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Research with under-represented survivor groups of Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) to inform the Survivor Engagement Framework: Phase 1

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Glossary

This list contains acronyms and key words used throughout this report.

Acronym/Key word	Definition
Cis	Cisgender, used to describe someone whose gender identity matches that assigned to them at birth
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulations
IRP	Internal Research Programme
LGBTQ+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (questioning)
ONS	Office for National Statistics
ToC	Theory of Change, a research methodology for planning, participation, and evaluating specific interventions
Trans	Transgender, used to describe someone whose gender identity is different from that assigned to them at birth
VAWDASV	Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence

1. Introduction

1.1 The Internal Research Programme (IRP) was commissioned by the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) policy team in October 2018 to undertake two phases of research and evaluation to inform the development and implementation of a long-term national survivor engagement framework. The engagement framework fulfils a commitment made in the National Strategy on VAWDASV 2016-21, and is underpinned by the VAWDASV Act (2015). The purpose of the Survivor Engagement Framework is to ensure that the needs and experiences of survivors, including the most under-represented survivors of gender-based violence and those who face multiple disadvantages in accessing help and support, are understood.

1.2 VAWDASV is a serious and endemic problem in Wales. In 2018 it was estimated that two million adults in England and Wales between the ages of 16 and 59 experienced domestic abuse (ONS, 2018). VAWDASV has become an increasing area of policy focus within Welsh Government. In 2015 the Well-Being of Future Generation (Wales) Act came into force, which states that wellbeing includes being free from abuse and violence (Future Generations Wales, 2015). The National Strategy uses the key principles of the VAWDASV Act - prevention, protection and support - to form their six main objectives:

1. Increase awareness and challenge attitudes of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence across the Welsh population.
2. Increased awareness in children and young people of the importance of safe, equal and healthy relationships and that abusive behaviour is always wrong.
3. Increased focus on holding perpetrators to account and provide opportunities to change their behaviour based around victim safety.
4. Make early intervention and prevention a priority.
5. Relevant professionals are trained to provide effective, timely and appropriate responses to victims and survivors.

6. Provide victims with equal access to appropriately resourced, high quality, needs led, strength based, gender responsive services across Wales

(Welsh Government, 2016)

1.3 A rapid evidence review of the enablers and barriers to survivor engagement was carried out by colleagues in the Social Research and Information Division (SRID) in 2017. The review found that existing evidence indicated the potential of service-user involvement to influence service design. This could be fostered through capacity building that encourages positive behaviours towards survivors from government and therefore empowers survivors to contribute. However, the evidence did not provide clarity on which measures could accurately measure the impact of survivor involvement. The evidence also highlighted the lack of diverse engagement with survivors from diverse backgrounds, including Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic women, the LGBTQ+ community and men.

1.4 In August 2017, the VAWDASV policy team issued a consultation to key national and regional stakeholders across the third and public sector, including survivors, to better understand the needs and future scope and design of a National Survivor Engagement Framework. The consultation found that there was support for a survivor panel that is formally situated within national VAWDASV governance structures, but no consensus on how this could be achieved. In order to avoid ad hoc or tokenistic engagement with survivors, and build a more sustainable and continuous model of survivor engagement, the National Strategy committed to creating a framework that was inclusive of diverse survivor voices. Further research was required to understand how under-represented survivors would like to engage with government to strengthen the process of survivor-informed policy making.

1.5 This research, hereafter referred to as ‘Phase 1’, aimed to collect in-depth qualitative data from specific survivor populations whose views are not currently represented within the Welsh Government consultation on the development of a National Survivor Engagement Framework. This includes men, LGBTQ+, disabled people, younger and older survivors and those from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities. The objectives were:

(1) To understand the views, capacities and motivations of the target populations to participate in a National Survivor Engagement Framework;
(2) To understand the barriers and enablers to participation;
(3) To explore the views and experiences of the target populations with respect to previous participation and effective models of participation;
(4) To understand the nature, focus and provision of support required to facilitate the participation of the target populations.

1.6 A survey was issued to those groups, and these data were analysed alongside the consultation responses and the data emerging from Theory of Change workshops held with survivors, stakeholders and Welsh Government officials. Phase 1 will inform the creation of a pilot survivor engagement panel which will be evaluated in phase 2 of this work.[1] This will in turn inform the decision making of the Deputy Minister and Chief Whip on the design of a long-term survivor panel. The evaluation of the panel comprised Phase 2 of this work, the findings of which are reported separately.

1.7 The following section outlines the methodological approach to the research, section three reports the survey findings, section four provides a synthesis and discussion of the survey findings, consultation responses and theory of change workshops and section five provides conclusions and recommendations for policy officials to inform the recruitment and facilitation of the VAWDASV pilot survivor panel.

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[1] At the time of writing (October 2020), the pilot had run the previous year (September-November 2019) and the evaluation (Phase 2) had completed.

2. Methodology

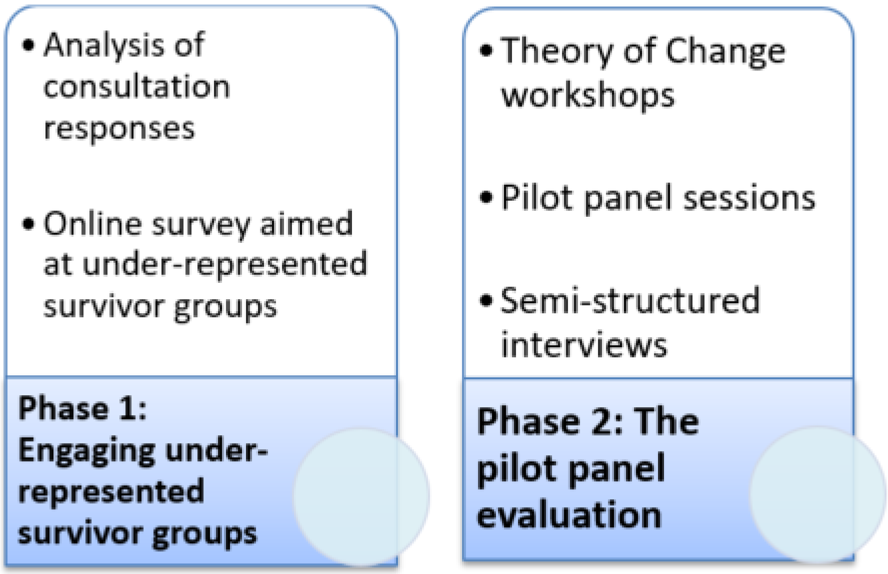
2.1 When developing the programme of research and evaluation for the Survivor Engagement Framework, initial discussions between IRP and policy officials revealed the key objective was to obtain in-depth data to understand why some survivors, in particular those from under-represented groups, do not engage with Welsh Government. The research aimed to provide a better understanding of the barriers and disadvantages to engagement for survivors and how they can be overcome to ensure all survivors are represented and listened to in order for them to contribute and help shape and develop policy.

2.2 The IRP was commissioned to undertake evidence gathering around survivor engagement for the VAWDASV policy team, with the research being divided into two distinct phases. Phase 1 would be a study compromising analysis of previous consultation responses on the proposed National Survivor Engagement Framework, followed by an online survey of a diverse survivors in order to explore if and how they had engaged with Welsh Government and to understand their preferences for future engagement around survivor support. Phase 2 focused on an evaluation of the pilot Survivor Engagement Panel, which included the following activity:

1. Constructing a Theory of Change for survivor engagement as a result of consultation with survivors, policy officials and external stakeholders
2. Conducting the pilot Survivor Panel
3. Following up with qualitative interviews with panel members and stakeholders following completion of the pilot

2.3 More information on the methodology can be found in Phase 2 of the report. The below diagram sets out the actions undertaken in each phase.

Figure 1: Phases of research and evaluation to support the VAWDASV Survivor Engagement Framework



2.4 From November 2017 to January 2018 a consultation was issued to with survivors and stakeholder organisations and received 60 responses. The consultation revealed that there was support for the development of a sustainable survivor engagement mechanism. However, the analysis also revealed that there was significant underrepresentation of survivors from certain survivor groups. It was a priority of the policy team to understand why these individuals and groups are not engaged with Welsh Government and to include their voices and experiences in shaping and developing policy. Therefore, further research was needed to capture the views of under-represented survivors and their engagement preferences.

2.5 Quantitative surveys allow for a large number of responses to be collected and data is easy to collate and analyse. Online surveys are easy to administer and allows for information to be easily gathered to understand if under-represented survivors were reached. The survey asked for participants' demographic information, including gender, age, race and sexual orientation, which helps understand who took part in the survey and to what extent under-represented survivors were engaged. Questions were also asked about engagement with Welsh Government and survivors' preferred method of engagement, which indicated which approaches were most favoured by participants. A copy of the survey questions can be found at Annex A.

2.6 In order to understand the barriers and enablers to engagement for under-represented survivors, the online survey was aimed at groups and individuals that are currently under-represented within Welsh Government, including:

- LGBTQ+ survivors;
- Survivors of sexual violence;
- Male survivors;
- Gypsy, Roma and Traveller survivors;
- Survivors who are seeking asylum;
- Disabled survivors;
- Older survivors (aged 65+); and
- Younger survivors (aged 18-24).

2.7 The survey was designed and administered by IRP and issued online in May 2019 for six weeks via Questback, an online platform for designing and administering surveys through email. A GDPR compliant privacy notice detailing how participants' data would be stored and analysed was issued with the survey invite. The survey was issued in English and Welsh and the raw data were then downloaded and analysed using Excel.

2.8 Key contacts from organisations and agencies working across VAWDASV services were used to promote the survey and to ensure it was disseminated to survivors. To maximise responses, pre-notification contacts, choice of visual and tonal design and the use of reminder letter using different wording to tap into various motivations were adopted.

2.9 In total 101 survey responses were received from survivors. The survey did engage survivors of some previously under-represented groups, including men (n=18), younger survivors (n=3), older survivors (n=3), people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities (n=11)[2] , people from the LGBTQ+ community (n=22), people with disabilities (n=38) and those who had experienced sexual violence

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[2] This is the sum of those indicating they were part of the following ethnic groups: Asian; Black, African or Caribbean; Mixed or multiple ethnicity; any other ethnicity.

(n=15). There were no responses received from the Gypsy Roma Traveller community, refugee asylum seekers or trans survivors.

2.10 Although the Theory of Change workshops were conducted under Phase 2, the data from those workshops fed into the analysis of Phase 1 and so is referenced within this report.

3. Survey findings

3.1 There was a total of **101 responses** to the VAWDASV survey aimed at groups under-represented in the data on VAWDASV survivors. These groups included people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds, people from the LGBTQ+ community, men, older people and younger people.

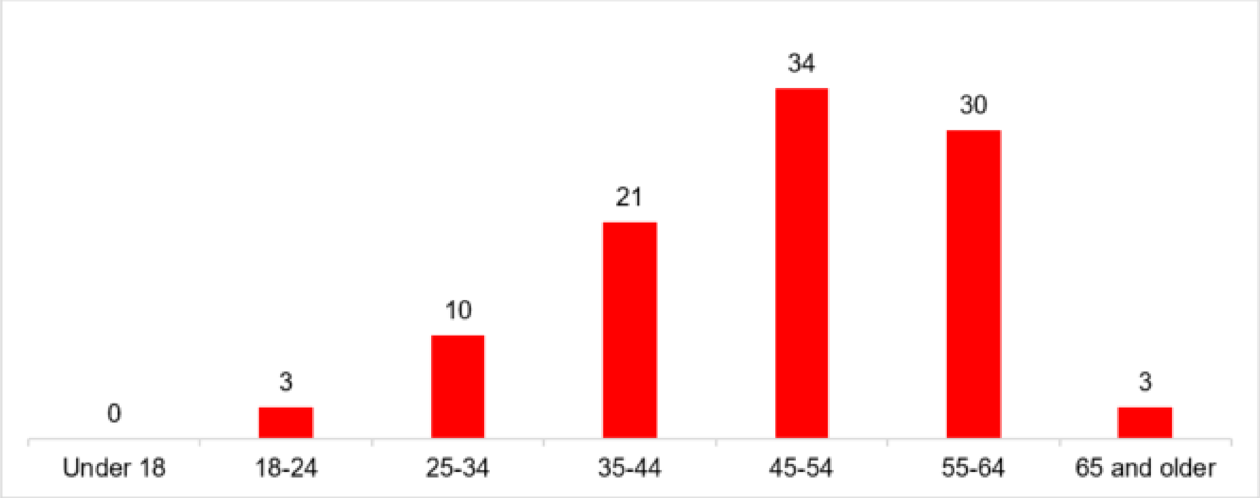
Demographics

3.2 The first part of the survey asked demographic questions about gender, age, ethnicity, sexual identity, area of residence and disability. The responses are summarised in this first section.

