

**FOURTH MEETING OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
SUB GROUP OF THE REGIONAL STEERING GROUP ON
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

THURSDAY 23 FEBRUARY 2006

ROOM 135, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

In attendance:	John Devaney (Chair)	Eastern Health and Social Services Board
	Joan McGovern	Barnardos
	Pip Jaffa	Parents Advice Centre
	Debbie Mehaffey	Women's Aid Federation (N.I.)
	Margaret Graham	DHSSPS
	Barbara Dean	National Society for the Prevention and Cruelty to Children
	Master Wells	Office of Care and Protection
	Pauline Leeson	Children in Northern Ireland
Apologies:	Anne Marks	Police Service of Northern Ireland
	Glynnis Henderson	CCEA
	Dawn Shaw	National Children's Home
	Liz Shaw	Southern Health and Social Services Board
Secretariat:	Kevin Shiels	Domestic Violence Unit
	Marie Austin	Domestic Violence Unit
	Elaine Farrell	Domestic Violence Unit

1. Introductions and Apologies

1.1 Mr Devaney welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were noted from those listed above.

2. Ways to access the views of children and young people affected by domestic violence.

2.1 Mr Devaney welcomed Ms Pauline Leeson from Children in Northern Ireland (CiNI) and advised that she was going to outline the Participation Network Initiative, which is currently being led by CiNI and the Northern Ireland Youth Forum. Ms Leeson explained that the overall aim of the project is to develop the capacity of statutory bodies to fulfil their duties to effectively engage, consult with and involve children and young people in decision making. She advised that CiNI

will be developing a web-based resource which will facilitate the exchange of information and ideas between those working in the field through an e-directory, e-mailing list and bi-annual bulleting. They will also undertake a seminar and two workshops each year to examine specific areas of participation, promote good practice and provide a platform to share experiences.

In addition, the NI Youth Forum will offer training and consultancy support to the statutory sector in order to develop their internal capacity to engage directly with children and young people. They will signpost agencies with specific needs for support to appropriate organisations and develop, promote and train on the implementation of standards for good practice in relation to child and youth participation.

The Participation Network will develop material, information and a web-site to be used as a resource for statutory authorities and bodies, community groups and voluntary organisations in relation to child and youth participation.

Mr Devaney suggested that it might be useful if he and other members of the sub group meet with NI Youth Forum to ensure that domestic violence is on their agenda at the outset.

Action: DV Unit to organise at meeting with NI Youth Forum and Mr Devaney, Pauline Leeson and Joan McGovern

3. Domestic Violence on the school curriculum

3.1 Mr Shiels informed members that David Mann (Department of Education) had left his post and that correspondence had gone to Eddie Rooney (Grade 3 in DE) seeking a replacement representative for both the Regional Steering Group and the Children and Young People Sub Group. No written response had been received but Mr Rooney had indicated via a telephone call that at present DE could not afford to nominate a representative. However, he and a couple of DE colleagues would be willing to meet with the sub-group chair and the DV Unit to consider how the key issues could be moved forward. this was also an opportune time as De were reviewing policies on child protection and this would dovetail with that action.

3.2 Mr Devaney suggested that a meeting with DE involving himself and Mr Shiels should be arranged to try to resolve the issues. Ms Mehaffey stated that one area of concern amongst teachers was not being released for training on dealing with domestic violence. Mr Devaney explained the DE recognise that this is an area of concern and that the DOCPEG Group of which he is a member are working to resolve this. Mr Devaney agreed to raise this issue with them again. Master Wells asked if it was possible for the PSNI to cover DV issues in their school visits. Mr Devaney agreed to speak to Inspector Anne Marks regarding this.

Action:

1. Mr Shiels and Mr Devaney to contact DE re David Mann's replacement and how guidance for schools should be developed.
2. Mr Devaney to raise with DOCPEG the issue of teachers being released from classes for appropriate training on dealing with domestic violence issues.
3. Mr Devaney to speak to Anne Marks regarding PSNI covering domestic violence during their school visits

4. Minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 2006

- 4.1 Ms Austin explained that in item 7.1 of the minutes of 17 November 2006 it had recorded that a report written Mary Furniss would issue to members. This report was in fact written Mary Barniss.

5. Matters Arising

5.1 *Links between RSG and Anti-Bullying Forum*

Mr Shiels informed members that he had meet with Ms Geraldine Loughran (Chair of the Anti-Bullying Forum) to discuss ways in which to establish links between the Forum and the Regional Steering Group. It had been agreed that the proposed development of guidance for schools would provide an obvious opportunity to cover links between domestic violence and bullying. . They would keep in touch and Mr Shiels agreed to consult the anti-bullying forum on relevant draft guidance.

