

WALES WITHOUT VIOLENCE

“You’ve given me the courage to challenge how boys treat girls”

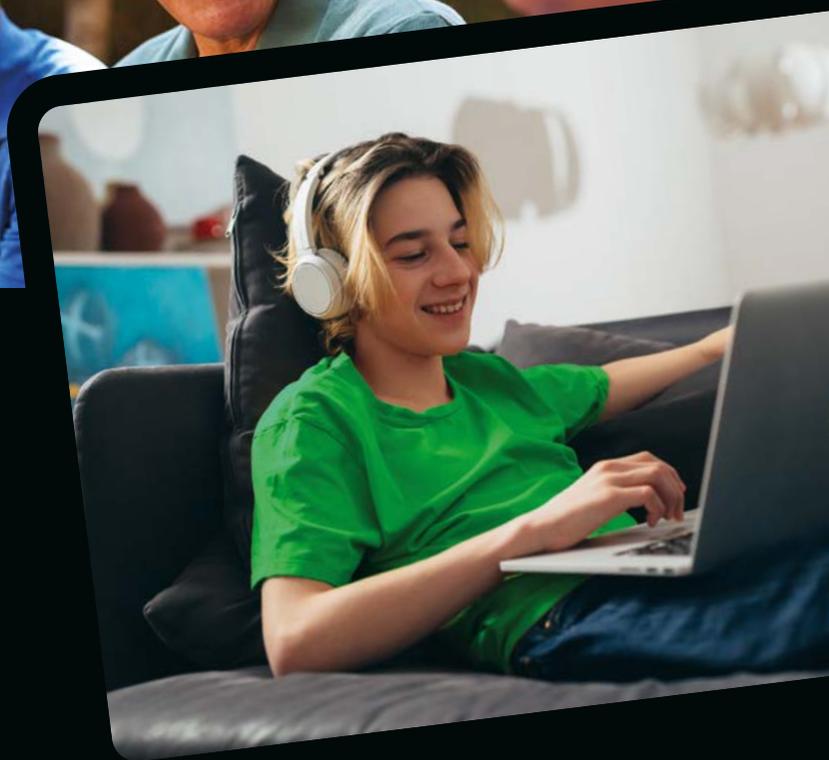
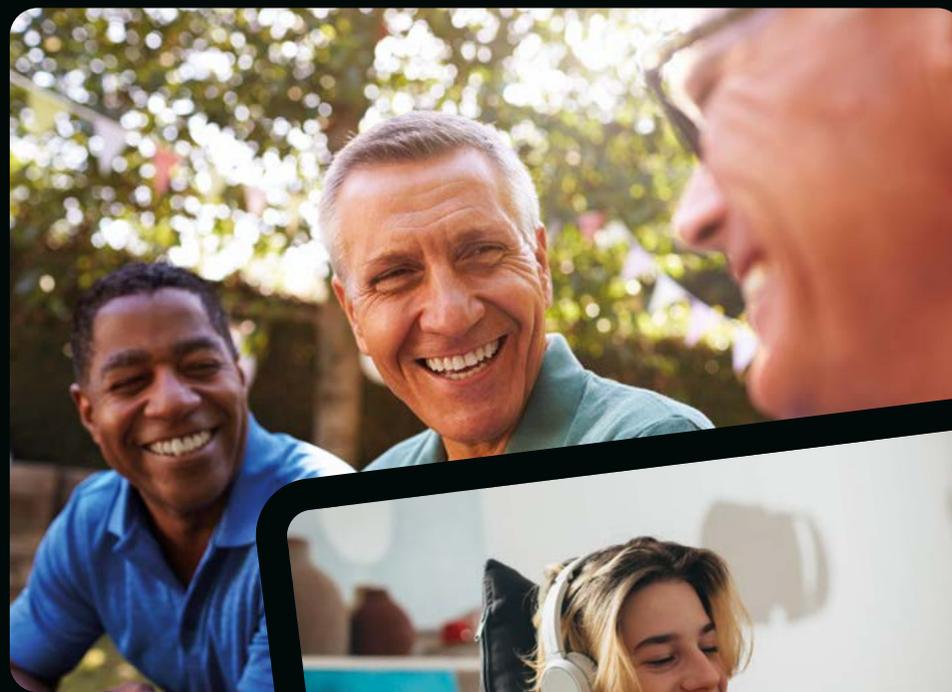
Engaging men and boys in violence prevention:

Key Findings from ‘Test and Learn’ Projects in Wales

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Violence Prevention Unit





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About the Wales Violence Prevention Unit

Established in 2019 through the Home Office Violence Reduction Unit fund, the Wales Violence Prevention Unit is a partnership between the South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner, Public Health Wales, and South Wales Police. Each organisation contributes funding, expertise, and resources to achieve the joint ambition of preventing violence through a public health approach. To do this, the core team work closely with over 30 multisectoral organisations, including health, policing, education, local authorities, governments, and the third sector, supporting a whole-system approach to preventing violence in Wales.

Commissioning interventions, delivering research, analysing data, conducting evaluations, leading campaigns, and evolving policing practice are all key areas of the Wales Violence Prevention Unit's work. So too is its commitment to bringing partners together to ensure a coordinated approach to violence prevention, advocating for co-designed solutions to violence, both between organisations and with communities.

About Plan International UK

Plan International is a global children's charity striving for an equal world. One where every child can reach their full potential.

Poverty, violence, and discrimination still hold back millions of children around the world. We work across more than 80 countries to build a future where every child is safe and receives an education.

