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POPULATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT

2022 – 2027

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

DOMESTIC ABUSE

AND

SEXUAL VIOLENCE

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West Glamorgan Transformation Office via email at  
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## WHAT IS VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, DOMESTIC ABUSE, AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE (VAWDASV)?

West Glamorgan, along with the Welsh Government, recognises that Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) is a violation of human rights. It is both a cause and a consequence of gender inequality and disproportionately affects women and girls, as recognised internationally by the Council of Europe (Convention on Preventing and Combatting Violence against Women and Domestic Violence) and the United Nations (Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women). Whilst it is important to acknowledge the disproportionate effect on women and girls, we recognise that abuse can also be directed towards men and boys, so our mission is to deliver a coordinated approach to prevention, protecting and supporting all groups and individuals affected by these forms of violence.

Across West Glamorgan, there is a wide array of services to respond to the needs of victims, perpetrators and children within both the public and third sector. There is a wide variety of commissioning arrangements, and clear regional and local governance structures to oversee and monitor the work.

This chapter highlights some of the key services operating across Neath Port Talbot and Swansea.

- 🌸 Every year an estimated 2.1 million people in the UK suffer some form of Domestic Abuse (1.4 million women and 700,000 men).
- 🌸 11% women and 5% men a year experience 'any domestic abuse', while rates of 'any sexual assault' in the last year were also higher for women (3.2%) than men (0.7%).
- 🌸 It is estimated there are 140 victims of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) a year in Wales.
- 🌸 It is estimated there are up to 100 victims of forced marriage a year in Wales.
- 🌸 In a study of young people in intimate relationships, 25% of the girls and 18% of the boys experienced physical abuse; 75% of the girls and 14% of the boys experienced emotional abuse, and 33% of the

girls and 16% of the boys experienced sexual abuse. The study found that not only do girls experience more abuse, but they also experience more severe abuse more frequently, and suffer more negative impacts on their welfare, compared with boys.

🌸 1 in 5 women aged 16-59 has experienced some form of sexual violence since the age of 16.

🌸 Two thirds of all women and 85% of younger women experience sexual harassment.

Source - [national-strategy-2016-to-2021.pdf \(gov.wales\)](#)

## **FACTORS THAT IMPACT ON THOSE AFFECTED BY VAWDASV**

VAWDASV issues often co-occur with a range of concerns which contribute to the experience of victims/ survivors, including but not exclusively; substance misuse, mental ill-health, financial pressure, debt and homelessness/ housing issues. However, it is widely considered that while wider factors such as these may exacerbate abuse, they do not cause or justify abusive behaviour. According to Welsh Women's Aid's Annual Membership Report 2019-20, the highest co-occurring issue that victims/ survivors presented with was that of a disability related to mental health, which was disclosed by 44% of survivors (2570 females and 68 males). This was followed by survivors who need assistance in relation to legal issues, for example support to obtain injunctions or deal with the family courts (733 females and 27 males).

While we recognise that there can be overlap with VAWDASV and the above issues, all forms of VAWDASV can occur in isolation and affect people from all demographics.

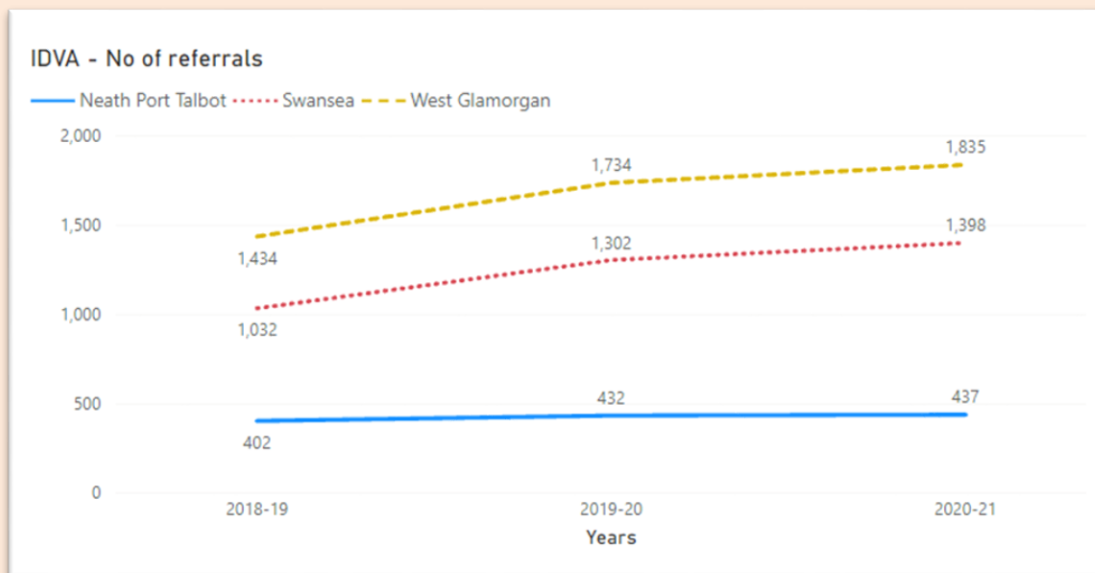
## **WHO IS RECEIVING HELP AND WHAT SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE?**

### **Independent Domestic Violence Advisers (IDVAs)**

The IDVAs work with high risk victims of domestic abuse, providing a specialist service with a focus on safety, court support and advocacy. They offer a victim led approach, and develop multi-agency support

plans, working closely with key partners across the region including police, social services, housing, and specialist sector to offer a holistic service to those at the highest risk. At the time of this report, there are five Swansea IDVAs, four NPT IDVAs, two regional IDVAs (one court specialist and one to support the DRIVE perpetrator programme) and one senior IDVA. Swansea Bay University Health Board have appointed a Health IDVA to be based in the Health Board’s Emergency department but will offer support across the whole Health Board.

