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

NEWSLETTER

S U M M E R 2 0 2 3

I S S U E 3



'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 Helen Munro

WSAS Programme Sexual Health Clinical Lead, Mid and West Wales

Welcome to the third edition of the Welsh Sexual Assault Services (WSAS) Programme Newsletter. The team continues to be working hard to further develop and improve services for people who have experienced sexual assault.

The second of the 'lunch and learn' sessions was well received with 60 delegates attending virtually to learn about emergency contraception, PEPSE and STI after sexual assault.

For more information scroll further down!

In West Wales the business case for a new SARC 'Hub' in Aberystwyth is due to be submitted to Welsh Government. This strategically appointed site will support victims and their families in the north Dyfed-Powys region to receive timely support and care.

This will be a significant milestone in the WSAS Programme. The SARC Hub will not only provide help and care in the acute phase, but a holistic, multi-agency supported space providing 24/7 access that will have the capacity to support the local communities and surrounding areas.

One of the greatest challenges of working on the WSAS Programme implementation, has been bringing so many key stakeholders together - which has also been one of the greatest strengths of the programme too!

We all have a vision for services that put the needs of the victim at the centre, building a model of care that will be sustainable in the years to come.

Thank you!

WSAS PROGRAMME UPDATE

Since our last newsletter we've seen major steps towards the new SARC 'Hub and Spoke' model across south Wales regions. Here are a few highlights:

Redirection of acute cases and 'ISO accreditation'

All SARCs in Wales and England are currently working hard to meet the 'ISO accreditation' deadline in October 2023. The accreditation is for all centres where forensic medical examinations are carried out.

Across south and mid Wales, acute cases that require a forensic medical examination will gradually be redirected from SARC 'Spokes' to the Cardiff, Swansea and Aberystwyth SARC 'Hubs'. This process is already underway, with Merthyr Tydfil having transferred its acute forensic cases to Cardiff in February 2023.

Acute cases requiring a forensic medical examination are currently still being seen at Risca, Carmarthen and Newtown, and communications will be sent out before any changes are made. In north Wales all cases continue to be seen at the Amethyst SARC.

Training to support paediatric provision

We were thrilled to run the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) 'Child sexual assault and the forensic examination' course in Wales on 20 and 21 April.

It was a fantastic opportunity to build on existing skills within Wales and to support the provision of paediatric services within sexual assault referral centres (SARCs), with the course attended by staff from all seven health boards.

"(The) Faculty were great.

Clearly experienced, passionate, caring, and excellent teachers."

Delegate feedback

Thank you RCPCH for organising the course and Health Education and Improvement Wales for providing the funding!

A Commissioning Framework for SARCs in Wales

A Delivery Assurance Group has been established to oversee the development, delivery and implementation of an All-Wales Sexual Assault Referral Centre Commissioning Framework.

We'll be inviting professionals and survivors to be involved in this work, helping us to develop 'what good looks like' for sexual assault referral centres.

Look out for opportunities to get involved in this work.

GET INVOLVED IN OUR WORK!

The WSAS Programme continues to make connections with a range of different services, programmes, and organisations across Wales.

Our second online engagement session was held 23 of March 2023 with sexual assault service providers and professionals. The Programme Team presented and discussed initial plans for the development of a SARC Commissioning Framework and a planned review of counselling services.

We would like to thank everyone who attended and for sharing your ideas and recommendations for the Programme to take forward!

[To find out more click here !](#)



Professionals and organisations

A **Service Engagement Forum session will be held in Autumn** with further engagement sessions planned, where 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 was a privilege for the WSAS team to be invited to join one of the **Welsh Women's Aid Survivor's Network** sessions in February, and have the opportunity to listen, understand and discuss with survivors what needs to be taken forward to improve sexual assault services and to raise awareness.

We would like to thank everyone who attended for sharing comments and suggestions, which will support the programme to achieve its aims.

'I felt this was a mentally draining Consultation one of which I had never attempted to make sense of before. However the Welsh team were warm and kind and they sat there actively listening not to respond or intervene when I felt like I was talking too much. This has helped me so much although I feel triggered I felt heard about my horrific Abuse!'

Survivor feedback

"Wow that was tough !! But extremely powerful to have our voice and opinions matter on something that has caused such distress, thank you Team."

Survivor feedback

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!

WSAS.programme@wales.nhs.uk

INTRODUCING OUR COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS

We would like to introduce you to some of the individuals and teams working with and supporting victims of sexual violence and abuse. Find out more about their roles and the amazing work they do!

Amethyst Sexual Assault Referral Centre Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, North Wales

The Amethyst SARC has 3 CYPSVAs (Children and Young People's Sexual Violence Advisers) and 2 YPSVAs (Young People's Sexual Violence Adviser).



Our CYPSVAs are Hannah Mart, Sandra Roque and Heather Robertshaw. Hannah and Sandra have been in their role for over 5 years and Heather has recently joined the team.

They are able to support children/young people from the ages 0-15 yrs.

Our YPSVAs are Sharon Williams and Julie-Anne McCabe who have been in their role for 12-18 months.

YPSVAs support young people aged 16-25yrs and are able to assist young people transitioning from children's support services to adult support services when they turn 18.

Counselling for individuals who access support from the Amethyst SARC is provided through the Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre North Wales and Stepping Stones - find out a bit more about them below.



