

# NEWSLETTER

W I N T E R / S P R I N G 2 0 2 4

I S S U E 4

*'Ensuring the best outcomes for all victims of sexual violence by delivering person-centred, trauma-informed sexual assault services in Wales'*



## WELCOME

by **Wendy Gunney**

Assistant Chief Constable

Senior Responsible Officer for South Wales SARC ISO Accreditation, South Wales Police

Firstly, I want to thank police colleagues, our partners and those working within our operational sexual assault referral centre (SARC) environments for their continued efforts and contributions.

Together, with support from colleagues, we have been able to make significant progress on the accreditation of forensic services for victims of sexual assault.

The Swansea SARC Hub remains a UK pathfinder site, which means it is one of the first to work towards achieving the accreditation standards, and whilst we benefit from additional support and guidance from the assessment team, trading this path is not an easy task. Swansea has already undertaken its pre-assessment, which will aid us in delivering a compliant service for victims.

We are hoping to invite the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) team for a full accreditation assessment of the Swansea SARC Hub by Autumn 2024. A detailed programme plan spanning the three sites in South Wales and the extension to scopes for paediatric services at Swansea and Cardiff has now been prepared. A separate but equally detailed plan has been developed for the North Wales service, which is being taken forward by North Wales Police.

There has been a restructure of the police team and a new WSAS Policing Programme Coordinator has recently been appointed to bolster delivery of the partnership.

As work continues to progress, updates will be included in future newsletters.

Thank you.

# WSAS PROGRAMME UPDATE

Key Programme activities for 2024 include implementing the final stages of the regional hub and spoke model for south-east, west, and mid Wales; meeting ISO accreditation for forensic services in sexual assault referral centres (SARCs); and the development of a SARC Commissioning Framework for Wales.

You can find more information about our latest work and key updates below.

## Implementation of the Regional Hub and Spoke Model

You can find background information about the [Regional Hub and Spoke Model](#) on our website.

### Redirection of acute forensic cases from 'spokes' to 'hubs'

The redirection of acute forensic cases in the south-east Wales region is nearly complete.

All acute cases from Merthyr Tydfil SARC and in-hours cases from Risca SARC are now being seen at Ynys Saff SARC Hub in Cardiff.

Risca out of out-of-hours cases are expected to transfer in Spring 2024.

It's essential to note that **all other services – crisis workers and achieving best evidence interviews, counselling, and independent sexual violence advisors – continue to operate from Merthyr Tydfil and Risca as they become SARC 'spokes' for their local communities.**

In the south-west and mid-Wales region, the transfer of acute cases from Carmarthen and Newton SARCs to relevant Hubs is expected to take place later in 2024.

### Swansea Paediatric Hub

Work on the new Swansea Paediatric SARC Hub is progressing well.

This work is being led by Swansea Bay University Health Board, working closely with New Pathways and police colleagues, and a Project Board has been established to oversee the building work and development of the supporting workforce.

The new Paediatric Hub will provide an invaluable service for children and families in west Wales, who are currently travelling to Ynys Saff Cardiff for forensic medical examinations.



**The Hub will also include facilities for historic examinations.**

## Wales wide projects and activities

### Sexual Assault Referral Centre Framework for Wales

Work has begun on a 'Sexual Assault Referral Centre Framework for Wales'.

Once complete, the Framework will provide a national set of care standards, activities, and evaluation descriptors for SARCs in Wales.

A series of online workshops were run with professionals at the end of 2023 to discuss '**what good looks like**' for sexual assault referral centre services and support.

Attendees looked at the different stages of accessing support - from general awareness of sexual assault referral centres and how to access them; to what happens when someone is ready to move on from these support services.

The workshops were built around feedback gathered from previous survivor engagement sessions. A session was also held with the West and Mid Wales VAWDASV Survivor Panel on 24 January 2024, where initial draft text from the Framework was shared and discussed.

We'd like to thank everyone who has been involved in these engagement workshops. The ideas and suggestions collected are now helping us to draft the Framework and to make plans for future projects.

**An online event is planned for Spring 2024, to provide an update on the Framework's development and will be open to all to attend.**

**This will be advertised through our mailing list.**

### Counselling Services Review

A review of counselling services for survivors of sexual assault in Wales is due to be launched over the next month.

The survey results will be used to inform training and service planning, which should ultimately enhance service provision for survivors in Wales.

# INTRODUCING OUR COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS

We would like to introduce you to some of the individuals and teams we work with so you can find out more about the amazing work they do!



## Uned Atal Trais Violence Prevention Unit

The Wales Violence Prevention Unit (VPU) was established through funding from the Home Office in 2019. It has the overarching aim to lead a whole-system approach to preventing and reducing violence through a public health approach, by seeking to understand the causes of violence based on evidence and using this to develop interventions focused on preventing the underlying causes of violence.

Multi-agency, collaborative working to prevent all types of violence is at the heart of the VPU, with representation from South Wales Police, Public Health Wales, South Wales Police and Crime Commissioners' Office, as well as further support from over 30 multisectoral organisations.

Additional support for the VPU is received from Welsh education partners and service providers spanning sectors of academic and research, education, health, local authorities, criminal justice and probation, and charities (third/voluntary sector).

To deliver on its aim the VPU operates at **four different levels:**

1. **Aware:** Knowledge of epidemiology (i.e., evidence, theory) and best practice on local and national levels
2. **Advocate:** Supporting and advocating for a public health approach to violence prevention through VPU leadership
3. **Assist:** Providing advice and data analysis such as through this Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA)
4. **Adopt:** Influence and inform strategic mobilisation of the VPU and partners.

