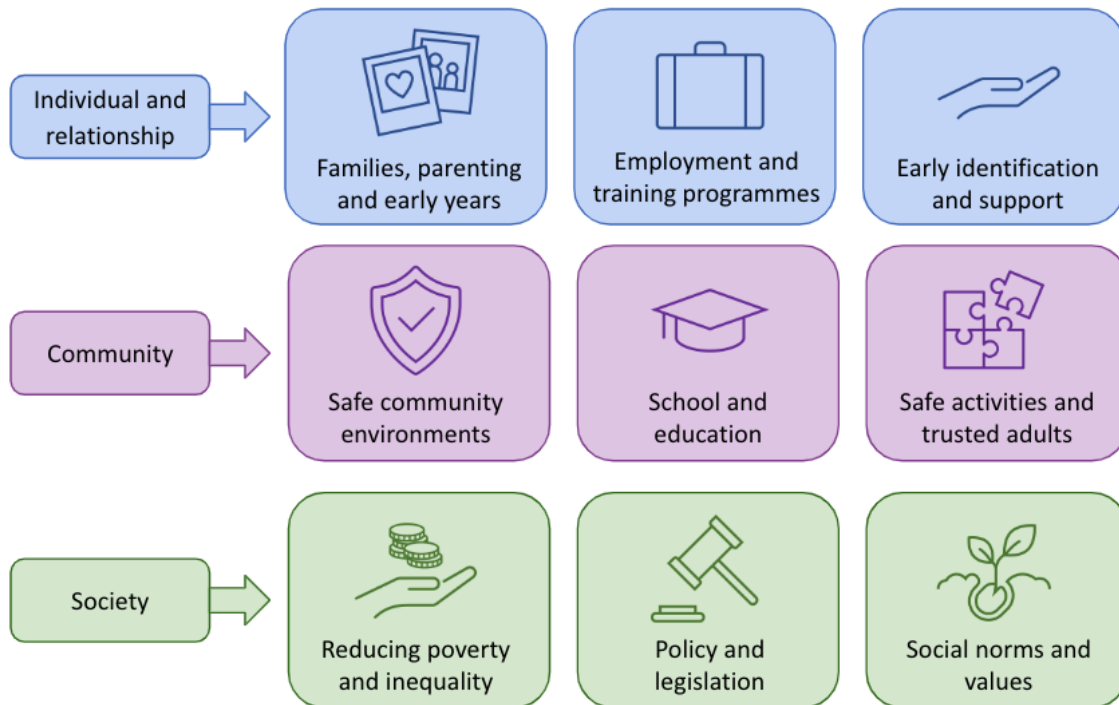
Identifying and implementing improvements, best practice and innovation as a partnership to respond to serious violence

Building a preventative approach in North Wales, through an understanding of risk, Adverse Childhood Experiences and trauma

## Alignment with the Wales Without Violence Framework

The Wales Without Violence Framework includes nine inter-related strategies for preventing violence, with a focus on primary prevention and early intervention.

Fig. Diagram of the nine strategies in the Wales Without Violence Framework



It is important that the North Wales serious violence response strategy aligns with the Wales Without Violence Framework. The below diagram sets out how each of the four priorities in this strategy aligns with the nine Wales Without Violence strategies.

Fig. Diagram of the four North Wales serious violence response strategy priorities compared to the Wales Without Violence strategies

Wales Without Violence Strategy	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Priority 4
Families, parenting and early years	✓			✓
Employment and training programs				
Early identification and support	✓	✓		
Safe community environments		✓		✓
Schools and education	✓	✓	✓	✓
Safe activities and trusted adults		✓		✓
Reducing poverty and inequality				
Policy and legislation			✓	
Social norms and values	✓			

## Supporting and enhancing prevention and early intervention around violence against women and girls, domestic abuse and violence (VAWDASV)

### Why is the Partnership doing this?

#### **VAWDASV increased by 32% in North Wales between 2018/19 and 2021/22**

This increase in reported VAWDASV figures highlights VAWDASV as an important crime type to prioritise as a Partnership. The North Wales VAWDASV Needs Assessment finalised in January 2023 notes that the number of recorded VAWDASV-related offences in North Wales rose from 22,744 in 2018/19 to 30,125 in 2021/22 (a 32% increase). This Needs Assessment also highlights a 32% increase in recorded domestic abuse offences in North Wales between 2020/21 and 2021/22, compared to a 7.7% rise for England and Wales in the same period. It should be noted that increases in reported offences can be influenced by changes in reporting and recording practices, as well as by actual changes in offending. It is also known that domestic abuse is often significantly under-reported, with research estimating that less than a quarter of domestic abuse crimes are reported to the police<sup>7</sup>.

#### **Sixty percent of violence without injury disproportionately impacts women and girls, and the majority of offences occur within the home**

The North Wales Serious Violence Strategic Needs Assessment also included findings on VAWDASV. The SNA notes that, when looking at violence without injury, sixty percent of victims were women and girls. Similarly, for this offence type, just under two thirds of offences (65%) occurred within the home, suggesting they are linked to domestic abuse. The SNA also states that the rate of sexual offences per 1,000 people in North Wales increased from 3.86 in 2021/22 to 3.92 in 2022/23. This is higher than the Wales average of 3.24 per 1,000 people, suggesting this is an area where North Wales can make improvements.

#### **The partnership recognise that there is a gap around prevention and early intervention around VAWDASV**

Partners support prioritising domestic abuse and sexual violence as key types of violence. We are also aware that, while there is lots of work already going on to help support victims in this space, there is a gap around prevention and early intervention. For example, it has been noted anecdotally that instances of teenagers using violence against parents should be picked up much sooner, which could in turn help to prevent these individuals later going on to be violent to their adult partners.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.ncdv.org.uk/domestic-abuse-statistics-uk/>

The Serious Violence Professionals Questionnaire also identified domestic abuse and sexual violence as areas respondents felt should be prioritised by the Partnership.

## What are we already doing?

### Governance

A Duty set out in the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 requires local authorities and Local Health Boards to prepare a strategy to tackle violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence. The national VAWDASV strategy sets out six objectives to address this form of violence.<sup>8</sup>

<b>Objective 1:</b> Challenge public attitudes to VAWDASV	<b>Objective 2:</b> Increase awareness of safe, equal and healthy relationships	<b>Objective 3:</b> Focus on perpetrators
<b>Objective 4:</b> Make early intervention and prevention a priority	<b>Objective 5:</b> Train professionals	<b>Objective 6:</b> Provide support and services to victims

In North Wales, the Vulnerability and Exploitation Board has a Terms of Reference to provide strategic leadership of national strategies including VAWDASV and the Board’s strategy is aligned to these six national objectives. The Safer North Wales Partnership Board also has a focus on VAWDASV, under their strategic priority to tackle violence crime.

### Alignment with the ‘Wales Without Violence Framework’

The North Wales priority to support prevention and early intervention around violence against women and girls, domestic abuse and sexual violence (VAWDASV) is aligned to the following strategies in the Wales Without Violence Framework.

