



Response

Welsh government

Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence (VAWDASV) National Strategy

January 2021

Respond via email: StrategaethVAWDASVStrategy@gov.wales

For enquiries regarding this response please contact office@thecca.org.uk

Company Chemists' Association
Coppergate House
10 Whites Row
London
E1 7NF

About the Company Chemists' Association (CCA)

Established in 1898, the CCA is the trade association for large pharmacy operators in England, Scotland and Wales. The CCA membership includes ASDA, Boots, LloydsPharmacy, Morrisons, Rowlands Pharmacy, Superdrug, Tesco, and Well, who between them own and operate around 6,000 pharmacies, which represents nearly half the market. CCA members deliver a broad range of healthcare and wellbeing services, from a variety of locations and settings, as well as dispensing almost 500 million NHS prescription items every year. The CCA represents the interests of its members and brings together their unique skills, knowledge, and scale for the benefit of community pharmacy, the NHS, patients and the public.

Executive Summary

The CCA welcomes the opportunity to respond to the consultation on Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence (VAWDASV) National Strategy. We wish to highlight the role that Community Pharmacy can play in a strategic partnership to tackle VAWDASV.

Community Pharmacy has already demonstrated an ability to support victims of domestic violence, are accessible, open extended hours, and are well distributed across Wales, in a range of locations.

Community pharmacies have considerable experience in the Safer Spaces Scheme, providing a safe area for victims to call a helpline or support service.

Community pharmacy has also been extensively involved with the Home Office backed scheme, Ask for ANI (Action Needed Immediately) to enable victims of domestic abuse to access immediate help from the police, from the safety of their local pharmacy.

Q2. 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?

This Welsh Government blueprint is important because it develops a structure of joint ownership, across all participating sectors, with National Partnership board responsible for delivering the strategy, direction and accountability. We believe such a structure will be essential in order to tackle VAWDASV, pulling together a wide range of participants including providers, survivors and employers.

At the CCA, we believe that Community Pharmacy has already had considerable experience of supporting victims of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence. Community pharmacies are accessible, open extended hours, and are distributed across Wales in a range of locations from the High Street of large cities and towns to the smaller rural village location.

In response to growing concerns about a rise in domestic abuse during the first national Covid-19 lockdown, Hestia and UK SAYS NO MORE launched Safe Spaces inside Boots, Superdrug, Morrisons and Well pharmacies, as well as in hundreds of independent pharmacies across the UK. The scheme Safe Spaces provides somewhere for anyone experiencing domestic abuse to safely download an app with local resources, call a helpline, support service or loved one.

The Safe Spaces scheme has continued to grow and is now facilitated in more than 5,600 pharmacies, across the UK.

Community pharmacy has also been extensively involved with the Home Office backed scheme, Ask for ANI (Action Needed Immediately) to enable victims of domestic abuse to access immediate help from the police, from the safety of their local pharmacy.

The pharmacy environment lends itself well to this scheme. Most pharmacies have consultation rooms available, and the staff have already undergone training on safeguarding. For many victims affected by domestic abuse, seeking medical assistance through a pharmacy is often allowed. Pharmacies are already responding to safeguarding issues and this scheme provides a clear process to follow, and additional training and guidance to support them to deliver this assistance even more effectively.

At the CCA we believe Community Pharmacy has already demonstrated an ability to support victims of domestic violence. In a setting that is unlikely to alert potential abusers, should they be nearby. We would urge the Welsh government to ensure that these existing schemes are built into the Blueprint so that those experiencing domestic abuse can receive consistent support. In turn, the schemes would benefit if there were most services that people in these situations could be referred to once they have accessed their 'safe space.' We would be happy to discuss this further with the Home Office and put you in contact with the relevant policy leads at Hestia/UK SAYS NO MORE and the Home Office.

In addition, we have recognised from our own analysis of the data from Safe Spaces and Ask for ANI that men are accessing these schemes and that abuse is not always within an intimate partnership, it can occur in familial settings. Therefore, we ask the Welsh government to ensure that the Blueprint provides accessible support to women, men and non-cisgender individuals vulnerable to domestic abuse.

Q10. 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?

If the Welsh Government is to successfully tackle the issue of VAWDASV, it is crucial that all stakeholders are involved in an all-Wales initiative designed to create collective sense of endeavour towards shared goals necessary to improve the current situation.

Clearly a strong partnership board will be crucial to bring together multiple stakeholders from different backgrounds to follow strategy and achieve the common goal of eliminating VAWDASV. It is so important that all providers, survivors, employers and those who conduct the abuse are included, mindsets are changed and lessons are learned from previous initiatives.

As detailed earlier, Community Pharmacy can be one of the significant providers to support survivors in the community. Pharmacies have considerable experience of initiatives, such as ANI and Safe Spaces, have good distribution and accessibility, private consultation rooms and staff already trained in Safeguarding which makes them able to triage and signpost survivors effectively. .

Eliminating VAWDASV is going to need all stakeholders working together, following by a common strategy, led by the project Board.