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## Ymateb i Ymgynghoriad / Consultation Response

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<b>Pwnc / Subject:</b>	<b>Consultation on the refresh of the violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence National Strategy for 2022 to 2026</b>

### Background information about Estyn

Estyn is the Office of Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales. As a Crown body, Estyn is independent of the Welsh Government.

Estyn's principal aim is to raise the standards and quality education and training in Wales. This is primarily set out in the Learning and Skills Act 2000 and the Education Act 2005. In exercising its functions, Estyn must give regard to the:

- Quality of education and training in Wales;
- Extent to which education and training meets the needs of learners;
- Educational standards achieved by education and training providers in Wales;
- Quality of leadership and management of those education and training providers;
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of learners; and,
- Contribution made to the well-being of learners.

Estyn's remit includes (but is not exclusive to) nurseries and non-maintained settings, primary schools, secondary schools, independent schools, pupil referrals units, further education, adult community learning, local government education services, work-based learning, and teacher education and training.

Estyn may give advice to the Welsh Parliament on any matter connected to education and training in Wales. To achieve excellence for learners, Estyn has set three strategic objectives:

- Provide accountability to service users on the quality and standards of education and training in Wales;
- Inform the development of national policy by the Welsh Government;
- Build capacity for improvement of the education and training system in Wales.

This response is not confidential.

## Response

### Introduction

We welcome the proposed refresh of the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence National Strategy 2022-26 ('the strategy'). Our recent report '[We don't tell our teachers](#)' about young people's experiences of peer-on-peer sexual harassment underlines the need to challenge everyday sexism and misogyny and embed positive understanding, attitudes and behaviours early. The strategy identifies priorities which correspond well to the recommendations in our report such as objective 2 to 'increase awareness in children, young people and adults of the importance of safe, equal and healthy relationships and empowering them to positive personal choices'.

We feel that the priorities and objectives are suitable. The blueprint for shared governance is ambitious and well-considered and there is a clear sense of national direction and purpose. There is, rightfully, a strong emphasis on ensuring consistency across parties and workstreams to ensure parity across all areas of Wales.

However, in places we feel that the strategy could be strengthened by:

- Reordering the objectives to start with the proactive objectives followed by the reactive objectives
- Adding more detail to areas such as the brief of the work of the subgroups and regional boards
- Including information on the role of individual local authorities within the regional boards, especially the education department due to their responsibility over schools' provision for RSE
- including a clear timeline with suitable and agreed review points to measure progress against actions and targets

## Question 1

We have set out our main priorities in the [Objectives](#). Do you think these are the right priorities?

Yes

Please give reasons for your answer:

We believe that the priorities set out in the 6 objectives are suitable and cover an appropriate range of proactive and reactive strategies. We think it might be helpful to reorder the objectives to start with the preventative objectives first followed by the reactive objectives. To strengthen the messages in the objectives, it would be helpful to add more detail to Objective 4. We feel it would also be beneficial to adapt the wording of Objective 5 to match the grammar and style of the other objectives, for example 'Train relevant professionals to provide effective, timely and appropriate responses to victims and survivors'.

## Question 2

Do you think the overall approach we will be taking, as set out in the sections on the [Blueprint](#), is the right one to stop violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence?

Yes

Please give reasons for your answer:

The blueprint for a shared governance structure is ambitious and well-considered. The scope of members of the National Partnership Board is broad and comprehensive. It would be beneficial to have some clarity and detail regarding the planned work of the regional boards.

The proposed sub-groups aligned to the National Programme are sensible and generally cover the expected areas of VAWDASV. We do not think that the section on 'Street Harassment' reflects fully the scope of the work outlined, which includes misogynistic violence and sexual violence and suggest amending this section to 'Street Harassment and Violence'. It would be helpful to understand which sub-groups will be responsible for scoping and developing policy of the 13 areas of work listed.

It would be helpful to consider how information from the work of the sub-groups feeds into the work of education professionals as they deliver the new Statutory RSE Code and Guidance. It may also be helpful to consider what links are made with governance groups overseeing the implementation of the Curriculum for Wales, and in particular the Statutory RSE Code and Guidance.

