

---

# VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, DOMESTIC ABUSE AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE RESEARCH NETWORK WALES

Annual Report: 2021-2022

---

Dr Sarah Wallace and Professor Emily Underwood-Lee

University of South Wales

January 2023



---

## INTRODUCTION









---

The VAWDASV Research Network Wales was initiated in Spring 2021 by the University of South Wales and launched on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2021 by the Minister for Social Justice, Jane Hutt MS, on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

### Aim

The VAWDASV Research Network aim is to facilitate *‘an inclusive research community for Wales that provides a safe, open forum to bring together those who are working towards an end to VAWDASV to set the future research agenda, foster collaboration and develop grant applications, undertake high quality research, and work towards the elimination of VAWDASV’.*

### Objectives

-  Determine/understand the research and practice priorities for Wales.
-  Identify gaps in VAWDASV research.
-  Share knowledge and expertise (including knowledge exchange).
-  ‘Test’ research ideas and gauge interest in collaboration.
-  Identify and respond to research council grant and commercial grant calls.
-  Co-produce research grant applications.
-  Develop future partnership working across the UK and internationally.
-  Annually report on progress against objectives.

The VAWDASV research network is governed by a core group which meets bi-monthly, with quarterly meetings held with wider network members, and quarterly newsletters: [March 2022](#), [July 2022](#), [November 2022](#). The VAWDASV Research Network published two reports in 2022 – the first was in partnership with the WG VAWDASV team and focussed on [VAWDASV Survivor Engagement Wales](#), and the second was an online consensus study to examine and co-produce the VAWDASV research priorities Wales: [VAWDASV: Setting Research Priorities for Wales](#).

At the time of writing, there are over 100 members representing organisations across health, social care, government, local authority, education, the third sector, policing and justice, and academia in Wales. We also have a growing membership representing organisations in England.

## **Aim of this report**

The following is the VAWDASV Research Network's first annual report for the period November 2021 – November 2022. It uses findings from a short online survey conducted with its members between 18<sup>th</sup> October 2022 and 21<sup>st</sup> November 2022 to report the impact of the research network since its inception.

---

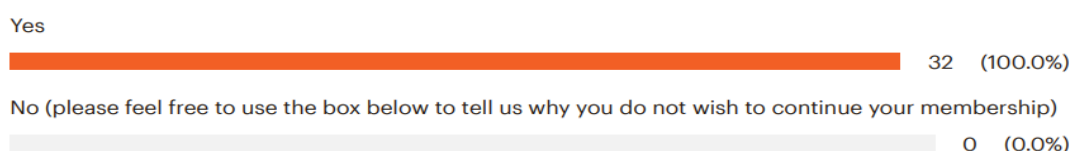
## FINDINGS

---

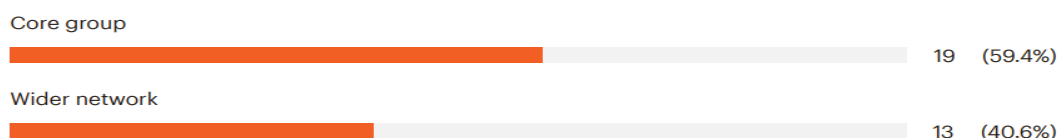
Thirty-two survey responses were received from sixty-nine members at that time (46% response rate). The survey included eight questions, which comprised a mixture of multiple choice and open text response. Any identifying information from responses has been omitted for anonymity.

### Q1. Do you wish to continue your membership of the VAWDASV Research Network Wales?

All respondents (100%) confirmed they wished to continue their membership.



### Q2. Would you like to be part of the core group (meeting every other month with additional working groups as and when required) or part of the wider membership (meeting every quarter plus occasional networking or project collaborations and events)?



### Q3. Thinking about your experience of the VAWDASV Research Network Wales, what has worked well?

Twenty-two responses were received to this open text question and a selection of responses are presented below<sup>1</sup>.

*Meetings, information sharing, events, research priorities.*

*The meetings have provided an inclusive space and an opportunity to stay connected with the VAWDASV sector in Wales (meetings are well coordinated). Work-streams have been well prioritised in this first year. The launch was a successful in-person event!*

*Opportunities to hear about the work being done and to connect with third/public sector partners as an academic.*

---

<sup>1</sup> A full list of all open text responses is provided in Appendix 1.