5.2 *Framework for the collection of domestic violence data*

Mr Shiels reported that the draft framework for the collection of domestic violence data was on the agenda for the next Information Sub Group meeting on 14 March 2006 and would be circulated to members in due course. Ms McGovern expressed concern regarding the recording of domestic violence incidents on recent police statistics and stated that there appeared to be a discrepancy in relation to incidents were children had been involved. Mr Devaney advised that a new policy for the collection of domestic violence data had only been introduced in September 2004 and that the next set of statistics to be published may show different results. Mr Shiels explained that Inspector Pauline Mooney was a member of the Information Sub Group and that he would raise this issue with her at the next meeting.
Action: Mr Shiels to contact Ms Mooney regarding statistics

5.3 *Domestic violence workplace policies/plans for UK Corporate Alliance Event*

Mr Shiels reported that within the Northern Ireland Civil Service, Central Personnel Group were due to issue a domestic violence workplace policy on 24 February 2006. Mr Shiels advised that the Domestic Violence Unit and the Community Safety Unit, NIO were also

hosting an event to formally launch the workplace policy. It has been organised for the 15 May 2006 in Hillsborough Castle and is hoped that CIPD, NICVA, Business in the Community will attend in order to encourage businesses to sign up to Corporate Alliance. **[Note official launch date now postponed until 22 May 2006]**

Ms Jaffa enquired if it was possible to have any information regarding workplace guidance, which she could pass onto other parenting groups. Mr Shiels agreed to forward a “flyer” with a covering minute to Ms Jaffa.

Action: Mr Shiels to forward workplace guidance flyer with covering minute to Ms Jaffa for circulation.

5.4 *Domestic Violence training for Trust staff*

Members were asked for their views on the draft form “Survey of Domestic Violence training for staff” which had been circulated. The following suggestions were made:

- To include a question on how up to date training is/last date of training.
- In relation to question 2 “Is domestic violence training provided at present to staff in your trust?” – If this is answered NO – it does not lead onto any other questions.
- Could Nurse in service training be mentioned in question 6 – “Who provides the training”?

Mr Devaney asked members to forward any further suggestions and advised that when the form was amended it was intended to forward it to Deirdre Webb and other Trust Trainers to seek their views.

5.5 *Report on the impact of domestic violence on children – Mary Barnish*

Mr Devaney explained that at a meeting with Justice Gillen to discuss children’s issues, the judge had suggested that more research was needed on the impact of domestic violence on children. Following a recommendation by Joan McGovern, a report by Mary Barnish had been issued to members. Ms McGovern also advised that she had a further report entitled “What works in Domestic Violence” and would forward this to the Domestic Violence Unit. A further report entitled “Research in Practice” by Catherine Humphreys and Audrey Mullender had also been issued to members prior to the meeting. Following discussions, members agreed the following:

- Forward both the Mary Barnish report and the Humphreys/Mullender report to Justice Gillen.
- Forward reports to the Children’s Commissioner and engage with them at a later date to enquire if domestic violence is one of their priorities.
- Pass research information onto the Information Sub Group.

Action:

1. Ms McGovern to forward a copy of the report "What works in Domestic Violence".
2. Domestic Violence Unit to draft letter for chair to issue reports as listed above.

6. Action Plan Review

6.1 Mr Devaney explained that he felt it would be useful for the group to go through the Action plan and evaluate the current position in relation to the sub group's area of responsibility:

- Resource Manual for health and social services professionals – Mr Shiels advised that this would be on the agenda for the Information Sub Group's next meeting on 14 March 2006.
- Education in Schools – this action point has now moved from the Information Sub Group to the Children and Young People Sub Group
- Drugs and Alcohol Misuse and Domestic Violence – Mr Shiels advised that it had not yet been decided which sub group would take this action point forward but he would discuss with Rab Phipps from the Drugs and Alcohol Unit.
- Child contact centres – Mr Shiels advised that a recent PQ should highlight who is responsible for this area, but it would be kept on the agenda to keep a focus on it.
- Work with relevant voluntary organisations – Ongoing.
- Good practice Standards/Guidelines – Mr Shiels advised that this was currently out to consultation with RSG and all Sub Groups, with a deadline for comments of 16 March 2006.
- Training Strategy – on agenda for RSG on 7 March 2006.
- Information Sharing – discussions to be held with NIO regarding legislative change to allow for the sharing of personal information in the context of domestic violence.
- Inter-Agency Cooperation and Communication – ongoing

7. Raising the Standards Conference (6 & 7 February 2006) – Workshop Feedback

7.1 A copy of the workshop feedback from the Raising the Standards Conference was tabled for member's information. Mr Shiels advised that as the Department of Education had not nominated a representative to attend the conference, they had been issued with a copy of the feedback on Question 1 – "What needs to be done to domestic Violence covered on the education curriculum". The issues would be addressed at the proposed meeting with DE.

8. Any other Business

8.1 Ms McGovern enquired if the impact of domestic violence on ethnic minorities was being currently looked at. Mr Shiels advised that Women's Aid Federation (N.I.) are undertaking a project in this area in

partnership with the Domestic Violence Partnerships. Mr Shiels agreed to e-mail members with details of this.

Action: Domestic Violence Unit to issue details of ethnic minority project.

9. Date and venue for next meeting

- 9.1 The date of the next meeting was scheduled for 18 May 2006 at 1.30 p.m. in Room 144, Parliament buildings.