

**FIRST MEETING OF THE INFORMATION SUB GROUP OF THE
REGIONAL STEERING GROUP ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

TUESDAY 22 MARCH 2005

ROOM 21, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Present:

Catherine Reilly (Ulster Community and Hospital Trust) – Chair
Lynn Cree (Queen's University Belfast)
Robin Dempsey (Police Service of Northern Ireland)
David Mann (Department of Education)
Maxine McCutcheon (Men's Advisory Project)
James Knox (Coalition on Sexual Orientation/Rainbow Project)
Liz McCrystal (Community Justice National Training Organisation)
Eugene Mooney (Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency)
Oonagh Cullen (Northern Ireland Women's Aid Federation)
Myra Andrews (Men to Men)
Edel Robinson (Northern Ireland Office)
Kevin Shiels (Domestic Violence Unit)

Apologies:

Grace Henry (Help the Aged/Age Concern)
Glynnis Henderson (Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment)

Secretariat:

Marie Austin (Domestic Violence Unit)

1. Introductions and Apologies

- 1.1 Ms Reilly welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the newly reconstituted Information Sub-Group.

2. Membership and Terms of Reference

- 2.1 Members considered paper ISG 1/2005 which outlined Terms of Reference, Roles and Responsibilities, and Membership of the Regional Steering Group (RSG) on Domestic Violence and the Information Sub-Group.
- 2.2 Ms Reilly suggested that a representative from an ethnic minority umbrella group should be invited to sit on the Sub-Group. Members agreed that Ms Reilly should contact Margaret Donaghy from the Multi-Cultural Resource Centre in relation to the matter.
Action: Ms Austin to draft a letter seeking nomination.
- 2.3 Mr Mooney proposed an amendment to the Roles and Responsibilities of the Regional Steering Group: members agreed that the Regional Steering Group's role should be to *approve* research, surveys, pilot studies (as proposed by the Sub-Groups) rather than to *commission*.

Action: Proposal to be placed on agenda for consideration at next RSG meeting (11 May 2005).

- 2.4 Members agreed that the Terms of Reference, Roles and Responsibilities, and Membership of the Sub-Group should be kept under review.

3. PRESENTATION ON DRAFT DOMESTIC STRATEGY

- 3.1 Mr Shiels gave a brief presentation on 'Tackling Violence at Home'. The areas covered were:

- Draft domestic violence strategy – current position;
- Implementation structures;
- Information issues raised during consultation;
- Definition; and
- Performance Indicators.

- 3.2 Mr Shiels informed members that, apart from the existing resources available to support domestic violence work, the Department of Health and Social Services had secured an additional £200k for each of the next three years. Most of this money would be used to fund the new free-phone domestic violence helpline, local fora, and training. However, there would be a small development fund, for specific projects. Mr Shiels advised members that the Sub-Group, with the approval of the RSG, might have access to some of the fund for research, surveys, pilot projects etc.

4. COLLECTION OF STATISTICAL DATA

- 4.1 Mr Mooney presented a short Report by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) on the type and availability of domestic violence statistics recorded and collated in Northern Ireland. The Report was commissioned in mid 2004 by the Information Sub-Group of the Regional Forum on Domestic Violence and involved a small but broad sample of public and private organisations in Northern Ireland. A copy of the Report is attached at Annexe 1. Members agreed that a Sub-Group should be established to consider the issues around the collection of statistics and data. The Sub-Group would comprise Mr Shiels, Ms Austin, Mr Mooney, Ms Cullen, Ms McCutcheon and Ms Andrews. Ms Reilly provided some information on collection of statistical data in Leicester which may be useful to the Sub-Group.
- Action:** Ms Austin to schedule meeting of Sub-Group.
- Action:** All Sub-Group members to send Ms Austin copies of any forms currently used to collect statistics.

5. EDUCATION/TRAINING IN SCHOOLS

- 5.1 Mr Mann informed members that the Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) had carried out an extensive

review of the curriculum and outlined relevant proposed changes. Mr Mann highlighted that, although there were a number of opportunities to address domestic violence within the new curriculum, neither the Department of Education (DE) nor CCEA could be prescriptive. Members noted that the revised curriculum would be in place by September 2006 and would be phased in over four years. It was agreed that a meeting should be scheduled (mid May) to discuss education/training in schools, with presentations from CCEA and Northern Ireland Women's Aid Federation (NIWAF), who had already delivered some programmes to schools.

Action: Mr Mann to contact CCEA in relation to content of presentation and availability. Dates to be sent to Ms Austin.

Action: Ms Cullen to check availability. Dates to be sent to Ms Austin.

Action: Ms Austin to arrange meeting on Education/Training.

