



DOMESTIC ABUSE SERVICES
GWASANAETHAU CAM-DRIN DOMESTIG



**STRATEGIC PLAN
2023 – 2027**

Life can be different



It's made a huge difference to mine and the children's lives. The ongoing support we are receiving has enabled us to process and try to recover from the abuse suffered. We have been supported since fleeing our previous home all the way through to us now feeling safer in our own home. I have felt listened to, supported and safer



All aspects of my life improved. Wouldn't be here today without this service!



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CHAIR FORWARD

We are pleased to present our new strategy for the way forward for Vale Domestic Abuse Services and the goals we have set ourselves to achieve.

This year marks our 30th birthday of supporting survivors of domestic abuse and their children in the Vale of Glamorgan. During the 30 years we have supported tens of thousands of women and their children to live their lives in safety.

Of course, we all wish domestic abuse didn't happen in our community. For as long as domestic abuse exists we will work with survivors to help them rebuild their lives. We will listen to survivors responding to their needs and supporting them to be safe. We will work to inspire our community to challenge domestic abuse and sexual violence so that gendered abuse is not seen as just part of life. We will sustain and develop our services to meet the changing needs of survivors and our community.

We hope our partners and funders will continue to work with us and support us on our journey. Keeping the needs of survivors and their children at the centre of everything we can do. Listening and helping to empower survivors and their children we can work together to bring about change. We are grateful to our dedicated staff for all the work they've done and continue to do.

Life can be different.

Carryn Williams

Chair



For as long as domestic abuse exists we will work with survivors to help them rebuild their lives. We will listen to survivors, responding to their needs and supporting them to be safe



CEO FORWARD

Having led the team at Vale Domestic Abuse Services just over a year, one of the things I hear regularly is how much our support has changed and saved lives. Over the last year we have supported over 1000 survivors and their children, expanded and invested in our team and grown our support for children and young people. Collaboration is the cornerstone of our work. We have worked in partnership to deliver ask and act training across the region and engaged with survivors to improve our systems. We want to ensure the survivor does not have to tell their story more than once and receives high quality support, tailored to meet their needs.

Violence against women, domestic abuse, and sexual violence (VAWDASV) has undergone a dramatic transformation over the last decade. There has been an increase in awareness, legislation, and commitment to making our communities safer for survivors.

There is still a lot to do. Due to recent events, there is a crisis of trust in our institutions. Young people tell us they feel unsafe on the streets, in schools and online. It is still common for communities and services to stigmatise, shame, and blame survivors instead of putting the blame firmly on those responsible. Housing shortages, increased financial stress, increased societal pressures, and the increased use of social media and technology have impacted survivors and made it increasingly difficult for them to act.

In response to these challenges, I am proud to introduce our refreshed brand and new strategy to ensure the survivor voice is at the forefront of everything we do. We intend to improve our engagement in Vale communities, work with our partners to improve confidence in their services and respond to survivors and their children to ensure their voices are heard, help them to be safe, rebuild their lives and gain the justice they deserve.

I feel immense privilege and honour to lead this team of inspiring women and I look forward to leading the charity to inspire change, respond and protect survivors, support them to rebuild their lives, recognising that life can be different and to ensure that Vale Domestic Abuse Services is the trusted provider of domestic abuse specialist services in the Vale of Glamorgan.

Vicky Friis

Chief Executive

“ I am proud to introduce our refreshed brand and new strategy to ensure the survivor voice is at the forefront of everything we do ”

ABOUT US



OUR VISION

There is no place for domestic abuse, sexual violence, or other forms of violence against women and girls in our community



OUR PURPOSE

We believe that life can be different. We are dedicated to supporting survivors to create fulfilled, safe lives and to create transformative, lasting change in the Vale of Glamorgan community



CURIOSITY

Our Clients are important, we want to get to know them, support them and build a professional, trusting relationship. We want to listen and understand rather than assume we know all the answers.



INTEGRITY

We are honest, transparent and keep our word. We know that people are their own experts. We are respectful and non judgemental.



REFLECTIVE

We identify patterns and opportunities for learning, focusing on what is strong not what is wrong. Reflection enables us to challenge attitudes and beliefs and enhances our understanding.



INCLUSIVITY

We understand that overlapping identities including gender, race, class, ethnicity, religion, and sexual orientation impact the way survivors experience discrimination, domestic abuse, sexual violence and violence against women and girls.