The tables below show the number of referrals and IDVA cases who engaged in support by year since 2018:



Years	Neath Port Talbot	Swansea	West Glamorgan
2018-19	230		230
2019-20	239		239
2020-21	286	1209	1495

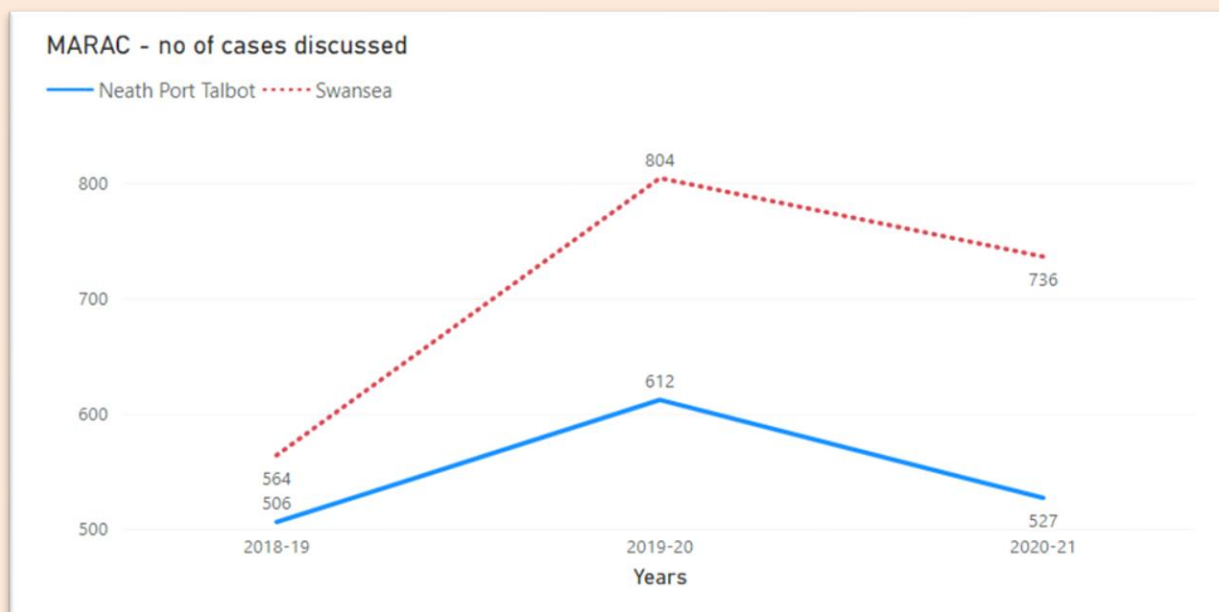
\*Swansea data was not captured during 2018-20.

IDVA referral numbers increase steadily year on year. This is consistent in all areas of domestic abuse, potentially demonstrating the value of raising awareness and encouraging victims to come forward and report. The vast majority of referrals come from the police, demonstrating that this continues to be the primary source of contact for high risk victims when reporting. Other referral sources include health, third sector, substance misuse services, and housing, among others.

It is important to note that data is captured slightly differently across the two authorities with regard to IDVA referral numbers and what constitutes meaningful engagement. Although NPT appears to indicate lower levels of engagement with the IDVA service than Swansea, the threshold for recording engagement in Neath Port Talbot is maintained at a higher level. NPT data also refers to number of referrals (people) passed to IDVAs, whereas Swansea data reflects the number of incidents and would include multiple occurrences for repeat cases.

### **Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)**

MARAC is a meeting where information is shared on the highest risk domestic abuse cases between representatives of local police, health, child protection, housing, IDVAs, probation and other specialists from statutory and voluntary sectors. There are two separate MARACs that take place every fortnight, one in Swansea, one in NPT and are attended by representatives from each local authority area. The table below shows the number of cases discussed since 2018.



Since 2019, a regional MARAC review has been commissioned to look at processes, streamline referrals into MARAC and ensure the process is as effective as possible in order to safeguard high risk victims and their families. This was led by the police, supported by both local authorities, with some direction given from SafeLives. The chart above displays a drop in referrals in 2020/21, which is a direct result of this work, although numbers remain high.

### Children affected by VAWDASV

The number of children in the household is recorded as the MARAC aims to safeguard both victims and any children associated with either them or the perpetrator. Children’s services are notified of any incident of domestic abuse where a child is present or associated, in order to allow professionals to have the relevant discussions and ensure appropriate safeguarding mechanisms are in place. The table below shows a large increase in figures for NPT in 2020-21 which reflects the sharp increase in domestic abuse reports, and subsequent MARAC referrals, made during the pandemic.



Years	Neath Port Talbot	Swansea	West Glamorgan
2018-19	555	522	1077
2019-20	468	629	1097
2020-21	836	506	1342

In Swansea, there is a specialist Domestic Abuse Hub which sits within Child and Family Single Point of Contact (SPOC) and consists of a specialist team







that processes Public Protection Notices (PPNs) for domestic abuse related incidents where children are either resident or linked to the adults involved. In 2020/21, they received notifications regarding 4,376 children or young people; 2,255 of these already had an allocated lead worker or social worker and 2,121 were provided with information, advice or assistance by the Domestic Abuse Hub.