3.3 As with previous research, there is an over-representation of people who identify as female within this sample (n=80 out of a total 100). Nonetheless, there was some representation from people of other genders: **18 identified as male and 2 identified as non-binary**.

3.4 All respondents answered this question (n=101) and each age bracket (over 18 years) is represented. Figure 1 illustrates the distribution of respondent age, with the most frequent age of respondents being the ‘45 to 54 years’ bracket.

Figure 2: Age (in years) of respondents (n=101)



3.5 11 out of 101 respondents identified as **Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic**. Of these:

- 3 identified as Asian (all of whom are British-Indian);
- 1 as Black, African or Caribbean;

- 4 as mixed or multiple ethnicity; and
- 3 as other.

3.6 The remainder of respondents identified as white (n=90), of which:

- 80 identified as Welsh, English, Scottish or Northern Irish;
- 3 as Irish; and
- 7 as any other white background.

3.7 Out of all respondents who answered the question about sexual identity (n=98), **22 said they consider themselves part of the LGBTQ+ community**. Of these:

- 8 stated they were lesbian/gay;
- 6 identified as bisexual;
- 4 identified in another way: half of these respondents used the open text box to describe themselves as queer (n=2);
- 4 respondents chose not to disclose specifically how they identify within the LGBTQ+ community;
- Zero respondents identified themselves as being transgender or inter-sex, although one respondent disclosed they were in a relationship with a transgender person.

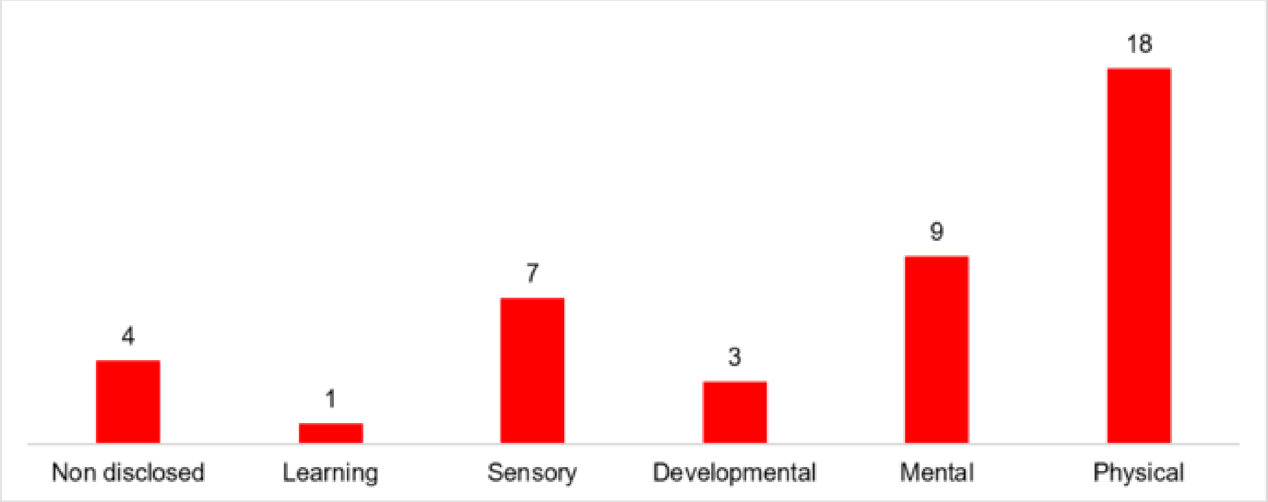
3.8 Of 100 respondents, 74 described the area where they live as either urban or suburban, while a minority lived in rural areas:

- Suburban (n=38)
- Urban (n=36)
- Rural (n=26)

3.9 **Thirty eight respondents told us that they consider themselves to have a disability**, although 42 incidences of disability were recorded (where a respondent disclosed more than one type of condition).

3.10 Figure 3 illustrates the frequency of disclosed disability by type (physical, mental, developmental, learning and sensory). Note that these categories were not given options in the survey responses; rather they were data-driven and developed (by the researchers) using the open text answers provided by respondents. The graph shows the number of times participants disclosed one type of disability. For example, someone with diabetes and depression would be recorded as having one physical disability/condition and one mental disability/condition.

Figure 3: Frequency of disability/condition by type



3.11 **The most frequently reported type of disability was physical**, with 18 incidents disclosed. The conditions covered a wide range of physical health problems from degenerative diseases (such as Parkinson’s and osteoarthritis) to neurological conditions (such as fibromyalgia and ME). Some respondents did not say specifically what their disability was, but indicated that it was physical (e.g. uses a wheelchair or having a stoma). A few respondents just wrote ‘physical’ in the open text box.

3.12 Mental health conditions reported included depression, PTSD and body dysmorphic disorder.

3.13 Six out of seven sensory disabilities that were disclosed were related to hearing loss. Autism spectrum disorder accounted for all three of the reported developmental disabilities. The four responses categorised as ‘not disclosed’ gave general answers that could not be determined as any one type of disability.

Experiences of abuse

3.14 The second part of the survey asked questions about the respondents’ experiences of abuse, including the type of abuse experienced and access to support afterwards. These responses are summarised next.

3.15 Respondents were given the choice of whether to answer questions about the nature of their abuse or not. Ten per cent opted out of answering these questions.

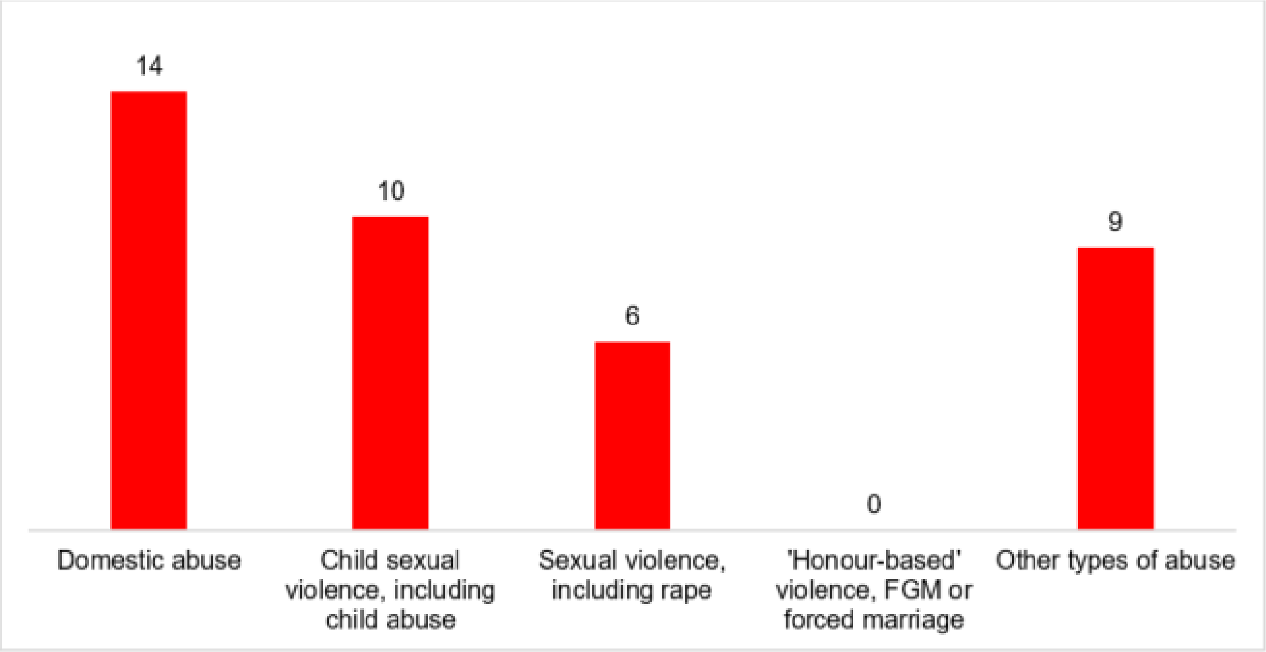
Type of abuse experienced

3.16 Although 90 respondents had agreed to answer the questions about abuse, only 39 disclosed the type of abuse they had experienced.

3.17 As demonstrated in Figure 4, **the most commonly experienced form of abuse was domestic abuse (n=14),** followed by child sexual violence (n=10). Sexual violence including rape was experienced by six of the 39 respondents who disclosed the nature of their abuse.

3.18 Nine respondents classified the abuse they had experienced as an ‘other type of abuse’ not captured by the predefined categories. None of the respondents reported any experience of ‘honour-based’ violence, FGM or forced marriage.

Figure 4: Type of abuse experienced

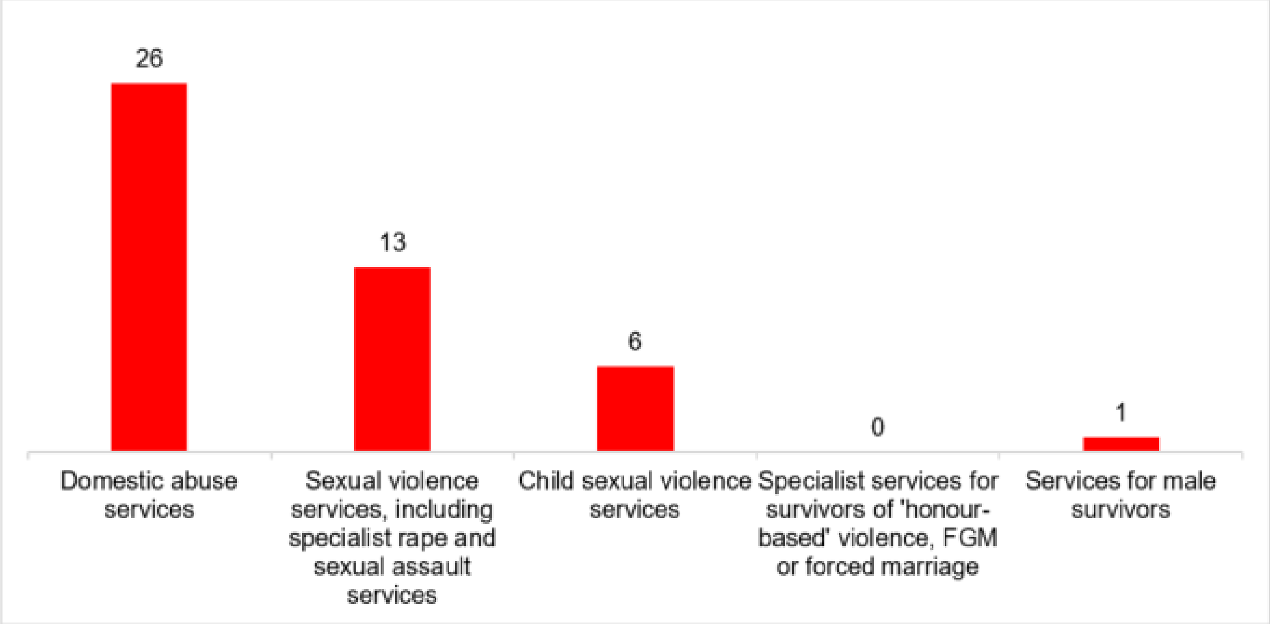


Accessing support services

3.19 Of 96 responses, **39 people stated that they had accessed support services following their experience of abuse,** while 60 had not. Respondents were also asked what types of support services they had accessed, where they were able to select more than one option[3]. 39 people answered this question and the responses are presented in Figure 5.

3.20 The most commonly accessed type of support service was domestic abuse services, which accounted for two-thirds (n=14) of all services accessed by the respondents. One respondent had used services for male survivors, sex for child sexual violence services and 13 for sexual violence services.

Figure 5: Types of support services accessed, by frequency



Engagement with Welsh Government

3.21 At the time of participating in the survey, **11 per cent of respondents were engaged in activities that impact Welsh Government's work on abuse**, compared with 89 per cent who were not. The kinds of activity that respondents were involved in mainly revolved around working or volunteering in organisations whose work supports survivors, for example Women's Aid, social services, NHS, housing, trade unions and local authority committees. Some had also accessed counselling services.