We understand that we need to look through different lenses and to listen and learn from diverse groups, to improve our practice and accessibility.



KINDNESS

Our team, volunteers, trustees and clients are important, we are patient, courteous and appreciative. We want to celebrate achievements and learn from our mistakes. We are Human.



COLLABORATIVE

We know we do not have all the answers and strive to work with the client, the community, partners and stakeholders to find solutions the effect change.



WHAT WE DO

- > We offer specialist, lifesaving support – we understand trauma caused in relationships is healed in relationships. We offer survivors, children and young people a different, healthy, professional relationship
- > We support children and young people with the impact of domestic abuse and help them to understand healthy relationships that enables informed decision making
- > We offer safe, inclusive spaces in the Vale to make it easier for survivors to access support
- > We provide information, guidance and opportunities that help survivors make informed decisions and choices
- > We bring people together to share their experiences, learn, influence and provide a space for voices to be heard
- > We work with survivors and partners to share learning and generate new ideas to help address issues and tackle injustice
- > We advocate for better understanding of survivors’ challenges with services, our partners, and the wider community
- > We raise awareness that domestic abuse, sexual violence and violence against women and girls is a result of gender inequality in society

OUR APPROACH

Vale Domestic Abuse Services believes that Domestic Abuse, Sexual Violence and all violence against women and girls is not inevitable and is a result of gender inequality in society. We are proud to be a feminist charity focused on equality and equity for survivors of VAWDASV. Our charity focuses primarily on female survivors. We recognise that men who are victims of domestic abuse require high quality support services and we work with our partners across the region to ensure they have access to high quality, tailored support services. We provide support to survivors that are preparing to leave, ready to leave, are in crisis, or in rebuilding their lives. We adopt a change that lasts approach which is focused on:

TRAUMA INFORMED

Recognise

- > Understand behaviour can be triggered by fear and trauma as a result of VAWDASV
- > Understand and recognise additional barriers survivors face in making changes and taking control of their own life
- > Recognise the signs and symptoms of trauma

Respond

- > Provide hope that life can be different
- > Act with care, kindness and curiosity
- > Seek to actively resist a re-traumatisation
- > Offer survivors a different type of relationship based on hope, safety, trust, choice, collaboration and empowerment

STRENGTHS BASED & NEEDS LED

Recognise

- > Everyone is their own expert
- > Survivors know what they need and how to solve their problems
- > Survivors don't recognise their strengths and strategies that have kept them safe

Respond

- > Be a “strength detective”
- > Focus on what is strong and not what is wrong
- > Focus on exceptions to the normal to build confidence and esteem
- > Listen – hear – believe

RISK ASSURED

Recognise

- > People die from domestic abuse
- > Signs and Red Flags of VAWDASV
- > Nuances of Domestic Abuse
- > Perpetrators’ actions constantly alter the risk
- > Survivors recognise the risk to themselves and others

Respond

- > Listen to the story and assess risk at every conversation and co-produce safety plans
- > Work with partners to support safety plans
- > Create a safe space where survivors can reflect, plan and act



EQUALITY

is everyone getting a pair of shoes



DIVERSITY

is everyone getting a different type of shoe



EQUITY

is everyone getting a pair of shoes that fits



ACCEPTANCE

is understanding we all wear different kinds of shoes



BELONGING

is wearing the shoes you want without fear of judgment

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Vale Domestic Abuse Services are committed to working inclusively. We recognise and respond to the systemic structural barriers that survivors experiencing multiple disadvantage (including survivors with protected characteristics, complex needs and women exploited through prostitution). We acknowledge the importance of understanding violence against women and girls, feminist practice, and our role as a specialist service.

Women need access to safe, separate, non-judgemental services. This is legal and appropriate where it can be shown to be the most effective way of providing those services, or where the service is needed by one sex only (Equality Act 2010, Schedule 16, Paragraph 1(3)).

We are a pro woman organisation who recognises the need for gender appropriate services for male victims of domestic abuse. We commit to working with partners to ensure that male survivors have access to appropriate, high-quality services that meet their needs.

We will actively promote diversity and inclusion as an employer and as a provider of services. We aim to create a culture that respects and values each other's differences, that promotes dignity, respect, equity, acceptance, and diversity. We commit to ensuring our workforce is reflective of the community in which we work.