NPT operates a SPOC which receives and processes all PPNs for Children and Young People's Services. If there is an allocated worker already supporting the family, the PPN is dealt with by the allocated worker/team to ensure they incorporate any support arising from the PPN in their ongoing care and support plan. For families where statutory interventions are necessary and proportionate, NPT have an experienced Family Action Support Team which offers support to children and families who have been exposed to domestic abuse/violence. If a PPN is received on a family not known to the service, the PPN is responded to by SPOC who will offer information, advice or assistance. NPT has an established Early Intervention and Prevention Panel which is able to link in with and offer preventative support to families where domestic abuse is identified as a factor impacting on the children. These support services include Calan DVS and Thrive Women's Aid.



Of the 7,402 PPNs received during 2020/21, 3,029 were recorded as being Domestic Abuse related, specifically:

-  2,457 were on closed cases or were new notifications
-  572 were on cases already open.

Of the 2,457:

-  No Further Action – 2,118
-  Children and Young People's Service Assessment – 95
-  Information, Advice & Assistance – IAA (Proportionate Assessment) – 152
-  Proportionate Assessment then pass to Early Intervention Panel – 21
-  Straight to Early Intervention Panel – 21
-  Passed to Team Around the Family – 50.

Of the 572:

-  No Further Action (Factored into ongoing case work) – 571
-  Children and Young People's Service Assessment – 1.

Operation Encompass is a notification system between the police and schools to ensure that schools are also aware of any Domestic Abuse incidents and can

take relevant action to support children. There are a number of children specific services across the region which both parents and professionals can access.

### NPT Adult Services



The Local Authority (Adult Services) does not currently capture usable data in respect of Domestic Violence and Abuse. There are no questions around DVA in the Contact/Assessment/Care Plans for Adult Services. There is a question on the Community Mental Health Team Assessment, however this isn't always completed and as a result this data is incomplete.

The Local Authority can obtain information for Adults at Risk, basing this on the reports received within the given parameters, broken down by those marked as 'Domestic Violence'. Included are the totals of those reports that went on to Section 126 (Safeguarding enquiry) relating to DVA, by breakdown of the category of abuse.

	Total No. of Reports Received	Category of abuse				
		<i>Emotional / Psychological</i>	<i>Financial</i>	<i>Physical</i>	<i>Neglect</i>	<i>Sexual</i>
1st April to 31st December 2021	67	43	7	48	7	8
<b>Of Which, the number that went on to S126 Enquiries</b>						
	9	3	1	7	1	0

	Total No. of Reports Received	Category of abuse				
		<i>Emotional / Psychological</i>	<i>Financial</i>	<i>Physical</i>	<i>Neglect</i>	<i>Sexual</i>
1st October 2020 to 31st March 2021	69	37	11	39	9	6
<b>Of Which, the number that went on to S126 Enquiries</b>						
	27	14	8	15	7	4

N.B.

-  The breakdown of the 'Category of Abuse' can be higher than the number of Reports/ S126, as there can be more than one form of abuse for each.
-  The DV field is not mandatory, therefore there are some Reports that have not been marked as Y/N on the system.



🌐 Due to the new system being created in 2020, we can only provide information from the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2020.

NPT Social Services is currently undertaking a multi-agency review of how services perceive and respond to domestic abuse. Incorporating examination of relevant national, regional and local literature alongside survivor, family and children engagement. Findings and recommendations will be shared once complete.

### **Swansea Adult Services**

The Local Authority (Adult Services) does not currently capture data in respect of Domestic Violence and Abuse within Assessment or Care and Support Plans. There are no questions relating to Domestic Violence and Abuse, although practitioners can document this within their written assessments. Consequently, this does not produce measurable data.

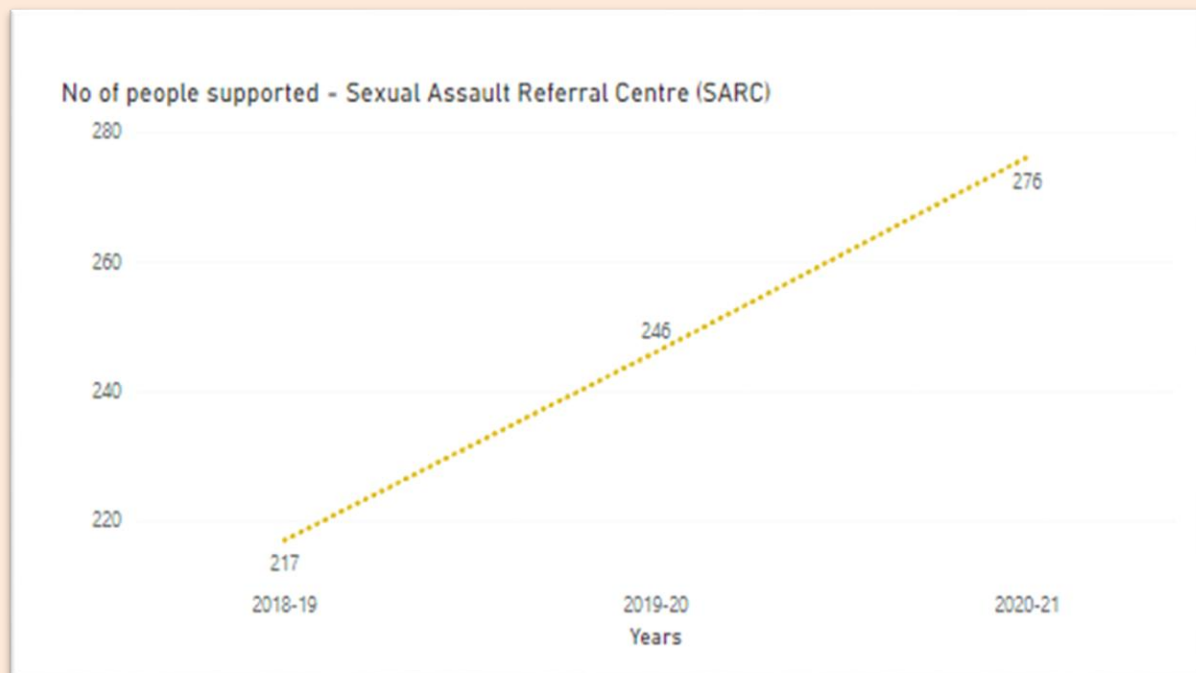
The Local Authority can gather information relating to Domestic Violence and Abuse from Adult at Risk reports received. This can be further examined down to the category of abuse.