*I find the network to be really useful to stay informed about what is taking place in the field of VAWDASV.*

*Networking and relationship building between academics and specialist providers.*

**Figure 1: Key terms – What has worked well (n=22 responses)**



**Q4. Thinking about your experience of the VAWDASV Research Network Wales, what could be done better?**

Fifteen responses were received to this open text question and a selection of responses are presented below.

*We could pull together a little more - it's a lot of work for two people to manage and I still don't know all the group, and the times of day we meet is sometimes not an option to attend.*

*Personally, I would like to be able to give more time to supporting areas of work.*

*I would like to know more about how to collaborate with researchers and about opportunities for research funding.*

*More time to develop joint research in this field of study to support practice.*

*More presentations/awareness raising sessions on the work of different organisations/teams.*

Figure two: Key terms - What could be better (n=15 responses)



**Q5. Please state the top three things that the network has helped you achieve or ways it has made a difference.**

Twenty-two responses were received to this open text question and a selection of responses are presented below.

*Getting the survivor voice out there and the importance.*

*Meeting people from outside of the sector, being able to link up academic research and the experience of providers.*

*Informed me of the Violence Prevention Unit - I have used the resources from their work and signposted to their work in my teaching.*

*Further understanding of what people see as the key priorities for the VAWDASV sector.*

*I feel like I'm contributing to the direction of travel in Wales.*

Figure three: achievements and difference made (n=22 responses)



**Q6. In the last 12 months, have you developed any new collaborations as a result of the network?**



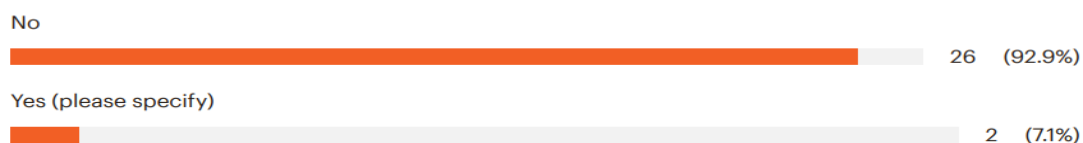
From seven 'yes' responses to questions 6, five members provided additional information:

*General awareness of what others are doing and put my PhD students in touch with others / potential collaboration projects (e.g., WG tender)*

*Working more closely with NSPCC*

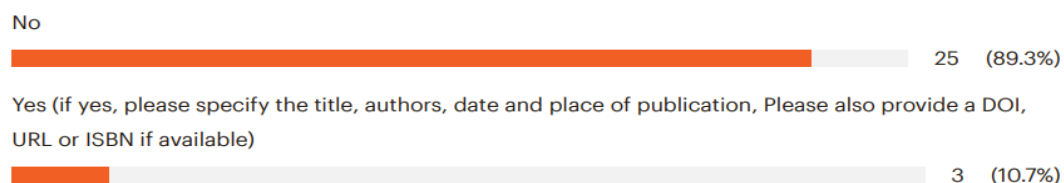
*As a result of [introductions] to members of the network, I have been able to invite expert practitioners to contribute to my new module 'Understanding VAWDASV'. [Two members] have taught workshops for my module, which has been immensely beneficial for my students*

**Q7. In the last 12 months, have you submitted any funding bids, successful or unsuccessful, directly related to the network?**



Two members advised of research proposals submitted to the Doctoral Training Partnership, and NIHR. In addition, a research grant application was submitted to Health and Care Research Wales. All submissions were unsuccessful.

**Q8. In the last 12 months, have you published anything directly related to the network or which might be of interest to network members?**



**Q9. Is there anything else that you would like to tell us about the network or the impact it has had for you?**

Eight responses were received to question 9, including one 'N/A' and a second confirming their renewal:

*Just great to collaborate a bit more effectively if we can strengthen that all it, could be amazing. Keep up the amazing hard work you're doing great.*

*I look forward to joining the group and share experiences, in addition to collaborative work and successful funding bids.*

*I think the network is fantastic but wish I was able to attend meetings regularly - it is unfortunate that my teaching commitments prevent me from being able to attend and contribute more.*

*Given me insight into research work and the process and procedures involved.*

*Just really glad and appreciative of its existence. I have myself experienced DA it is a way to try and give back to services that helped me by being part of research that improves our evidence base and so will support the services in developing and sustaining their work. I joined hoping to develop my own research in the area, and as I get more familiar with the groups and needs my confidence is growing to do so.*

*The first year of the network has proven very successful. I am looking forward to seeing what we achieve this year and assessing the impact on services and partners.*



---

## SUMMARY

---

In its first year the network has brought together over 100 practitioners and academics with an interest in VAWDASV through meetings, events, newsletters, and information sharing.