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[3] Important to note that eight people who answered 'no' to the question 'have you accessed any support services to help you deal with your experience of abuse?' went on to select a type of support service when asked at the next question. In the interests of data integrity, these 8 responses were excluded from the analysis

Methods of engagement

3.22 89 respondents answered questions about the ways in which they would want to engage with Welsh Government in the future and are presented in figures 6 and 7. Respondents were able to choose more than one option in answering this question in the survey.

3.23 **Using the internet to engage with Welsh Government was the most preferred method (n=56)**, followed by face to face (n=39) on paper (n=26) and on the phone (n=25). Other suggestions were via email or through a third party organisation whom the respondent already has a trustful relationship with.

Figure 6: Preferred method of engaging with Welsh Government (n=89)

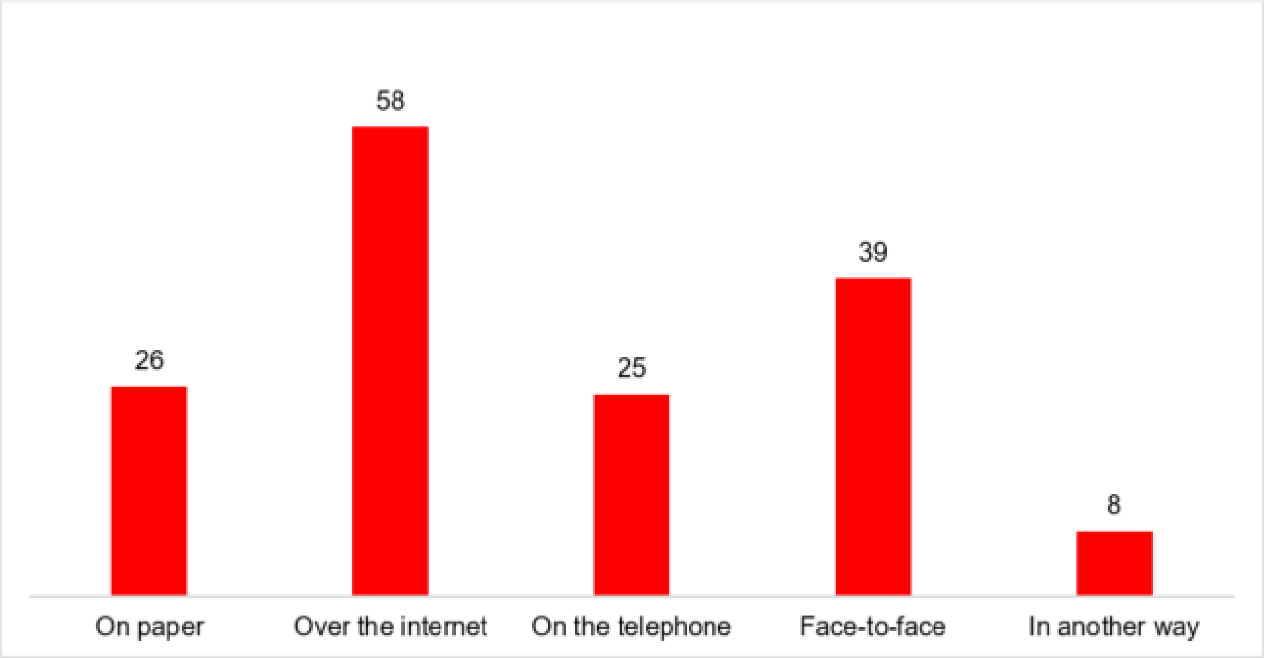
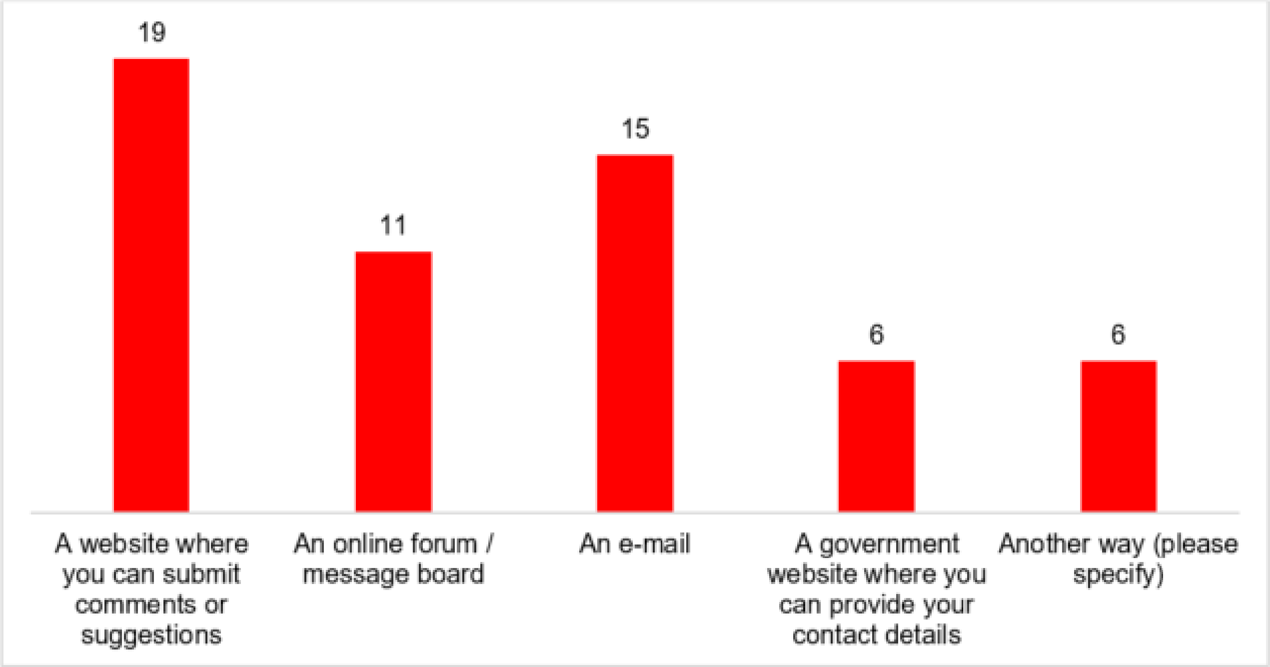


Figure 7: Preferred tools for engaging with Welsh Government (n=57)

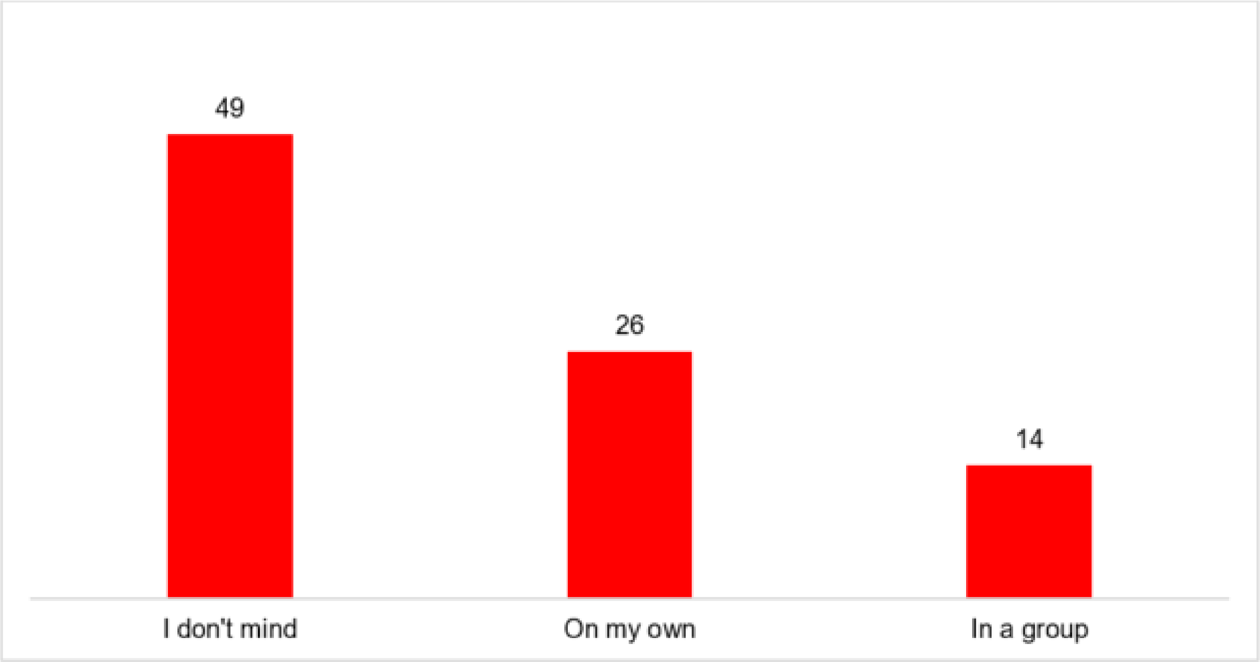


3.24 As seen in Figure 7, the most commonly chosen tool for engaging with Welsh Government is a website where comments can be submitted (n=19). Suggestions made by two respondents who selected ‘another way’ included online chat and anonymous methods. The remainder of the respondents in this category wrote that they would want to use all of the methods listed.

Group engagement

3.25 There was no clear consensus on whether engaging with Welsh Government in a group setting or alone was preferred (see figure 8), with the majority saying they didn’t mind either way (49 out of 89 responses). 26 would like to engage on their own and 14 in a group.

Figure 8: Preference for engaging with Welsh Government in a group or on own (n=89)



3.26 61 people answered a question about group composition. If these respondents were to engage through a group setting:

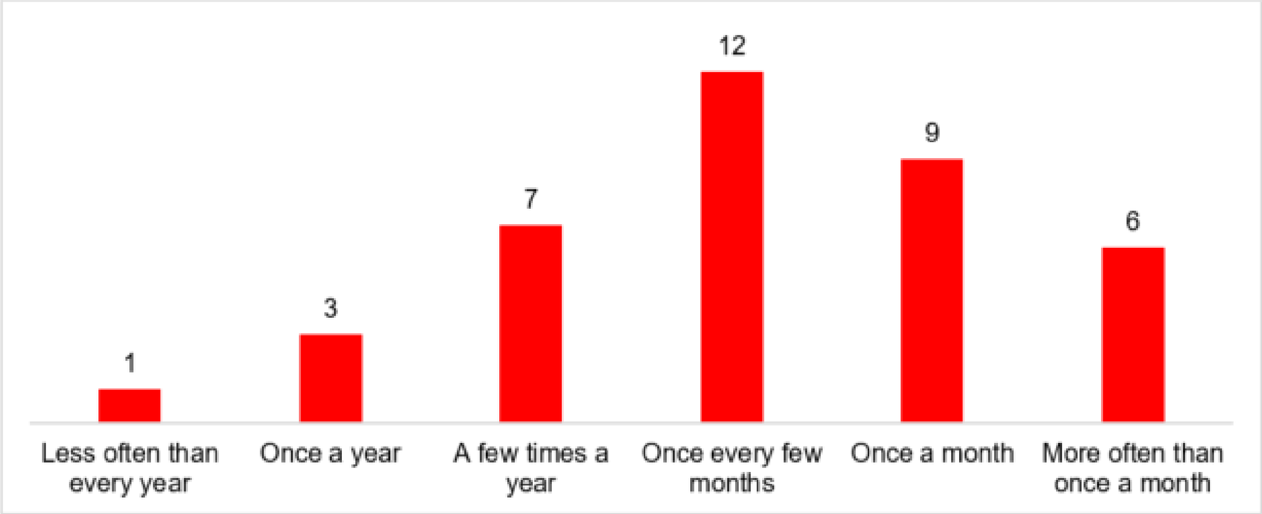
- 43 did not have a preference for who was in the group;
- 12 said they would rather be in a group with people similar to them (in terms of gender, age, type of experience etc.);
- One said they would like the other group members to be different from themselves
- Five said something else

3.27 Those who answered ‘something else’ (n=5) gave free text responses. Three of those respondents explicitly stated that they would want a group made up of people of the same sex; all of these respondents were women and emphasised that they would not want any men or male-bodied people in their group. One respondent commented that it would need to be a respectful environment. The remaining respondent thought that the question did not apply to them.

Frequency of engagement

3.28 Figure 9 shows how often people want to speak with Welsh Government face-to-face. Of 38 respondents, the most popular frequency of communication as once every few months (n=12), followed by once a month (n=9).

Figure 9: Preferred frequency of communication with Welsh Government (n=38)



Barriers to engagement

3.29 Respondents were asked about barriers to being involved in activities to impact Welsh Government's work on VAWDASV. This open question generated a range of very different responses. Using a grounded theory approach, recurring themes in the data were drawn out and categorised so that the data could be analysed and presented in a coherent way.