**Alignment of this priority with the ‘Wales Without Violence Framework’**

<sup>8</sup> Welsh Government, Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence: strategy 2022 to 2026



<p><b>Families, parenting and early years</b></p> <p>A focus on creating a healthy, safe and happy environment for children. This includes measures for the prevention of child abuse, including domestic abuse and other adverse childhood experiences.</p>	<p><b>Early identification and support</b></p> <p>Children and young people are able to access safe, appropriate and timely support if they have experienced and/or are concerned about VAWDASV.</p>
<p><b>Schools and education</b></p> <p>Children and young people are able to access violence prevention programmes focused on VAWDASV within educational settings.</p> <p>Education professionals are trained around working with children and young people around VAWDASV.</p>	<p><b>Social norms and values</b></p> <p>Children and young people are able to access social norms programmes that challenge inequitable social norms around VAWDASV and upskills bystanders to prevent violence.</p>

### Processes, services and people

Recent intervention mapping indicates there are a number of existing interventions focused on secondary and tertiary prevention around VAWDASV, for example Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC), Independent Domestic/ Sexual Violence Advisor (IDVA/ISVA) provision, victim and survivor services and perpetrator programmes. North Wales Police chair a domestic abuse perpetrator programme ADAPT (Agencies Domestic Abuse Perpetrators Tasking) including a multi agency panel once a month to discuss a cohort of domestic abuse perpetrators from each of the six local authorities.

However, there is an opportunity to focus on primary and secondary prevention - preventing violence before it happens and addressing early signs of problems. The Welsh Violence Prevention Unit conducted a systematic evidence assessment to produce a report on What Works to Prevention Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) which will be useful to inform the partnership North Wales.<sup>9</sup>

What are we going to do next?

**Long-term outcomes for this priority:**

<sup>9</sup> Violence Prevention Unit, What Works to Prevent Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV)?: Systematic Evidence Assessment

- Children and young people in North Wales understand what safe and healthy relationships look like, including how to be active bystanders to tackle VAWDASV. It is essential that all children and young people have access to this information, including those who do not attend school or who have low attendance. This could include engagement with CAMHS and CALDS to ensure that programmes are accessible and understandable for all children and young people.
- Members of the public in North Wales are able to more effectively identify incidents of VAWDASV, and know how they can intervene and support those affected.
- Partners have a better understanding of who is affected by VAWDASV in North Wales through an improved data environment, including understanding the specific risk factors that exist in these cohorts (e.g. child / adolescent to parent / carer abuse). This includes improved data collection and enhanced data sharing as well as ensuring systems of work are set up to respond to information.

## Short-term and long-term actions to realise these outcomes

### Short-term actions (to achieve in the next year)

- Use the findings from the intervention mapping exercise to review the services and gaps in services in the VAWDASV space, particularly focusing on primary prevention opportunities that challenge and shift social norms and values and focusing on positive role modelling for boys and men living in North Wales
- Review the referral pathways and their use by partners for VAWDASV services in North Wales
- Deliver training on active bystander approaches to tackle VAWDASV, emphasising that VAWDASV is “everyone’s business”
- Review examples of national good practice in reducing VAWDASV, including a focus on VAWDASV in the night time economy, and consider where this can be applied in North Wales

### Long-term actions (to achieve in the next five years)

- Review sustainable commissioning opportunities in the VAWDASV space, learning from existing breadth of coverage by contracted services
- Improve the consistency and quality of data collection of VAWDASV indicators, including data on child on parent/ carer abuse, and consider modernising the approach to data collection and reporting across all areas

- Take a systems-thinking approach to VAWDASV and explore how partnership working supports a holistic approach to wrap around support for families
- Create defined parameters of the times and locations associated with the night time economy in North Wales, to enable further research on the extent to which VAWDASV and other offence types are associated with the night time economy.

## What are we doing already to tackle VAWDASV?

### Rape and Sexual Abuse Support North Wales - Don't Steal My Future Programme

**Introduction:** 'Don't Steal My Future' is an educational campaign, raising awareness of the widespread prevalence of sexual violence in society, and most importantly, how we can begin to change attitudes and behaviours particularly towards women and girls who make up the large proportion of the population affected by these crimes. RASASCNW's 'Don't Steal My Future' programme is approximately 2-3 hours long and has been designed to educate students on the reality of sexual violence, particularly against women and girls, although the training addresses sexual violence against all.

It is the only program being delivered of this type which is offender focused and addresses perpetrator behaviour and the impact of offending on the offender and their family.

**Workshops:** The workshop uses real life examples, interactive quizzes and information on types of crimes, the consequences of committing offences and provides participants with a 70+ page e-book which contains the workshop material plus additional information.

The workshop is impact driven and discusses topics such as: what is sexual violence; why does it matter to me; and peer pressure. The training is not graphic; it does briefly discuss the real life cases of Sarah Everard, Chanel Miller and David Davies. The material is designed to help young people identify sexual violence, controlling behaviour etc and offers information and resources in a supportive manner. The end of the training encourages participants to take a pledge not to steal anyone's future and silicone bracelets and ribbons are available for participants to wear, showing their support of the pledge.

We believe the training will be the seismic shift needed in changing the attitudes towards sexual violence and will reduce offending, leaving young people safer.

**Programme delivery:** The programme has been delivered across the whole of North Wales in all six counties in schools, colleges, and universities. During its first year the programme was delivered to over **3700 students, to 32 schools and colleges**, with attendance from **322 educational staff**.

It became evident from the pilot phase of this campaign the need for this important work, not only for the young people that the programme was aimed at reaching, but also for the staff and professionals of the educational settings we were delivering too. Staff organising or attending would approach our trainers and support staff for advice and support on how to manage disclosures or even how to approach situations of possible sexual abuse.

This academic year 2023 -2024 **so far**, we have delivered to 41 schools, to students from year 7+, and have already reached 3155 students and 122 staff members. Bookings confirmed **so far** for the remainder of the academic year are confirmed to 20 schools, student audiences of approximately 7500 and 320 educational staff.

Data analysis from student surveys and Kahoot quizzes have found that:

- Knowledge of understanding/awareness before the session average was 51%.
- Knowledge understanding/awareness after the session average was 78%
- When asked 'How much have you learnt today?' most recent findings was that 90% of learners chose 'a lot' or 'quite a bit'
- When asked 'do you think this training helps young people?' response from students in the latest analysis found that 85% found the training helpful.

## What are we doing already to tackle VAWDASV?

### Case study: Plan UK International - Futures Without Violence

**Who are Plan UK International?** Plan International UK is a global children's charity working with girls and boys growing up in some of the world's poorest communities, making sure they have access to the education, health care, clean water and future opportunities they need to thrive. Plan UK International also work to create a just and equal world for girls – including here in the UK. Through 'Because I am a Girl campaign' they are standing with brave girls everywhere as they take on the issues that matter to them, from child marriage to street harassment and sexual exploitation at work.

**Futures without violence project:** Plan UK International held a series of events and activities in North Wales. The events involved inspirational speakers, workshops and collaborative discussion for young men, boys and the professionals that support them, to create a vision for a future Wales without Gender Based Violence.