### **Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC)**

A SARC is a specialist facility where recent victims of sexual assault can receive immediate help and support. This includes access to forensic medical examination which is carried out by an experienced and qualified doctor and the offer of an opportunity to speak to the police about what has happened to them, if the individual wishes to do so.

There is one SARC in West Glamorgan, which supports people from both Swansea and NPT. It is managed by New Pathways and works closely alongside the police and other support services.

As with other areas of VAWDASV, the following table shows an increase year on year in referrals across the West Glamorgan region.



## **IRIS – Identification and Referral to Improve Safety**

IRIS is a general practice-based Domestic Violence and Abuse (DVA) training, support and referral programme, which is a collaboration between primary care and third sector organisations specialising in DVA. IRIS has been introduced to all GP practices across Swansea Bay University Health Board; GP staff are trained to recognise the indicators of DVA, make enquiries and if they receive a disclosure they are able to refer directly to a DVA specialist that is linked to the practice. The specialist is able to offer risk assessment and support. Since the implementation of IRIS there have been 130 referrals made by GP practices, prior to IRIS there were minimal referrals made. A high number of referrals are from first time disclosures and in the 60+ age group, there are also a high number of children living with the patient experience DVA who have received ongoing specialist support.

## **Refuge and Safe House**

Across West Glamorgan, the specialist providers Swansea Women's Aid, BAWSO, Thrive and Calan DVS offer emergency, safe accommodation to women and children who are fleeing domestic abuse. While in refuge, women and children can access wrap around support addressing any needs they may be presenting with.

Not all victims take the refuge/safe house route. Other options include target hardening to their properties, including panic alarms, CCTV, additional locks, and alternative housing solutions via the local authority, housing association or private accommodation.

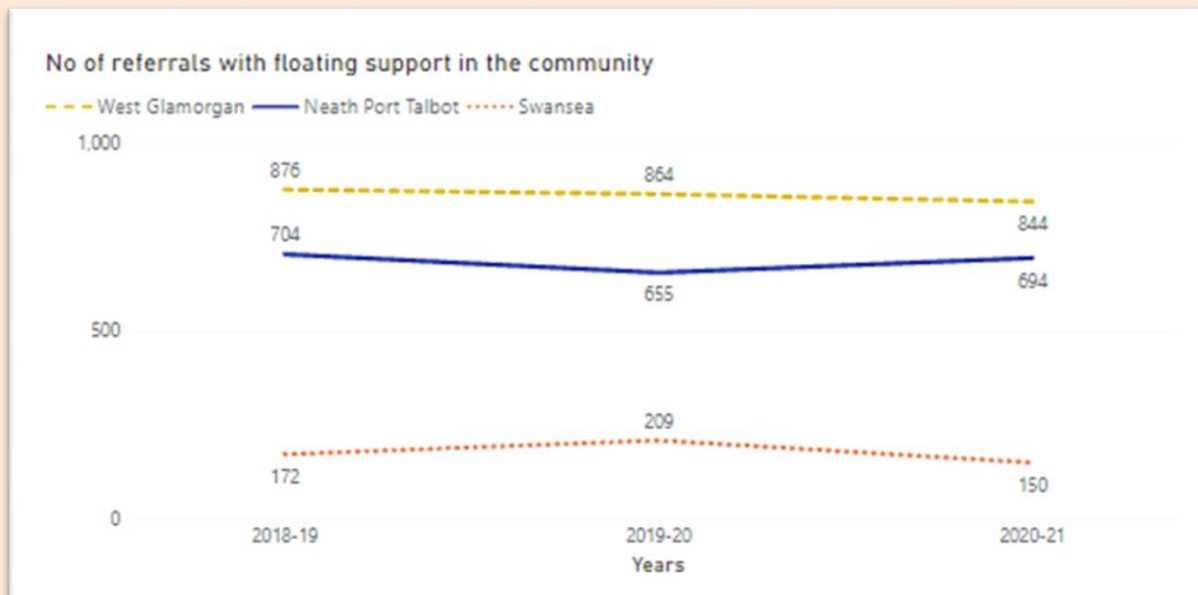
Years	Neath Port Talbot	Swansea	West Glamorgan
2018-19	132	135	267
2019-20	127	119	246
2020-21	106	102	208

The above table shows a drop in people accessing refuge/safe house in 2020-21, which coincides with periods of lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which meant there was little opportunity for residents to move on into longer term accommodation.

