



## **AGENDA ITEM: 12**

### **NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**17 March 2014**

### **ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND DOMESTIC ABUSE (WALES) BILL**

**Report by Dawn Docx, Deputy Chief Fire Officer**

#### **Purpose of Report**

- 1 To inform Members of the progression of the above Bill, its implications for the Fire and Rescue Authority and actions being taken to meet those responsibilities.

#### **Background**

- 2 In order to promote the aims of the above Bill, the Safer Communities Conference took place in Cardiff on 13 February hosted by the Chartered Institute for Housing. The main theme was the role housing providers have in tackling domestic abuse and sexual violence against women along with tackling anti-social behaviour.
- 3 The conference highlighted that violence against women (and men) and domestic abuse is widespread across all of Wales and the wider UK with it being reported as the largest single killer of women aged between 19 and 44. Victims of domestic abuse and violence on average undergo 35 attacks or events of abuse before first reporting it. Violence and abuse often co-exist along with other issues such as wider anti-social behaviour and poverty in areas such as financial, educational and health.

## **Information**

### **Introduction of the Bill**

- 4 Lesley Griffiths AM gave the opening Ministerial address and included the update on the progress of the Ending Violence Against Women and Domestic Abuse (Wales) Bill currently progressing through the National Assembly.
- 5 The Bill, which was consulted on at the end of 2012/start of 2013 and is due to be enacted in the summer of 2014, will hold new requirements for landlords, local authorities and partner organisations including the fire and rescue authorities.

### **Implications and Opportunities**

- 6 The Minister outlined the areas of interest and where the Bill will place new duties on organisations. These included the role of the leadership in an organisation - at all levels, raising awareness in the workplace for employees, training of all staff in the workplace for both personal and professional awareness and Information Sharing Protocols/Data Disclosure Agreements. All of these have implications for the FRA and its partners.
- 7 Information Sharing Protocols are now well developed in the Fire and Rescue Service alongside the Memorandums of Understanding which are under frequent review.
- 8 A significant number of our employees come into regular contact with members of the public, often in those people's own homes, in the course of their work. The provision of appropriate training and development as well as the creation and fine tuning of effective systems between organisations for sharing (and actioning) of relevant information will be essential.
- 9 The training and awareness raising provides an opportunity for an all-Wales approach and development of packages linked to Learn Pro (the e learning system that the Service uses as part of its training and development). There is also the opportunity to share this development, or at least the content of these packages with other partner agencies.

## **Actions**

- 10 On publication of the Bill the all-Wales Community Risk Reduction Committee will undertake a full review of it to produce a definitive list of implications and actions. These will include:
- a leadership led approach to support and implementation
  - review of organisation existing policy in line with the Bill
  - review of MOU and information sharing protocol/data disclosure agreements to ensure correct application in the light of the Bill
  - all-Wales People and Organisational Development (POD) Committee to produce the training and awareness package(s) for differing levels and need in the organisation
  - link with external partners to provide consistency in collaborative approaches across organisations as well as potentially access economies of scale in the production and procurement of generic materials.

## **Recommendations**

- 11 Members are asked to note the:
- (i) contents of the report and the timings associated with the Bill;
  - (ii) work that is progressing through the all-Wales Community Risk Reduction Committee and are aware of the implications for the Fire and Rescue Authority.