3.30 Every single response (n=66) has been drawn upon in this exercise. As such, some categories are only relevant to one respondent. Others occurred much more frequently, as depicted in figure 10. As these categories have been developed based on researcher interpretation, Table 1 explains further what sort of things are included in the categories. Some of the categories are self-explanatory (e.g. not interested in being involved) so are not presented. Categories cited by only one or two respondents that may be disclosive are also not detailed to protect anonymity and confidentiality.

3.31 The five most commonly cited reasons for being or feeling unable to be involved in Welsh Government's work on abuse were:

- Lack of awareness on the work that Welsh Government does
- Mental health illness or disability
- Time restrictions
- Knowing how to become involved in Welsh Government's work on abuse
- Fear of consequences from being involved

Figure 10: Barriers to engaging with Welsh Government's work on abuse by frequency

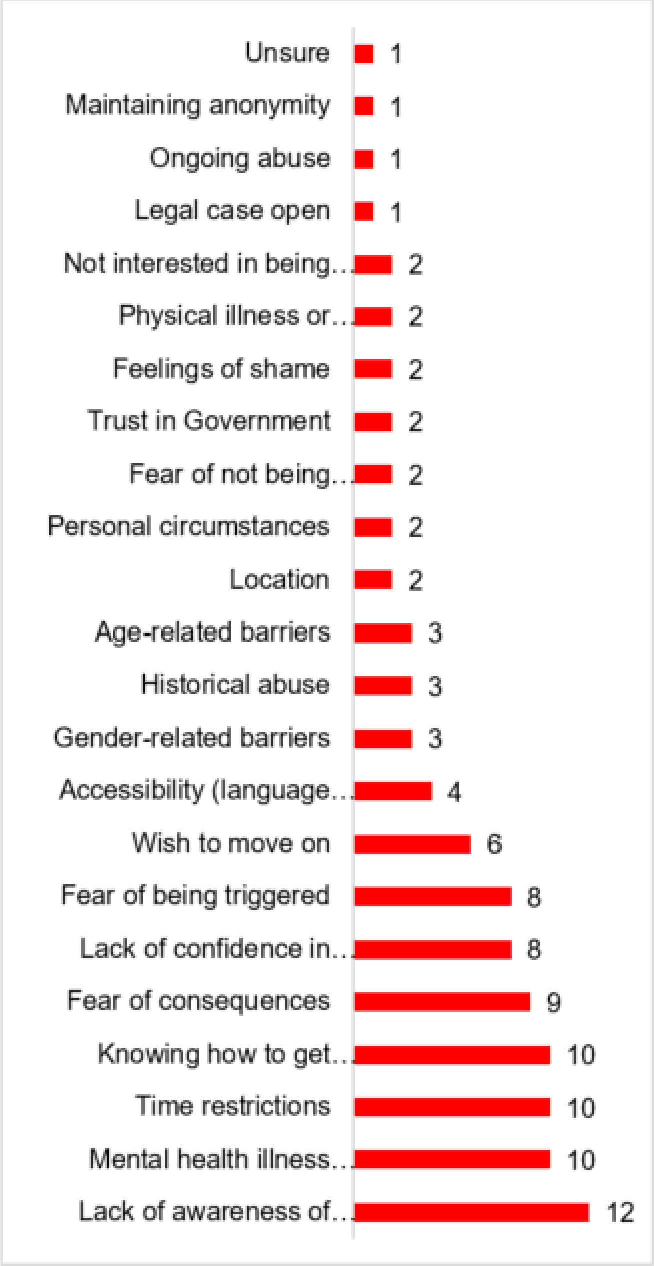


Table 1: Details of barriers to engagement, by category

Category	**Description**
Lack of awareness of Welsh Government's work	Unaware of what work is currently being undertaken on VAWDASV within Welsh Government or not aware that Welsh Government is undertaking work on VAWDASV related issues
Mental health illness or disability	Not being well enough to be involved due to mental health illnesses such as anxiety, depression or agoraphobia
Time restrictions	Not having enough time to be involved due to work commitments, caring commitments and other activities
Knowing how to get involved	Unsure of the ways to be engaged with Welsh Government or where to find information about becoming involved
Fear of consequences	Worry that involvement in Welsh Government's work on abuse will have consequences for them personally. Examples cited include risk of declining mental health, opening old wounds, risk of retribution by abuser if they found out
Lack of confidence in value of experience	Feeling as though the abuse experienced was not severe enough to qualify the respondent as knowledgeable on the subject; feeling as though they do not have anything useful to contribute
Fear of being triggered	Worry that involvement could provoke feelings of sadness, anxiety or panic related to the abuse experienced. Concern about disrupting their path to recovery by 'reliving' their abuse through involvement, either through sharing their experience with others or from hearing others' experiences
Wish to move on	Does not want to dwell on past experiences, or feels that being involved in Welsh Government work on abuse would stop them from being able to properly move on with their lives

Category	Description
Accessibility (language and understanding of concepts)	Lack of familiarity with the words used around abuse, being unsure what words or phrases mean; uncertainty around concepts used in abuse e.g. what is ‘abuse’ and how to know if it has happened to them; inability to read or write
Gender-related barriers	Feeling unable to be involved because of an issue related to own gender or gender of others involved in Welsh Government’s work. Examples given were: lack of single sex services, worry about other participants being the same gender as their perpetrator, fear of not being taken seriously due to one’s own gender
Historic abuse	Implication that abuse that happened a long time ago so may not be recalled properly, or would not be relevant to the current work ongoing by Welsh Government
Age-related barriers	The sense that age makes it difficult to be involved in some way, such as feeling like services are not available to older people
Location	The distance and/or location of services means the respondent feels unable to be involved. For example, the respondent lives rurally or even outside of Wales
Personal circumstances	Personal reasons that are not elaborated on by the respondent
Fear of not being heard or believed	Concern that their experience would not be taken seriously due to their gender or other protected characteristic; concern that their input will be dismissed or ignored
Trust in government	May include fear of disclosure or identification, mistrust of government’s data handling processes, tokenism, or whether the emotional investment in being involved is properly appreciated

3.32 It is possible to group the categories into themes, as shown in table 2. Five themes became apparent during the analysis: awareness and understanding, fear, personal circumstances, demographic factors and other.

Table 2: Emerging themes in barriers to engagement

Theme	**Sub-categories within theme**
Awareness and understanding	Lack of awareness of Welsh Government's work; Accessibility in terms of language and understanding of concepts; Knowing how to get involved
Fear	Maintaining anonymity; Ongoing abuse; Fear of not being believed or heard; Fear of being triggered; Fear of consequences from involvement; Lack of trust in Government; Feelings of shame
Personal circumstances	Time restrictions; Location of services; Location of residency (e.g. rural); Legal case open; Personal circumstances (not specified)
Demographic factors	Age-related barriers; Gender-related barriers; Health-related barriers (physical and mental illness/disability)
Other	Not interested in being involved; Unsure of what the barriers are

How Welsh Government can encourage involvement

3.33 Finally, respondents were asked what Welsh Government could do to encourage them to get involved in their work on abuse. Again, this was an open-ended question with a wide range of answers and recurring themes, which are presented in Figure 11.

3.34 The most frequently cited suggestions for encouraging involvement in Welsh Government's work on abuse were:

- Not sure (of what could be done)
- Provide resource for specialist services, including single-sex services
- Promote the ways survivors can get involved
- Proactively seek out and contact survivors
- Genuinely listen to survivors' experiences

3.35 Some of the suggestions made could be, relatively, easily and quickly implemented; for example using simpler language, promoting the ways survivors can be involved in Welsh Government's work on abuse, or raising awareness of the work itself.

3.36 Others require more consideration. For example, specialist knowledge and expertise would be needed to implement actions such as offering after-support for participants (e.g. counselling), provide safe spaces for survivors of VAWDASV to share experiences and offer each other support, ensure survivors feel they are being genuinely listened to, or prepare prospective participants by ensuring they are fully informed of what is involved in participating. Given the highly sensitive nature of the topic, these actions would need to be approached very carefully and with consideration. Delivery by specialists in this area would help to ensure that any risk to participants is minimised, if Welsh Government was to consider implementing these types of suggestions.

Figure 11: What Welsh Government (WG) can do to encourage engagement, by frequency

3.37 Suggestions made about resources might be longer-term considerations, such as allocating resource for specialist services, running schemes in further and higher education institutions, changing the school curriculum on sex education to be more comprehensive (in terms of LGBTQ+ issues, for example), or offering after-support for participants.

3.38 One respondent suggested reducing council tax, but did not elaborate any further so it is not clear exactly how they would link this to encouraging involvement.

Other points to note

'Sex' v 'gender'

3.39 The debate on women's-only services including or excluding trans women or having male-free spaces was raised on numerous occasions throughout the survey. This is a highly contentious issue and one that needs to be considered thoroughly in terms of engagement and panel representation.

3.40 First, it is important to understand the differences between 'sex' and 'gender' as concepts. The following definitions are taken from MRS (2016:2) guidance:

> ***'Biological sex*** *refers to a person's physical anatomy. In most cases, the terms male and female will cover biological sex but there are a range of other variations in anatomy and chromosomal makeup, which will require an additional classification such as intersex.'*
>
> ***'Gender and gender identity…****is the way that an individual describes themselves and identifies with a gender category. A person's identity may or may not correspond with their biological sex and is…not fully covered by the standard Male and Female categories. The wide range of non-binary gender identities means that some people may identify as male or female and some may identify with an alternative third option gender identity such as transgender. Other identities may include polygender, intergender, nongender, agender or transsexual.'*

3.41 The subject of women-only spaces is an important and very real issue for some respondents. It is evident that a proportion of respondents feel that allowing self-identifying trans women access to women's-only services poses risks to the safety of women who are female as determined by biological sex.

3.42 Some of the comments that illustrate this point were:

> *'Governments seem to ignore the needs of women not to be around male-bodied people. It's an essential part of our treatment and recovery'*
>
> *'[there should be] support for women who do not agree that self id[entifying] trans women are women'*
>
> *'Recognise SEX over gender'*
>
> *'Surely we can have equality with different groups needs being met and not one group (women) having to bear all the risks and have our services diluted'*
>
> *'Recognise sex over gender. Consult with women's groups'*
>
> *'Recognise that women and girls are…most at risk of abuse, especially when their single sex spaces and protections are removed'*
>
> *'As a woman I am worried that services I may access will have men there'*

3.43 The points being made above do not necessarily mean that these respondents would be opposed to trans women being on the survivor's panel; however, it may mean that input by trans women may not be taken as seriously or even completely dismissed because their experience is not as a biological female.

3.44 Literature in the field suggests that concerns around trans women accessing women's-only services are based on the premise that trans women are not 'real' women, or not the same type of woman as a biologically female woman (Stonewall, 2018). The fear is that male abusers disguised as trans women could infiltrate women-only spaces designed for survivors of VAWDASV if trans women are permitted access to these spaces, although research suggests this is an incredibly low risk (Stonewall, 2018). Another factor shaping this discourse is 'gender identity', as put by Manners (2019:2):

> *'Perhaps this is where inclusion becomes complicated: a survivor who is triggered by men will be triggered by anyone she perceives as male regardless of how they identify, and this may be an automatic reaction that defies politics.'*

Men’s perceptions of being believed

3.45 There was a sense of apprehension from some of the respondents with regards to being male and being taken seriously:

> *‘Being male, the fear of not being believed and that it would have been acted on.’*
>
> *‘[I’ve had a] feeling of pointlessness as white heterosexual men are not considered seriously, as equally and independently from other groups.’*
>
> *‘[Welsh Government] assure me that my protected characteristics and experiences will be seriously considered and enacted upon.’*
>
> *‘Convince me that white heterosexual male issues are as important as any other individual or combination of protected characteristics.’*
>
> *‘I…didn't feel like I would have been taken seriously’*

3.46 These comments suggest that there is work to be done on ensuring that men’s voices are believed and represented in the wider work on VAWDASV abuse.

4. Evidence Synthesis

4.1 This section summarises the findings from the data carried out by the IRP in Phase 1 to inform the development of the VAWDASV Survivor Engagement Panel. The data collection exercises aimed to collate the views of survivors, officials and stakeholders on how Welsh Government should set up the Survivor Engagement Panel, which was piloted between September and November 2019. For Phase 1, activities were n online survey and consultation responses, but it is important to note that relevant data from the Theory of Change work from Phase 2 inputs into this evidence synthesis to support data collected from Phase 1.