This has resulted in:

- 🌱 4 research funding bids;
- 🌱 Contribution to new curriculum content;
- 🌱 Increased understanding of VAWDASV;
- 🌱 Increased understanding of interdisciplinary approaches;
- 🌱 Increased collaboration between academia and practice; and
- 🌱 Increased cooperation within the sector.

In the coming year, continuing our progress towards our aim and objectives, we will capitalise on this work to:

- 🌱 Host in person networking events;
- 🌱 Increase the membership to include more representation from associated sectors such as criminal justice and health and social care;
- 🌱 Submit further funding bids and secure funding for at least one collaborative research project;
- 🌱 Have a demonstrable impact on policy and practice in the sector; and
- 🌱 Expand the membership across the UK.

---

## APPENDIX 1

---

### Open text responses by question

#### Thinking about your experience of the VAWDASV Research Network Wales, what has worked well?

*Hearing and sharing instrumental work as it is happening not when it's too late.*

*I have just joined the VAWDASV Research Network.*

*Emails that outline key research currently being undertaken.*

*Meetings, info sharing, event, research priorities.*

*Great to bring various individuals together.*

*The meetings have provided an inclusive space and an opportunity to stay connected with the VAWDASV sector in Wales (meetings are well coordinated) Work-streams have been well prioritised in this first year. The launch was a successful in-person event!*

*I can't comment- my ability to commit has been very restricted.*

*Networking and relationship building between academics and specialist providers.*

*It's been great to have the opportunity to hear from different members at the start of each meeting.*

*Unfortunately, I haven't been able to attend the meetings as often as I would like, due to teaching commitments, however, I find the network to be really useful to stay informed about what is taking place in the field of VAWDASV research. It has also been incredibly helpful for networking too.*

*Sharing of information and best practice.*

*Opportunities to hear about the work being done and to connect with third/pub sector partners as an academic.*

*Networking, up-to-date research.*

*I have only just joined!*

*I'm afraid that I haven't engaged that well with the Network this year but I think the emails that you send are informative and helpful, identifying relevant publications and funding opportunities.*

*It has kept me informed on what is happening across Wales and enabled me to share with colleagues.*

*Receiving lots of interesting info about pertinent research studies and projects and learning more about what others across [...] and the sector are working on in regard to VAWSADV.*

*I have particularly welcomed the recent coming together for the [name] tender as this is how I imagined the network would work. I have been made aware of things I wouldn't have without the group and have learned a lot from each of the meetings I've attended. I find it so useful to have representative from all the various 'groups' like service delivery, Public Health Wales, Welsh Government, and academics as well as victims/survivors.*

*I have not yet been able to attend any of the network meetings, but have enjoyed reading the updates and minutes, which has made me feel still involved.*

*Bringing everyone together.*

*Identification of key research priorities, collaborative working, sharing best practice and ideas. Meeting and getting to know other agencies and the potential for future partnership working.*

**Thinking about your experience of the VAWDASV Research Network Wales, what could be done better?**

*We could pull together a little more it's a lot of work for 2 people to manage and I still don't know all the group, and the times of day we meet is sometimes not an option to attend.*

*As above.*

*Just a shame I can't always make meetings :-{.*

*Creating opportunities for further networking e.g., some meetings being in-person. The newsletter and website has got great potential to develop as a platform for sharing our work. Personally - I would like to be able to give more time to supporting areas of work.*

*I would like to know more about how to collaborate with researchers and about opportunities for research funding.*

*It would be great if there were more events taking place.*

*To be honest I've struggled to attend but have still found being part of the network extremely beneficial.*

*I think it's great!*

*More time to develop joint research in this field of study to support practice.*

*n/a.*

*The first year has been a learning curve and I feel it is progressing well.*

*Nothing at this stage as it is a bedding in period and the website and resource share are in progress. I do think the website will be very useful when it is ready.*

*Get more buy in from Criminal Justice Services and Police. CJS are the primary perpetrator voice, so it would be good to have greater involvement from them.*

*More presentations/awareness raising sessions on the work of different organisations/teams.*