Amethyst

Sexual Assault Referral Centre

Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre (RASASC) North Wales



The Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre (RASASC) was established in 1983. We provide information, specialist support and therapy to anyone aged 3 and over who has experienced any kind of sexual abuse or violence.

We will support you whether this happened recently or in the past. We can also provide specialist support and therapy to partners and family members of those who have been affected by sexual abuse and violence.

Our services include:

- **Specialist Counselling and Therapeutic Intervention** – tailored to meet individual needs, available face to face or remotely, one to one and group programmes
- **Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA)** – Impartial support and information, including reporting to the police and Criminal Justice Process
- **Pre-Therapy Workshop** – One off support programme for those in the waiting list
- **Taste of Recovery** – online lifetime resource

All services are free and cover the whole of North Wales and referrals can be made via our webpage www.rasawales.org.uk or by contacting us on 01248 670 628.

Stepping Stones, North Wales

“Stepping Stones North Wales is a charity that has been supporting adult survivors of child sexual abuse for 39 years. We provide a range of services including counselling, art therapy, psychoeducational courses and resources, ISVA support and support groups across all six counties of North Wales free of charge.



All our counsellors are British Association for Counsellors and Psychotherapists (BACP) registered and are specialists in working with trauma, they work with clients at their pace and we provide a holistic service to ensure survivors can work safely and without becoming retraumatised and can go on to live their lives more fully.

steppingstonesnorthwales.co.uk

'Sound Campaign'

On the 14th of July the Welsh Government launched the new Sound campaign, which encourages young men in Wales to learn about gender-based violence and 'sound out' their relationships, behaviours, and thoughts with each other.

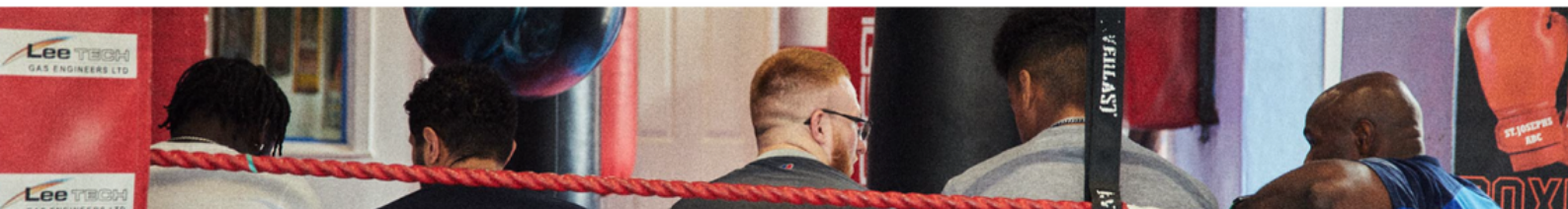
Sound targets men aged 18-34 with engaging and informative content around healthy relationships across social media, podcasts, TV and streaming channels to counteract a narrative shared by some social media influencers promoting 'ultra-masculine' views.

Developed with men from a variety of backgrounds across Wales, the campaign has also been informed by perpetrators and survivors of abuse.

The campaign focuses on early intervention, which is one of the priorities in the current Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence strategy.

Any questions or queries, please get in touch with katie.dowling@gov.wales

SOUND IT OUT SOUND ADVICE SOUND AS



Tough questions need sound advice

SOUND CHANNELS:



Website: www.gov.wales/sound



[lawn/Sound \(@soundcymru\)](https://www.tiktok.com/@soundcymru) | TikTok



[Sound \(@soundcymru\)](https://www.instagram.com/soundcymru) | Instagram



<https://www.youtube.com/@SoundCymru>

EVENTS AND TRAINING SESSIONS

Sharing learning and good practise!

WSAS 'Lunch & Learn' Sessions

Due to the success of these sessions, the Programme Team continues to plan online 'Lunch & Learn' sessions via MS Teams to keep engaging with professionals and increase understanding of 'best practice' when interacting with victims and survivors of sexual assault and domestic abuse.

6 September at 1-2
Paediatric Sexual Assault
medical examinations
[Book your space here!](#)

[Click here to watch
previous sessions!](#)

31 October at 1-2
*Identifying and responding to child sexual abuse
in Wales: Supporting children and families with
confidence.*
[Book your space here!](#)

26 September at 1-2
*Researching Violence Against Women,
Domestic Abuse
and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV)*
[Book your space here!](#)

WSAS Conference 2023

The annual WSAS Conference was held back on 13 June at Cardiff and Vale College Business Centre.

The theme of the conference ' **A sexual assault survivor's journey: Pathways to recovery** ' was focused on providing an insight into the different pathways victims and survivors follow, the services and challenges involved at each stage and what needs to be improved to deliver sexual assault services that are victim centred, with health and wellbeing needs as the key priority across Wales.

Thank you to all the speakers, guests and delegates who made this event a success!



To watch the talks go to [training & events website page](#)
For the resources go to [event slides](#)

CONTACT US



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



Visit our Welsh Sexual Assault Services [web page](#) to find:

- Your nearest SARC on [SARC web page](#)

Don't forget our powerful animation describing the services and support provided by sexual assault referral centres in Wales.

[Watch the animation](#)



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



Llinell Gymorth Live Fear
Byw Heb Ofn Free Helpline

0808 80 10 800

ffôn • tecst • sgwrsio byw • ebost
call • text • live chat • email

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