4.2 Themes that emerged from the data are presented here. The themes were drawn out by 'mapping' the topics raised in each data collection exercise, identifying commonalities and linking them to each other where relevant. Some themes are broken down into sub-headings; this is to separate distinct issues raised under any one theme. Where appropriate, the analysis is supported and complemented by quotations from participants and respondents.

4.3 A section is included at the end of the document, which summarises the key considerations to make ahead of the pilot sessions due to begin at the end of the month.

4.4 For ease, the following engagement activities have been shortened as indicated:

- Public consultation on the Survivor Engagement Framework ('the consultation')
- Survey for under-represented groups ('the survey')
- Theory of change workshop attended by survivors ('the survivors' workshop')
- Theory of change workshop attended by stakeholders ('the stakeholders' workshop')
- Theory of change workshop attended by government officials ('the officials' workshop')

Time barriers

Finding spare time to participate

4.5 Time was discussed throughout the theory of change workshops in terms of both quantity and quality. It was also referred to in numerous survey responses.

4.6 Participants in the stakeholder’s workshop stressed that many survivors do not have the spare time to participate in Welsh Government activities like workshops or panels. The survey findings support this statement; a lack of spare time was cited by a small minority of survey respondents as a barrier to engagement. Of those respondents who expanded on their answers, juggling caring responsibilities and working were the reasons for not having enough time to be engaged with Welsh Government’s work on abuse. Stakeholders said that in knowing that time was a barrier for survivors, Welsh Government should offer alternative methods of engagement in order to be more inclusive of survivors with different commitments and availability.

Offering enough time to research participants

4.7 For the participants of the survivors’ workshop, not having enough time to give thorough answers to the researchers’ questions was an issue that was raised several times throughout the session. It was felt that too much was being addressed in a short amount of time, leading them to feel ‘rushed’ and as if their time was not considered valuable by Welsh Government. A suggestion for maximising the short amount of time that they had was for the researchers to issue participants with a topic guide ahead of the workshop, giving them time to think in advance about the subject areas.

Time spent travelling to participation site

4.8 As well as the survivors’ workshop being too short, participants also felt that having to travel to Cardiff was a big ask and that the researchers should consider travelling to other parts of Wales. This would promote inclusivity, reaching survivors who are unable to travel to Cardiff. It would also help survivors to feel that their time is valued, as some participants had taken a day off work to attend the workshop.

4.9 Participants in the officials’ workshop were open to travelling to survivors, rather than asking survivors to spend their time travelling on top of participating in research. However, the officials pointed out that their policy team is only two people and their time is limited too. They also felt that dedicating so much resource to travelling across Wales could be expensive and potentially hard to justify in financial terms.

Payment for participants

Payment as a gesture in valuing participants

4.10 Paying survivors for participating in Welsh Government research was debated by all of the workshop groups and cited by two survey respondents as a way for Welsh Government to encourage their participation. Paying participants in social research is contentious issue, yet a study in which participants who received financial compensation related to their status as a survivor of sexual violence reported not only improved financial security, but also feeling a valuable sense of acknowledgement (Holder and Daly, 2017). **Stakeholders and survivors alike felt that payment was a way of demonstrating that their input is valued**:

> *When you pay for something, you value it a lot more.*
>
> (Participant - Survivors' workshop)

4.11 It was also felt that members of the survivors' panel should be treated as equivalent in value to other expert panels:

> *The survivor expert panel should be recompensed the exact same way as the other panels.*
>
> (Participant - Survivors' workshop)

4.12 Participants in the survivors' workshop thought that paying members of other expert panels (but not members of the survivors' panel) would cause survivors to feel as though they were not being taken as seriously as other experts were. This was echoed in the stakeholder's workshop:

> *If we were going to deliver something as an organisation, there would be a cost element…So what are we thinking about the individuals who are best placed to do this…If [survivors] are going to do this, how do we value them?*
>
> (Participant - Stakeholders' workshop)

Sourcing funding for paying participants

4.13 At the same time, one participant in the stakeholder's workshop expressed concern over where the resources for paying survivors would come from. This triggered others in the stakeholder's workshop to talk about how the money for this work must be in addition to the existing funding that is given for the front-line services they deliver, not taken from it:

> *We don't want to take service provision away; we want to add to it and to make it stronger.*
>
> (Participant - Stakeholders' workshop)

4.14 This point was also made in the survivors' workshop. One person in the survivors workshop suggested different types of 'payment' that were non-financial, such as organisational support, which would still demonstrate the value that Welsh Government places on survivor participation.

Ethical implications

4.15 **Officials raised concerns around paying survivors for participating in Welsh Government-funded research**. Free and informed consent is the key ethical principle underpinning qualitative social research (Head, 2009), and paying participants for their views could be considered as bribery or exploitative, threatening the reputability of Welsh Government. In terms of incentive, payment may attract people who are motivated by money rather than shaping policy. A participant in the survivors' workshop pointed out that service providers could too have a hidden agenda if there is a monetary incentive for participating.

4.16 Moreover, officials said that paying one participant group means paying all groups in order to be seen as 'fair', which would be (financially) costly to the government. Cost is important because government work is publicly funded and Welsh Government is accountable for how those funds are spent. On the other hand, survivors were sceptical of this view because, as one person highlighted, the UK Government pays survivor consultants in the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse ('the inquiry').

4.17 Power dynamics was also raised as potential ethical concern by one stakeholder, who saw Welsh Government as having all of the money and the power. Because of this, they thought that it was the responsibility of Welsh Government to ensure that all activities concerning VAWDASV work were underpinned by the same agenda, which furthermore must be consistent with the wider Welsh Government agenda, e.g. The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015.

Methods of engagement

Accessible and varied methods

4.18 Methods for engaging survivors in Welsh Government's work on VAWDASV was touched upon by participants in both the survivors and stakeholders workshops. **Stakeholders said that there needed to be an adequate variety of accessible resources available, including Braille, easy-read and multi-lingual versions.**

4.19 In the survivors' workshop, some suggestions were made about the types of engagement method that Welsh Government could adopt: consultation groups, forums, events, online live streams, Facebook adverts, TV adverts, or support groups. Focus groups were very popular amongst participants in the survivors' workshop and it was suggested that they could be useful when opening consultations to try to get a greater response. The inquiry, and specifically the Truth Project, was referenced again as a preferable engagement model by the survivors' workshop participants. **The message coming from the survivors' workshop was clear: whatever is offered should be continuous and structured if it is to have any purposeful impact.**

Advertising methods for engagement

4.20 Another suggestion was a Welsh Government website page that could list all of the engagement options and direct people to a way of engaging that suits them. This may prove effective particularly with people from under-represented groups, since sixty-five percent of respondents to the survey chose the internet as their preferred method for engaging with Welsh Government; indeed, preference for using the internet was consistent across all demographic groups.

Focus groups

Benefits of focus groups for survivor engagement

4.21 Whilst focus groups are one type of qualitative method in social research – and therefore could be encapsulated in section 3 – an entire section is dedicated to them here because of the length and frequency at which they were discussed in the workshops. Focus groups are usually attended by people with shared experiences to discuss a specific aspect of their experience in an unstructured way (Bryman, 2010). Owing to these attributes, participation in focus groups can have positive outcomes for survivors of VAWDASV:

> *I've had service users say that just being in that focus group, or that environment, that is the first time I've spoken to other people and felt like I haven't got this sign on my head that says "I am not the same as other people", that there is something about me that is okay. That makes a real difference in itself.*
>
> (Participant - Stakeholders' workshop)

Facilitation of focus groups with survivors

4.22 Whilst participants in the survivors' workshop agreed that focus groups were an appropriate and effective way for sharing ideas, they discussed some preferences for how a focus group should be facilitated. **There should be enough time to discuss the issue at hand (it was felt that two hours was not long enough for the workshop), so that everyone has the chance to input to the extent they want**:

> *We could have had two hours just working on one of these points, not all of them.*
>
> (Participant - Survivors' workshop)

> *I think you need to value people's time…this [session] has been very rushed and I think that if you genuinely wanted to consult with me then you're going to have to set a day at least aside.*
>
> (Participant - Survivors' workshop)

4.23 Allowing participants to set the agenda of focus groups may encourage engagement with a wider variety of survivors. At the same time, structure and talking points are necessary for achieving a worthwhile discussion. The chance to network before a focus group begins can be a helpful way for people to get to know one another and feel more comfortable in participating in the focus group discussion. From a research perspective, this may also help to generate richer data (Peterson and Barron, 2007). Previous research suggests that focus groups are most effective when participants share similar social identities and experiences (Rodriguez et al, 2011).

Identifying under-represented populations

Contributory factors to under-representation

4.24 Attaining a survivor's engagement panel that is representative of the entire spectrum of people living with experience of VAWDASV is the main aim of this work. In analysing the consultation responses, the VAWDASV policy team identified the following groups as under-represented: men, people of the LGBTQ+ community, people of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds, disabled people, older people and younger people. Participants in the stakeholders' workshop mentioned two additional groups that are often not in contact with frontline services and are consequently under-represented: the travelling community and sex workers.

4.25 A group is considered 'under-represented' because it is not as engaged in current Welsh Government work as other groups. The causes of marginalisation for a group of people with similar characteristics or attributes are complex. Social or physical location, vulnerability or otherwise hidden nature of a population can contribute to exclusion from traditional social research sampling methods (Ellard-Gray et al, 2015). Under-represented populations often experience disadvantaged circumstances and disenfranchisement caused by barriers to inclusion, which can manifest as mistrust in government (Devotta et al, 2016) and mistrust in research processes (Ellard-Gray et al, 2015). Trust in government is evidently low for some participants:

> *[I am] so scared of any contact. How can we trust you?*
>
> (Survey respondent)

> *We've gone to cross party groups in the past and…[ministers] just wander in in their lunch time, we were told, 'don't worry if they wander back out, it's just here as part of their lunch'. Now, that's horrific.*
>
> (Participant - Survivors' workshop)

> *Governments seem to ignore the needs of [women survivors] not to be around male-bodied people.*
>
> (Survey respondent)

4.26 With lack of trust being a barrier for some survivors, it is unsurprising that disengagement is higher within groups that are already under-represented by virtue of being excluded. With this in mind, it is worth exploring whether specific barriers to participation apply to certain under-represented groups.

Barriers to engagement for under-represented groups

4.27 Survey respondents and participants in the workshops cited various barriers to participating in Welsh Government research, including time restrictions, childcare responsibilities, fear of their perpetrator finding out, negative previous experience of talking with Ministers or being able to afford to travel to focus groups:

> *…with all respect, I've got no issue coming here but if you're coming from Lampeter, and you're expected to come here all the time then cost is implicated there somewhere.*
>
> (Participant - Survivors' workshop)
>
> *I don't think I have enough free time to commit*
>
> (Survey respondent)
>
> *I was involved but been silenced by [the perpetrator]*
>
> (Survey respondent)
>
> *[I am] working full-time [and] having a young family*
>
> (Survey respondent)
>
> *My important job is getting up in the morning and surviving, coping with a vast mountain of debt…and parent my children.*
>
> (Survey respondent)
>
> *If there was a way that I could have an impact that felt very safe and positive I would consider [engaging with Welsh Government]*
>
> (Survey respondent)

Addressing accessibility issues

4.28 Accessibility is key in encouraging participation from hard-to-reach groups. Research recruitment processes should avoid inaccessible language, such as jargon, which can be highly exclusionary. Complicated language was cited by two survey participants as a barrier to engagement and by workshop participants:

> *It needs to be able to be read by survivors*
>
> (Participant - Survivors' workshop)

4.29 Producing materials that aim to engage all survivors of abuse should therefore be simple and easy to read. This is a relatively easy step for Welsh Government to implement compared with other outcomes (for example, paying participants).

4.30 Participants in the survivors' workshop expressed concern that male survivors may be put off participating in Welsh Government research because the word 'women' is included in the VAWDASV acronym. Furthermore, members of hard-to-reach groups may not recognise themselves as belonging to a specific group or as having experienced abuse. Ellard-Gray et al (2015) cite an example where many women survivors do not recognise their experience as 'assault', 'rape' or even harassment, and so may not even think to come forward as a participant in research on sexual assault survivors. Raising awareness of what constitutes violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence may help to address this issue.