We commit to taking practical steps, using an intersectional approach, to ensure that our services are accessible to survivors of domestic abuse and sexual violence regardless of any multiple/protected characteristics. This includes tailoring our services to meet survivors' needs.

We are committed to becoming an anti-racist charity. We will be an advocate for racial justice and survivors of domestic abuse. We will invest in building an inclusive organisational culture that will ensure that no Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic Survivor is disadvantaged.

ABOUT THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN

- > The Vale of Glamorgan has a population of around 131,800 people. It is a mixture of rural areas, coastal towns and busy towns and villages. It is divided into three community areas, Barry Community Area, Eastern Vale Community Area (Sully, Dinas Powys, Penarth, Llandough) and Western Vale Community (St Athan, Llantwit Major, Cowbridge, Wenvoe).
- > It is estimated that 41% of the population live in Barry, 31% in the Western Vale and 28% in the Eastern Vale. Whilst seen as an affluent area, The Vale of Glamorgan have 5 LSOAs ranked in the top 10% most deprived areas in Wales, these are located in the Barry Community Area.
- > It is estimated that 5.4% of the population were from a Black, Asian, or Minority Ethnic background and an estimated 8.5% identified as being disabled and 3.07% of the population identifies as LGBTQ+ (census 2021). The number of Welsh Speakers is estimated to be 20.7%.
- > In 2011, The Vale of Glamorgan has the largest Armed Forces population of all Local Authority areas in Wales.
- > In recent years there has been a growth of the 65+ age group, predominantly in the Western Vale.
- > It is estimated that there are 36,000 children and young people aged (0 – 24) in the Vale of Glamorgan. (Census 2021).

THE PROBLEM

- > **Women die because of domestic abuse**
On average, 2 women a week are killed by a current or former partner in England and Wales
- > **Experiences of domestic abuse**
1 in 4 women in England and Wales will experience domestic abuse in her lifetime
- > **Reports to police**
The police receive a domestic abuse related call every 30 seconds
- > **Leaving Abusive Relationships**
It takes, on average, 7 attempts before a woman is able to leave for good, it is a process not a single attempt
- > **Post Separation Abuse**
When an abusive relationship ends, the abuser's need for power and control does not disappear. 37% of those killed in 2020 were killed by an ex partner
- > **Impacts**
Domestic abuse is linked to depression and homelessness
- > **Suicide**
Domestic abuse can lead women to suicide – it is estimated that around 3 women a week die by suicide as a result of domestic abuse
- > **Children & Young People**
1 in 5 children across the UK have lived with an adult perpetrating domestic abuse
- > **Young People**
Young girls in the UK report high incidence of sexual violence and do not feel safe on the streets
- > **Courts**
93% of defendants in domestic abuse cases are male; 84% of victims are female

In the last Financial Year Vale Domestic Abuse Services supported **963 survivors of domestic abuse and 107 children.**

26% of our referrals came from South Wales Police PPNs

22% from Vale of Glamorgan CBC including housing, social services and Families First

18% were self-referrals

The remaining referrals came from other third sector and statutory agencies

We supported **92% females** and **8% males**

The highest proportion of women supported were **31–35**

4% of women supported were black, Asian or minority ethnic

2.39% identified as LGBTQ+

OUR CHALLENGES

- > **High Demand for our Services** – We continue to see increased demand for our services, the complexity of need has increased and due to cost of living crisis, the challenges survivors face in their recovery have increased resulting in increased pressures on our frontline teams.
- > **Recruitment of Specialist Colleagues** – We have a fantastic team who are committed to making a difference for the survivors we support. However, the challenges in the recruitment market, and the challenging nature of the roles result in difficulties recruiting new specialist staff to meet high service demand.
- > **Funding and Sustainability** – The cost of living crisis has increased pressures on us to keep delivering our services and ensuring our charity is well run and governed. Having a plan for action and good relationships with our partners and communities will help us to minimise impact and risk.

KEY SUCCESS OVER THE LAST 5 YEAR STRATEGIC CYCLE



Investment in a new client management system so clients don't have to tell their story more than once



Contract won for delivering VAWDASV services in the Vale of Glamorgan



Increased our support for children and young people



Collaborated with partners to deliver Ask & Act Training across the region



204 women attended our therapeutic group work and counselling...



POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

Our strategy has been aligned to a number of key national and local strategies including:

- > Welsh Government National Strategy on Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence 2022-26
- > Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy
- > South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner’s Tackling Violence against Women and girls Strategy, 2019-24
- > Vale of Glamorgan Well-being Plan 2018-23

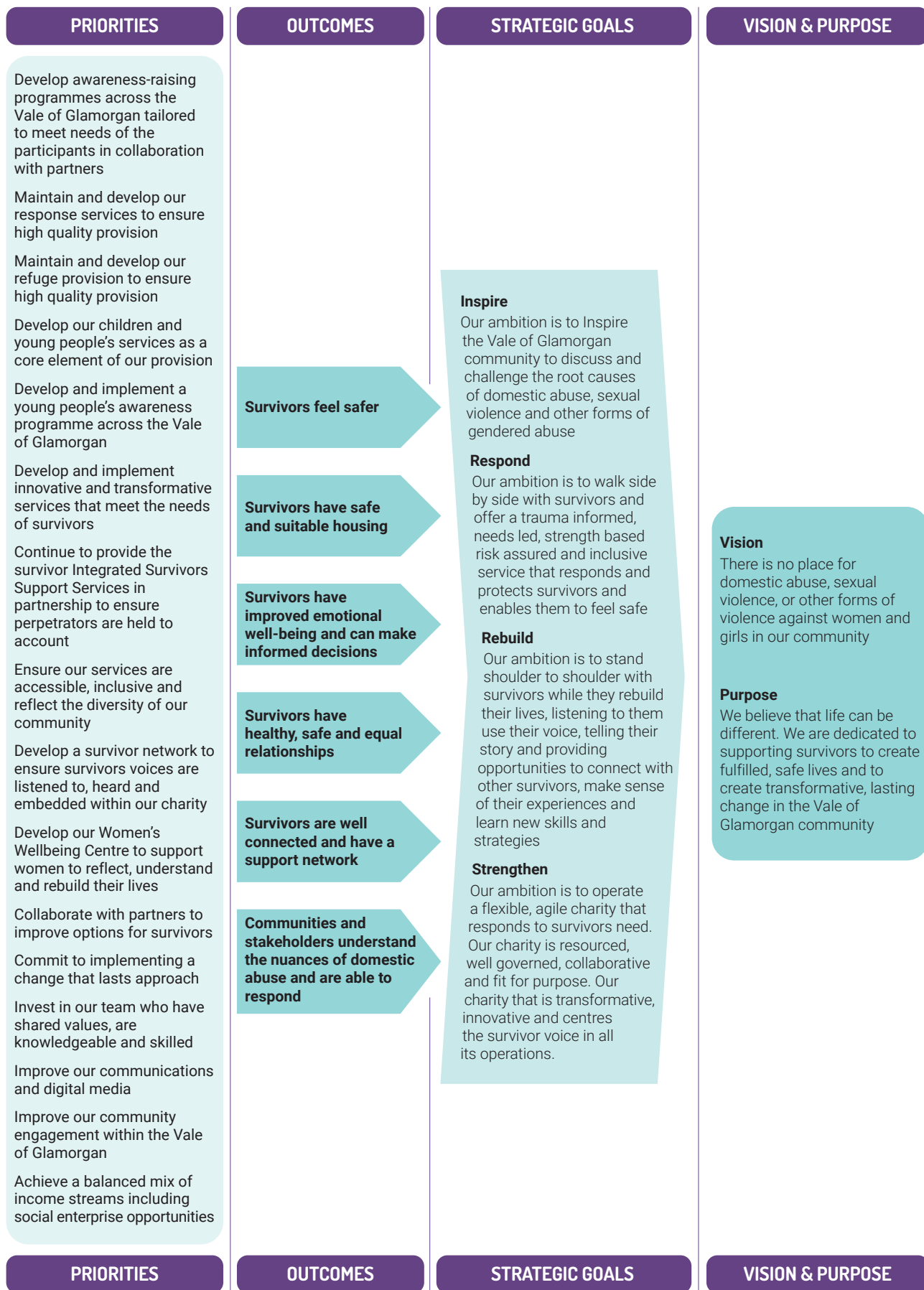
PUBLICATIONS & LEGISLATION

- > Welsh Women’s Aid and Violence Prevention Unit, A Blueprint for the Prevention of Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence in Wales, Jan 2020
- > Anti-racist Wales Action Plan (2022)
- > LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales (2021)
- > Children and Young People Plan (2022-23)
- > Social Services Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014
- > Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015
- > Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- > Renting Homes (Wales) Act
- > Domestic Abuse Act (2021)