6. ROUTINE ENQUIRY IN RELATION TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

6.1 Ms Cullen informed members that NIWAF and Belfast and Lisburn Women's Aid had been working with the Royal Jubilee Maternity Service to heighten awareness of domestic violence and to develop policy, procedures and training for staff. The general screening of pregnant women for domestic violence was successfully piloted in the Royal Jubilee and will be rolled out from May 2005. Ms Reilly reported that the Ulster Hospital and Altnagelvin were also considering enquiry with ante-natal patients and Sperrin and Lakeland Trust intends to screen *suspected* victims of domestic violence in its Accident and Emergency department. Members agreed that directors in all maternity units in Northern Ireland should be contacted to inform them of the procedure being adopted by the Royal Jubilee and to ascertain what the position is in relation to the introduction of same in their units.

Action: Mr Shiels to contact Eithne Gilligan for further information in relation to the routine enquiry in Royal Jubilee.

Action: Domestic Violence Unit to discuss with DHSSPS nursing colleagues the content of draft letter to directors of maternity units.

7. INFORMATION SHARING

7.1 Members considered briefly the Home Office document: 'Safety and justice: sharing personal information in the context of domestic violence – an overview'. Minister for Health, Ms Angela Smith, had given a commitment to issue similar guidance in Northern Ireland, which would take account of the different organisational and legislative situation. It was explained that the issue was complicated because Northern Ireland legislation was not on a par with that in England.

Action: Mr Shiels and Ms Austin to consider the document further and refer to the Domestic Violence and Law Sub-Group for advice.

8. MEMBERS' PROPOSALS ON RESEARCH

8.1 Mr Shiels informed the group that any proposals from members for research could be considered by the Sub-Group and if recommended,

passed to the Regional Steering Group for approval. The starting point for any research proposal, however, would be the drafting of an initial proposal outlining objectives etc.

Action: Members to let Domestic Violence Unit have written details of any proposals for research.

9. MEMBERS' PROPOSALS FOR FUTURE MEDIA CAMPAIGN(S)

9.1 Mr Knox expressed some concern that the current media campaign did not include images of men and made no reference to sexual orientation. Also, the Helpline cards included the Women's Aid logo and referred only to women and children. Mr Shiels informed the group that the Helpline cards have been reprinted without the logo and with a reference to the Helpline being open to anyone affected by domestic violence. Mr Shiels reminded members that the media campaign will be ongoing and that members would have the opportunity to influence the shape and content of future campaigns. There was general agreement that an all-inclusive campaign should be considered in the future.

9.2 Mr Dempsey reported an increase in reporting to the police from male victims of domestic violence and agreed to contact his analyst to discuss the possibility of a breakdown of the figures into the types of abuse etc.

Action: Mr Dempsey to provide breakdown of figures to Domestic Violence Unit.

9.3 Members agreed that the publicity campaign should be kept on the agenda for all future meetings.

10. PROVIDING ADVOCACY AND SUPPORT TO SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

10.1 Members agreed to consider the Home Office document: 'Providing Advocacy and Support to Survivors of Domestic Violence' and email comments to Ms Austin. Mr Shiels informed members that this document would be brought to the RSG for consideration with a view to producing something similar for Northern Ireland.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

11.1 Edel Robinson explained that the results of the 2003 Northern Ireland Crime Survey was to be published on 23 March 2005 and would be available on the NIO website. She added that the survey would in future be undertaken annually rather than every second year.

12. DATE AND VENUE FOR NEXT MEETING

12.1 The next meeting of the Sub-Group has been scheduled for Tuesday 7 June 2005 at 9.30 a.m. in Room 21, Parliament Buildings.

Overview

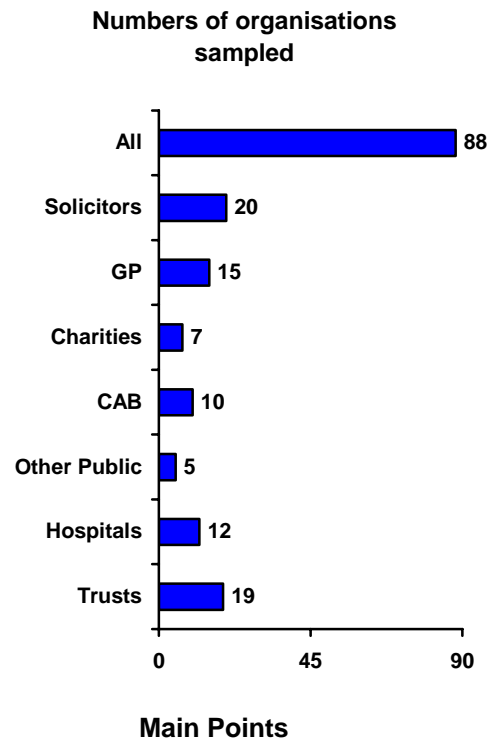
Background

To help inform the development of the Regional Strategy on Domestic Violence, the information subgroup of the regional forum on domestic violence carried out an information-gathering exercise on a small but broad sample of public and private organisations in Northern Ireland. The subgroup agreed a short questionnaire (Appendix 1) that was sent to a sample of organisations in Northern Ireland during the summer months of 2004.