### **Floating Support**

Floating support is a service provided to victims of domestic abuse in the community. Across West Glamorgan, this is provided by Hafan Cymru, BAWSO, Thrive and Calan DVS. The service works with victims/survivors to identify support goals and work towards achieving them. The floating support in the community consists of a number of areas dependent on needs. They can cover: DA support, housing, legal, child support, education and employment, finances and benefits, Target Hardening, accessing refuge, Clare's Law, MARAC, Safeguarding, reintegration into community, court support. They offer this through 121s, core groups, MARAC meetings, drop in service, on call service, support plan reviews, multi-agency working.

The following table displays a slight decline in referrals across West Glamorgan in 2020-21, possibly due to the lockdown restrictions and people less able to access services to identify need and make referrals into floating support.



## Repeat Cases

Due to its complex nature, repeat incidents are commonly seen in domestic abuse. It is widely recognised that ending an abusive relationship is not only very difficult due to a wide array of barriers, but also can significantly increase the risk to a victim. Some repeat incidents are seen as positive because the victim is reporting to services, others are considered negative where there is escalation or the abuse is enduring and there is limited engagement with services. For many victims, domestic abuse is not a stand-alone issue, and co-occurs with mental ill-health, substance misuse, homelessness, debt, and other issues.

The following table shows the number of repeat cases recorded over the last three years.

Years	Neath Port Talbot	Swansea	West Glamorgan
2018-19	172	194	366
2019-20	248	221	469
2020-21	225	208	433

## The Freedom Programme

The Freedom Programme is a domestic violence initiative created by Pat Craven, who holds the copyright (all rights reserved) and evolved from her work with perpetrators of domestic violence.

The Programme was primarily designed for women as victims of domestic violence, since research shows that in the vast majority of cases of serious abuse are male towards female.

However, the Programme, when delivered as an intensive two day course, is also suitable for men, whether they are abusive and wish to change their attitudes and behaviours, or whether they are victims of domestic abuse themselves.

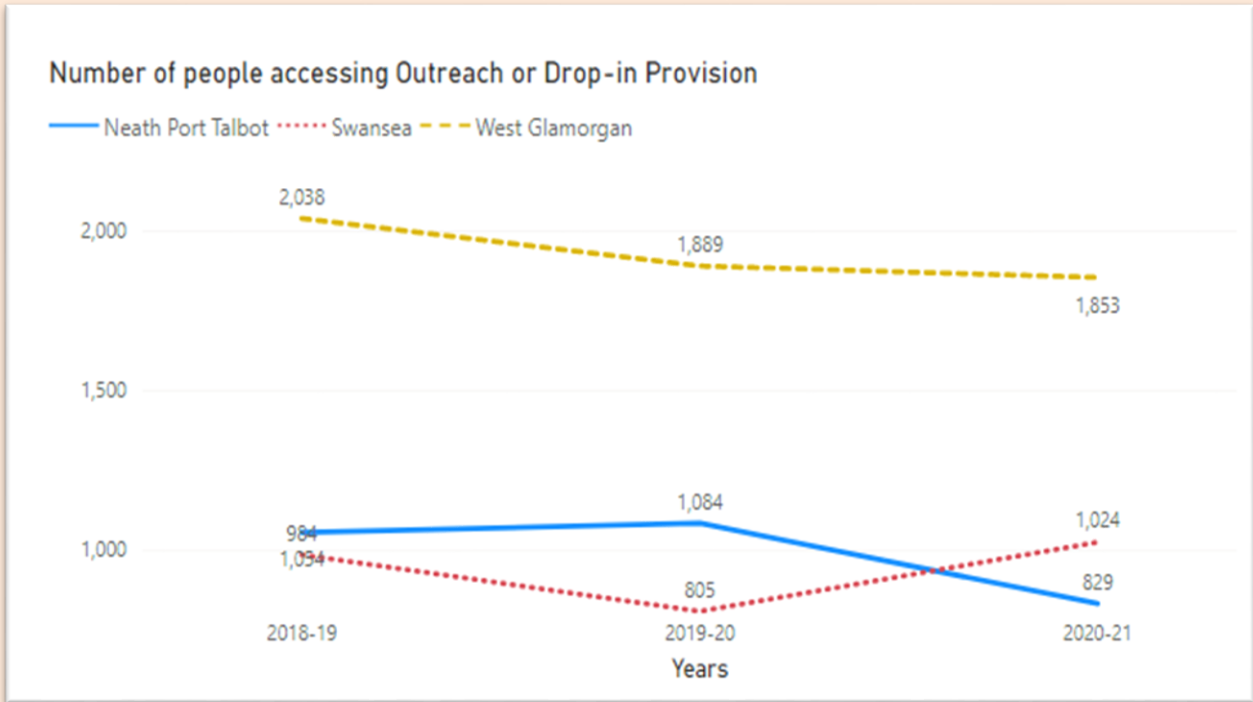
The following table shows a significant drop in numbers attending the Freedom Programme in 2020/21, as group activities came to a halt during the early stages of the pandemic. Services adapted delivery to online, and groups were reinstated towards the second half of the year.