4.31 Overcoming barriers to engaging with particular communities was touched upon by participants in the stakeholders' workshop. One participant suggested using gatekeepers, such as an organisation or individual already engaged with people from under-represented groups:

> *I think sometimes you can piggyback into communities and hear views that you can't if you are from outside.*
>
> (Participant - Stakeholders' workshop)

4.32 Research suggests that the use of gatekeepers in the recruitment process is particularly beneficial for research involving people of Black, Asian and minority ethnicities, people in poverty and other excluded groups (Thummepol et al, 2019). The workshop data offers ways in which Welsh Government can make itself more accessible to under-represented groups in VAWDASV policy and research that could be relatively simple to implement.

Data sharing

Making the most of data

4.33 Participants in the stakeholders' workshop raised the subject of sharing personal/confidential/sensitive data, saying that data sharing agreements should be in place from the outset of the research process. The rationale for this is that survivors' data can be shared with relevant services, if permission is given beforehand. There seemed to be some frustration amongst some stakeholder participants with the perception that Welsh Government is the gatekeeper of survivors' data:

> *…the lack of communication and the gatekeeping that is taking place [by Welsh Government] is the issue where we can't make change and we can't prevent [abuse] or protect [victims]…*
>
> (Participant - Stakeholders' workshop)

Mistrust in government data handling capabilities

4.34 Findings from the survey also indicated some mistrust in government data handling processes amongst VAWDASV survivors, for example:

> *…Welsh Government would need to envisage that any activity/group that they would like me to be involved in would have to be in a safe setting and also allow any survivors that turn up that they have a right to anonymity such as requests for photographs, sharing on social media, etc. Making those attending knowing they can attend in an anonymous setting is more likely to encourage a more wider [sic] range of people.*
>
> (Survey respondent)

4.35 In response to these concerns, participants in the officials' workshop expressed apprehension about knowing what they could and could not share with organisations because of the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

Social media

As an engagement tool

4.36 **The internet was a preferred method for engaging with Welsh Government according to the survey**. Social media was suggested in the survivors' workshop as a way for using the internet to engage with a broad spectrum of people, including those who are unlikely to participate in 'traditional' research methods. However, feedback from one stakeholder participant was that research their organisation had carried out found that social media was not favoured by their service users:

> *Links through social media and Facebook come up as the least, the least preferred way to engage…*
>
> (Participant - Stakeholders' workshop)

4.37 In response to this comment, another participant speculated that fear of identification through personal social media accounts could be the reason why social media is perhaps seen unfavourably compared with other engagement methods:

> *The way they are marketed on the social media platforms clearly identifies the service with that individual*
>
> (Participant - Stakeholders' workshop)

4.38 It was suggested that engagement activities could be advertised or 'reposted' through third-party social media accounts. One example was of a social housing provider posting on behalf of another organisation on their social media page, so that people who had 'liked' their page would see it, without having to subscribe directly to the page being reposted. Using this method needs to be explored in further depth to understand the costs and risks.

Risks associated with using social media

4.39 Known risks of using social media as an engagement tool were discussed in the officials' workshop. Their previous experience had shown social media to be a tool with profound negative consequences, with online abuse and trolling leaving users and managers of the page feeling vulnerable. As user profiles tend to have a personal and permanent identity (De Choudry and De, 2014), anonymity cannot be guaranteed on social media sites. As already discussed in this summary, maintaining anonymity is important to many survivors.

4.40 Maintaining anonymity is often imperative for preventing perpetrator retaliation (Adefolalu, 2014). The social stigma associated with abuse (Callaghan et al, 2017) may also force survivors and victims to avoid disclosure in any public way, such as on social media. The stigma around online disclosure of negative subjects or emotions, or seeking to gain social support, is often seen as violating online social norms (Wolfer, 2017), meaning survivors and victims of abuse may be reluctant to engage through social media for fear of being further marginalised by those in their online community.

Consistency of language

4.41 **Ensuring that language is consistent across the board was important for participants of all three workshops**. This means using language that is jargon-free, survivor-led and familiar to society, not just government officials and stakeholders:

> *…if we're trying to impact community engagement, we've got to work with what the community is used to hearing*
>
> (Participant - Survivors' workshop)

> *The key thing about prevention is raising awareness within society and within Wales…that starts from all the very low level on the ground and goes all the way up…*
>
> (Participant - Stakeholders' workshop)

> *…that's what resonates with [survivors] so why would we overcomplicate it with more civil service language*
>
> (Participant - Officials' workshop)

4.42 Participants also recognised the importance of consistent language in setting the direction of VAWDASV policy:

> *…the participation strategy having the same words, having the national strategy saying the same words, having this say the same words… otherwise we are going to lose where we are going with it*
>
> (Participant - Stakeholders' workshop)

> *If you change the word then it changes the meaning*
>
> (Participant - Officials' workshop)

4.43 At the same time, participants in the officials' workshop pointed out that the VAWDASV acronym was hotly debated during the development of the Act, and had taken a long time to create. Essentially, the acronym would continue to be used but there was scope to use different language when engaging with survivors, although this would contradict the notion of consistency.

Sustainability

Creating a sustainable framework

4.44 A clear message for delivering an impactful Survivor Engagement Framework was that it needs to be sustainable. To function long-term, one participant in the survivors' workshop felt that the framework would need to be financially and practically sustainable. Another said it would also need to include representation from survivors who have experienced varying types of abuse (e.g. domestic abuse, sexual violence, child abuse). Otherwise, the framework will fail to serve a large proportion of survivors and be unfit for purpose in the long-term.

Maintaining a sustainable framework

4.45 There was some discussion around how the Survivor Engagement Framework could be maintained. Providing quality feedback about outcomes to participants was one way in which sustainability could be maintained:

> *…people won't engage a second time if…they don't see that anything's been impacted, that nothing has changed*
>
> (Participant - Stakeholders' workshop)

4.46 Part of being sustainable involves continuous engagement, too:

> *…it can't be one off events; it has to be a package.*
>
> (Participant - Stakeholders' workshop)

> *…meaningful means continuously. It is an ongoing process and not just when you need to commission something, or when you want to gauge impact of how services work*
>
> (Participant - Stakeholders' workshop)

Terminology

Appropriateness of terminology

4.47 Participants in both the stakeholder and survivor workshops felt that terminology was very important in terms of inclusivity and respect. Use of the term ‘survivor’ was debated heavily. Many participants in the survivors’ workshop would prefer to be called ‘experts’ or ‘professionals’. By distinguishing experts from survivors, participants felt that this undermined the expertise that they brought to Welsh Government’s work:

> *Survivors aren’t seen as professional.*
>
> (Participant - Survivors’ workshop)

> *They’re [survivors] not seen as experts. I think they are the experts.*
>
> (Participant - Survivors’ workshop)

4.48 However, there was a consensus that survivors are experts and should be treated as such:

> *…panels need to…have survivor experts as experts.*
>
> (Participant - Survivors’ workshop)

> *…you could just use the prototype that the inquiry into child sexual abuse is doing now and have the survivors as the expert panel*
>
> (Participant - Survivors’ workshop)

4.49 These discussions highlight the need for sensitivity around terminology when referring to people who have been subjected to VAWDASV.

4.50 Another example of how tension can arise through choice of language was where the IRP researchers referred to experiences of abuse as ‘stories’ and was considered disrespectful by a participant in the stakeholders’ workshop:

> *I don’t like the word ‘story’...that’s quite derogatory, it is experiences.*
>
> (Participant - Survivors’ workshop)
>
> *I hate the word ‘stories’, it sounds made up.*
>
> (Participant - Stakeholders’ workshop)

4.51 However, using the word ‘story’ to describe someone’s experience of abuse is adopted widely by charity organisations, mainstream media and academia. There seems to be very limited literature demonstrating that the term ‘story’ is offensive. On the contrary, storytelling can be empowering; Andersen (2008) defines a story as a person constructing narratives of their own experiences in order to make sense of them. Nonetheless, it is important to acknowledge how use of certain terms can stir emotions and connotations - both positive and negative – associated with sensitive topics like VAWDASV.

Exclusion through terminology

4.52 Another issue with terminology is that it can be limiting (Ellard-Gray et al, 2015). A reason cited as not wanting to engage with Welsh Government on its work on VAWDASV was being ‘labelled’:

> *I don’t want to be labelled as a victim.*
>
> (Survey respondent)

4.53 Potential participants may not view themselves as being either a ‘victim’ or a ‘survivor’; this was true for one person:

> *I don’t consider myself a victim or survivor*
>
> (Participant - Survivors’ workshop)

4.54 The consequence of this is that people who do not self-identify as a ‘survivor’ or a ‘victim’ may consider themselves ineligible to take part in research (Ellard-Gray et al, 2015); the terminology becomes the cause of exclusion.

4.55 There was an assumed dichotomy between the terms ‘survivor’ and ‘professional’ that was made in the survivors’ workshop, meaning that a person could not be both. One participant assumed that neither of the IRP researchers had any personal experience of VAWDASV and commented that they have no idea what it is like to be a survivor of abuse. Regardless of whether this is true or not, their comments illustrate how preconceptions of others and associations with certain terms can occur on both sides (researcher and participant). One academic article argues that appearance and attributes of focus group facilitators have a direct effect on group dynamics and interaction (Kreuger, 1994). This is exacerbated where the subject of discussion is sensitive (Wellings et al, 2000).

4.56 In the same vein, participants in the stakeholders' workshop talked about the word 'survivor' not being appropriate in all situations where someone has experienced abuse, for example children or those affected by proxy (such as immediate family members). One stakeholder participant noted that people using their services are often not ready to think of themselves as 'survivors' because they are in the very early process of escaping from their abusive situation.

Alternative terminology

4.57 Suggestions for alternative ways of referring to survivors came from the stakeholder workshop. These included 'client' (as used in the Criminal Justice System), 'victim of crime' (seen as the legally accurate term), 'people affected' (to encompass all affected parties, like family members), and 'experts by experience'. The latter was already used by one stakeholder organisation and was described as having been really empowering for some of their service-users.

4.58 In the literature, 'victim-survivor' was used by one researcher to encompass those at all stages of the recovery process.

Language

4.59 Throughout the data analysis, it became clear that the language used when talking about VAWDASV and related issues has strong implications on the outcomes of participation, research, policy and cohesion between official institutions (like Welsh Government) and stakeholders and people with lived experience of abuse. **Participants in the survivors' workshop felt that language must be inclusive, survivor-led and free from jargon.** Similarly, findings from the survey found that respondents wanted language to be accessible, and that inaccessible language was a barrier to engaging with government.

4.60 Several ideas for ensuring that materials used in the VAWDASV work is accessible came out of the stakeholders' workshop, including having bi- and/or multi- lingual resources (particularly in areas where Welsh is spoken) and being consistent across documents. In addition, it was felt that some concepts should be defined and clarified such as 'community' (e.g. who is included– just survivors, survivors and their families, or wider) and ‘engagement’ (e.g. what does it mean and what does it involve).

Respecting research participants

Demonstrating respect

4.61 The need to respect people both individually and collectively underpins much of what participants told the researchers during the workshops. Giving appropriate time, attention and resource to the subject of VAWDASV all feed into showing respect for what survivors have been through and have to say.

4.62 However, feeling respected by government officials is not something that participants in the survivors’ workshop had experienced so far. Their previous encounters with Welsh Government policy teams were seen as tokenistic:

> *…very often we are asked by Welsh Government to inform and advise but do you know what, it comes back time and time again in our feedback, that [survivors] felt like it was an empty gesture.*
>
> (Participant - Survivors’ workshop)
>
> *I don’t really think [WG] took on anything we were saying, they made lots of notes and that but they ran with their campaigns anyway… We wanted loads of changes. We wanted loads of things done differently.*
>
> (Participant - Survivors’ workshop)

4.63 Tangible resources like quality time, accessible engagement methods and financial compensation and investment are physical ways of demonstrating that the views of participants in Welsh Government research are listened to, valued and acted upon.

4.64 Genuine recognition and acknowledgement of the harm and victimisation caused to a person by being abused can help bring a sense of justice that is powerful and validating for that individual (McGlynn and Westmarland, 2018). The loss that is associated with suffering abuse (e.g. lost sense of self, loss of normal childhood) is amplified when the victim is not believed (Alaggia, 2005), hence why acknowledging survivors’ abuse is so important in building trust between survivors and official organisations like Welsh Government. Survivors’ workshop participants spoke about how appropriate two-way interaction between Welsh Government and survivors would demonstrate respect:

> *…action is survivor-led and based on genuine, purposeful, continuous, and reciprocal dialogue between government and everyone affected by it and survivors of abuse.*
>
> (Participant - Survivors’ workshop)

4.65 This excerpt from the workshop transcription suggests that respect is consolidated when interaction is continuous and genuine. Respecting survivors could therefore be demonstrated through being kept up-to-date with progress and policy developments, including policy outcomes, through ongoing feedback processes (see section ‘Managing expectations’ for further detail).