But we don't do it alone. To create lasting change, we work together with children, local communities, partners, and our supporters who believe a better future is possible.



Introduction

This report is part of a toolkit for practitioners to support the engagement of men and boys, in violence prevention programmes.

The toolkit uses an evidence-informed approach to bring together learning from the academic evidence base, as well as the views and expertise of practitioners working to prevent violence in Wales. Overall, it provides a range of accessible information for understanding, supporting, and critically assessing the role that men and boys can play in violence prevention.

This report explores the key findings from eight 'test and learn' projects in Wales, which were delivered during the summer of 2023 by Plan International UK, with funding from the Moondance Foundation. These projects aimed to engage boys and young men with interventions that may help in reducing violence against women, domestic abuse, and sexual violence (VAWDASV).



Wales Without Violence

In April 2023, the Wales Violence Prevention Unit (VPU) launched 'Wales Without Violence: a shared framework for the prevention of violence among children and young people' (Snowdon et al., 2023). This Framework sets out an ambitious vision for Wales in which children and young people feel safe to be themselves and to live their lives free from violence and the threat of violence.

The VPU is committed to developing an evidence-based approach to violence prevention in which we draw upon the scientific evidence of 'what works' to prevent violence, as well as drawing upon the expertise and experience of practitioners and experts in Wales, including children and young people themselves.

Background

Men and boys have a vital role in ending violence. In recent years, efforts to engage men and boys in violence prevention have grown rapidly across the globe: from policy and legislation, to campaigns, educational programmes, and advocacy work.

However, this is a relatively new trend. Historically, initiatives to prevent violence (particularly gender-based violence), often presented violence as a “women’s issue” and focused on teaching women and girls to “protect” themselves, largely neglecting the role of men and boys as allies and change makers (Flood, 2019).

Whilst work to support and empower victims of violence is of critical importance, efforts to prevent violence before it occurs (primary prevention) must engage with people of all genders, including men and boys. There is a growing evidence base which supports efforts to prevent violence occurring. Interventions may focus on individual behaviour change, supporting skills for healthy relationships, consent, active bystandership, or engaging participants in critically challenging harmful gender norms (Addis and Snowdon, 2021).

Programming to engage men and boys through a gender transformative approach encourages participants to critically reflect on the power dynamic between different genders. This approach recognises that masculinities are socially constructed gender norms which can change over time and are not equivalent to men. These gendered social norms can play an important role in upholding male privilege, dominance, and control, sometimes through the use, or threat of, violence (Connell, 2005).

As such, violence prevention efforts may seek to engage men and boys in critically assessing and deconstructing these harmful social norms and exploring how individuals, peer groups, and communities can play a positive role in challenging and reconstructing harmful social norms. Such programmes may also recognise, through a trauma-informed approach, that men and boys may have lived-experience of violence, which they may be replicating and/or reinforcing. Acknowledging this can enable a compassionate and constructive conversation about the role of men and boys as change-makers and allies.



The rationale to engage men and boys in violence prevention emphasised four elements:

- 1) Any work to prevent violence must engage men and boys, because it is frequently (but not exclusively) men who enact violence.
- 2) Harmful constructions of masculinity and related social norms and attitudes can encourage violent behaviour.
- 3) Men and boys have a positive and constructive role to play in preventing violence.
- 4) Through a trauma-informed approach, we can recognise that many boys and men have lived-experience of harmful gender norms, and even violence. Acknowledging this enables a compassionate and constructive conversation about the role of men and boys as change-makers, allies and ambassadors.

Test and Learn Projects

During the summer of 2023, Plan International UK funded eight 'test and learn' projects across Wales to deliver interventions and activities with boys and young men that may help in reducing VAWDASV. Overall, 84 children and young people were engaged in the test and learn projects, with 50 sessions being delivered between the organisations involved.



Our Aims

The aim of the test and learn projects was to allow organisations the space to explore, experiment, and reflect on effective ways to engage with boys and young men.

The projects took place across a four-month period. All the projects participated in facilitator training with Plan International UK and Beyond Equality and took part in four Community of Practice (CoP) sessions. Four community of practice sessions were held on a monthly basis. These allowed space for the projects to come together, learn from each other, explore challenges and successes, and feel like part of a learning community.

The projects:

- Worked with boys and young men between the ages of 13 and 25.
- Consisted of between 6 and 12 sessions.
- Followed a clear, structured plan of activities.
- Were delivered by appropriately qualified and experienced staff.
- Involved an element of co-design or co-production with young people.

The projects were asked to focus on some or all the following areas:

- Developing a positive sense of identity as a boy/young man.
- Challenging harmful gender and social norms.
- Exploring masculinity.
- Creating safer, more equitable communities.
- Raising awareness of gender-based violence and its impacts.
- Having/developing respectful and healthy relationships.

The eight projects were within the following organisations: Blwm, Cardiff YMCA, Inspire Training Swansea, Swansea MAD (Make A Difference), Media Academy Cymru, Safer Swansea Partnership, Safer Wales, and Youth Cymru.



Beyond Equality is disrupting harmful norms and creating possibilities for positive change, working with men and boys towards gender equality, inclusive communities, and healthier relationships. Beyond Equality run equality, inclusion and masculinities workshops with men and boys in schools, universities and workplaces.