## Wales Violence Prevention Portal



The VPU has developed the Wales Violence Prevention Portal (WVPP) in partnership with the Public Health Institute Liverpool John Moores University.

The digital platform holds anonymised, multi-agency violence surveillance administrative data on violence across Wales, and allows users to aggregate and present different data sources using a variety of mediums including graphs, charts, tables, reports, and interactive maps of local and national areas.

The focus of the WVPP is **to support partners in Wales to deliver an evidence-based public health approach to violence prevention.**

Partners can identify and monitor trends in violence at a local and national level, benchmark current services, inform violence prevention strategies through needs assessments and identification of at-risk groups; with the potential to evaluate the impact of interventions.

**In addition, the Portal provides partners with the means to securely share service performance level reports and data summary reports in the Report Repository.**



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Trawmatig  
Cymru**

**Traumatic  
Stress  
Wales**

# Sexual Assault Counselling Review Survey



Dear Colleague,

The Sexual Assault Workstream in Traumatic Stress Wales working with the Welsh Sexual Assault Services Programme would like to invite you to take part in our service mapping to help us understand the provision of counselling services for survivors of sexual assault across Wales.

**Counselling and therapeutic support for survivors of sexual assault is an essential service that we need to provide for survivors of all ages and at any stage of their journey.**

We are aware that there are many organisations that provide specialist sexual assault services and others who provide this support as part of a wider service provision.

We would like to ask all services that provide any counselling to survivors of sexual assault in Wales to complete this survey to help us gain insight into what services are being provided and help us establish and plan what services are needed going forward.

**The survey link below is open from 29 March until 1 April 2024.**

<https://forms.office.com/e/C8Y368phkW>

- English version

<https://forms.office.com/e/yxKRb8FNgj>

- Welsh version

**Thank you in advance for taking the time to complete this questionnaire and helping us to get a better picture of counselling services for sexual assault across Wales.**

# EVENTS AND RESOURCES

Sharing learning and good practise!



## WSAS 'Lunch & Learn' Sessions

The WSAS team has accomplished its first year of virtual lunch and learn sessions, run from February to December 2023 on MS Teams.

In total, 10 online monthly sessions were held with an average number of attendances reaching 250, aiming to engage with a wide range of professionals from multi-agency organisations and increase understanding of 'best practice' when interacting with victims and survivors of sexual violence.

The first 'lunch & learn' session for 2024 was launched during Sexual Abuse and Sexual Violence Awareness Week, in the first week of February. Welsh Sexual Assault Services Programme Director, Joanna Williams, presented an 'Overview of the Sexual Assault Services' aiming to raise awareness on current services and support available across Wales, as well as providing an update on the programme's work.

[Watch here!](#)

Help us plan future lunch and learn sessions and have a say on what topics you would like to see covered in the months ahead!



As the next session is planned for mid/end of May we would like to hear your ideas by Friday 22 March 2024 !!

[WSAS.programme@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:WSAS.programme@wales.nhs.uk)

SEXUAL ABUSE & SEXUAL VIOLENCE AWARENESS WEEK 2024

[Watch here!](#)

## WSAS Virtual Conference

19 June 2024

The WSAS team is looking forward to welcoming you to its virtual Conference on

Wednesday 19 June  
from 10 am to 2 pm.



Stay tuned as planning is in progress with more information on speakers and agenda will be shared through our mailing list in due course!

This year's conference will focus on services and support for children and young people.

# Workshop at the New Pathways Conference 2023

Looking back in 2023, the WSAS Programme Director, Joanna Williams and Dr Catrin Simpson, Clinical Lead for Children and Young People and SARC Ynys Saff Cardiff had the honour to run one of the five workshops at the New Pathways Sexual Violence Conference 'It Takes 30 Years' held on 27 of September 2023 in Cardiff.



Thank you to everyone for taking the time to attend our session !

The workshop 'Shaping the Future of Sexual Violence Services' looked at the SARC services available across Wales and the WSAS Programme's development work.

## New videos describing support at Sexual Assault Referral Centres

A collection of short videos that detail the support available within sexual assault referral centres are now online on the WSAS web page.

These videos join the existing SARC animation released in 2022, which provides an overview of services and support from the perspective of survivors of sexual violence.

We'd like to say a huge thank you to all the SARC staff who were involved in this project.

Please share these videos within your organisations - they can be used in several ways, including for staff training and to support individuals who are considering accessing sexual assault referral centre services.

[Watch the animation!](#)



[Watch the videos !](#)



## ACE Hub Wales Animation

Trauma-Informed Wales has launched an animation, bringing to life the Trauma-Informed Wales Framework: '***A Societal Approach to Understanding, Preventing and Supporting the Impacts of Trauma and Adversity***' for a wider audience. You can read the full Trauma-informed Wales Framework [here](#)

The animation helps to communicate the four defined practice levels of the Framework that make up the 'all of society' trauma-informed approach in Wales.

[Watch here!](#)

# CONTACT US

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- [Hubs and Spokes Model Trauma-Informed Approach](#)
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[WSAS.programme@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:WSAS.programme@wales.nhs.uk)



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*Ddylai neb deimlo'n ofnus gartre*  
*Mae help ar gael ohyd, ddydd a nos*

*Home shouldn't be a place of fear*  
*Help is still available 24/7*