Years	Neath Port Talbot	Swansea	West Glamorgan
2018-19	145	52	197
2019-20	91	88	179
2020-21	36	61	97

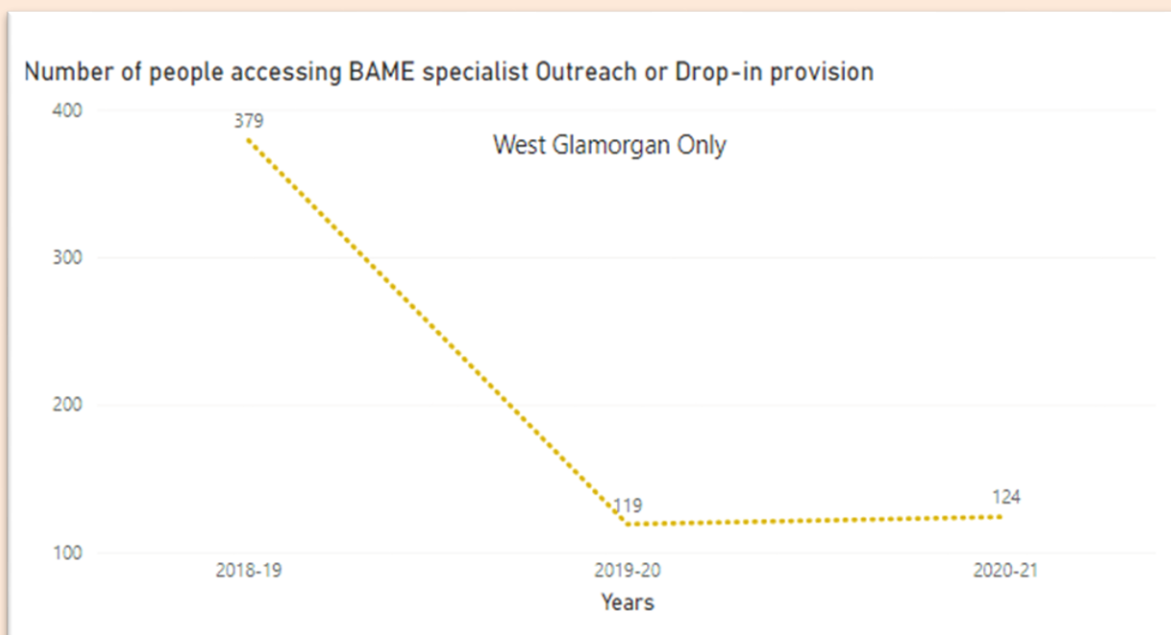
## Outreach Support

There is a range of outreach support options across West Glamorgan, hosted by the specialist agencies. They provide emotional support, safety advice, specialist knowledge and understanding of domestic abuse, practical support and guidance (some on a drop-in basis and some by appointment).

During the pandemic, outreach support continued but in different formats. Some transferred to telephone contact, others made use of video conferencing facilities. This may explain the fluctuation in data as some agencies and victims/survivors may not have had access to certain devices or support options.



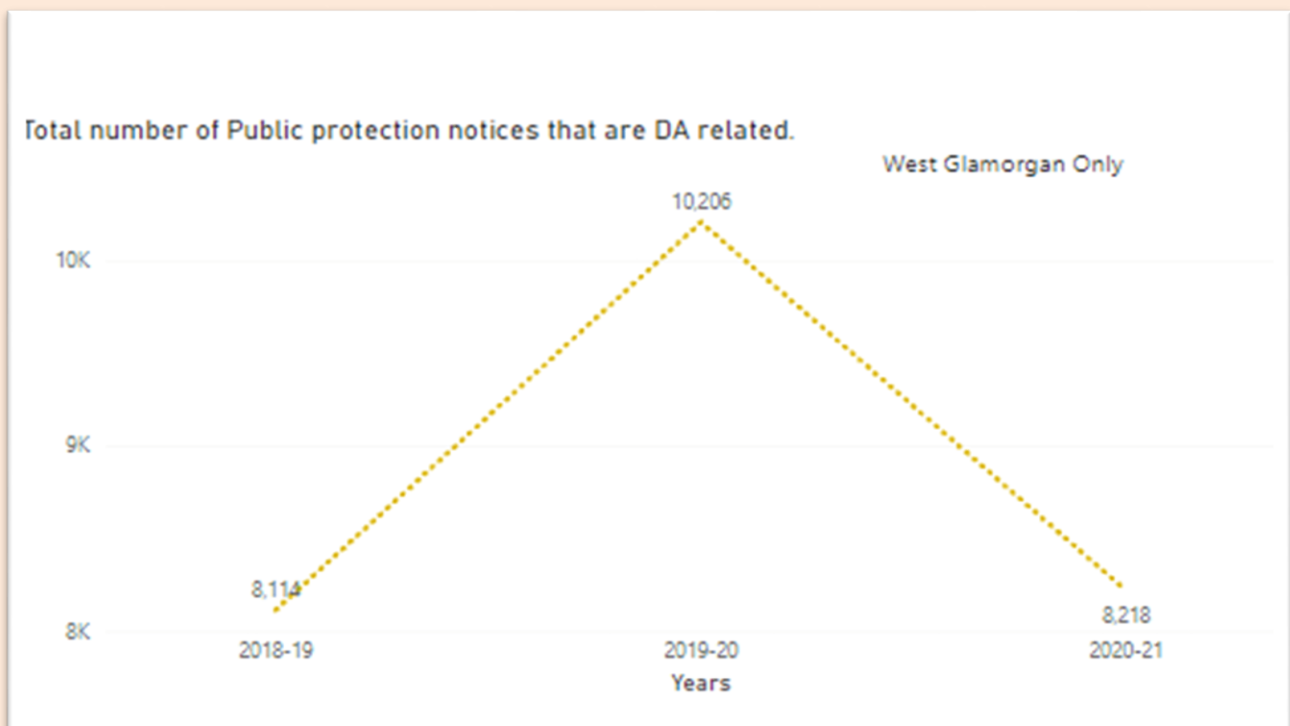
There is a specialist advice service for victims/survivors from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities, which can offer specialist guidance and support around issues such as Honour Based Violence, Female Genital Mutilation, Forced Marriage, Human Trafficking or assist with immigration issues or language barriers. The graph below shows the highest number in 2018-19, when engagement events took place, which would explain the high take-up. No further engagement events were possible following the pandemic, which may explain the lower numbers in the subsequent years.



