

Sound

30-word description

Sound is an anti-violence platform supporting men to end violence against women. It has changed Wales' approach to violence prevention and gathered international recognition as a world leading approach.

1000-word entry

Brief

Make Wales the safest place in the world to be a woman.

Objectives:

1. Increase male awareness of early 'red flag' VAWDASV behaviours.
2. Increase participation in conversations around healthy relationships to challenge harmful behaviours and attitudes towards women.
3. Increase male understanding of the levels of harm associated with all forms of violence against women.

Idea

Safety and trust are central to this project. Engaging the intended audience in their own spaces was our starting point.

We recruited eight cohort groups representing all ages, backgrounds, educations, and ethnicities. We conducted groups in English and Welsh. We worked with barbers, boxers, footballers, rugby players, musicians, tradesmen, apprentices, and college students.

We collaborated with Safer Merthyr Tydfil and family courts to work with perpetrators who used engagement as part of rehabilitation.

Survivors were kept informed of campaign developments to ensure they weren't alienated.

We developed a national survey for men in Wales, exploring views and understanding of gender-based violence. 500+ responses alongside the face-to-face groups gave us clear understanding into the scale of the challenge.

Young men feel: Pressure to conform to masculine stereotypes, 'guilty' for being a man because they are seen as violent. A desire to 'do better.' Insecurity around how they are perceived.

Barriers to change: Men don't know what gender-based violence is. They're afraid to ask in case it leads to social alienation or serious consequences. A lack of resources aimed at men that aren't persecutory.

Theory of change: Young men need clear, positive, encouraging direction, to remove the stigma around asking questions about healthy relationships.

Strategy

Following our significant research and engagement, we focused the first phase on those who exhibit seed behaviours or casual misogyny, who would benefit from early intervention before behaviours escalate.

Previous government campaigns on this topic have relied on ‘one-to-many’ activations (billboards, buses, posters). These resources were often persecutory, inflammatory, and ultimately, unsuccessful.

Our approach carefully assessed audience mood, young men feeling an increasing alienation from figures of authority and lost in a myriad of damaging content around masculinity. We assessed the needs of those ultimately at risk: women. They told us ‘Just get them to stop.’

We utilised extensive behavioural science and psychology to map the root of male-on-female violence, and one thing stood out: insecurity.

Men are afraid to be laughed at, women are afraid men will kill them.

We went back to the beginning, before violence occurs, working with a range of young men to find knowledge gaps, current attitudes, and discover what would help them cultivate healthy connections.

This sparked our creative concept.

TOUGH QUESTIONS NEED SOUND ADVICE

Sound: a platform and suite of social spaces with three simple calls to action:

- 1) **Sound it out.** Encourage men to chat to one another and professionals about their behaviours and relationships in safe spaces, without fear of judgement.
- 2) **Get Sound advice.** Use Sound channels to get verified advice on relationship issues. Do not fall prey to internet algorithms and misinformation.
- 3) **Be Sound as.** Take simple steps to improve your own behaviours while supporting your friends and peers to do the same.

Using a 3-step model of change, underpinned by deep community engagement, we created opportunities for men to educate themselves, have meaningful conversations about positive behaviour patterns and work together to create a safer Wales for all. Our guiding principle was creating space for men to discover expressions of masculinity that serve them and the world around them.

Stage 1, Prompt: Use conversation starters to introduce a topic.

Stage 2, Converse: Encourage conversations between young men about their lives, relationships, and behaviours.

Stage 3, Normalise: Conversations and actions happen organically, new societal norms take shape.

Tactics

Authentic engagement, two-way conversation and discreet one-on-one learning sit at the core of Sound and informed the development of channel plans.

Our insights work gave us the following considerations for our channel planning:

- 100% young men listen to music or podcasts daily.
- All use an online search engine for 'personal' questions.
- Most connected to interest-based forums (i.e. sport, profession, or hobby).
- Majority spend at least an hour/day on a game console.
- TikTok and Instagram are popular for daily scrolling, YouTube for longer content.

With this in mind, we focused primarily on the creation of stand-out content for:

- owned social media profiles (Insta / TikTok / YouTube) with a mix of educational graphics on behaviours and their meanings, on street videos with men across Wales with their advice on how to change behaviours, plus locally relevant male influencers and every day young men talking together about their relationship experiences
- a podcast presented by a well-known gamer
- paid activation (TV, radio, digital) targeted to an 18-34 male audience (Sky Sports TV and online, Sports Social Audio Network, male-oriented Reddit forums, targeted Google searches around commonly searched 'relationship' terms.)
- 25 pieces of coverage in national press including print in the Guardian.

Impact

Objective 1: increase male awareness of early 'red flag' behaviours

- KPI = reach 50% of men aged 18-34 in Wales (approx. 200,000) in first year
Achieved = 400,000 in nine months **(+45%)**
- KPI = 5m total impressions (paid and organic)
Achieved = 15m **(+300%)**
- KPI = 10million opportunities to see.
Achieved = 100million **(+1000%)**

Objective 2: increase conversations around healthy relationships

- KPI = 30 cohort members involved in campaign

Achieved = 58 **(+193%)**

- KPI = Engage five external stakeholder organisations.
Achieved = 33 **(+660%)**
- KPI = 150 shares by target audience.
Achieved = 960 **(+640%)**
- KPI = 50 positive comments from target demographic.
Achieved = 4,650 **(+3100%)**
- KPI = Work with five influencers.
Achieved = 11 **(+220%)**
- KPI = Positive sentiment 75%.
Achieved = 99% positive **(+24%)**
- KPI = Two cohort members speak positively about involvement.
Achieved = 15 **(+750%)**

Objective 3: increase understanding around VAW

Measured annually through long term cohort evaluation, a nationwide survey and VAWDASV crime statistics (next evaluation in June 2024), early signals are positive:

- **100%** of participants feel more informed about forms of abuse.
- **Ten** men have contacted Sound to ask for advice, indicating immediate brand trust.

Sound is changing the direction of VAWDASV policy at Welsh Government, shifting focus from supporting victims to educating and supporting men to be better.

Men and women have responded positively. We've been approached by the cabinet office, United Nations, police forces, third sector organisations, politicians, including members of the Lords, trade unions, universities, and global anti-violence specialists to discuss where the campaign goes next.