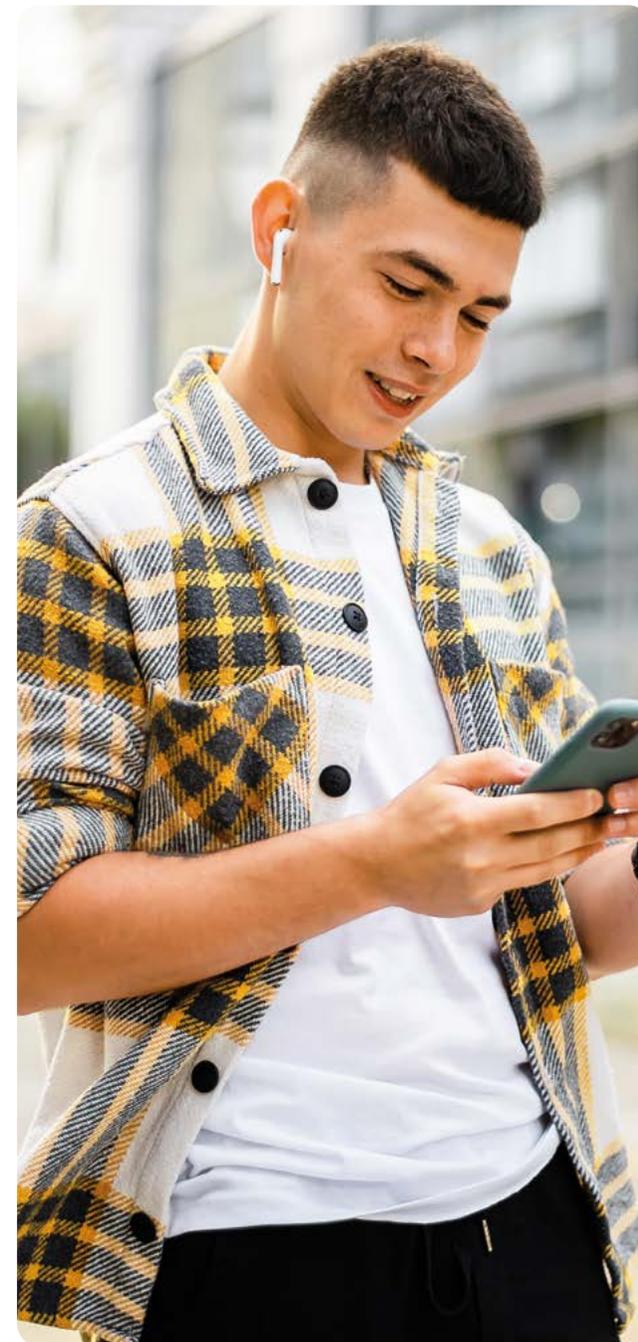
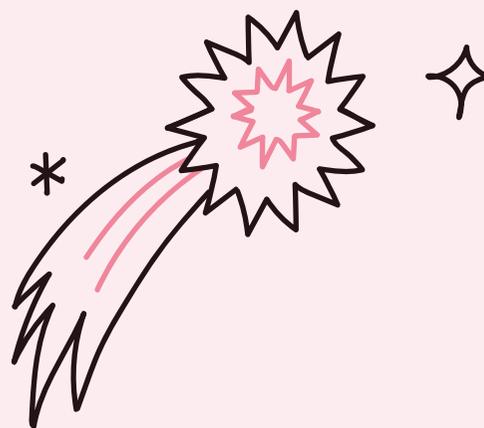


Blŵm

Cwmni Blŵm is a community interest company that has been set up to support children and young people in their transition into and through adolescence in rural areas of Mid-Wales. Their wellbeing-educational sessions offer young people the opportunity to socialise in a safe space, build friendships, as well as share and receive support from their peers and mentors.

Blŵm worked in collaboration with Ysgol Bro Hyddgen to deliver creative outdoor sessions to boys in Year 9, within the school timetable. Over the course of six weeks, an average of 23 boys were engaged in each session of the test and learn project, and they had the opportunity to participate in activities and exercises such as sharing circles, group discussion, whittling/woodwork, yoga, walking, games, and exercises exploring interpersonal dynamics whilst sitting around a fire together. Alongside these activities, facilitators opened discussion and reflective space on themes such as exploring masculinity, challenging gender stereotypes, and cultivating healthy, respectful relationships. By doing this in a relaxed setting, whilst engaging in interesting activities in the outdoors, these topics were more accessible for boys to engage with and enjoy.

In the sixth session, the facilitators took the group on a small hike, which involved going up a large hill to visit a lake. Here, they had the opportunity to reflect on their process and what they had learned during the programme. The programme ended with a closing ritual where each boy could step forward in the circle and name what kind of person they wanted to be in the world.



Cardiff YMCA

YMCA Cardiff Group is part of the largest youth charity in the world; their aim is to make a positive difference within the communities they work in. Their vision is of an inclusive movement, transforming communities so that all young people can belong, contribute, and thrive.

YMCA Cardiff Group has had a keen interest and demand for supporting boys, much like the support provided for girls through the Y-Girls mentoring project and Girls' Group. As part of the Healthy Relationship Service, there was an increase in referrals received in relation to boys displaying misogynistic behaviour, toxic masculinity traits, inappropriate language towards women and girls, and showing supportive views of misogynistic influencers. This issue was tackled by delivering sessions in schools which were well received and resulted in a further influx of requests from other schools.

The test and learn project allowed YMCA Cardiff Group to develop this work and provide targeted support to further explore these issues. Engaging boys in a different way using youth club style sessions run by the Healthy Relationship Service alongside external providers focusing on their specialist topics including masculine culture in sport, music, crime, cooking, and mental health awareness.