**Leading the Change:** Plan International UK and partners held a unique event for boys and young men aged 13-19 to explore healthy relationships and positive masculinity with the world-renowned organisation, She Is Not Your Rehab. Approximately 300 boys and young men, from several local schools and colleges, attended the event which provided a marketplace for young people, introducing and informing them of organisations and valuable supportive resources.

A presentation was given from 'She Is Not Your Rehab', TEDx speaker and best-selling author Matt Brown, with a positive message of hope and inspiration for teen boys and young men.

The event gave an opportunity to explore themes related to anti-violence, positive masculinity and healthy relationships. Opportunities to contribute towards a vision of a Wales free from violence. A free resource pack were distributed to enable teachers and schools to continue to explore these themes with student's post-event.

**Feedback:** Post event, Matt Brown received many powerful messages via social media from young boys and men who attended. The following have given approval for their feedback to be shared:

Hi Mat I was to shy to come up to you today but I want you to know you've impacted me deeply. I wish my Dad got to hear you today because he carries so much of the anger you talked about today towards his own father that I've seen it play out on me and my siblings. I've held a lot of resentment towards my Dad for a long time but after your talk today you've given me new understanding on why my Dad is the way he is and it makes so much sense. Never change Mat, you're my new favourite role model so thank you for coming to visit us.

Damn bro, you really challenged me today on my view of masculinity and how I've treated females for sometime now. Especially my mum. I think I've blamed her for everything wrong in my life where infact shes been everything for me and more than any male has shown up for. The first thing I did tonight when mum got home from work is apologised to her for treating her like shit since my dad left us. I just wanted you to know your lecture will have a lasting impression on me bro and im grateful i was in the room. Thank you

Im so glad I got to hear you today Matt. Im so glad I came to school today because I wasn't going to. Your talk is one of the best things Ive ever listened to. I couldve listened to you all day and wish more teachers and parents were in the room to! From all of us in deeside, thank you for speaking up on topics that are so foreign to hear yet so close to home for a lot of us. New Zealand is very lucky to have you so please know if you ever want to move here, we'd gladly have you and your family as so many of us boys need better role models like yourself. All the best with the rest of your tour.

# Promoting contextual safeguarding<sup>10</sup> to work with children and young people vulnerable to exploitation<sup>11</sup> and/or modern slavery

## Why are we doing this?

### **School exclusion rates are higher in North Wales than the overall rates for Wales**

The North Wales Serious Violence SNA identified some key areas of risk that may put children and young people at increased vulnerability to exploitation and/or modern slavery. For example, despite attendance and engagement with education being a known protective factor for children and young people, the SNA highlighted that the school exclusion rates in North Wales are higher than the Wales average. The use of fixed-term exclusions in North Wales has also been increasing, from 3,274 fixed-term exclusions in 2011/12 to 6,666 in 2021/22<sup>12</sup>.

### **Around a third of children in North Wales live in low-income households**

Another risk factor that can lead to increased vulnerability is deprivation. The SNA noted that between 30% and 35% of children in North Wales live in low-income households. Deprivation can increase vulnerability to exploitation and modern slavery as models such as county lines can target children and young people with promises of money and desirable material goods.

According to the SNA, there are between 10 and 15 county lines operating in North Wales at any given time. County lines are associated with high levels of violence, as well as child criminal and sexual exploitation. The 2023 Community Profiles produced by North Wales police state that between April 2021 and August 2022, 77 individuals in North Wales were flagged by the police as being vulnerable to criminal exploitation. Out of these 77 individuals, almost half (38) were between the ages of 8 and 17 years old. In addition, the questionnaire completed by professionals working in the serious violence space put forward violence associated with drug dealing or substance misuse as a key priority area for the Partnership.

### **Over a third of respondents to the children's survey had seen posts encouraging or threatening violence on social media in the last 12 months**

Safeguarding should not be limited to physical spaces. Many partners have concerns regarding the influence of social media and the online space on the safety of children and young people. The Children and Young People North Wales Violence Survey asked respondents whether they had seen

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<sup>10</sup> Contextual safeguarding is an approach to recognising and responding to sources of harm to children and young people, outside of their family home. For example, this can include schools, after-school activities and the online space.

<sup>11</sup> The term 'exploitation' here refers to both criminal and sexual exploitation.

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.gov.wales/permanent-and-fixed-term-exclusions-schools-september-2021-august-2022>

individuals or groups on social media encouraging or making threats of violence. Of the 256 respondents to that question, 38% (96 respondents) said they had seen this within the last 12 months, with a further 18% (46 respondents) saying they had but over 12 months ago.

Due to the prevalence of these risk factors and the high levels of harm associated with exploitation and modern slavery, the Partnership will prioritise contextual safeguarding for vulnerable children and young people in this space.

## What are we already doing?

### Governance

In North Wales, the Vulnerability and Exploitation Board has a Terms of Reference to provide strategic leadership of national strategies including on exploitation and modern slavery, and the Vulnerability and Exploitation Board strategy aligns with the Home Office Modern Slavery Strategy and the Wales Anti-Slavery Leadership Group Strategic Objectives. The North Wales Vulnerability and Exploitation Strategy 2021-2024 sets out seven objectives related to tackling modern slavery.

<b>Objective 1:</b> Support victims to recover	<b>Objective 2:</b> Raise awareness and develop knowledge and skills among professionals	<b>Objective 3:</b> Disrupt organised crime
<b>Objective 4:</b> Increase referrals to the NRM	<b>Objective 5:</b> Support agencies to ensure effective use of legal powers	<b>Objective 6:</b> Develop sustainable and effective governance structures
<b>Objective 7:</b> Ensure the sustainability of the partnership response		

### Alignment with the ‘Wales Without Violence Framework’

The priority to promote contextual safeguarding and work with children and young people vulnerable to exploitation and/or modern slavery is aligned to the following strategies in the Wales Without Violence Framework.



Alignment of this priority with 'Wales Without Violence Framework'	
<p><b>Early identification and support</b></p> <p>Children and young people are able to access safe, appropriate and timely support if they have experienced and/or are concerned about exploitation and/or modern slavery</p>	<p><b>Safer Community Environments</b></p> <p>Children and young people are able to access safe, recreational spaces within their communities (online and offline)</p>
<p><b>Schools and education</b></p> <p>Children and young people are able to access violence prevention programmes focused on exploitation and modern slavery within education settings</p> <p>Children and young people are able to access education based, trauma-enhanced services for the trauma and adversity they've experienced</p> <p>Education professionals are trained around working with children and young people around exploitation and modern slavery</p>	<p><b>Connection to safe activities and trusted adults</b></p> <p>Children and young people are engaged in activities outside school/ education</p>

### Processes, services and people

There are a number of existing interventions across the three levels of prevention which are targeted at tackling child exploitation and modern slavery. These existing interventions and services tend to focus on tackling exploitation and county lines. One common primary intervention across North Wales is awareness sessions for young people and parents and carers.