We will ensure our strategy aligns with relevant policy and related action plans as these are reviewed and renewed

“ My DART Team worker saved my life, literally. I was in a violent volatile relationship and did not see a way out. Without her support I wouldn’t be where I am today ”

THEORY OF CHANGE



OUR GOALS

MAKING A DIFFERENCE – WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Survivors and their families supported by Vale Domestic Abuse Services:

- > Feel safer
- > Feel listened to, heard and valued and feel able to use their voice and tell their story
- > Are informed, confident, have increased knowledge and able to make informed choices
- > Have improved understanding of the power imbalance in our society and have safe, healthy and equal relationships
- > Are well-connected, have friends and a support network

Communities and agencies

- > Understand the nature and impact of domestic abuse, sexual violence and violence against women and girls
- > Are confident to talk about and call out abusive behaviour and encourage survivors to reach out for support
- > Understand and implement best practice when supporting those who have been subjected to domestic abuse, sexual violence and violence against women and girls

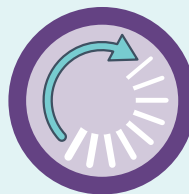
DELIVERING THE STRATEGY

It is often said that it takes a community to raise a child. It also takes a community to create an environment where everyone can live their life free from abuse. We have four strategic priorities to deliver this strategy.



INSPIRE

Our ambition is to Inspire the Vale of Glamorgan community to understand, discuss and challenge the root causes of domestic abuse, sexual violence and other forms of gendered abuse.



REBUILD

Our ambition is to stand shoulder to shoulder with survivors while they rebuild their lives, listening to them use their voice, telling their story and providing opportunities to connect with other survivors, make sense of their experiences and learn new techniques, skills and strategies.



RESPOND

Our ambition is to walk side by side with survivors and offer a trauma informed, needs led, strength based, risk assured and inclusive service that responds and protects survivors and enables them to feel safe.



STRENGTHEN

Our ambition is to operate a flexible, agile charity that responds to survivors' need. Our charity is resourced, well governed, collaborative and fit for purpose. Our charity is transformative, innovative and centres the survivor voice in all its operations.



AMBITION 1 – INSPIRE

Our ambition is to inspire the Vale of Glamorgan community to address the taboo of domestic abuse, sexual violence, and gendered abuse in the Vale of Glamorgan. By talking, listening and hearing we want communities to understand that domestic abuse is not a result of individual choices or behaviour but its rooted in social and cultural norms that reinforce gender based power imbalance.

To do this we will:

- > Increase our engagement with communities by collaborating with partners to develop community-based awareness programs
- > Increase our engagement with young people to hear their voices, understand their challenges and support them to act
- > Implement a *Change That Lasts* model in the Vale of Glamorgan, working towards a whole systems approach to tackling VAWDASV
- > Ensure survivors voices are listened to, heard and opportunities are available to influence services, policy, and legislation
- > Inspire services to respect and understand the challenges survivors face in building a fulfilled life

We will know this is successful if:

- > Community participants tell us they understand the reasons behind VAWDASV
- > Community participants engage with volunteering opportunities and ambassador schemes
- > Young people tell us they understand the ingredients of a healthy, safe, and equal relationships, can set boundaries and use their voices to tell their stories
- > Survivors agree to being a supporter of Vale Domestic Abuse Services
- > Professionals can implement learning after participating in training



It was such an eye opener to hear about what survivors of domestic abuse face. The course helped me to understand how I can spot the signs and help. I would recommend





AMBITION 2 – RESPOND

Our ambition is to walk side by side with survivors and their children, deliver a *Change That Lasts* trauma informed, needs led, strengths-based approach that is responsive, relevant and protects survivors.