The project aimed to ensure boys understood the issues and felt motivated to take action. This was achieved through a series of workshops. This learning was then supported by provisions such as Ministry of Life, Up in Smoke Kitchen, Cardiff City Football Foundation, Hurts So Good, Jacob Abraham Foundation, and Fearless.

An average of seven boys were engaged in each session delivered by YMCA Cardiff Group. Through creative methods, they held discussions around 'de-normalising' violence, masculine stereotypes in sport, cooking, and art, creating a safe space to discuss mental health, coercive control, and harassment in relationships, and exploring language in music and the use of music as an emotional outlet. The boys created pieces of art and music and had discussions that allowed them to explore and adapt their thinking in a safe and supportive environment.



Inspire Training (Swansea)

INSPIRE training (GE) ltd has been set up to offer young men the opportunity to learn in a fun and relaxed atmosphere, through innovative and passionate delivery, using an empathetic approach.

They delivered a residential experience to a select group of young men currently attending Inspire Training on the Jobs Growth Wales Plus programme. An average of six young men were engaged in each session. As the learners of Inspire Training were not in education, employment, or training, and generally came from disadvantaged backgrounds, having dealt with hardships, including independent living from a young age. During this residential, they delivered internal and external workshops exploring the themes of developing a positive sense of identity as a young man, challenging harmful gender and social norms, exploring masculinity, creating safer, more equitable communities, raising awareness of gender-based violence, and respectful & healthy relationships. As well as this, the project engaged the participants with extracurricular activities. In similar projects they have run in the past, they have found that doing these activities breaks down barriers, allows a rapport to build, and supports an open/honest conversation during workshops.

Swansea MAD – Make A Difference

Swansea MAD is a grassroots, anti-poverty, anti-racist, pro-equality, inclusive youth and community charity, intolerant of discrimination and injustice. Driven by the advancement of social justice and equity, they work with children, young people, and communities who are marginalised by systemic oppression to dismantle structures which support discrimination.

Swansea MAD planned, facilitated, and evaluated a series of eight creative workshops with an average of four boys (ages 13–15) per session, who attend the Pentrehafod Alternative Curriculum Education (PACE) Unit at Pentrehafod School in Swansea. The workshops used DJing and music production to provide a creative and empowering environment for boys to express themselves and explore topics including identity, masculinity, gender stereotypes and pressures, relationships, communities, and online misogyny.



Media Academy Cymru (MAC)

MAC was created in 2010 and has since been at the forefront in Wales of supporting children and young people when they have needed somewhere safe to turn. MAC is internationally known for its work in diverting children and young people from the criminal justice system, having created both 10-17 and 18-25 triage diversion programmes in Wales where previously there were none. To date, they have diverted over 10,000 children and young people away from the criminal justice system.

MAC piloted an eight-week programme working 1:1 with boys and young men aged 10-18 who are immersing themselves in manosphere¹ rhetoric with the inability to adopt critical thinking skills to process the information that they are receiving. The overall aim was to create a pilot programme in Cardiff engaging 10-12 boys and young men via a developmental groupwork methodology and intensive mentoring which was supported by significant research suggesting that this is an evidence-based approach to challenge toxic masculinity. MAC delivered the sessions to a total of four boys and young men during the time it was in operation.

Safer Swansea Partnership

Safer Swansea Partnership is made up of agencies who work together to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour in Swansea. Participants for this project were secondary school aged boys between 13 and 15 years old, from all areas of Swansea. An average of seven participants took part in each session delivered by Safer Swansea Partnership. They took part in a combination of online sessions and in-person workshops including inputs from guest speakers and practical tasks/activities throughout the project.

Session one was the project planning session where the boys worked with staff to set the agenda for the project and plan exactly what they wanted the following sessions to look like. There were six boy-led, adult facilitated sessions with further opportunities for the workers leading the project to attend individual schools as and when needed. Creative/practical outputs were produced during the project (a positive, lasting resource that can be shared).

A positive outcome was the boys participating offered to work as 'ambassadors' in their link primary schools to share their newly acquired knowledge with their younger peers as part of an assembly where they might also share some of the workshop activities the year 5/6 pupils.

¹ The manosphere is a network of online men's communities against the empowerment of women and who promote anti-feminist and sexist beliefs. They blame women and feminists for the problems experienced by society.



Safer Wales

Safer Wales delivered sessions targeted at young men involved with or vulnerable to involvement with the criminal justice system. The following groups were targeted:

Young men who accessed their Young Adult Hub who have left prison. This included young men who have suffered trauma including growing up with gender-based violence which may influence their behaviors.

Young men who were in the secure estate. Safer Wales worked with Parc Prison and supported them through the Young Adult Hub.