Mapping work is currently underway through the Regional Modern Slavery forum, on behalf of the Violence and Exploitation Board, regarding MET (missing, exploited, trafficked) to review forums across the region. These forums hold key data related to vulnerable children and young people and the aim of this mapping exercise is to review the forums and define their functions, how and where they report to, and how they can be utilised to improve outcomes for young people.

Partners in North Wales agree there is a need to ensure safeguarding exists in all spaces frequented by children, both physical and virtual. At present, services tend to focus on supporting young people in physical spaces, and further work could be done to safeguard young people online.

## What are we going to do next?

### Long-term outcomes:

- Children and young people in North Wales understand how and why certain contexts are dangerous, including online spaces. They are well equipped to mitigate the risks around exploitation and/or modern slavery, and how to access support if they feel at risk/ in danger
- Professionals, family and members of the public (including businesses and the voluntary and community sector) in North Wales are able to more effectively identify and then intervene around exploitation and/or modern slavery, and how to support those affected
- Partners have a better understanding of who is at risk of exploitation and modern slavery in North Wales through an improved data environment, including understanding the specific risk factors that exist in these cohorts

## Short-term and long-term actions to realise these outcomes

### Short-term actions (to achieve in the next year)

- Develop consistent training on contextual safeguarding and trauma informed practice for children and young people for use across the partnership
- Strengthen collaborative and data-sharing relationships between agencies in neighbouring areas, with the aim of working together to safeguard vulnerable young people
- Review the consistency of delivery of return from home interviews and robustly evaluate how effectively interviews are being used to safeguard young people
- Continue to progress existing work to align and streamline Boards responsible for the strategic response to safeguarding children and young people, including join-up with the Serious Organised Crime partnership meetings
- Provide all children and young people in North Wales with the necessary training and skills to navigate online spaces and stay safe online
- Ensure there are opportunities for collaboration and join-up with schools and local authorities to create opportunities for mutual learning on 'what works' in contextual safeguarding, acknowledging that this may look different in each local authority
- Review the referral pathways available and their use by partners for children and young people at risk of exploitation and modern slavery

**Long-term actions (to achieve in the next five years)**

- Improve the policies and processes for the sharing of intelligence on vulnerable children and young people across the partnership
- Improve the consistency and quality of data collection of risk factors for exploitation, and consider modernising the approach to data collection and reporting across all areas
- Develop evidence-based interventions focused on both preventing exploitation and modern slavery, and reducing its long-term harm where it has been identified

# What are we doing already to tackle exploitation and modern slavery?

## North Wales Police - Victims of Modern Day Slavery, two case studies

### Case study 5a - introduction:

Labour Abuse and Exploitation Female in her early 50s, identified as a victim of modern slavery working in a hotel. She was trafficked away from her home and family and was exploited by her abusers. She was forced to work long hours with very little or no pay. Although she was given accommodation as an incentive, she received no contract of employment, no payslips, and wasn't given access to her own money.

### Needs and support:

Ongoing support and reassurance to help them cope with what had happened.

- Housing - letters of support sent to housing authorities and agencies
- Advocacy with Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority to find out who the caseworker was as no contact from them and original caseworkers x 2 had left.
- Advocacy with Navigator - Liaised with Navigator support worker to ensure support was not duplicated and the victim's needs were met.
- Personal Safety - personal alarm sent.

With help from Victim Support she moved out of Wales to a place where she could begin to rebuild her life away from the abusers. The caseworker initially kept in contact with her over the phone on a weekly basis until the support gradually reduced to the victim taking the lead and calling when she needed to talk. More recently she has a new job where she now receives fair and equal pay, a payslip and has a contract and she has also moved into her own home. She no longer feels she is at risk of being exploited.

Victims Quote: *"At first I was in denial that I was a victim. It was only when it was pointed out to me that I realised what was happening[...]. Support from the caseworker helped build my self-esteem and confidence, I was always a strong person and I still am but I got lost. [...] I felt a weight lifted off my shoulders."*

**Case study 5b - introduction:** Labour Abuse and Fraud Ongoing case of MDS – they had been a victim of MDS and Labour abuse for many years and English was not their first language. The case was heard at court and the 2 offenders were found guilty and sentenced to 18 yrs each in prison.

### Needs and support:

- Ongoing support and reassurance to help them cope with what had happened to them.
- Support with understanding and completing CICA claims.
- Financial advice and signposting to Citizens Advice - The offender repeatedly took out fraudulent loans in the victim's name, resulting in a poor credit rating in their name.

Language Line was used for all verbal communication and we also developed our communication by meeting face to face and calling Language Line to facilitate conversation. The caseworker assisted the victim face to face to complete the CICA form online using an interpreter for victim input. Several follow up meetings were held, again using the interpreter and the victim has been able to ask CICA questions herself by using the interpreter.

Victim stated *"this has empowered me as I have been able to ask questions myself to [...] about CICA"*. CICA has since been awarded for £2000.

Quote from victim: *"Thank you Victim Support, you are the only people that have taken the time to listen to me, I have felt really discriminated against by so many other agencies as they have not taken the time to listen to me as my first language isn't English"*.

## Identifying and implementing improvements, best practice and innovation as a partnership to respond to serious violence

### Why are we doing this?

#### Collaboration across the partnership is key to tackling serious violence

Collaboration is a key element of a successful partnership response to serious violence. There is collaborative work underway across specified authorities and relevant partners, but more could be done to ensure that partners have the opportunity to work together to respond to serious violence. When asked in the Serious Violence Professional Questionnaire to share any examples of good practice to reduce serious violence, multiple respondents gave answers related to collaboration:

“Any successful initiative has only ever been successful because of a partnership approach.” - Survey respondent

“Our police colleagues are proactive and communicative which is positive and supports our aim to reduce crime and ASB.” - Survey respondent

“Most effective work is when professional work together and share information timely.” - Survey respondent

The Duty legislation includes specific provisions to enable data sharing to prevent and reduce serious violence, particularly to:

- Providing a shared understanding of the problem
- Fostering a multi-agency response
- Supporting partnership working

In particular, information sharing is critical to the development of the Strategic Needs Assessment, and the identification of hotspot locations and individuals at risk. The Wales Without Violence Framework says that it is important to share information, data, research and examples of best practice, as well as including the voices of children and young people, working with them to ‘co-produce the solutions to violence’.

Involving the community in the response to serious violence and its prevention can increase the effectiveness of violence prevention approaches. There is an opportunity to develop the partnership response to tackling violence by building on existing good practice around initiatives such as Clear, Hold, Build and Integrated Offender Management and increasing engagement with the community.

## **A healthy data environment can support an evidence-based response to tackling serious violence**

Improving the data environment is a key priority for the partnership. Partners have described how this is a key area where improvement will make a noticeable difference in improving how the Partnership is able to respond to and prevent serious violence. At present, systems of different organisations don't always 'talk to each other', resulting in a lack of a joined up response to tackling serious violence since information and data is not easily accessed and compared.

We believe that improved data collection and sharing would enable the partnership to better target resources and interventions. By triangulating different data sources, we would be able to get a better understanding of the specific locations and cohorts where serious violence is happening and therefore apply far more focused responses.