## Question 3

We have set out the principles which underpin the draft [National Strategy](#). Do you agree with these?

Yes

Please give reasons for your answer:

We agree with the principles behind the strategy. They are broad, comprehensive, and well-considered. The principles encompass the complete spectrum of VAWDASV. The strong focus on a collaborative, multi-agency and multi-faceted approach is both ambitious and innovative.

## Question 4

Do you agree with our [immediate priorities](#)?

Yes

Please give reasons for your answer:

The immediate priorities are sensible and well-considered. There is a clear sense of direction and purpose. There is a strong thread of ensuring consistency across parties and workstreams. It would be helpful to include more detail around the 'review and refresh' of the role of Regional VAWDASV Boards.

## Question 5

What do you think is the most important thing we can do to stop violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence?

Raising public awareness through:

- High-profile public campaigns
- Proactive television and social media campaigns
- Coordinated approach to preventative support
- Comprehensive provision (age-appropriate) across all education settings
- Solution-focussed open discussions in a range of fora

## Question 6

Do you think there is anything we should be doing as part of this Strategy that can have a positive effect on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language?

The Blueprint places an importance on the work of Regional Boards and on ensuring consistency of an 'all-Wales approach whilst still reflecting regional difference'. It is important to consider the availability of and provision for Welsh-medium services across all areas. It is imperative to ensure a fair, equal delivery of services where victims, service users and the general public prefer to communicate in the Welsh language.

## Question 7

Are there any other things you think we should be doing to stop violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence, or do you have any other comments?

It would be helpful to include some detail about proactive and preventative work planned in collaboration with local education authorities and regional consortia as part of the roll-out of the new Statutory RSE Code and Guidance.

It may be of interest to note that we will be carrying out a review of peer-on-peer sexual harassment in further education colleges during 2022-2023. We intend to work with QAA who will be carrying out a similar review in higher education on behalf of HEFCW.

An area of concern that was raised on our work with schools was the role of online gaming in promoting or developing misogynist attitudes. Is there more that can be done, for example through influencing the current UK Online Safety Bill, to prevent this from happening?

## Question 8

How should we measure progress and success in delivering the things outlined in this Strategy?

The Strategy could be strengthened by including a clear timeline with suitable and agreed review points to measure progress against actions and targets. Progress should be measured using a broad and comprehensive range of information, including and an evaluation of both national/regional data and first-hand evidence.

## Question 9

Do you agree with the [scope of the Strategy](#)?

Yes

Please give reasons for your answer:

The scope is clear, purposeful, and justified. Recognising that abuse and violence can happen in a variety of scenarios is key to the strategy. Acknowledging that it is the abuse that defines the scope of this strategy not the gender or otherwise of the perpetrator or survivor is also of importance. However, the strategy rightly focuses mainly on the main societal issue of male violence and abuse towards women. The Strategy's clear and main purpose is changing attitudes to male violence on an individual and wider society level. The link with the strengthening and advancement of equality and human rights in Wales and Welsh Government legislation (such as the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual violence (Wales) Act 2015 and The Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015) is clear and purposeful.

## Question 10

We have proposed governance arrangements, which include working with key partner organisation and a number of sub-group/workstreams to tackle specific issues. Do you think working together in this way will improve coordination of work to stop violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence?

Yes

Please give reasons for your answer:

We think that working in collaboration with key partners is a sensible approach. We believe that by identifying key areas of responsibility for relevant sub-groups should ensure that all organisations have joint ownership and accountability of the national strategy.

## Question 11

Are you a professional, working with victims, survivors and perpetrators of VAWDASV?

No

## Question 12

We have asked a number of specific questions. If you have any related issues which we have not specifically addressed, please use this space to report them:

It may help to revisit the language and sentence structure of the strategy in places to ensure that it is clear for all stakeholders. For example, some of the sentences in the 'Street harassment' section are long and could be shortened to make the meaning clearer for all readers.

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