To do this we will:

- > Improve our reach across the Vale of Glamorgan, ensuring all survivors know where to access information and support
- > Ensure that survivors receive timely, relevant, and responsive information and guidance services
- > Ensure that services are inclusive and meet the needs of the clients, including those from marginalised communities, with mental health, substance use or other complex challenges
- > Ensure survivors have a safe space to talk, feel listened to, heard, and have space to act
- > Ensure survivors, who cannot stay in their own homes, have access to high quality refuge accommodation
- > Ensure that children and young people have access to high quality, trauma informed and age-appropriate services
- > Collaborate with partners to ensure survivors are protected and to develop and implement innovate approaches to providing services
- > Ensure survivors are supported the criminal, civil and family courts

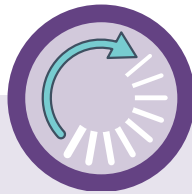
We will know if this is successful if:

- > Survivors and their families are safe, protected and can move forward with their lives
- > Survivors are confident to report incidents to the police
- > Survivors are confident pursuing justice through the criminal courts and obtaining orders through the civil courts
- > Survivors recognize their strengths and understand the options available to them and can make informed decisions
- > Survivors achieve positive outcomes
- > Survivors are able to access suitable, high quality refuge accommodation and are supported to find a suitable long term home
- > Survivors receive a service that meets Vale Domestic Abuse Services Support Charter
- > Survivors and their families are satisfied with the service they have received



Refuge... my world was upside down, it provided me with safety and from there everything else fell into place





AMBITION 3 – REBUILD

Our ambition is to stand shoulder to shoulder with survivors and enable survivors and their families have access to a range of options and opportunities that enable them to flourish and lead a happy, fulfilled life.

To do this we will:

- > Sustain and grow our therapeutic group work programs
- > Further develop our counselling services
- > Provide access to well-being and learning opportunities.
- > Provide opportunities for survivors to connect with other survivors, make friends and build networks
- > Ensure survivors are supported as a parent to enable positive relationships post separation
- > Connect survivors with opportunities within their communities

We will know if this is successful if:

- > Survivors understand the reasons why perpetrators harm and understand the power imbalance in abusive relationships
- > Survivors understand the ingredients to a healthy, safe, and equal relationship and have a strong support network
- > Survivors have greater understanding of their children's experiences and have improved relationships with their children
- > Survivors recognise their strengths, understand, and can implement boundaries, have improved emotional well-being
- > Survivors improve their wellbeing, skills, can tell their story with confidence and are using their voice to influence services, policy, and legislation
- > Survivors are satisfied with the services they receive
- > Survivors receive a service that meets Vale Domestic Abuse Services Support Charter



I'm glad to have done the course as it has made me more aware and mindful of behaviours and situations to look out for and/or avoid in future





AMBITION 4 – STRENGTHEN

Our ambition is to sustain and strengthen Vale Domestic Abuse Services ensuring survivors are at the heart of all our activities.

To do this we will:

- > Invest in our team to ensure they have the tools, knowledge, and skills to support survivors
- > Develop our portfolio of services in collaboration with survivors to ensure gaps in services and unmet needs are identified and actioned
- > Achieve recognition of a trusted high quality, trauma informed, strengths based and needs led qualifications
- > Improve our internal and external communications
- > Develop a volunteering programme that enables Vale Domestic Abuse Service to be open, transparent, dynamic, and flexible
- > Campaign, collaborate and raise awareness of the issues and improve our reach across the Vale of Glamorgan and beyond

We will know if this is successful if:

- > Our team are not afraid to learn from mistakes, want to increase their knowledge and obtain accredited qualifications
- > Our team feel happy and valued in their roles and want to stay with charity
- > We achieve Welsh Women's Aid Quality Support Standards
- > Our co-produced service portfolio increases to ensure the needs of survivors are met
- > Our supporter base is increased and volunteers are satisfied with their work and they achieve positive outcomes
- > We secure a more appropriate base within the community that enables survivors to make friends, learn new skills and rebuild their lives
- > Our trustees are passionate about their work, we are financially resourced and well managed, able to meet the needs of our charity



I am proud to work for Vale DAS and am excited to be part of a growing team, whereby we are expanding into new roles and projects. I feel that the work we do has a significant positive impact on those experiencing VAWDASV in the Vale and helps them on their journey to safety and recovery



Vale 

DOMESTIC ABUSE SERVICES
GWASANAETHAU CAM-DRIN DOMESTIG

Life can be different

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