### **What are we already doing?**

#### **Governance**

To develop improved data sharing arrangements, North Wales has recently established a Data Subgroup that meets fortnightly to explore opportunities in relation to data tools.

#### **Alignment with the 'Wales Without Violence Framework'**

The priority to identify and implement improvements, best practice and innovation as a partnership to respond to serious violence is aligned to the following strategies in the Wales Without Violence Framework.

<b>Alignment of this priority with 'Wales Without Violence Framework'</b>	
<b>Policy and legislation</b> Good practice can be scaled up using a robust legislative and policy framework. One example of this is establishing frameworks for multi-agency data and information sharing and common indicators for violence prevention	<b>Schools and education</b> Schools and education settings play a crucial role in violence prevention. Hotspot mapping can identify areas where students feel less safe. This evidence can support adaptations to buildings, grounds, transport and online spaces

#### **Processes, services and people**

Clear, Hold, Build has been described as a promising framework by the College of Policing. There has already been a successful implementation of a Clear, Hold, Build pilot in Holway, Flintshire and there are initial plans to roll this out further in other areas of North Wales including Pwllheli and Rhyl. The key next step as part of the Clear, Hold, Build roll out in North Wales is to develop community buy-in around the approach and focus on the Build phase.

North Wales has also seen innovative practice in the expansion of the Integrated Offender Management (IOM) cohort to include additional categories of offenders. IOM enables a joint partner response to offenders to work on long-term reductions in offending behaviour. While IOM tends to focus on repeat offenders of acquisitive crime, areas are able to expand the intended cohort to suit their local needs. Partners identified that there is further opportunity to expand the IOM cohort in North Wales and build on existing good practice in this space.

## What are we going to do next?

### Long-term outcomes:

- Partners are able to build on existing practice to target serious violence, such as scaling up best practice to target serious violence hotspots or prolific offenders
- Partners are inclusive and creative in order to engage all communities to support the response to serious violence
- Partners are more confident in sharing and using data to respond to serious violence, such as identifying and understanding hotspot areas and developing a shared repository of data

## Short-term and long-term actions to realise these outcomes

### Short-term actions (to achieve in the next year)

- Review existing data sharing practices and identify opportunities to improve data sharing related to serious violence across the partnership, for example by making use of existing channels such as the North Wales Police Serious Organised Crime meetings
- Hold a data event with specified authorities and relevant partners across the partnership to drive forward action around data sharing
- Establish a sub-group under the Safer North Wales Partnership Board, focused on developing the serious violence data landscape in North Wales, with a remit to promote data sharing and direct data analysis, including focusing on new and emerging risks
- Include a standing agenda item on the Safer North Wales Partnership Board for the specified authorities to discuss best practice and innovation examples, and consider opportunities for collaboration and further innovation.
- Ensure that there are effective two-way channels of communication between the strategic boards in North Wales and practitioners/stakeholders working on the ground to reduce

serious violence, to enable mutual learning around best practice

#### Long-term actions (to achieve in the next five years)

- Develop a repository or 'data lake' with all key information related to serious violence in one place. This repository should be accessible for all relevant partners.
- Modernise data collection and analysis processes, including considering the possible use of A.I. software
- Further develop the Partnership's community engagement and co-production, including engagement with those with lived experience of committing and/or being a victim of serious violence. This engagement should be inclusive and accessible with consideration given to ensure all members of the community are represented and have the opportunity to have their voices heard.
- Develop a multi-agency database with guidance on best practice when tackling a variety of issues related to serious violence and vulnerability



# Building a preventative approach in North Wales, through an understanding of risk, Adverse Childhood Experiences and trauma

## Why are we doing this?

### **The top two most deprived areas in Wales are found in North Wales**

The North Wales Serious Violence SNA identified that there are areas with high levels of deprivation in North Wales. Data from the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation shows that 12% of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Denbighshire are in the 10% most deprived LSOAs in Wales, followed by 7% of the LSOAs in Wrexham and 6% of the LSOAs in Conwy. In addition, according to the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation the top two most deprived areas (by rank) in Wales are both in Denbighshire, with Rhyl West 2 ranked first and Rhyl West 1 ranked second. There are clear benefits to focusing interventions in these areas of greatest need.

Across North Wales there were 51 children per 10,000 on the child protection register (2020/21), with 23 children per 10,000 experiencing emotional abuse and 18 out of 10,000 experiencing neglect. In addition, there are 104 children per 10,000 in North Wales who are looked after by the local authority (2021). This is lower than the national average of 112 per 10,000 but still represents a high number of children who may be missing out on important protective factors.

### **Children known to the youth justice service are more likely to experience ACEs**

There is a known link between adverse childhood experiences and offending. Data from the Youth Justice services in Flintshire shows that in the 2022/23 cohort of children and young people known to the service, the majority had experienced at least one form of adverse childhood experience. For example, 49% had experienced truancy or poor attendance at school, 35% had experienced parental substance misuse and 30% were identified as in need of care or support. This connection between ACEs and offending demonstrates that, by focusing on reducing these risk factors, we will be able to improve the lives of children and young people now, while also helping to reduce rates of future serious violence further down the line.

## What are we already doing?

### **Governance**

There is a strong policy and legislative landscape in North Wales supporting a focus on prevention. For example, Public Service Boards were set up in each Local Authority area in Wales as part of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (2015). These boards have a focus on improving the social, economic, cultural and environmental well-being in their local areas. In addition, the Children and Communities Grant provides funding to a range of programmes focusing on early intervention, prevention and providing support to vulnerable individuals, including children and young people.

The ACE Hub was set up following research into the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) on health outcomes. The Hub is aimed at supporting Wales to lead the way in tackling, preventing and mitigating ACEs.

Prevention and early intervention is a priority of the North Wales Criminal Justice Board, specifically ensuring early intervention and prevention is embedded in criminal justice agencies, implementing interventions that are proven to work and ensuring agencies are trauma-informed. The Vulnerability and Exploitation Board also prioritises this in the context of VAWDASV.

**Alignment with the ‘Wales Without Violence Framework’**

The North Wales priority to build a preventative approach across the area, through an understanding of risk, Adverse Childhood Experiences and trauma, is aligned to the following strategies in the Wales Without Violence Framework.

Alignment of this priority with ‘Wales Without Violence Framework’	
<p><b>Families, parenting and early years</b></p> <p>Families in the most deprived areas are supported to build positive home environments in which children and young people feel safe</p>	<p><b>Schools and education</b></p> <p>Schools provide access to prevention opportunities for children and young people in a safe and trusted environment</p>
<p><b>Safe activities and trusted adults</b></p> <p>Children and young people in need of support have access to professionals trained in trauma-informed approaches.</p>	<p><b>Safe community environments</b></p> <p>Children and young people feel safe in their communities. Protective community environments enable young people to thrive and develop</p>

**Processes, services and people**

Recent intervention mapping indicates there are multiple existing interventions focused on trauma and adverse childhood experiences. This includes training aimed at professionals working with children and young people to recognise signs of domestic violence within families and targeted interventions to support young parents with matters of emotional and mental health.

