

Guidance on the Welsh Government VAWDASV Perpetrator Service Standards

What are the Standards?

“[The Standards] provide the minimum requirements for all services (including but not limited to individual/group-based programmes) delivered to perpetrators of the full range of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence (VAWDASV) in Wales that aim to address the attitudes/ thinking/ feelings/ behaviours underlying VAWDASV perpetration. They are not intended to apply to services aiming to address the broader needs of VAWDASV perpetrators (such as substance misuse, housing, education and training, mental health issues, etc).”

Welsh Government Perpetrator Service Standards

The Welsh Government Perpetrator Service Standards are designed to ensure that VAWDASV perpetrator services are of high quality and are likely to be effective and minimise risk of further harm to participants, victims/survivors and potential victims/survivors of VAWDASV, staff and other relevant individuals.

Why do they exist?

“These Standards are intended to be used by both **commissioners** and **services** when making decisions regarding the development, delivery, evaluation and commissioning (or decommissioning) of VAWDASV perpetrator services in Wales.”

“They [also] seek to support the development and delivery of effective evidence-based services, offering options for perpetrators to address the factors underlying their offending/ abusive behaviour and work towards an abuse-free life with positive, healthy relationships.”

Welsh Government Perpetrator Service Standards

“As well as being specifically applicable to commissioners and services, these Standards may be referred to by wider stakeholders including users of VAWDASV perpetrator services. They may be used, for example, by a perpetrator to set expectations of the quality of services they should receive and/or by victims/survivors with questions/concerns regarding the Standards that VAWDASV services should be adhering to. Commissioners should ensure that clear processes of accountability are included for perpetrators, victims/survivors, partners and ex partners as well as commissioned partner organisations [...]”

Welsh Government Perpetrator Service Standards

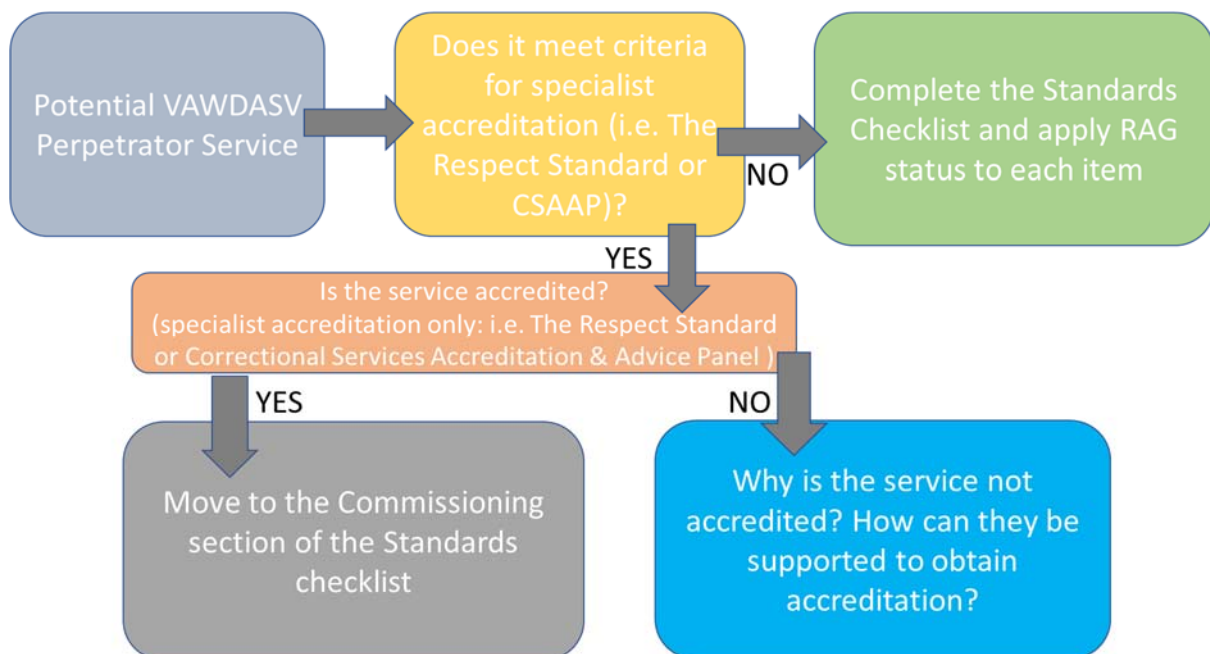
Where can I find the Standards?

The Standards can be found at <https://gov.wales/violence-against-women-domestic-abuse-and-sexual-violence-perpetrator-service-standards>

Who should use them?

Not everyone will need to use the Standards. The following flowchart from the Standards document explains who does and doesn't need to use the Standards checklist.

Figure 1. This diagram illustrates the decision-making process when commissioning perpetrator services. From Welsh Government Perpetrator Service Standards.



Where only these Standards and checklist are used, accountability mechanisms should be additionally resourced.

I am developing or commissioning a service that is new, do I need to use the Standards?