*N/A*

**Please state the top three things that the network has helped you achieve or ways it has made a difference.**

*Keep informed about issues, legislation, policy, and opportunities for joint working*

*Getting the survivor voice out there and the importance.*

*As above.*

*Kept me up to date with research in my field.*

*Updates from other orgs; Information on research happening; Sharing our organisations' research.*

*It has brought together core individuals to coalesce and highlight issues of DV.*

*Network, link up colleagues with similar interests / learn about what others are doing (share our own research).*

*Connectivity.*

*Being able to connect with other academics within [...] (e.g., supporting [events]); Being able to re-connect with the wider VAWDASV sector (support for my PhD); Making links between internal [...] "VAWDASV" work and the research network.*

*Meeting people from outside the sector, being able to link up academic research and the experience of providers.*

*Increased awareness of research activity and other organisations activities. It's all really helpful to keep us thinking about the research priorities that could support our programme of work.*

*Making new contacts Finding out about contemporary research.*

*Sharing up to date research; Sharing best practice; Mix of information.*

*I haven't engaged as well as I wanted because of diary clashes. But I've moved into a new role that is now not so focussed on VAWDASV and so for me it's made a big difference in reminding me of my purpose and thinking off ways I can still work on VAWDASV in my current role.*

*Networking; Awareness raising of current research and policy.*

*N/A*

*Shared good practice inform others of ongoing work kept focus on what works for survivors.*

*Learning more about the wider programmes linked to VAWG Meeting people connected to the topic that I might not otherwise have known about.*

*Made me better aware of services that I wasn't familiar with, [...] and which I have signposted students to. Informed me of the [...] – I have used the resources from their work and signposted to their work in my teaching in public health. Introduced me to researchers with similar interests and made me aware of all the excellent work that is taking place in Wales - made connections for research.*

*Feel like I'm contributing to the direction of travel in Wales.*

*Connections in other organisations, awareness of what other people deliver, research knowledge on how to deliver a Group Concept Mapping study.*

*Further understanding of additional services available to vulnerable people and how this can benefit our service users. Further understanding of what people see as the key priorities for the VAWDASV sector. Higher engagement with likeminded organisations and individuals who are able to share good practice and innovative ways of working.*

**In the last 12 months, have you developed any new collaborations as a result of the network?**

*I was introduced to the group by [...].*

*General awareness of what others are doing and put my PhD students in touch with others / potential collaboration projects (e.g., WG tender).*

*Working more closely with [...].*

*As a result of [introductions] to members of the network, I have been able to invite expert practitioners to contribute to my new module 'Understanding VAWDASV'. [Two members] have taught workshops for my module, which has been immensely beneficial for my students.*

*Whist not any outcomes yet I have enjoyed the [name] tender process.*

**In the last 12 months, have you submitted any funding bids, successful or unsuccessful, directly related to the network?"**

*We have submitted a PhD proposal to the DTP programme (unsuccessful), are working with FE colleges in Wales based on some WG funding.*

*Myself, [...] and [...] submitted a bid to undertake work related to peer-on-peer sexual abuse but it was unsuccessful. I can't remember the funding provider, sorry.*

**In the last 12 months, have you published anything directly related to the network or which might be of interest to network members?"**

*[responses to this question have been redacted to ensure anonymity]*

**Is there anything else that you would like to tell us about the network or the impact it has had for you?"**

*N/A.*

*Just great to collaborate a bit more effectively if we can strengthen that all could be amazing. Keep up the amazing hard work you're doing great.*

*I look forward to joining the group and share experiences, in addition to collaborative work and successful funding bids.*

*I think the network is fantastic but wish I was able to attend meetings regularly - it is unfortunate that my teaching commitments prevent me from being able to attend and contribute more.*

*Sorry I was sent the renewal email so have completed as I don't want to be missed off the emails! very much looking forward to being part of the group.*

*Given me insight into research work and the process and procedures involved.*

*Just really glad and appreciative of its existence. I have myself experienced DA, it is a way to try and give back to services that helped me by being part of research that improves our evidence base and so will support the services in developing and sustaining their work. I joined hoping to develop my own research in the area, and as I get more familiar with the groups and needs my confidence is growing to do so.*

*The first year of the network has proven very successful. I am looking forward to seeing what we achieve this year and assessing the impact on services and partners.*

Anyone with an interest in VAWDASV research can join the network by signing up here:  
<http://eepurl.com/h34gnz>

<https://vawdasv.wales/>