## Domestic Abuse related Public Protection Notices (PPNs)

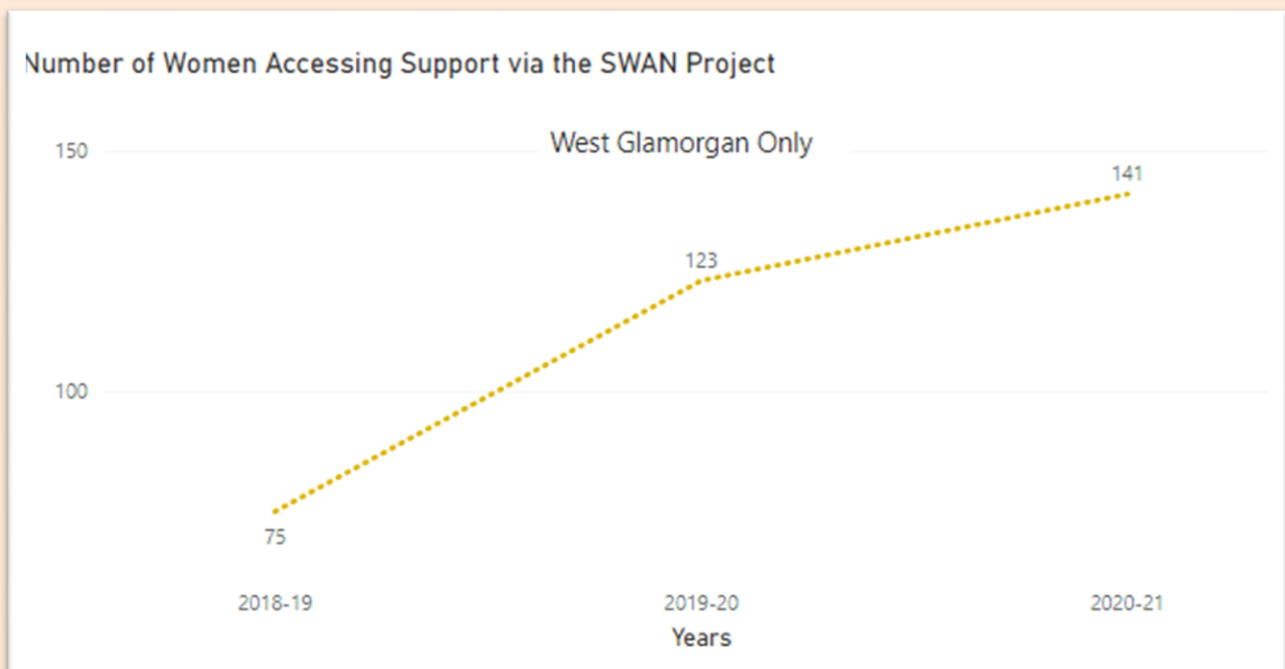
Public Protection Notices are produced by the police following all incidents of domestic abuse. They contain information pertaining to the victim, perpetrator and associated children, as well as a summary by the attending officer on the circumstances. This is then processed by the specialist police Domestic Abuse Unit, who risk assess the incident based on previous history, the risk assessment contained in the PPN and any other relevant information on the police system. All PPNs are then referred onto the relevant partner agencies for support/ intervention depending on the level of risk and need. For example, all high risk cases are sent to IDVA, all cases with associated children are sent to Children's Services.

The following table presents the number of Domestic Abuse related PPNs per year, which although consistently high, shows a peak in 2019-20 and then a drop in 2020-21. This may be due to a drop in reports to police during the COVID-19 outbreak and the following months. This conflicted with data captured by the All-Wales Domestic Abuse Helpline, which saw a huge rise in reports during the pandemic, suggesting people were more likely to contact helplines for support at this time than reach out to police.



## Sexually Exploited Women

[The SWAN Project](#) (Support, Wellbeing, Advocacy and Enablement), supports women who are sexually exploited in Swansea, with a further pilot project recently commissioned in NPT. It provides practical and emotional support to some of the most vulnerable women in society with the aim of improving the safety and wellbeing of those accessing the service. The graph above shows a significant increase in referral numbers since 2018, which signifies both the success of the project in terms of reaching out to those hard to reach individuals', but also the concerning extent of the problem of sexual exploitation.



## Perpetrator Services

There is currently a range of community-based services available to offer support and intervention to perpetrators of domestic abuse.

The DRIVE Programme was implemented across West Glamorgan in 2020, which works with high-harm, high-risk and serial perpetrators of domestic abuse to prevent their abusive behaviour and protect victims.

