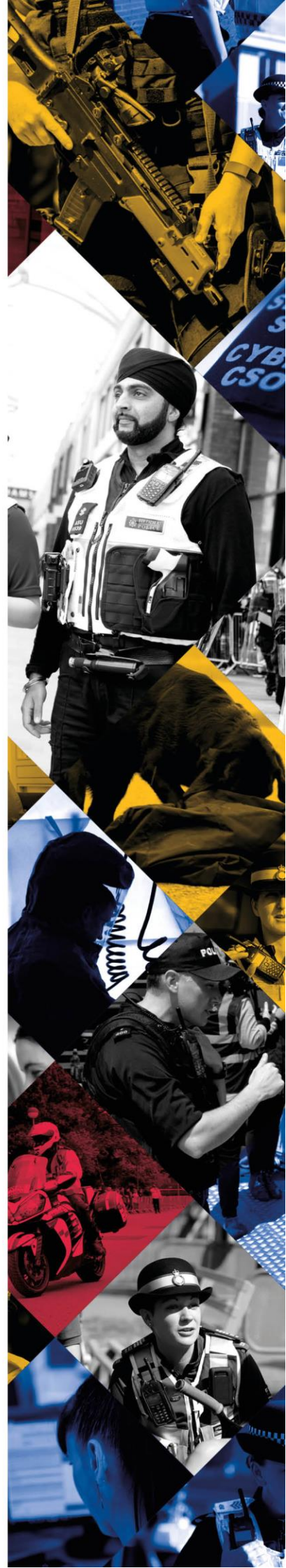




VAWG Strategy and Delivery Framework 2021-2024

June 2022



1. PURPOSE AND RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is a decision on ratification and formal approval for the implementation of Gwent Police Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy and Delivery Framework.

2. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The kidnapping, rape and murder of Sarah Everard by a serving police officer on 3 March 2021 has led to women and girls across the country speaking out about their own experiences of violence and abuse, and demanding change.

The names of other women who have been murdered have reached public consciousness since then, including Bibaa Henry and Nicole Smallman, Gracie Spinks and Julia James.

These horrific crimes have had the result of damaging public confidence and trust in policing across the UK.

The data on the nature and prevalence of Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) in England and Wales is stark and shocking. In the UK, a woman is killed by a man every three days on average between 2009-2019. In the last 12 months in Gwent there have been 7468 female victims of Domestic Abuse (DA), 404 female victims of rape and 794 victims of sexual offences. This demonstrates the clear scale of VAWG.

Recent thematic inspections from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS/HMIC) have concluded that, while great improvements have been made in the policing response to Policing violence against women and girls, these were not enough. HMIC have found significant inconsistencies in the service that forces provide to women and girls across England and Wales. The inspectorate have recommended a fundamental shift in prioritisation, aimed at bringing greater consistency and universally higher standards.

One specific Area for Improvement (AFI) from HMIC that has been assigned to all forces is;

“By March 2022, chief constables should establish and publish an action plan that specifies in detail what steps the force will take to improve and standardise its approach to responding to violence against women and girls offences, with the aim of ensuring policies, processes and practices are effective, actively monitored and managed, and meeting national standards”.

As a result of the HMIC recommendations and the significant events from last year that's has impacted on public confidence it is important that Gwent Police



has a VAWG Strategy and Plan in place to provide a clear and consistent approach which demonstrates our commitment to keeping women and girls safe.

The strategy and delivery framework have been aligned with the national VAWG strategies including the Welsh Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV), National VAWG Strategy and the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) National Framework. The views of survivors within the Gwent Police Survivor Network were also captured and helped shape the strategy.

The overarching aim of the strategy has been set out clearly. Which is to help create an environment where women and girls feel safe to pursue their lives free of fear and harassment from men, delivering effectively upon our core responsibilities, and using our influence to support change in our communities to help enhance trust and confidence in Gwent Police.

3. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

3.1 There are seven Key Strategic Principles which set out Gwent's immediate and long-term direction to help tackle VAWG;

- Violence, abuse, and intimidation against women and girls in any form is not acceptable and will not be tolerated.
- Public spaces, education establishments, and online should be safe places for all women and girls. This includes within our own organisation.
- Women and girls should feel confident to report their experiences of harm to the police directly or indirectly, safe in the knowledge that they will be taken seriously and that they will be treated with dignity and respect.
- Our actions to tackle violence against women and girls will be open and transparent to external scrutiny.
- The lived experiences of women and girls will be heard, and their opinions respected.
- Prevent police officers abusing their position.
- We need to target and deal with violent perpetrators.

The delivery of the strategy then utilises the widely recognised four pillar approach which has been recommended by HMIC. These are Prepare, Pursue, Prevent, Protect. All the objectives and tactical actions sit within each of these pillars.

There is an internal section that sits within the framework, which is focused on achieving cultural change, adopting a zero-tolerance approach within the Gwent Police workplace to all forms of VAWG.

The internal element of the plan will go via Professional Standards Department (PSD). The external elements of the plan will go via the DA and Rape and Serious Sexual Offences (RASSO) Steering Groups. A VAWG Quarterly Report will then be produced for the Culture Board.

4. COLLABORATION

- 4.1 Both the Strategy and Framework have been sent out to the force leads who are responsible for the objectives in the framework. They have been consulted and changes to the plan were made accordingly. Feedback was also sought from our stakeholders, including the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) and Independent Advisory Group (IAG).
- 4.2 The delivery plan sets out the work around building and strengthening collaboration with our partner agencies, as well as at a national level as part of the VAWDASV Welsh Government approach.

5. NEXT STEPS

- 5.1 For agreement and decision.

6. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 There are no costs associated with this paper.

7. PERSONNEL CONSIDERATIONS

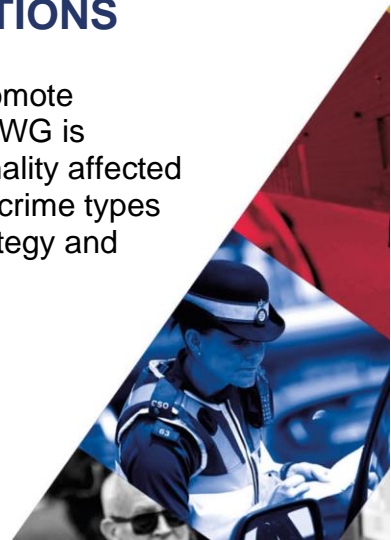
- 7.1 None identified in this paper beyond metrics in place to monitor progress of the framework.

8. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 None identified in this paper.

9. EQUALITIES & HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

- 9.1 The strategy has been considered against the general duty to promote equality, as stipulated under the Joint Strategic Equality Plan. VAWG is specifically to help protect women and girls who are disproportionality affected by these specific crimes. Men and boys who are victims of these crime types are dealt with via other strategies, including the Vulnerability Strategy and Child Centred Policing Strategy.



9.2 In preparing this report, consideration has been given to requirements of the Articles contained in the European Convention on Human Rights and the Human Rights Act 1998.

10. RISK

10.1 There are no risks identified in this paper beyond those recorded in force risk register.

11. PUBLIC INTEREST

11.1 The VAWG Strategy and Framework are clearly in the public interest in order to help repair the overarching trust and confidence levels of the public, specifically women and girls.

11.2 The strategy is suitable to be shared in the public domain. The framework will not as it contains specific tactical actions.

12. REPORT AUTHOR

12.1 PS 919 Carrington

13. LEAD CHIEF OFFICER

13.1 DCC Blakeman

14. ANNEXES



15. CHIEF OFFICER APPROVAL

15.1 I confirm this report has been discussed and approved at a formal Chief Officers' meeting.

15.2 I confirm this report is suitable for the public domain with exceptions for the reasons stated in 11.1 and 11.2.

Signature: 

Date: 10.05.2022