However, there is an opportunity to focus on engaging schools to support serious violence prevention. At present, schools are an under-utilised mechanism to support children and identify and address ACEs. Going forward, there could be an increased focus during teacher training on how to recognise ACEs and respond to identified needs.

## What are we going to do next?

### Long-term outcomes:

- Preventative work is focused on the children and young people up to the age of 25, and their families, living in the most deprived communities in North Wales
- Partners work with schools to identify primary prevention opportunities, using the intervention mapping as a tool
- Partners ensure trauma-informed approaches are adopted by professionals working with children and young people up to the age of 25 in all contexts
- The Clear, Hold, Build model is used to improve the outcomes for the communities that are most deprived and most affected by serious violence

## Short-term and long-term actions to realise these outcomes

### Short-term actions (to achieve in the next year)

- Implement trauma-informed working practices across the North Wales partnership. This includes the delivery of trauma-informed training across the partnership
- Engage people with lived experience of trauma and other risk factors to serious violence in meaningful ways and empower them to contribute to the serious violence response
- Ensure resources are accessible to all stakeholders, as part of engagement with children and young people and those with lived experiences of serious violence
- Review the referral pathways and their use by partners for children and young people with ACEs

### Long-term actions (to achieve in the next five years)

- Use the intervention mapping work carried out by the partnership to identify primary prevention opportunities with schools
- Commission interventions targeted at children and young people, and their families, living in the most deprived communities in North Wales. Children, young people and their families should be involved in the development of these interventions
- Improve the consistency and quality of data collection around ACEs so that partners are able to use shared data resources to ensure the early recognition of ACEs and target intervention as early as possible
- Recognise and support additional learning needs so that children and young people are able to engage effectively in education

- Engage agencies that work with children and young people outside of educational contexts, such as after school clubs and activities, in the prevention response to serious violence

- Improve understanding on why children and young people commit serious violence through research and engagement, enabling a public health approach to be implemented more effectively

## What are we doing already to tackle serious violence?

### North Wales Fire and Rescue & Street Doctors

**Introduction to the Phoenix Course:** North Wales Fire and Rescue Service is proud to recognise the partnership work with Street Doctors during a recent Phoenix Course in Mold. Eight pupils from Ysgol Maes Garmon engaged in two sessions with the Street Doctors learning what to do if someone is bleeding and how to provide first aid to those who have lost consciousness or have been knocked out through violence.

**Who are Street Doctors?** Street Doctors is a national charity that puts young people at the centre of emergency first-aid provision and empowers them to become part of the solution to violence. They empower young people affected by violence with the skills and knowledge to save lives, and increase their understanding of the medical and psychological consequences of violence. And their training is delivered by young healthcare volunteers (nurses, paramedics and doctors) who work in partnership with criminal justice services, schools, pupil referral units, youth, sports and community groups.

**Target audience:** The Phoenix Project is a fire and rescue initiative aimed at young people aged 13 – 17 who may be or have been involved in anti - social behaviour, bullying or have behavioural problems at school. Other youngsters who are encouraged to attend the course include individuals with low self-esteem or confidence, those who struggle to perform academically, those in need of vocational direction and those who have difficulty communicating with others.

**How is the project delivered?** The project runs five-day courses across North Wales designed to assist in redirecting the energy of youngsters towards productive and worthwhile activities that will assist in the integration of the individuals with their peers and their communities.

**The aim of the project:** The principal aim of the project is to invest in young people, utilising the skills, experience and reputation of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Service for the benefit of the community of North Wales.

Reducing fire deaths and injuries in the region is more than just providing an efficient emergency response service - by working with these youngsters we are able to educate them about the importance of fire safety and the consequences of deliberate fires and hoax calls.

The aim is to reform some, if not all of those involved, and help them to become more motivated and positive about themselves, which in turn has the effect of making them better citizens.

North Wales Fire and Rescue Service see the real benefit of working closely with Street Doctors as a sustained partnership delivering safer communities across North Wales, providing life saving skills and knowledge to young people with a view to the reduction in injury and death through serious violence.

## Reviewing the strategy & Monitoring and evaluation framework

### Reviewing the strategy

We will review the strategy on an annual basis, in line with the requirements of the Serious Violence Duty and the Wales Without Violence Framework. All relevant and specified authorities will have the opportunity to participate in the review. An updated version of the strategy will be produced each year, incorporating up-to-date data analysis from the most recent Strategic Needs Assessment.

During the review process the Partnership will agree whether any of the priorities should be changed or adapted based on the findings of the SNA or any other changes to the serious violence context in North Wales. The actions for each priority will also be reviewed and updated to reflect the progress to date and anticipated next steps.

### Monitoring and evaluation framework

We understand the importance of monitoring and evaluating the impact this strategy has on achieving our stated aims and objectives. This will ensure we are able to hold ourselves to account and monitor our progress effectively.

Monitoring and evaluation of the strategy will be conducted in line with our Theory of Change (the Wales without Violence Framework Theory of Change will also inform our monitoring and evaluation). We will collect and analyse data on the following:

#### 1. Inputs:

- The resources that are being used to implement the strategy.
- The activities that are being undertaken.
- The partnerships that are being developed.

#### 2. Outputs

- The number of people who have been reached by the strategy.
- The number of interventions that have been delivered.
- The level of satisfaction with the strategy among stakeholders.

#### 3. Outcomes

- The reduction in serious violence
- The improvement in safety for victims and communities
- The reduction in the cost of violence

We will use a variety of data collection methods to gather this data, including surveys of victims of serious violence and focus groups with community members. We will also monitor published and local data sources such as police recorded crime data and conduct a cost-benefit analysis of activities.

To analyse the data collected, we will use a range of available techniques, including statistical

analysis, qualitative analysis and case studies. This will provide us with a broader and more detailed understanding of our impact, enabling us to make effective decisions and informing future work on preventing and reducing serious violence

## 1. Summary of North Wales’ Joint Readiness Assessment

In preparation for the roll out of the Serious Violence Duty, the Home Office commissioned Crest Advisory to work with local areas to assess their readiness to deliver the Duty through undertaking a Joint Readiness Assessment (JRA) and to provide tailored support. The purpose of the JRA is to identify opportunities for improvement and provide recommendations on how local areas can realise these opportunities.

The findings of the JRA were based on a rapid analytical review of existing partnership products, interviews and focus groups with leaders and practitioners in each authority specified in the Duty, and quantitative analysis of data pertaining to serious violence. The evidence was used to place each force area on a scale from ‘preparing’ to ‘mature, demonstrating best practice’ in terms of their readiness to meet the core requirements of the Serious Violence Duty, and the strength of partnership activity (based on the 5 Cs of a public health approach).

This JRA looked at both the existing readiness of North Wales to meet the Duty requirements and the current level of serious violence in the area. By looking at these two elements together, Crest identified suggested areas for North Wales to prioritise going forward.

The full JRA is included as an Annex in this response strategy.

### *Joint Readiness Assessment findings for North Wales*

The JRA was completed in April 2023. Overall, North Wales were assessed as ‘preparing’ because, at the time of writing, the partnership had not yet developed a response strategy or a framework for monitoring change and impact.