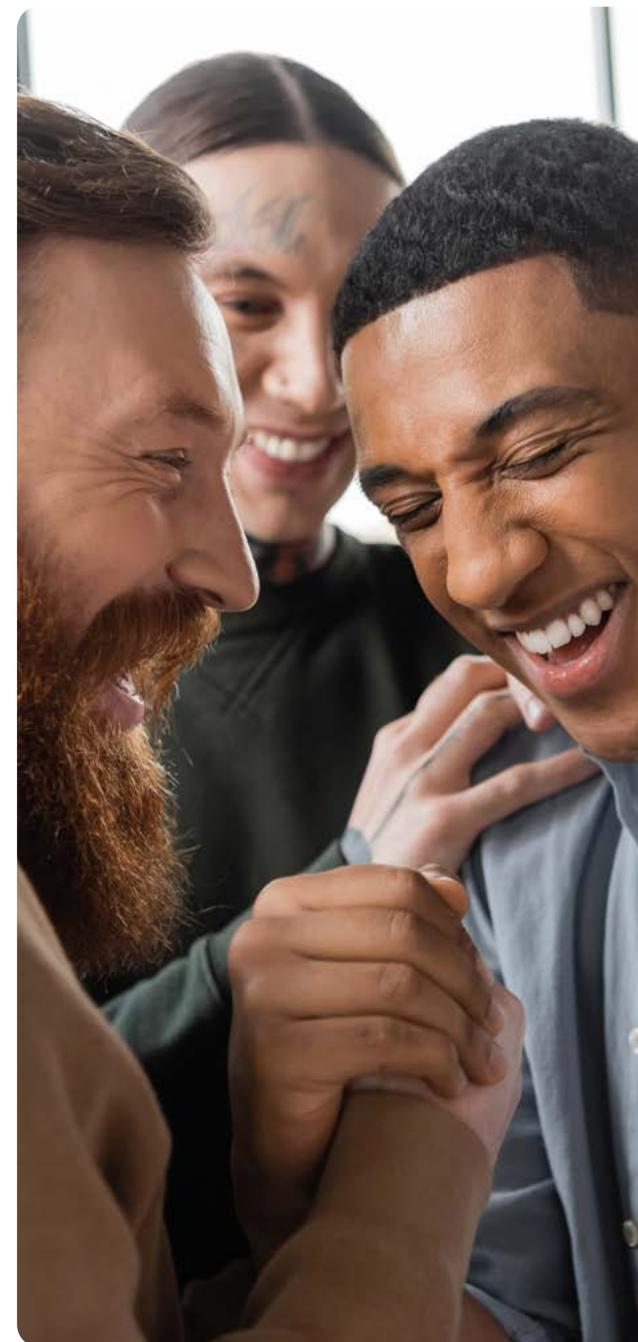
They worked with an average of five young men (between 18 years and 25 years) over four sessions.

During the sessions, they explored some of the following: developing a positive sense of identity as a young man, challenging harmful gender and social norms, exploring how they have entered the criminal justice system, creating safer, more equitable communities, raising awareness of gender-based violence, and respectful and healthy relationships. Work with Radio Cardiff provides an opportunity for young men to be involved with the radio or create podcasts/ interviews around exploring masculinity and connecting to their communities.

Youth Cymru

Youth Cymru is a national youth work organisation with over 85 years' experience of delivering and supporting youth work in Wales. They have extensive expertise and experience of planning, supporting, and facilitating projects, workshops, and activities with, and for, young people, youth workers, and youth organisations. They work with 14 - 17-year-old young men and boys bringing together two groups to work in North and South Wales.

Youth Cymru used a small-group discussion approach, each group was made up of approximately 13 young men and boys, each accessing the 6x3 hour sessions.



Method

Facilitators from the eight test and learn projects were invited to take part in a focus group discussion to explore the key learning that had arisen from the projects. The focus group discussions were centred around what the facilitators found had worked well, and what barriers they had faced.

Focus group participants (n=8) were also asked to reflect on some of the key themes that emerged from a literature review (Walker et al., 2024a) and mapping survey of violence prevention projects in Wales (Walker et al., 2024b), as well as from feedback forms which project coordinators completed during project delivery. The focus group agenda can be found in Appendix A.

It is important to note that all focus group attendees were from a youth work background. It is possible that professionals from a different background may have different experiences of working with men and boys and would encounter different enablers and barriers to engagement with this group. This is an area future research could explore.

Focus group feedback was analysed using content analysis, highlighting similarities and differences in the experiences of the professionals who participated. Findings are written in the same structure as the focus groups, following the interview schedule.

This work was approved by Public Health Wales Research and Development Department. The Department deemed this work as 'non-research', and therefore it did not require ethical permissions.



Findings

What has promoted engagement with men and boys in violence prevention?

There was general consensus among the focus group participants about the enablers for engaging men and boys in violence prevention programming. The discussion ranged from the importance of providing safe and accessible spaces for sessions to take place, through to using the right language, case studies, and role models, to using a variety of delivery styles.

When asked to rank some of these enablers from most influential to least influential, attendees felt that offering safe and accessible spaces for sessions to take place was the most influential enabler to engaging men and boys in violence prevention.

What do you think are the most influential enablers to engaging men and boys in violence prevention?

Most Influential

Offering safe and accessible spaces for sessions to take place.

Taking a trauma informed and person centered approach.

Using positive and empowering language.

Having relatable staff and the right role models.

Using relatable messages and scenarios.

Using a variety of delivery styles.

Multiagency working.

Least Influential

Focus group attendees also felt that some men and boys needed an incentive to take part in the programme. The focus group felt that participants could not be incentivised by the impact this would have over their communities. Instead, programme participants need to be motivated by things that are directly beneficial to themselves, like food or activities.

It is worth noting the test and learn groups worked with different audiences, the majority of the participants were mandated to be there because the project was happening as part of the school day, or the young men were in custody.

Consistent with the literature review, projects said they did feel that gender of the facilitator/ staff was important, but some reflected that men and boys respond better to working with women. In the opinion of some group members, when working with women, participants offered unfiltered opinions, and were able to speak their mind more freely which allowed them more scope to explore different topics. When working with a man, some participants seemed intimidated and unable to express their opinions. This suggests that having facilitators of different genders could be an important factor in supporting engagement with men and boys, some of whom may engage more effectively with different facilitators and styles.

