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

NEWSLETTER

W I N T E R 2 0 2 3

I S S U E 2



'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 Catrin Simpson

Clinical Lead Ynys Saff, Sexual Assault Referral Centre, Cardiff and Vale
University Health Board/WSAS Programme Paediatric Clinical Lead

Welcome to the second 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.

A huge amount of effort has been continuing in services working towards the Forensic Medical Examination ISO accreditation. This really is a mammoth team effort from a range of agencies, and it is heartening to see these great working relationships continue to develop.

We are continuing to make steps forward in our aim to have a second paediatric hub for acute SARC medicals in Swansea. A site has been identified and will be further developed over the coming months. Workforce planning for paediatric services remains a challenge, but positive steps are being made.

The provision of a Wales based Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) Faculty of Forensic and Legal Medicine (FFLM) course for medics performing Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) medicals in the spring, and a series of online 'Lunch and Learn' sessions for professionals working across Wales planned this year, are all positive steps forward in this area.

Please read on for further details of the WSAS programme of work.

Thank you!

Catrin

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:

Long term site for Aberystwyth 'Hub'

A building for a new 'Hub' in Aberystwyth and plans for what it will look like are progressing well. The existing Bow Street SARC will continue to operate until the new facility is complete.

Second 'Paediatric Hub' in South Wales

A site for the second 'Paediatric Hub' in the south Wales region has been identified in Swansea. This hub will sit alongside the current Adult SARC unit SA1, the detailed plans are continuing to progress.

Redirection of acute cases from Merthyr Tydfil SARC

The first phase of redirecting acute services to 'Hubs' has taken place.

From 1 February 2023, acute referrals to the Merthyr Tydfil SARC are being seen at the Cardiff Ynys Saff SARC 'Hub'.

The Merthyr Tydfil 'Spoke' continues to provide independent sexual violence advisors, counselling, and other long-term support for the local communities. Crisis workers are available between 9am and 8pm seven days a week and the provision of Achieving Best Evidence interviews also continues between these times.

Find out more information about the [Hub and Spoke' model](#) here.

● ● ● LOOKING AHEAD IN 2023....

- **ISO accreditation work** - All sexual assault referral centres (SARCs) across Wales are making good progress towards meeting the ISO accreditation standards deadline in October 2023.
- **Centralised core funding** - From April 2023, core funding for the seven SARCs across the south Wales regions will be processed through the NHS National Collaborative Commissioning Unit.

This is a first key step in centralising the commissioning of SARC services.

- **SARC Commissioning Framework** - Work will start this year on a SARC Commissioning Framework, which will include care standards, resource descriptors and measures.

This will be developed through a collaborative process with partners and stakeholders across Wales.

GET INVOLVED IN OUR WORK!

The WSAS Programme is steadily making connections with a range of different services, programmes, and organisations across Wales.

Our first online engagement session was held in November 2022 with sexual assault service providers and professionals to discuss the most effective ways the WSAS Programme can engage with them and how survivors can be involved with the Programme to support service development.

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

Further engagement sessions are being planned both **for professionals and survivors** over the next few months.

Professionals and organisations

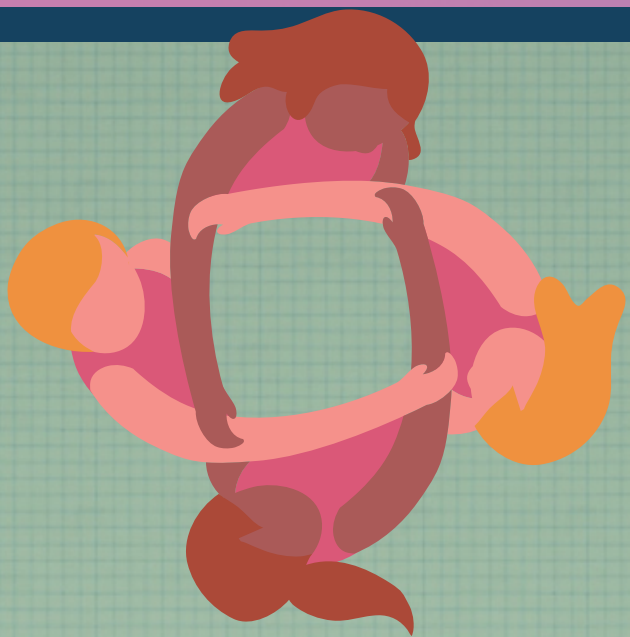
We have arranged a **Service Engagement Forum event on the 28 February at 10.30-12** to bring together professionals from statutory, public organisations and third sector, who work with victims and survivors of rape, sexual assault, and abuse.