*Fig. the eight domain areas assessed in the Joint Readiness Assessment, rated from ‘preparing’ to ‘mature, best practice’. North Wales were assessed as preparing overall, however four domains were considered to be ‘ready’.*

Preparing	Ready	Ready and Engaged	Mature	Mature, best practice
2. Response Strategy	1. Definition and evidence base			
3. Change and impact	4. Collaboration			



7. Counter-narrative	5. Co-production			
8. Community consensus	6. Co-operation on information and data			

### Core elements of the Duty

The Wales Violence Prevention Unit and Public Health Wales produced a robust violence Strategic Needs Assessment in July 2022 and an updated version is currently in progress. The definition of serious violence was established for the first SNA and work is underway within the Partnership to review this definition and potentially update it based on the findings of the first SNA. At the time of the JRAs, the Partnership had not yet produced a serious violence response strategy or implemented a robust framework for monitoring and evaluating impact.

### Partnership maturity: recommendations

- To facilitate buy-in from partners in working to meet the Duty requirements, the JRA recommended that North Wales works collaboratively to delineate and agree each specified authority’s responsibilities within the Partnership. It was recommended that there should be an opportunity for partners who wished to be more involved to share their thoughts on how best to focus their efforts. It was also suggested that North Wales could hold a leadership event, for example, to establish commitment and contribution from partners across all domains.
- The JRA recommended that the Partnership sought to ascertain how feasible they could meet the deadlines attached to funding and potentially raise any issues with the Home Office to find alternative approaches.
- In order to ensure the Partnership’s response to serious violence is co-produced, it was recommended that the Partnership should work together to develop a platform for co-production with the voluntary and community sector and children and young people. North Wales should consider seeking advice and/or examples of best practice from more established areas. This should be used to develop a framework for co-production and a strategic commitment to utilise the framework.
- Regarding cooperation, the JRA recommended that the Partnership conduct a data mapping exercise across all specified authorities in North Wales to develop an understanding of which data is collected and held by each agency. The Partnership should also identify gaps in data sharing provisions specific to the Serious Violence Duty in the WASPI tool and work with neighbouring areas in Wales to resolve them where possible. The Partnership should also work with all specified authorities to identify gaps in analytical capacity and share resources where possible. This should be a transparent and open process.
- To ensure the response to serious violence in North Wales aligns with the public health approach, the JRA recommended that staff at all levels across all specified authorities endeavoured to develop their understanding of the approach. It was also recommended that North Wales should consider using workshops to build understanding and authorities’ buy-in around the public health approach. Building on the response strategy and co-production work, it was recommended that specified and relevant authorities should work in

partnership to identify opportunities to deliver new or amended interventions at different levels of prevention.

- To establish an approach to gathering community consensus on the response to serious violence, the JRA recommended that the Partnership begins by conducting a mapping exercise to identify existing community assets. An approach to engaging the community should then be established and formalised to ensure that their potential for contributing to the partnership's ways of working, the SNA and the strategy is utilised. Leaders within the partnership should actively seek to identify and, in turn, resolve barriers to engagement, ensuring the process is as inclusive as possible.

## Level of serious violence and recommendations

Our quantitative analysis indicates that prevalence and risk of serious violence in North Wales is moderate.

It was recommended that the VRU complete the core elements of the Duty - a response strategy, and methods for monitoring the impact of the strategy. To do this effectively, the partnership should develop a Theory of Change and associated performance framework which maps onto the partnership response strategy, including commitments from partners to support the performance framework. When a review of community engagement is completed, the partnership will be able to harness the views of the community and young people.

## 2. Further evidence related to the identified priorities

Supporting prevention and early intervention around violence against women and girls, domestic abuse and sexual violence (VAWDASV)

- While the Chair of the Vulnerability and Exploitation Board regularly attends the Safer North Wales Board meetings, this is not reciprocated by the Chair of the Safer North Wales Board. Going forward, the Chair of the Exploitation and Vulnerability Board could also attend the Safer North Wales Board for improved alignment between groups.
- Furthermore, Board meetings could be more effective by ensuring that the right people are in attendance. At present, senior Board members from the Vulnerability and Exploitation Board and the Safer North Wales Board often delegate their Board meeting attendance to junior colleagues. As a result, it is difficult for decisions to be made at Board meetings.

Promoting contextual safeguarding to work with children and young people vulnerable to exploitation and/or modern slavery

- The partnership identified the need to coordinate the strategic local response to contextual safeguarding for children and young people across North Wales. At present, there are varying approaches by local Boards.
- There is some need for development around consistent knowledge around identifying exploitation of children and young people.

- The partnership would like further work to be done around developing cross-border relationships with other police force areas and relevant agencies in order to safeguard young people who are at risk of county lines exploitation.
- Modern innovations need to be utilised to improve data sharing, data quality and the use of data to safeguard children and young people.
- Further research should be undertaken to understand the growing problem of school exclusions in North Wales.
- There should be a consistent approach to return to home interviews. The information gathered from these interviews should be reviewed in a consistent manner to understand the problem of child exploitation and modern slavery.
- The partnership wants to ensure that the contextual safeguarding of children and young people is 'everyone's business'.

#### Identifying and implementing improvements, best practice and innovation as a partnership to respond to serious violence

- Inconsistent data collection is an issue that the partnership seeks to overcome. A particular example is the recording of assault-related injuries in emergency departments, as it may only become known that the injury was the result of an assault later on and then this is not recorded in the admittance data.
- The partnership would welcome experimental data techniques to improve the efficiency of data collection and processes. One suggestion is to create a 'data lake' which could act as a repository for information from across the partnership.
- The implementation of A.I. or a data lake could streamline the data collection and analysis process across the partnership and help to develop the strategic direction to tackling all forms of serious violence. This might involve setting up a new Board.
- Partners suggested that there should be a regular review of data processes and approaches.
- The partnership should develop its response to tackling violence by building on existing good practice around initiatives such as Clear, Hold, Build and Integrated Offender Management and increasing engagement with the community.
- There should be regular opportunities for partners in strategic roles to discuss best practice innovations with practitioners and stakeholders working on the ground with the community to reduce serious violence, and this should include a process of collaboration
- The North Wales serious violence partnership should seek out and create opportunities for the specified authorities to collaborate to discuss best practice and innovation together, and continue to develop a North Wales wide response to serious violence
- More work should be done to develop the Partnership's ongoing community engagement and co-production. There should be a focus on engagement with those with lived experience of committing and/or being a victim of serious violence

#### Building a preventative approach in North Wales, through an understanding of risk, Adverse Childhood Experiences and trauma

- The partnership recognised that further work could be undertaken with schools to build a preventative approach across Wales.

- The partnership has delivered trauma-informed training to partners working with vulnerable young people and their families. However, further work could be done across the partnership to ensure that training is consistent across the partnership.
- The partnership would like to build on the intervention mapping which has already been carried out to support the development of a preventative approach to violence in North Wales, ensuring that the communities and young people most vulnerable to violence are supported early on.
- Further research should be carried out to understand the link between risk, ACEs and trauma on vulnerability to violence, specifically in the North Wales context.