Whilst formal accreditation of a service is the ideal scenario, the Standards are the minimum requirements for safe and effective VAWDASV practice. Formal accreditation can take time to achieve, and you should therefore use the Standards to guide the development of your service, while keeping the accreditation requirements in mind. This will ensure your service is built on a solid foundation and support you in moving towards accreditation in the future.

We are about to commission a new service, do I need to use the Standards?

Yes. You can use the Standards to ensure that you are commissioning a safe and effective intervention. Ask service providers to complete the Standards checklist evidencing how they meet the Standards and their plans for meeting any that are not currently fully achieved.

We are already commissioning a service – what do the Standards mean for me?

All services providing intervention for VAWDASV perpetrators should be working towards meeting the Standards. As part of your monitoring of the services you commission, you should request evidence of how the service is working towards meeting the Standards. If the service cannot evidence this or will not be able to achieve the Standards in a reasonable time frame, you should consider decommissioning the service.

Won't it mean a lot of extra work?

No, you are probably doing most of what is required already; the Standards are simply asking you to document it.

What do I need to do?

Appendix 1 of the Standards is a checklist of all the standards with space to detail how you are meeting them. Complete this document and signpost to additional evidence. Red/Amber/Green (RAG) rate each standard to show how well they are being achieved. Here is an example of what this might look like:

No	Standard	Evidence	RAG Status
12	Consent		
13	How is consent sought?	All perpetrators complete a consent form (see Appendix *; supplemented by a service Information Sheet, see Appendix *) before work starts. This is presented in an Easy Read format and participants have the opportunity to ask questions before signing. The consent form makes it clear what they are signing up to, what happens if they don't sign up and what the limits of confidentiality are. Consent forms are kept securely in the individual's file	GREEN
22	Links to Partner work		
23	How are links to other services made?	Good links with victim/survivor services, underpinned by clear policy (see Appendix *) and well-documented processes. Information channels with children's and adult services are inconsistent	AMBER Meetings arranged with children's and adult services to improve links
44	Service Evaluation		
45	How will the evaluation of service take place?	Nothing yet planned	RED Evaluation plan to be finalised within 3 months

What evidence should I use?

There is no right or wrong answer to this, as different services will naturally have different types of evidence. Examples of types of evidence you could use (and are probably already using) include:

- Logs (e.g. training attendance, session registers)
- Notes (e.g. session notes, supervision notes)
- Manuals/policy documents (e.g. intervention theory manual, equality and diversity policy)
- Consent forms
- Copies of communication between partner agencies

What if some Standards do not apply to me?

If you do not think they apply to you, speak to your Regional VAWDASV Advisor for advice.

“The Standards are designed to provide a benchmark for VAWDASV perpetrator services in Wales and as such provide a comprehensive set of criteria that all VAWDASV perpetrator services in Wales should adhere to.”

Welsh Government Perpetrator Services Standards

What if I am not meeting all the Standards?

The Standards are the minimum standards to provide safe VAWDASV perpetrator interventions, so it is important that you are working towards them. If you are not yet achieving all the Standards, detail your plans for reaching them, providing timescales for when they will be met. Commissioners may ask you to review any amber or red rated areas within a specified time frame as a condition of funding.

Who checks I am meeting the Standards?

There is no external audit process for the Standards. You should keep your own records of how you are meeting the Standards so you can show commissioners. Some regions are setting up peer quality assurance checks, where service providers review each other against the Standards. Contact your Regional VAWDASV Advisor to discuss doing this in your area.

What happens if I don't use the Standards?

The Standards are not compulsory, however Commissioners have been advised to use them as a benchmark for VAWDASV perpetrator service standards. It is likely you will be asked to provide this evidence for the 2021/2022 commissioning round.

If I use the Standards does that mean I don't need to bother with accreditation?

No. The Standards are the minimum standards required to provide a safe service. The Welsh Government recommends that all VAWDASV service providers work towards Respect or the Correctional Services Accreditation and Advice Panel (CSAAP) accreditation.

Who can I ask for help?

You can speak to your Regional VAWDASV Advisor for support. If you don't know how to contact your regional advisor, you can ask the Welsh Government VAWDASV team by emailing VAWDASV@gov.wales

Top tips

- *Set up electronic and/or paper systems for automatically collating evidence.* Once you've identified what evidence you are going to use for each standard, store the evidence as soon as it is generated. It is then a quick job to pull it together for commissioners.
- *Run awareness sessions with your team* to help them understand the Standards and know what data they need to be collecting and how to store it.
- *Have a single point of contact for Standards evidence.* This person can be responsible for checking that all evidence has been stored properly at frequent intervals.
- *Contact local universities.* Psychology departments are often looking for research projects for their students to use for their qualifications. MSc and Doctoral level research projects can be a great way to get your service objectively evaluated for free.
- *Do self-audits.* Get someone who has not been involved in the collation of your evidence to conduct a self-audit. This will help identify your blind spots (i.e. things you know so have assumed others will know).
- *Update your evidence every 6 months.* Once you have completed the Standards, it should be fairly quick to update your evidence if you do it at regular intervals. The longer you leave it between updates, the bigger a job it is to update it.
- *Make your Standards compliance document available on your website.* This will allow commissioners, referrers and service users to see that you are achieving the minimum recommended standards to provide a safe service.