Allowing participants to take part in activities while they engage in the initiative can reap many benefits. These activities can range from cooking, to music, sports, and art. Activities can break down gendered stereotypes around participation, build relationships between the attendees and the facilitators, offer informal environments for difficult conversations to take place, and boost self-confidence.

If programme participants have confidence and feel safe, they will feel more able to take part in conversations and share their opinions. It can take time to build a sense of safety and develop confidence, which can be aided by identifying some common ground between participants and facilitators.



What difficulties have been encountered when engaging men and boys in violence prevention?

The focus group attendees were asked to explore difficulties that they had encountered in engaging men and boys in the test and learn projects. When asked to rank some of these barriers from most influential to least influential, attendees felt that fear of repercussions was the most influential barrier to engaging men and boys in violence prevention.



What do you think are the most influential barriers to engaging men and boys in violence prevention?

Most Influential

Fear of repercussions.

Unreliability of scenarios and messages being used.

Negative, accusatory language.

Unsupportive networks.

Short-termism of funding programmes.

Unmet needs being/remaining unaddressed.

Unbalanced groups.

Trying to engage at the wrong time for that man/boy.

Internal processed (e.g. recruitment or staffing)

Inflexibility of sessions.

Least Influential

There were many practical barriers that the focus group attendees explained hindered their ability to engage men and boys in violence prevention activities (e.g., getting the time of the sessions right). For example, if school-based, the last lesson on a Friday is not an optimum time to generate engagement. Similarly, only offering initiatives during the work hours of 9am – 5pm can hinder engagement, as men and boys may be in school or in work during these times. Only offering the initiative at a certain time of year (for example, summer school holidays) can also result in low attendance and engagement numbers.

The location of the programme needs careful consideration. It needs to be accessible, and in an area where participants feel safe. The group reflected that some programme participants can be reluctant to be ‘out of area’ for fear of their own safety. Utilising buildings that are familiar can help overcome this. Staff also need to feel safe if the location is away from their usual base.

Transport to and from the programme can also be a barrier, not only the cost associated with public transport, but also the safety of participants when using public transport. Some initiatives have offered to run a mini-bus service to overcome this, but that requires additional staff and resources, which are not always readily available.

The focus group attendees spoke about misogynistic social media influencers, and how there needs to be a consistent approach to counteracting this type of harmful messaging. For example, some schools offer immediate detention to anyone displaying agreement with misogynistic beliefs, while others use it as a learning opportunity to explore and discuss such topics. There needs to be a consistent and evidence-based approach to addressing this.

Similarly, being able to discuss these topics ‘in real time’ can help engage with men and boys. Using historical examples can often result in boredom and unrelatability. However, keeping up with the latest news and online trends can be challenging for the staff who work with men and boys, and they can often be met with backlash when there is a disparity in knowledge or awareness from either side.



What wider elements have helped or hindered engaging men and boys in violence prevention programmes?

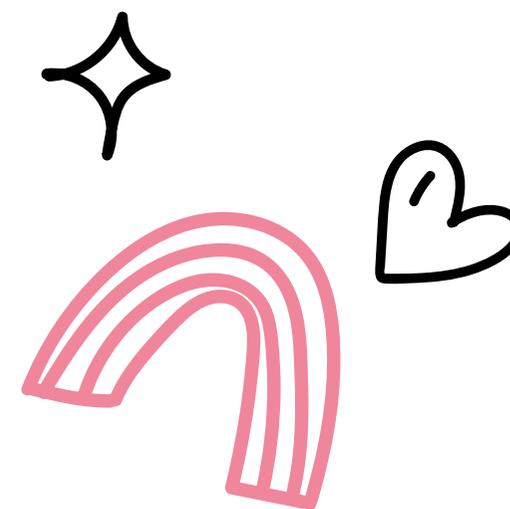
Whilst not specific to engaging men and boys, the focus group attendees spoke at length about the difficulties they have faced in trying to deliver violence prevention programmes. The most significant of these was relating to funding. Short term funding programmes often don't allow sufficient time for the programme to be effectively set up. It does not allow for advertising of the service, staff recruitment, staff training, implementing referral processes, and presents challenges for onward referral of participants who need ongoing support. Whilst the test and learn projects were specifically set up to develop and improve understanding about approaches to engage men and boys - achieving longer term sustainable funding is a key challenge for future programme development.

Focus group attendees felt that men and boys generally understood what the programmes were aiming to achieve, but some programmes reported difficulties when trying to get other professionals to understand the service and refer into it. Improving multi-agency communication and working to improve understanding of service delivery could be an important opportunity for future programmes.

On this theme, the group discussed how competitive funding calls can deter services from collaborative efforts, which can result in similar projects running in close proximity, yet in silos as the funding does not allow these services to work together. The co-ordination of services would decrease demand on some services and allow specialisation in certain aspects of violence prevention. The focus group attendees welcomed the idea of collaborating to compare experiences of delivering the same programme in different areas, with potentially different groups of men and boys, with different social norms and demographics.

Participants discussed how funders can often specify that work should be targeted at either men and boys, or women and girls. As such, there are very few services or expertise around working with children and young people who are gender diverse, including people who identify as non-binary or transgender. It was reflected that when services are working with gender diverse people, they often work on a 1:1 basis as they feel that it would not be safe for them to be in a group with cis men or women.