### 3. Examples of practice currently ongoing that aligns to each of the priorities

Supporting prevention and early intervention around violence against women and girls, domestic abuse and sexual violence (VAWDASV)

- **Domestic Abuse Safety Unit (DASU)** in Wrexham provides targeted interventions to people experiencing DA in North Wales, offering 24 hour access to refuges, to empower survivors, and to work with the needs of dependent children.
- **Gorwel** provides quality services to support people suffering domestic abuse or support people at risk of losing their homes and prevent homelessness. The service supports individuals and families within four counties in north Wales: Anglesey, Gwynedd, Conwy and Denbighshire.
- **The Intervention Initiative** is based on social norms theory and developed by academics at the University of the West of England, this programme empowers communities to intervene proactively to stop violence and abuse. Bystander training, delivered by Welsh Women's Aid in universities across Wales, teaches students how to identify problematic situations, assume responsibility and intervene safely.
- **The Ask Me project**, delivered by Welsh Women's Aid online and in-person in North Wales, aims to maximise people's understanding of violence against women and girls, so they are able to raise awareness in their community and respond appropriately to survivors if they choose to share their experiences. The project consists of free training and ongoing support that helps community members start conversations about abuse, know where help is available, share their knowledge with others and learn how to respond to anyone who shares their experience of abuse.
- The **Ask and Act** training, introduced as part of the VAWDASV (Wales) Act 2015, aims to ensure that all relevant professionals have the necessary skills and awareness to provide appropriate and timely responses to victims and survivors of VAWDASV.
- The regional VAWDASV team produced a **VAWDASV Needs Assessment** for North Wales in 2022, including information on current rates and trends in VAWDASV offending and commissioned interventions.

Promoting contextual safeguarding to work with children and young people vulnerable to exploitation and/or modern slavery

- **Pastoral hubs within educational establishments provide** an effective approach to supporting young people with wellbeing needs, including those at risk of exclusion from school. This is an alternative to an isolation room and can support young people instead of punishing them.
- **TGP Cymru** is a charity operating across Wales that works with vulnerable and marginalised CYP and their families to direct them to accessing appropriate support services.
- **GISDA** is a charity operating in Gwynedd that offers intensive therapeutic support opportunities to vulnerable young people.
- Multiple youth services across North Wales provide **awareness training** on county lines for children, young people and their parents.

Identifying and implementing improvements, best practice and innovation as a partnership to respond to serious violence

- The North Wales Partnership has undertaken **community asset mapping** to better understand its links with the community around serious violence.
- The Welsh Government has issued a Framework embedding a **whole-school approach to emotional and mental wellbeing** as statutory guidance to governing bodies of maintained nursery, primary, secondary, middle, pupil referral units (PRUs), and special schools and local authorities in Wales. The Framework aims to provide direction to address the emotional and mental wellbeing needs of all children and young people, as well as school staff as part of the whole-school community. The Framework is based on the continuous improvement approach and seeks to promote positive mental wellbeing, prevent mental ill health and to take action to support individuals where needed.

Building a preventative approach in North Wales, through an understanding of risk, Adverse Childhood Experiences and trauma

- **Flying Start** is a geographically targeted early years programme for families with children under four years old in some of the most deprived areas of Wales.
- **Parenting. Give it time** is a campaign that provides positive parenting practical hints, tips and expert advice to encourage good behaviour from children and offers alternatives to physical punishment.
- **ACE Hub Wales** has developed a model to ensure that the education system in Wales is informed by trauma and adverse childhood experience (TrACE) approaches. **Wrexham Glyndŵr University**, with support from ACE Hub Wales, is on track to becoming **the first TrACE University**.
- Anglesey Council have been making significant progress towards their goal of becoming a **‘Trauma-Informed Island’**. This includes training staff and partners in trauma-informed practice.
- The **Best Start Hub**, run by Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board provides information, advice and support to families from preconception to early years.
- **Flintshire Youth Justice Service** is working with Public Health Wales and using their **TrACE toolkit** to become a trauma informed service. The Youth Justice Service also has access to Enhanced Case Management in partnership with FACTS.

- Flintshire has developed an Early Help Hub, which provides families with two or more identified ACEs with a multi-agency response.

#### 4. Additional case study of existing work taking place in North Wales<sup>13</sup>

<b>Case Study: Domestic Abuse Safety Unit (DASU)</b>
<b>Lessons learned:</b> Ensure immediate contact with probation and the prison, so that there is no opportunity for the perpetrator to make contact with the client.
<b>Positive outcomes:</b> Regular contact with client, being supportive and non-judgemental, so that client felt she could trust services and call police and ask for support in order to reduce the risk of serious harm or death.
<b>Background:</b> Referred to DASU IDVA service 6 times by police and probation dating back to 2020 involving the same perpetrator. High risk domestic abuse cases including physical assaults, strangulation, financial abuse, criminal damage and coercive control. Client struggled with her mental health and engagement with all services had been poor. Client last referred XX/X/23 and remains an open case.
<b>Needs of the client:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Abuse from the perpetrator consisted of physical abuse which escalated over time, as well as emotional abuse.</li> <li>● Perpetrator used control and coercive behaviour whereby the client would isolate herself, feel she cannot meet other people or have a social life in case he became jealous and aggressive, financial abuse whereby the client stated that he would ask her for money all the time.</li> <li>● Perpetrator drank alcohol to excess and took class A drugs whilst in the relationship with client which increased her risks.</li> <li>● Client was very reluctant to report the perpetrator to the police or to support any orders such as Non-Molestation orders.</li> <li>● Due to the years of domestic abuse her mental health was impacted, she has a lack of trust in anyone especially professionals. Support was needed to build trust with professionals.</li> <li>● Due to the continued escalating risk, support around safety was paramount.</li> <li>● Support to end the relationship and not to be coerced back into the relationship.</li> <li>● Support to report to the police and get orders in place to safeguard herself.</li> </ul>
<b>Support provided:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Due to the client's lack of trust in professionals each time the client was referred we ensured that she was allocated to the same IDVA [...] to build up that trust.</li> <li>● Once the client was ready to engage, IDVA worked with housing to assist in client moving areas to have a fresh start, which we did, however the perpetrator moved in with her and carried out two separate assaults on her that ended in a serious physical assault.</li> <li>● DASH safety and support plan completed on contact and reviewed every six weeks.</li> <li>● Client has never engaged with the police or made a statement of domestic abuse until the last incident.</li> </ul>

<sup>13</sup> Case studies have been abridged for brevity.

- An IDVA and CID officer visited the client at her home address to provide support and talked through support that is available to her such as a restraining order and discussed conditions that would make her feel safe.
- CCTV will be provided from DASU.
- Warning marker on the property and client has target hardening to improve home safety.



**TOGETHER**  
Preventing Serious Violence in Partnership

SWYDDFA COMISIYNYDD HEDDLU  
A THROSEDD GOGLEDD CYMRU



OFFICE OF THE POLICE & CRIME  
COMMISSIONER NORTH WALES