Ministers’ interest in survivor voices

4.66 The survivors’ workshop participants felt strongly about the perceived lack of interest from Ministers. One participant described the example of Ministers meeting survivors in their lunch break as ‘horrendous’. They felt that if Welsh Government really valued their input, Ministers would allocate time to talk to survivors properly and not just fit them in between meetings.

Representing all survivors

All individuals deserve to be heard

4.67 The workshop participants brought up the subject of representation in terms of survivor voices. It was felt that the most assertive and engaged survivors are those who are most often heard in campaigns against VAWDASV, and it was felt that such individuals may be held up as the ‘poster person’ for all survivors of VAWDASV. However, they do not represent all experiences, views or demographics of survivors:

> *[when only] one person speaks up [it] can be really tokenistic and really dangerous. Their story is the only thing they are thinking about.*
>
> (Participant - Stakeholders’ workshop)

> *Their view becomes…the accepted view, and I think that’s quite dangerous territory.*
>
> (Participant - Officials’ workshop)

> *…the people with the louder voices, sometimes they have their own agenda as well.*
>
> (Participant - Stakeholders' workshop)

> *I know they still need to be heard, but if they've got the loudest voice maybe they are going to drive that agenda, not the one they are there to do.*
>
> (Participant - Stakeholders' workshop)

A collective voice

4.68 A topic covered in the stakeholders' workshop was seeing the results of collective participation. As one person said:

> *…if you haven't [participated before], you might be more likely to because you can see that something has happened as a result of that collective voice.*
>
> (Participant - Stakeholders' workshop)

4.69 Participants in the survivors' workshop did not necessarily engage with the notion of a 'collective voice', but there was acknowledgement of the power of diversity of experience:

> *…experiences are so different, but the voices are so powerful*
>
> (Participant - Survivors' workshop)

4.70 Officials recognised the personal nature of individual experiences and it was acknowledged that survivors are experts of their own experience. At the same time, it was felt that personal experience was not enough to become an expert of VAWDASV in general.

Wellbeing of research participants

Wellbeing services offered by Welsh Government

4.71 Participants of the survivors' workshop proposed a wellbeing policy to serve all participants of Welsh Government research, not just those involved with VAWDASV. A wellbeing service may be beneficial for those who want to partake but are unable due to illness by offering support and information on methods to engage that can work with, rather against, a disability. **The survey findings support having some mechanism to assist people with some form of**

disability or illness, as around one-fifth of all survey respondents identified their disability as a barrier to engaging with Welsh Government's work on abuse.

Responsibility for individual wellbeing

4.72 It was felt by officials that survivors are essentially responsible for their own wellbeing, and that participants in Welsh Government-funded research should have a support system in place where re-traumatisation occurs. While officials discussed signposting to support services, it was agreed that taking on the responsibility of the wellbeing of participants was outside of the remit of government policy teams. The officials' views here are cohesive with the survivors' rhetoric of being strong and seen as adults:

> *For us [officials], it would be more of a, sort of, you [survivors] come to this group or you participate in this group knowing that if it triggers for you, you take responsibility for yourself and getting yourself some help.*
>
> (Participant - Officials' workshop)

4.73 Failing to recognise the immense resilience, altruism or sense of agency that survivors show by participating in research perpetuates the notion that they are victims in need of protection, and is disempowering (Scerri, Abela and Vetere, 2012). In this sense, the view that survivors are strong enough to take care of their own wellbeing (in terms of participating in research) is consistent with this ethos.

Managing expectations

Expectations of outcomes

4.74 Workshop attendees felt that Welsh Government had a responsibility to manage expectations for participants in research. Participants in the stakeholders' workshop tended to see the 'bigger picture' of expectation management with regards to what outcomes can realistically be achieved by partaking in research:

> *[Participants] need to know that it is realistic, or they are just constantly going to be searching for something that is not achievable...Just because someone wants something, doesn't mean we are going to be able to give it.*
>
> (Participant - Stakeholders' workshop)

4.75 One stakeholder illustrated the importance of realistic expectations with a metaphor:

> *I think you've got to manage expectations before you start. Just because you ask me how I feel I feel about how ASDA is set up, does not mean they are going to move the bakery to the front because I love bread most. I'm not trying to make it frivolous, but it is about managing the expectations of what impact is likely to happen.*
>
> (Participant - Stakeholders' workshop)

4.76 To prevent the complications from mismanaged expectations, it was suggested that (as well as giving information prior to data collection) there should be a continual feedback process for participants to know what is being done with the data they have given. This was supported by officials:

> *I think we need to be honest and realistic as well of what we expect from them or their expectations from us. I don't think we can promise to sort of change the world or make immediate decisions…it is about having that open communication between policy and survivors.*
>
> (Participant - Officials' workshop)

> *…sometimes you'll get someone coming to you saying "I want this fixed now" because they're in a crisis environment. And you can completely understand where they're coming from, but the machinery of government just doesn't function in that way…it's about us being really honest about that and saying "things will change but it has to go through a certain amount of government processes first before we can make those changes.*
>
> (Participant - Officials' workshop)

4.77 Previous experience of working with Welsh Government had instilled doubt over the impact of survivor participation. Therefore, survivors welcomed a move towards reciprocal dialogue:

> *What I would really like is feedback on today and what's going to come out of this…*
>
> (Participant - Survivors' workshop)

Expectations of research processes

4.78 Expectation management applies not only to the outcomes of participation and contribution to policy decisions, but also to the actual research process too. Participants in the survivors' workshop emphasised managing expectations for the focus group process (e.g. how long it will last, how much material there is to cover, how many people will be attending), with the consequences reflected:

> *I'm feeling rushed because I don't know how long you're expecting or how many more points you're expecting us to cover*
>
> (Participant - Survivors' workshop)

> *[Welsh Government researchers need to] have some clarification about what it is that you want from us, what your expectations are…I think your expectations about what you wanted from us today and then some time to think about how we can help you get there, that would be helpful.*
>
> (Participant - Survivors' workshop)

The wider context

Social change

4.79 Changing the social structures in which abuse can and does occur were discussed in each of the workshops as a way of tackling VAWDASV:

> *…the main issue in society is that things aren't spoken about, that there's this stigma attached to things which would then lead people to maybe not want to disclose or feel that they can't when they really need to because they've got issues...*
>
> (Participant - Survivors' workshop)

> *The key thing about prevention is raising awareness within society and within Wales.*
>
> (Participant - Stakeholders' workshop)

> *…the survivor engagement framework alone can't fix the problem [of abuse]. But what the whole package can do is improve things for women and men, the survivors in Wales.*
>
> (Participant - Officials' workshop)

4.80 These excerpts highlight the embeddedness of VAWDASV in a social context. The example from the participant in the survivors' workshop suggest that being able to talk about abuse is a huge barrier to overcome because of the associated taboo. Likewise, the stakeholder participant recognises that public awareness is important in achieving social change: the more aware the public is of VAWDASV, the less taboo it should become. Finally, the participant in the officials' workshop acknowledges the limitations of the Survivor Engagement Framework in tackling VAWDASV as an isolated project, but implies that it can contribute to a bigger movement to include and believe survivors of abuse.

Masculinity and vulnerability

4.81 A participant in the survivors' workshop emphasised the role of patriarchal structures in shaping how abuse is perpetuated:

> *…it's changing the patriarchal system…men are excused from everything that they do and that there must be a reason and that it's their childhood that's making them do that or they were just angry or perhaps that they are going through a divorce…*
>
> (Participant - Survivors' workshop)

4.82 The view that men are perpetrators and women are victims is a common conception about VAWDASV. The most recent statistics on domestic abuse support the commonly held belief that abusers are male and the abused are female, but this is not always the case. Figures show that 4.2 per cent of working-age men experienced domestic abuse in the years 2015-2017, compared with 7.9 per cent of working-age women (ONS, 2019). Domestic homicides committed by male suspects accounted for 348 reported crimes across England and Wales between 2015 and 2017, of which 89 per cent of victims were female (ONS, 2019). By comparison, only 50 reports of domestic homicides were committed by female suspects. Longitudinal data from 2009 through to 2018 shows that in every single year, men made up at least 92 per cent of all defendants in domestic abuse cases, whereas women made up at least 62 per cent of all victims in domestic abuse cases (ONS, 2019).

4.83 At the same time, some research suggests that male experience of abuse is underreported and that boys and men make up a large minority of service users for sexual abuse services (Hallet et al, 2017; Quale et al, 2018). It has been argued that patriarchal structures are responsible for the underreporting of abuse by male victims (Depraetaer et al, 2018), as showing emotional vulnerability is ‘not masculine’ and undermines the power structures that maintain male privilege (Affleck and MacDonald, 2012). Moreover, heterosexual social norms create the fear of being labelled as ‘homosexual’ for men abused by male perpetrators (Alaggia, 2005). The barriers for men in disclosing abuse have been categorised by Easton, Saltzman and Willis (2014) as: socio-political (e.g. masculinity, limited resources), interpersonal (e.g. mistrust of others, abuser factors) and personal (e.g. emotions, naming the experience as abuse).

4.84 A male survey respondent experienced socio-political barriers:

> *…white heterosexual men are not considered seriously, as equally and independently from other groups.*
>
> (Survey respondent)

4.85 Other male respondents expressed personal barriers, like shame and fear of not being believed, and interpersonal barriers, like being distrustful of government.

4.86 Participants in the stakeholders’ workshop discussed why there were no men currently engaged with their services:

> *P1: But it is open to men so that is because they aren’t coming forward*
> *P2: We aren’t engaging with them in the right way*
> *P1: Yeah*
> *P2: We aren’t engaging with them in the way they want.*
>
> (Participants - Stakeholders’ workshop)

4.87 **In engaging with a broad spectrum of people with very individual experiences of VAWDASV, a one-size-fits-all approach will not work.** An example of this is provided by Andersen (2008:25): ‘principles appropriate to female victimization are inappropriate when working with males and may do more harm than good. Treated as some kind of a female subcategory, sexually abused men become invisible’. Engaging with men raises specific challenges for policy-makers and researchers, but these points made by participants is an opportunity to begin working to overcome such barriers.

Transphobia

4.88 Some transphobic views were expressed by some of the survey respondents. These were in response to questions exploring the type of scenario respondents would prefer when engaging with Welsh Government. Mainly, these concerns related to cis women feeling uncomfortable being in the same focus group as trans women. Requests were made to recognise individuals according to their sex at birth, rather than how they identify their gender. The previous section details the survey responses and these sentiments were echoed by one workshop participant too:

> *I have to say that it's from my own personal experience that if there were a man in the room, I would feel a little bit uncomfortable.*
>
> (Participant - Survivors' workshop)

Recognising the risks associated with trans people coming out at, or indeed simply attending, panel meetings is therefore imperative. Airing personal opinions on sensitive subjects in front of a group puts an individual at greater social risk than confiding one-on-one with a researcher (Wellings et al, 2000). This risk is heightened when it is suspected or known that others within the group do not share the same views, or where societal norms are contradicted. In previous research that carried out group interviews, the contradiction was often openly recognized with the acknowledgement of the social view being combined with the personal departure from it (Wellings et al, 2000).

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 This section draws together the main findings of the research with survivors from under-represented groups. It makes some recommendations for engagement with these groups to improve awareness of the Welsh Government's survivor engagement approach, and ensure that the recruitment for the pilot panel is as inclusive as possible of those groups currently under-represented.

5.2 The demographic analysis of those who responded to the survey revealed that there was good representation from male, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic, LGBTQ+ and disabled survivors. There was however no representation from Gypsy Roma Traveller communities or refugee asylum seekers, neither did any survivors from the trans community respond to the survey. These groups of survivors are typically disengaged for numerous different reasons. Future engagement work will need to understand the unique barriers experienced by these survivor groups and target their engagement accordingly to increase the diversity of survivors contributing to survivor panels and other approaches. Discussion in the theory of change workshops made reference to the use of gatekeepers e.g. support organisations for specific groups of survivors, who could provide access to explain the aims of survivor engagement whilst also building trust with survivors from under-represented groups to facilitate participation.