Click to
[Reserve your spot!](#)



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

A crucial next step in the engagement work is for the Programme Team to meet with survivor networks and groups across Wales over the coming months.

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 meeting us through 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!

WSAS.programme@wales.nhs.uk

INTRODUCING OUR COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS

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

Samantha Wassall

New Pathways ISVA and Sexual Assault Services Coordinator for Gwent



"I've worked at New Pathways as an ISVA and Sexual Assault Services Co-Ordinator for 5 years.

We support victims of sexual violence, making sure they have accurate information about the criminal justice process and their entitlements under the Victims Code of Practice, to make empowered choices whether they decide to report to the police or not and also support their safety and well-being throughout the process.

Every day brings challenges, but knowing I've done what I can to make even the slightest difference to someone's life is rewarding. I enjoy being part of an amazing team, with knowledgeable and dependable colleagues, providing the best possible support.'

Ginny and Jennie

Cardiff & Vale Ynys Saff Sexual Assault Referral Centre, Crisis Workers



"We are fairly new to the Ynys Saff team, having joined 6 months ago.

Our role as crisis workers is to support service users during their time at Ynys Saff, which may include support during a forensic medical examination or during a police interview.

Ginny has recently taken on the role of paediatric crisis worker, so will mainly be supporting children and young people. Jennie mainly works with adults.

Both are working to support the changes needed to meet ISO accreditation within the SARC. The role involves working with a lot of different professionals including forensic medical examiners, Paediatricians, sexual health teams, Police, and social services.

We enjoy working as a part of an amazing team in Ynys Saff, who are all working holistically to achieve the best outcomes for our service users"

Detective Sergeant Natalie McCarthy

Rape Investigation Team Gwent Police



'A New Rape Investigation Team has been set up within Gwent Police which went live on Sept 12th, 2022. Approx. 300 Rapes are reported to Gwent Police in a 12-month period.

Our Team Investigates Rapes and Attempt Rapes where the victim is over 13 years old.

The Aim of the Team is to improve the journey for the victim, complete timely investigations and to bring offenders to justice.

Recently Gwent Police have become an Op Soteria Expansion force which will help us to improve the service we provide to victims of Rape and Serious Sexual Offences (RASSO).

Soteria has five key pillars which looks at Suspect focused investigations, challenging repeat offenders, victim engagement, an enhanced approach to learning and development for RASSO investigations, understanding data led performance and digital forensics.'

EVENTS AND TRAINING SESSIONS

Sharing learning and good practise!

WSAS 'Lunch & Learn' Sessions

A series of online 'Lunch and Learn' sessions are planned throughout 2023 to increase understanding of 'best practice' for professionals when interacting with VAWDASV victims and survivors; to ensure a consistent quality of service for all those accessing SARC services; and to provide information on current guidelines across Wales.

Following the successful first session 'Overview of ISO and Forensic Science Regulator requirements for sexual assault referral centre accreditation' on 9 February, the next ones in line are:

22 March 2023 at 1-2

Emergency contraception, sexual infections and Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) after sexual assault

[To register click here!](#)

25 April 2023 at 1-2

Updated Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) guidance for children who have experienced sexual assault

[To register click here!](#)

To **watch** the 'Overview of ISO and Forensic Science Regulator' Lunch & Learn session **click PLAY**



WSAS Conference 2023

Tuesday 13 June

9-4

Cardiff & Vale College
Business Centre

City Centre Campus,
Dumballs Road, Cardiff
CF10 5FE

Further details will be announced shortly on our web page:

[training & events website page.](#)

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 visit [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](#)



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Welsh Government



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Mae help ar gael ohyd, ddydd a nos

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