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Gwasanaethau Ymosodiad
Rhywiol Cymru (GYRC)
Welsh Sexual Assault
Services (WSAS)

NEWSLETTER

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I S S U E 1



'Ensuring the best outcomes for all victims of sexual violence by delivering person-centred, health and well-being focused, sexual assault services in Wales'

WELCOME

by Joanna Williams

Welsh Sexual Assault Services Programme Director

Welcome to the inaugural Welsh Sexual Assault Services (WSAS) Programme newsletter. In this first issue we've provided an overview of the programme and its current activities.

In future newsletters, we'll have features on specific areas of work and contributions from partners working across the programme.

The WSAS programme is a collaboration between health boards, police forces, police and crime commissioners, and third sector to deliver a new service model for sexual assault referral services across Wales. This development will provide a more integrated service that is driven by the needs of victims and patients and supports the provision of services that meet clinical, forensic, quality and safety standards and guidance, and ensures robust governance arrangements.

Our ambition is to deliver patient and victim centred sexual assault services with health needs as the key priority, achieving the best outcomes for victims of sexual violence through a health-led programme, with the NHS working in partnership with policing and others.

I would like to thank everyone who is working with us on the delivery of the programme. We want the programme to be inclusive of all of those who have an interest in improving sexual assault services across Wales.

The team and I are looking forward to meeting and working with many more of you in the coming months. If there is anything that you would like to ask or see included in future newsletters, please let us know.

WSAS PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

●●● A new model for sexual assault referral centres across the south Wales region

The WSAS Programme is implementing a new 'hub and spoke' model of sexual assault referral centres (SARCs) across south-east, west, and mid Wales.

This model was agreed in 2019 following development work with health, police, third sector, victims, and survivors.

Although health-led, the WSAS Programme is a collaboration with policing (regional police forces and police and crime commissioners) and third sector, including New Pathways.

Why are we doing this?

The 'Proposal for a Regional Sexual Assault Referral Centre Model for South, Mid and West Wales' (2019) was the culmination of work that began in 2013 in response to a Welsh Government review.

As a result of this there has been significant work undertaken in partnership with multiple agencies to develop recommendations that would significantly benefit the victims, survivors and their families who use SARC services across the region.

●●● Services for children and young people

There is a commitment to developing two dedicated paediatric SARC hubs (Swansea and Cardiff) to provide acute services across the south Wales region, with ongoing support provided through the local SARC spokes.

Currently, services for children and young people are provided by Ynys Saff SARC, Cardiff in south Wales and by Amethyst in north Wales.

●●● North Wales

The Amethyst SARC in Colwyn Bay provides support for victims across north Wales. Although the 'hub and spoke' model is being implemented across south Wales regions, the WSAS Programme is committed to developing all-Wales sexual assault services.

Health and police representatives from north Wales are a key part of the Programme Board and individual programme workstreams

What are 'hubs' and 'spokes' ?

SARC Hub

A facility dedicated to providing immediate care for victims.

This will include the offer of an acute forensic medical examination and health needs assessment, with referral pathways in place to local services to support follow-up care.

There will be three adult 'hubs' based in:

- Aberystwyth
- Cardiff
- Swansea

SARC Spoke

A facility that can provide immediate and ongoing care but does not provide forensic medical examinations.

The spoke will also provide support for victims engaged in criminal justice proceedings, through independent sexual violence advisors.

SARC hubs will also act as 'spokes' for their local communities in providing ongoing care and support, with the following centres for each region:

- West Wales: Aberystwyth (hub and spoke), Carmarthen and Newtown
- South-east Wales: Cardiff (hub and spoke) Risca, Merthyr Tydfil
- South-west Wales: Swansea (hub and spoke)

HIGHLIGHTS OF OUR CURRENT ACTIVITIES

It's a busy time for the programme with lots of activity underway to achieve the improvements to sexual assault services that we've set out to deliver.

Here are just a few brief highlights:

Developing 'spoke' services

Counselling and therapeutic services

Working with Traumatic Stress Wales, we will be reviewing rape, sexual assault, and abuse counselling services in Wales. As part of the review we'll look at the therapeutic support through the lens of a trauma-informed approach.

Independent sexual violence advisors (ISVAs)

A review of ISVA services was carried out in 2022. A task and finish group are taking forward this work and will develop and cost a new model of ISVA services to be provided through SARC spokes.