Focus group attendees felt that there was a gap in service provision for those of university age. Most services are either for those aged under 18, or those 25 and above. There is a lack of services for those aged 18 to 24. It was felt that universities could potentially provide more violence prevention initiatives, but that funders also need to consider specific bids for programmes that would target this age group.



Reflections from Plan International UK

“It was useful for us to have oversight of a range of different project approaches and also to see that the amount of funding awarded, the size and experience of the organisation did not directly correlate to the success of project delivery. We found that some of the smaller or less established organisations were able to be more agile and adaptable to accommodate the test and learn projects.

Enabling collaboration and creating a sense of community between the different organisations who are all working on addressing the same, or similar topics, was very beneficial.

The community of practice session reflections provided by each project drew out valuable opportunities for learning and supporting one another. The community of practice sessions allowed facilitators to share and reflect on challenges, whilst obtaining support from others to address and overcome their difficulties. Being able to share what was working well and share engagement and facilitation tips was helpful in influencing practice”.

 **Anne-Marie Lawrence**
Wales Development Manager

“It’s really good how these projects are structured. It’s great to be a part of. You weren’t just given the funding and told to get on with it. Bringing the projects together, as a group, was so helpful, so was the training we received.”

“More work would be helpful for facilitators who are doing this work with young people for us, as professionals, to go through this work ourselves and learn about what conditions or influences we are carrying as adults. We need to learn about ourselves, how to use resources available and understand our own perspectives and points of view. Personal enquiry about what is going on for me was helpful - am I being a role model?”

 **Facilitors**
Test and Learn Projects

“We have learnt that, by having a designated space for boys to express themselves, to learn and meet others from outside their initial communities, we are able to offer alternative thoughts and provide a holistic support programme for each boy. We have begun to see how others are keen to engage with this work and topic, and hope, with further funding, we are able to continue the success of this summer.”

“The overall result was very positive as the boys and young men started to change how they thought about their gender and how they treated others.”

Summary of findings

Based on the focus group findings above, it is suggested that the following may help promote engagement with VAWDASV violence prevention programmes for young men and boys living in Wales:

Offering safe and accessible spaces for sessions to take place

Taking a trauma informed and person-centred approach

Recognising that some of the young men and boys may have additional needs that need to be addressed, for example, substance misuse or lack of housing

Using positive and empowering language, building on any pre-existing skills

Having relatable messages and scenarios in any advertisements or conversation-starting examples

Using a variety of delivery styles

Using buildings that are accessible, familiar, and safe for the young men, boys, and staff members

Offering incentives to take part (like a meal or taking part in activities)

Having facilitators of different genders

Using activities to build relationships, break down gendered stereotypes and offer informal environments to potentially have difficult conversations

Recognising that the young men and boys may have a fear of the repercussions that they may face for taking part in VAWDASV prevention programmes

Understanding that the young men and boys may not have supportive networks of family, friends, and other trusted adults

Ensuring the groups are balanced so that every young man and boy can engage equally, without a dominant personality overshadowing them

Offer flexibility in the design of the sessions. For example, on the weekend or in the evenings. They should not run on a strict 9-5, Monday to Friday

If possible, offer transport to and from the programme venue for the young men and boys. This transport should make them feel safe and be flexible to their needs



Conclusion

During the summer of 2023, Plan International UK funded eight ‘test and learn’ projects across Wales to deliver interventions and activities with boys and young men that may help in reducing VAWDASV.

This report explores feedback received from the test and learn projects through a focus group which explored what they felt had worked well, and what barriers they had faced when engaging boys and young men in violence against women prevention activities.

Consistent with findings from a literature review (Walker et al., 2024a) and mapping survey of violence prevention projects in Wales (Walker et al., 2024b), conducted by the same research team, the focus group determined that the most influential enablers for engaging with boys and men was offering safe spaces for sessions to take place, taking a trauma-informed approach, and using positive and empowering language. The focus group attendees noted that boys and young men are often deterred from violence prevention activities due to a fear of repercussions, negative and accusatory language being used, and unrelatability of the scenarios and messages being used in engagement materials.

Funding was seen to be an influential factor in programme development, as short-term funding can hinder recruitment and engagement. Similarly, funding bids often discourage collaboration between organisations, and stipulate that certain groups be targeted, rather than allowing community-based organisations to meet the needs of the community within which they operate.



Way Forward

Plan International UK continue to explore work on the prevention of gender-based violence and supporting organisations in the sector.

Since the test and learn projects, Plan International UK have collaborated with She Is Not Your Rehab to deliver a series of workshops across Wales with professionals, on ‘how to do the work’. With support from Welsh Government’s Taith programme, the Moondance Foundation, North Wales Serious Violence Together fund, and Wales Violence Prevention Unit, 70 professionals in Wales took part in an interactive workshop to create meaningful conversations about domestic violence prevention. Professionals were encouraged to share key learnings with their organisations and reflect on how they can change and challenge working practices to benefit those that they support in Welsh communities.

She Is Not Your Rehab also delivered several workshops with boys aged 14-18. These events had a deep impact on many of the boys in the audience, and the facilitator was inundated with messages from boys who connected with his story:

“I learnt a lot about how I can be better towards girls this morning. You’ve given me the courage to speak up more around societal norms and challenge how boys treat girls”.