5.3 The majority of survey respondents stated a preference for online engagement and over half would prefer to engage face-to-face. Of those who stated a preference for online engagement, around a third would like to engage via a website and a quarter via email. There was no clear preference on whether respondents would prefer to engage with a group of survivors or alone. If contributing as part of a group, the majority stated that they did not have a preference for who was in the group, whilst a minority preferred to engage with survivors who were similar to themselves. In terms of frequency of engagement, around one third preferred to engage once every few months and around a quarter stated their preferred frequency was once a month.

5.4 The five most common barriers for survivors in engaging with the Welsh Government on VAWDASV policy were lack of awareness of Welsh Government survivor engagement, mental health illness or disability, time constraints, not knowing how to get involved in Welsh Government's work with survivors and fear of the consequences of being involved. Discussions in the theory of change workshops also supported the difficulties for some in being able to commit time to a face-to-face panel. These difficulties included childcare commitments and the need to travel long distances to attend panel sessions. These barriers highlight the importance of clear communication on the aims of the Survivor Engagement Framework and the need for widespread advertisement of how survivors can become involved. This may include multiple methods of engagement to ensure that those who may not have time to commit to taking part in a face-to-face panel may engage in a less time-consuming way e.g. via an online survey. Stakeholders in the theory of change workshops pointed out that the use of online engagement, particularly via social media, was not commonly used due to risks of survivors' anonymity being compromised. Using closed and secure online platforms may allow survivors to protect their anonymity in a way they might not be able to when taking part in a face-to-face panel, or when using social media.

5.5 When asked how Welsh Government could encourage more survivor involvement, respondents mentioned the need for Welsh Government to promote their survivor engagement work more proactively by seeking out and contacting under-represented survivors. Survivors also felt that Welsh Government policy officials needed to engage with individuals' experiences more readily in order for engagement to be effective. Some respondents also felt it was important for Welsh Government to provide resource for specialist services, including single-sex services. The numbers responding to this question were low, and so this may need to be explored with other survivors to gain a wider understanding of how to inform approaches to recruitment for future engagement work.

5.6 A number of survey respondents expressed the need to recognise the difference between biological sex and gender when designing services, and that biological sex needs to be given more significance than gender when designing women-only services. This view prioritises the need of cis women to receive services not accessible to trans women as part of their treatment and recovery. This is a highly contentious issue within service provision for VAWDASV, and there is a possibility that contributions from trans women may not be equally valued within a panel setting. This requires consideration by the VAWDASV policy team when recruiting for members and in the way the sessions are facilitated.

5.7 Although there was good representation from men in the survey, some male respondents did highlight that they felt they would be less likely to be believed when discussing their experiences compared to women. The synthesis also suggests there is work to be done in ensuring male voices are included using targeted engagement.

5.8 Discussions in the theory of change workshops also touched on the practicalities of survivor engagement. As well as expressing difficulties setting aside time to attend a panel on a regular basis, many survivors also felt that there should be appropriate remuneration for participation, to demonstrate that Welsh Government valued their contributions on an equal footing with academic experts and other stakeholders. Officials pointed out the ethical issues of doing so i.e. that payment for survivors' participation may look as though they are paying panel members to express certain views, and that the process is therefore not impartial. This is a reputational threat to Welsh Government and therefore approaches to remuneration for panel members require careful consideration and clear communication to those choosing to contribute.

5.9 Survivors also emphasised the need for engagement to be accessible in terms of the materials circulated, taking into account the needs of those for whom English is not their first language, and other accessible formats such as Braille. The use of jargon was also thought to be unhelpful in engaging survivors, who might be put off by the use of unclear language. Participants also highlighted the need for clear signposting for survivors as to how they can get involved, and that once engaged the nature of involvement should be structured and continuous. Survivors also expressed a wish for engagement sessions to be longer to ensure that each panel member has the opportunity to express themselves fully, without feeling rushed.

5.10 Survivors felt that the use of the term 'experts' to describe academics and stakeholders alongside the use of 'survivors' to describe themselves did not reflect the equal value of their contribution. They felt that they should also be considered experts due to their lived experience, and sometimes felt that their views were secondary in importance to the expert group. However, officials expressed the view that there needed to be a distinction between experts and survivors due to survivors' contributions through lived experience being qualitatively different to those who undertook research into and supported survivors of VAWDASV.

5.11 The workshops revealed differences in expectations over what sustained survivor engagement could achieve. The risks of failing to discuss what can and can't be achieved in a survivor panel were raised, and the need to clearly outline the remit of the panel is needed to ensure facilitators' and members' expectations are aligned.

Recommendations

5.12 Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made for the recruitment and facilitation of the pilot survivor panel.

1. **Undertake targeted engagement with under-represented groups using appropriate support organisations.** The survey result indicated that more outreach work is required to engage hard to reach groups such as Gypsy Roma Travellers, refugee asylum seekers and the trans community. Discussing directly with survivors via support organisations how they would prefer to engage, whilst explaining the aims and objectives of the survivor engagement framework may help raise awareness and motivate these groups to participate, ensuring that their perspectives are considered within policy development.

2. **Ensure that the remit for the pilot panel is clear to participants and their expectations are appropriate.** Participants in the panel meetings should be given clear guidance from the outset of what is realistically achievable within the remit of the panel. Out of courtesy for panel members, follow up information should be circulated about developments resulting from the panel's expertise. This is part of building and maintaining strong relationships between survivors and government, so that work on tackling VAWDASV continues with genuine involvement from the people who are affected by Welsh Government policies.

3. **Offer a variety of options for survivors to engage with Welsh Government.** The survey findings did not find any consensus in how survivors would like to be engaged. It seems appropriate to consider multiple approaches to engagement, both face-to-face and online, the latter of which would be more suitable for those with significant time constraints. The internet has been shown to be a preferred method for survey respondents; consider how this can be

incorporated into the pilot, possibly in the form of a ‘virtual panel’, where participants can contribute their views as individuals, or as part of a group in a moderated discussion board. In addition, publicise documents and literature and make sure these are accessible. Use translations for survivors whose first or preferred language is not English, publish documents in Braille for survivors who are blind, and ensure that any communication is easy to understand and jargon-free. The aim is to reach as many people as possible and to build trustful relationships that can work together in the long-term.

4. Consider offering compensation for participation. Workshop attendees told us that they had taken time off work and travelled long distances to participate in our research. They want some form of compensation for their time and input, just as other stakeholders and consultants are paid for theirs. This does not need to be financial, but an offering demonstrates to survivors that Welsh Government is serious about their input, values their views and is willing to invest in them.

5. Have a clear strategy for recruitment to ensure diversity of voices on the pilot panel. The data collected so far has revealed a degree of engagement but with some additional work to do to access certain under-represented groups. Ensuring a clear strategy, including widespread advertisement for expressions of interest for the pilot panel will help ensure a diversity of voices are captured. This may be employed alongside recommendation 1 to raise awareness of the Welsh Government’s work on survivor engagement for increased effectiveness.

6. Ensure that engagement respects survivors’ anonymity and safety. Stakeholders have noted the need to ensure any form of engagement does not compromise survivors’ anonymity and safety, whether online or face-to-face. Therefore, any face-to-face engagement needs to be governed by clear ground rules about respecting privacy and not revealing the identities of panel members to others. Similarly, any online engagement needs to make clear whether the forum is public i.e. any form of social media, but also take into consideration the benefits of anonymous contribution to discussion forums or surveys in order to gain the perspectives of those who prefer to remain anonymous.

7. Acknowledge and directly address the issues around ‘women-only’ spaces. As presented in this document, tensions have already begun to arise with regards to gender identity amongst survivor groups. Transphobia is a particular cause for concern based on the responses we have received so far. In knowing about and understanding the various viewpoints in the discourse on transgender issues, points of conflict can be diffused more quickly and easily through the moderator. This idea applies to other contentious subjects, too. Understanding that a diverse panel will likely bring a diverse range of opinions and beliefs can help to avoid potential disputes.

8. Consult with participants about the terms to be used for survivors and the reasons for the use of those terms. Not all people who have experienced VAWDASV want to be called a ‘survivor’. One term that seemed agreeable across the board was ‘people with lived experience’. It is unlikely that one term will suit all because people are individuals and their experiences are very personal, but thinking and consulting with those who it affects might be helpful in building mutual trust and respect from the start.

9. Be aware of additional difficulties for survivors from particular backgrounds. People from groups that are traditionally under-represented in VAWDASV work may face specific challenges when participating in a panel. For example, men may struggle to show emotional vulnerability more so than women. These sorts of issues can affect the way in which some people participate in a group discussion. Whilst facilitators cannot be expected to resolve these issues, being aware of them may help in facilitating a more inclusive group dynamic and discussion. It is also advised to consider that some participants may be unable to read, write, or have physical disabilities that require additional resources (such as Braille, translators or hearing loops).

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Annex A

Online survey structure

1. What is your gender?
    - Male
    - Female
    - I identify in another way (please specify)

2. What is your age?
    - Under 18
    - 18-24
    - 25-34
    - 35-44
    - 45-54
    - 55-64
    - 65 and older

3. What is your ethnicity?
    - White (go to question 4)
    - Asian (go to question 5)
    - Black, African, Caribbean (go to question 6)
    - Mixed or multiple ethnicity (go to question 7)
    - Any other ethnicity (please specify)

4. More specifically, what is your ethnicity?
    - Welsh, English, Scottish, Northern Irish or British
    - Gypsy or Irish Traveller
    - Irish
    - Any other white background (please specify)

5. More specifically, what is your ethnicity?
    - Asian British
    - Asian British-Chinese
    - Asian British-Bangladeshi
    - Asian British-Indian
    - Asian British-Pakistani
    - Any other Asian background (please specify)

6. More specifically, what is your ethnicity?
    - Black African
    - Black Caribbean
    - Any other black background (please specify)
7. More specifically, what is your ethnicity?

White and Asian
White and Black African
White and Black Caribbean
Any other mixed ethnicity (please specify)

8. Would you describe yourself as a member of the LGBTQ+ community?
    Yes (go to question 9)
    No (go to question 10)

9. In what way do you describe yourself? Please tick all that apply.
    Lesbian/Gay
    Bisexual
    Transgender
    Intersex
    Prefer not to say
    I identify in another way (please specify)

10. Which of these best describes where you live?
    Urban
    Suburban
    Rural

11. Do you think of yourself as having a disability or impairment?
    Yes (go to question 12)
    No (go to question 13)

12. How would you describe your disability or impairment?
    [Open text box]

13. The next question is about your experience of abuse. We do not want to ask you too much about this, but it is important that we know so that we can learn more about the experiences of the people who have responded to this survey. If you do not want to answer this question please let us know now.
    I am willing to answer the question about abuse (go to question 14)
    I do not want to answer the question about abuse (go to question 17)

14. What type of abuse have you experienced? Please select all that apply.
    Domestic abuse
    Sexual violence, including rape
    Child sexual violence, including child abuse
    ‘Honour-based’ violence, FGM, or forced marriage
    Other type of abuse

15. Have you accessed any support services to help you deal with your experience of abuse?
    - Yes (go to question 16)
    - No (go to question 17)

16. What type of support services are these? Please select all that apply.
    - Domestic abuse services
    - Sexual violence services, including specialist rape and sexual assault services
    - Child sexual violence services
    - Specialist services for survivors of ‘Honour-based’ violence, FGM, or forced marriage
    - Services for male survivors

17. Are you currently involved in any activities which impact Welsh Government work on abuse?
    - Yes (go to question 18)
    - No (go to question 19)

18. What activities are you involved in to impact Welsh Government work on abuse?
    - [Open text box]

19. What holds you back from getting involved in activities to impact Welsh Government work on abuse?
    - [Open text box]

20. How might you want to talk to Welsh Government? Please select all that apply.
    - Face-to-face
    - On the telephone
    - Over the internet
    - On paper
    - In another way (please specify)

21. Would you prefer to talk to Welsh Government in a group setting or on your own?
    - In a group
    - On my own
    - I don’t mind

22. Would you want the people in the group to be similar to you or different from you (for example, the same gender, the same age and/or the same experiences)?
    - Similar to me
    - Different from me
    - I don’t mind
    - I think something else (please provide details)

23. If you spoke to Welsh Government face-to-face, how often would you want this to be?

    More often than once a month
    Once a month
    Once every few months
    A few times a year
    Once a year
    Less often than every year

24. Which of these ways of using the internet to share information and views with Welsh Government would you use?

    A government website where you can provide your contact details
    A website where you can submit comments or suggestions
    An e-mail
    An online forum / message board
    Another way (please specify)

25. What could the Welsh Government do to encourage you to get involved in impacting work on abuse?

    [Open text box]