New approaches to forensic medical examination services

The WSAS Programme is overseeing improvements to forensic medical examination (FME) provision, with the aim of addressing issues of sustainability, clinical governance, and engagement with local health services.

Meeting ISO accreditation

SARC forensic medical examination facilities in Wales will have to meet new ISO accreditation standards.

Led by police in north and south Wales, teams are working at pace to meet the set deadlines, carrying out building work, training staff, and developing new standard operational procedures. Many thanks to all who are involved in this work to ensure that we meet those standards across Wales.

Gathering data across Wales

We're working with SARC providers, police, and health to develop a new process for gathering and analysing SARC data.

Our aim is to provide an all-Wales picture of SARC activity, to ensure that current and future demand is met, and to identify any potential issues that may impact on the delivery of the new hub and spoke model.

Transferring acute services

Work is in progress to update facilities and recruit the additional staff needed to support the transfer of acute services from Carmarthen, Newtown, Risca and Merthyr Tydfil to the Cardiff, Swansea, and Aberystwyth SARC Hubs.

Developing the paediatric workforce

Additional training and peer review is being established to support current paediatric staff undertaking SARC medicals, and to work towards a more sustainable workforce in the future.

'Work continues to link with other Programme workstreams to ensure children are seen in safe, child friendly environments that meet forensic standards, and that their well being and aftercare are key considerations'

*Catrin Simpson
WSAS Programme Clinical Lead*

Making connections

The WSAS Programme is steadily making connections with a range of different services, programmes, and organisations across Wales, such as research networks, Welsh Government, the Children's Commissioner for Wales, Traumatic Stress Wales and we also regularly meet with colleagues from across the four nations.

GET INVOLVED IN OUR WORK!



Professionals and organisations

We're setting up a Service Engagement Group to bring together individuals, services and organisations who work with victims and survivors of rape, sexual assault, and abuse.

There will be opportunities to:

- receive updates on the WSAS Programme
- support service development by sharing your ideas and recommendations
- provide feedback on our projects and resources

Survivors, families, and friends

It's essential that sexual assault services in Wales are shaped by the experiences of victims, survivors, their families, and friends.

We want to provide a variety of opportunities for survivors to be involved - through in-person or online workshops, written feedback, or by going out to meet with existing survivor networks.

Please get in touch if you or your organisation can help us connect with survivor networks, or if you are a survivor who would like to get involved in our work!

For more information, contact: WSAS.programme@wales.nhs.uk

RAISING AWARENESS OF SARCS (SEXUAL ASSAULT REFERRAL CENTRES)

A powerful film and animation were released in June, describing the services and support provided by sexual assault referral centres (SARCs) in Wales.

Thanks to NHS England, who gave us permission to adapt these resources.

Watch the video



Watch the animation



We've also been promoting some simple messages about SARCs through social media - a huge thank you to everyone who has got involved by posting content or retweeting our posts.



Follow us [@WSAS_Programme](https://twitter.com/WSAS_Programme)

If you can help us raise awareness of SARCs, please get in touch for more information and supporting resources

WSAS.programme@wales.nhs.uk

Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs) provide a safe space, specialist support and dedicated care for people who have been raped, sexually assaulted, or abused.

Visit

collaborative.nhs.wales/SARCs
to find your nearest centre



WSAS EVENTS

SHARING LEARNING AND GOOD PRACTICE

Virtual learning events

We held a series of successful virtual learning events earlier this year and you can watch all four sessions online.

Watch the learning events



The learning events each had a different focus including children and young people, LGBTQ+ and Black, Asian and minority communities, older people, and forensic medical examinations.

WSAS Conference – 14 June 2022

Many thanks to everyone who attended, presented, or ran workshops at our inaugural Conference.

We were thrilled with the positive feedback the event received.

The morning session featured video messages and presentations by Jane Hutt, Minister for Social Justice; Stephen HARRY, WSAS Programme Chair; Yasmin Khan, VAWDASV National Advisor; Eleri Thomas, Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent; and Sara Kirkpatrick, CEO, Welsh Women's Aid.

Special thanks were given to the survivor who shared their personal story and experiences with the delegates.

A series of workshops ran in the afternoon, looking at forensic medical examinations, trauma-focused responses for children and young people, and preventing sexual violence and harassment.

Thank you to all the workshop leads!

You can find out more about who ran these sessions on our conference [website page](#).

CONTACT US



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