Plan International are also working with children, young people, and professionals to co-create a ‘vision for Wales’ to help shape how Wales could meet ambitions set out in its VAWDASV strategy and the Wales Without Violence Framework to create safer, more equal communities for girls and our future generations.

In 2025, Plan International UK and She is Not Your Rehab will collaborate to launch a joint resource aimed at professionals who support children and young people. The resource will allow professionals to be better equipped to create environments where young people feel safe to open up about their experiences and discuss issues relating to gender-based violence.



She is Not Your Rehab is a global anti-violence movement founded in New Zealand, created to address and dismantle cycles of intergenerational trauma, violence and abuse, by promoting safe relationships and providing support for individuals and communities.

The Wales VPU will continue to promote the implementation of a public health approach to violence prevention through the Wales Without Violence Framework.

As part of the implementation of the Framework, the VPU will support partners to understand the evidence base for violence prevention as well as evaluating the implementation and impact of violence prevention programmes. Alongside this report, a mapping report (Walker et al., 2024b) will be published which explores the landscape of programmes in Wales which seek to engage men and boys in violence prevention. These reports will support partners to deliver interventions which engage men and boys in violence prevention, thus contributing to the evidence base for this type of programming in Wales.

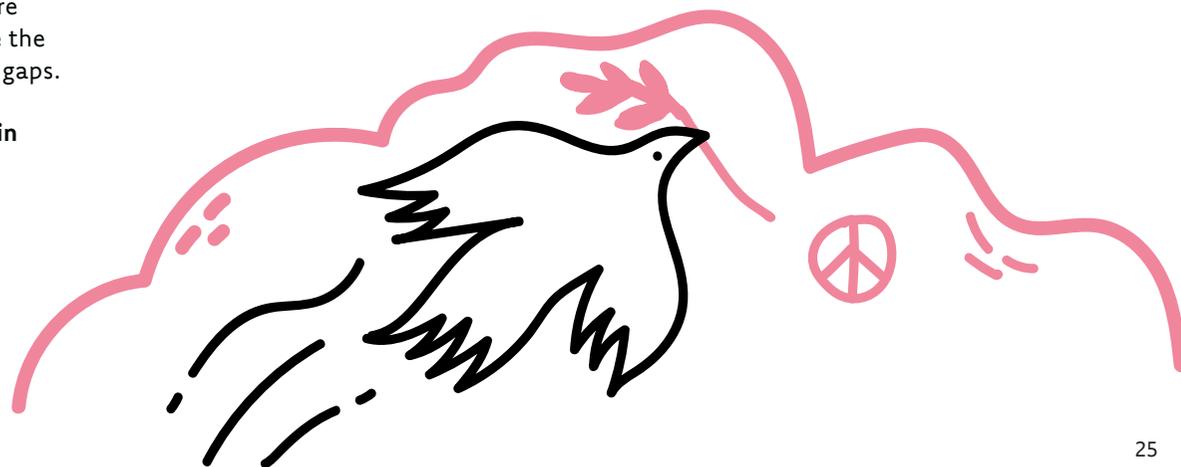
References

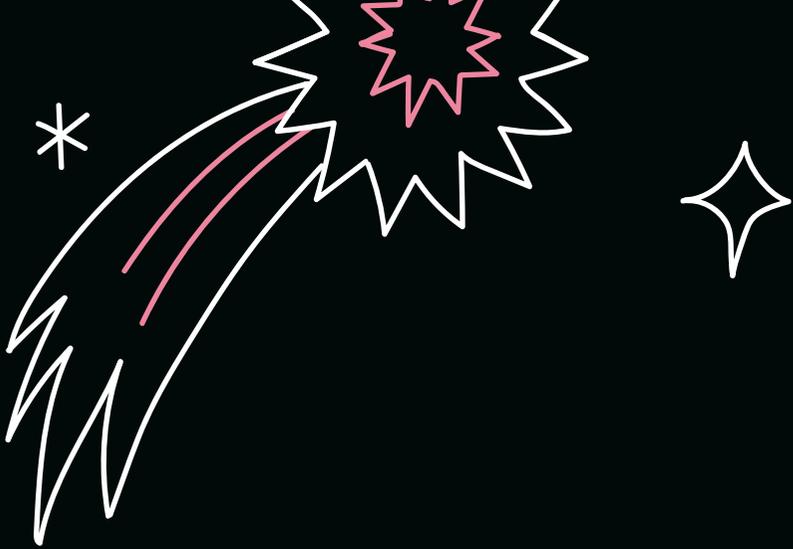
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Appendix A: Focus group agenda

1. **Introductions**
2. **Update on report/research to date**
3. **Purpose of today's session:**
to discuss the learning from the literature review and mapping survey. Discuss the findings and any gaps, in relation to the work being undertaken by the focus group attendees.
4. **What works well:**
Give an overview of the things that work well according to the literature review and the mapping survey. Rank these in order of influence over men and boy's engagement. Identify any gaps in what works well when engaging men and boys in violence prevention.
5. **What are the barriers faced:**
Give an overview of the possible barriers according to the literature review and the mapping survey. Rank these in order of influence over men and boy's engagement. Identify any gaps in what a barrier can be when engaging men and boys in violence prevention.
6. **What are the current gaps in our understanding:**
Discuss some of the gaps that have been identified through the literature review and mapping survey. Where/If possible, identify instances where the group attendees have experience or insights into the influence of these gaps.
7. **Is there anything else we need to know about engaging men and boys in violence prevention that we have not already talked about?**
8. **Thank you for your time.**





WALES WITHOUT VIOLENCE

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