The Equilibrium Programme operates in Swansea and works with medium risk perpetrators of domestic abuse in group or one to one settings, offering a solution-focused approach with the aim of reducing the risk to the victims and offering positive behaviour change strategies.

The Criminal Justice System also intervenes and disrupts VAWDASV perpetrators through the police, court and probation service, who offer a 'Building Better Relationships' programme to relevant individuals.



The following graph captures data from DRIVE and Equilibrium. It shows a drop in referrals in 2020-21. The Equilibrium Programme saw a significant drop due to the referral pathway primarily being from involved professionals who were largely unable to provide face to face contact and engagement and therefore couldn't identify need. In-person group work was not possible due to restrictions, so Equilibrium adapted largely to online delivery.




The above graph does not include DRIVE data from Neath Port Talbot. DRIVE data by Neath Port Talbot began being captured in September 2020 and the number of perpetrators engaged for the period September 2020 to March 2021 was 42.


DRIVE was rolled out across NPT in September 2020 and is currently the only perpetrator service offered there so this data reflects only the number of high risk/high harm cases engaged from that date. Further exploration is underway to explore the possibility of introducing Equilibrium in NPT, subject to funding and budget constraints, in order to expand the service to medium risk perpetrators.

## Prevention


Welsh Government through education, empowerment and engagement, are committed to challenging attitudes and behaviours across society which lead to violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence and seek ways to prevent them from occurring in the first instance or repeating. Three of the objectives support the purpose of preventing violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence:

 Objective 1 – Increase awareness and challenge attitudes of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence across the Welsh Population.

We will continue to challenge attitudes in order to prevent violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence happening in the first place. Ultimately we intend to build a society which does not tolerate violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

 Objective 2 - Increased awareness in children and young people of the importance of safe, equal and healthy relationships and that abusive behaviour is always wrong.

Longer term, we know that violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence can have a huge impact on children and young people. It can affect their safety, health and wellbeing, educational attainment, family and peer relationships, and their ability to enjoy healthy, happy, respectful relationships in the future.

 Objective 3 - Increased focus on holding perpetrators to account and provide opportunities to change their behaviour based around victim safety. We recognise that we cannot tackle violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence effectively without working to prevent perpetrators from abusing in the first place and this is an area of work that Welsh Government is committed to develop.

Source: [national-strategy-2016-to-2021.pdf \(gov.wales\)](#)

As a region, we have invested in Primary Prevention work in 2021/21, and this will be further developed in future years. We have commissioned a programme called ‘Change that Lasts’, which is delivered by Welsh Women’s Aid in partnership with local providers. As a region, we deliver communications campaigns with specific target areas, such as sports clubs, or hairdressers and barbers. The purpose is to raise awareness and challenge attitudes of VAWDASV in community settings.

Work is ongoing with Education partners across the region to deliver a ‘Whole School Approach’ to VAWDASV, which involved training, support and signposting, and we have a successful Operation Encompass scheme operating across the region where schools are notified by police of all domestic abuse incidents where a child was present or linked.

Objective 3 is covered in the earlier section on Equilibrium and DRIVE.

## **CONCLUSION AND GAPS IDENTIFIED**

There is recognition across the region that in order to fully address VAWDASV issues, there needs to be more focus placed on community based early intervention and primary prevention. We are in the early stages of development in this area with the 'Ask Me' initiative for community ambassadors being rolled out across West Glamorgan, as well as other campaigns targeting key groups such as hairdressers, barbers and sports teams. A shift in perspective is important in order to 'call out' perpetrators of VAWDASV, and we are working with Welsh Government and our regional communications partners to develop this.

The responsibility of VAWDASV lies with those who perpetrate it, and work must be done to encourage all agencies to recognise this. A Whole Systems Approach to perpetrator work is the region's aim, and we work closely with the police, the Police and Crime Commissioner and other partners towards achieving this.

Sexual violence and abuse infiltrates many areas of society, including schools and colleges, workplaces, night time economy and aspects of daily life, so we aim to work with partners across all sectors to highlight the issue and ensure it is everyone's responsibility in line with the VAWDASV (Wales) Act, 2015.

For victims/survivors with multiple disadvantages, such as alcohol and/or substance misuse, there can be additional barriers in terms of accessing refuge or safe emergency accommodation. We recognise this as a key priority area of work.

While good progress has been made for specialist services for those with protected characteristics, such as older victims and LGBTQ+ victims, it is important to continue to monitor and develop these services ensuring the victim's voice is embedded into practice.






Survivor involvement and coproduction is integral to this area of work, and while there has been progress in this area, we recognise there is more work to do to develop and embed the survivor framework along with partners.

We will continue to prioritise those who are most vulnerable and at highest risk by supporting and developing existing services, and working within multiagency frameworks such as MARAC to ensure safeguarding victims and children remains a core focus of everyday practise.

We will continue to work with colleagues across Education to keep the VAWDASV profile high and further embed the Whole School Approach.

Partnership working between statutory services and the voluntary sector in this area is strong, with excellent attendance and engagement at the VAWDASV Leadership Groups in both Swansea and NPT and many partnership subgroups which focus on specific work streams. Collaboration with the voluntary sector is a key part of all planning and delivery.

Key areas for further development are:

-  Primary/community-based prevention and early intervention
-  Survivor engagement
-  Focus on holding perpetrators of VAWDASV to account
-  Further engagement at a senior leadership level
-  Complex need provision.