The questionnaire was used to obtain basic information from organisations about the type and availability of statistics recorded and collated relating to 'Domestic Violence'.

With a low response rate and only a small sample of questionnaires returned for analysis, the findings from this exercise may not be representative of the wider population.

Organisations¹ Sampled

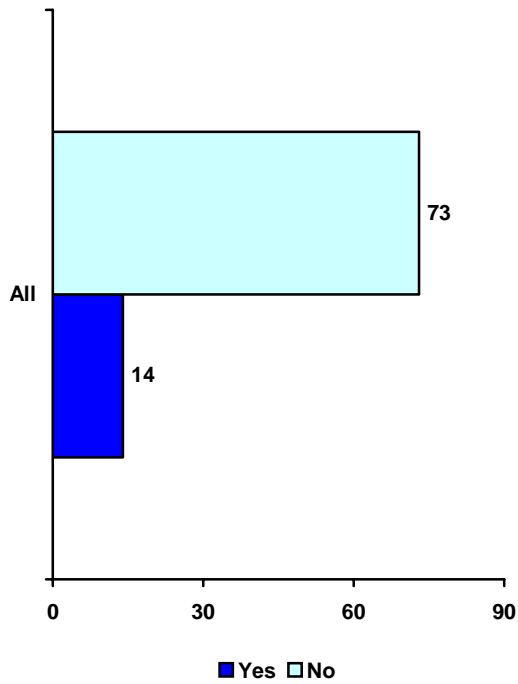


- Of the 318 questionnaires issued to organisations in Northern Ireland, 88 (28%) were returned to the Department².
- The 88 organisations that returned a questionnaire comprised 19 HSS Trusts, 12 Hospitals, 5 Other Public Authorities, 10 Citizen's Advice Bureau, 7 Charitable Organisations, 15 General Practitioners and 20 Solicitors.

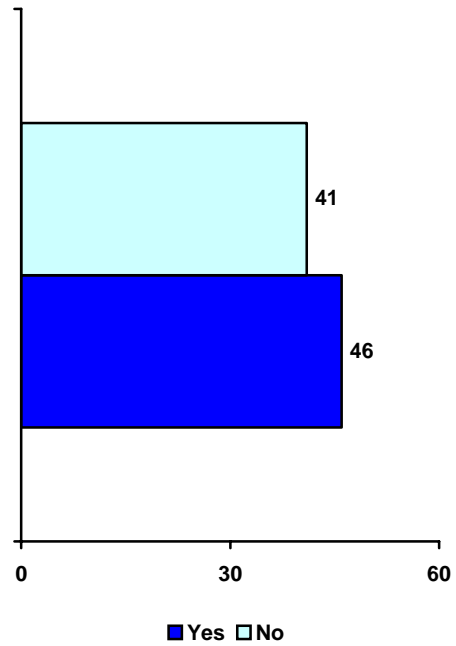
¹ Organisations can also refer to individuals working in a particular profession e.g. solicitors.

² Nominated staff in each organisation surveyed returned the questionnaires.

Q1 Do you have a written policy on domestic violence



Q2 Do you ask those you come into contact with if they have experienced Domestic Violence



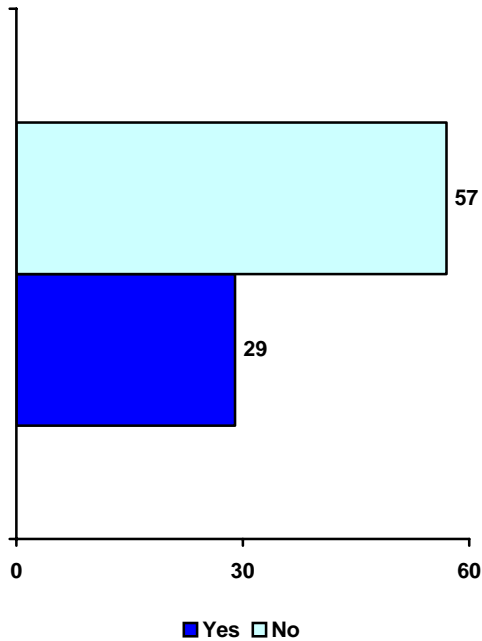
Main points

- When asked if they have a written policy on domestic violence, 73 (84%) of 87 respondents reported they have no written policy on domestic violence, compared with 14 (16%) that do have a written policy on domestic violence.

Main point

- Just over 53% (46) of respondents reported that they ask those they come into contact with if they have experienced domestic violence, compared with 47% (41) that do not ask this question.

Q3 Do you record information about the number of Domestic Violence incidents you come into contact with?



Main point

- When asked if they record information about the number of domestic violence incidents they come into contact with, 34% (29) of respondents reported that they do record this information, compared with 66% (57) that do not record such information.

Q4 Please state the definition of Domestic Violence that you use when collating data

Main points

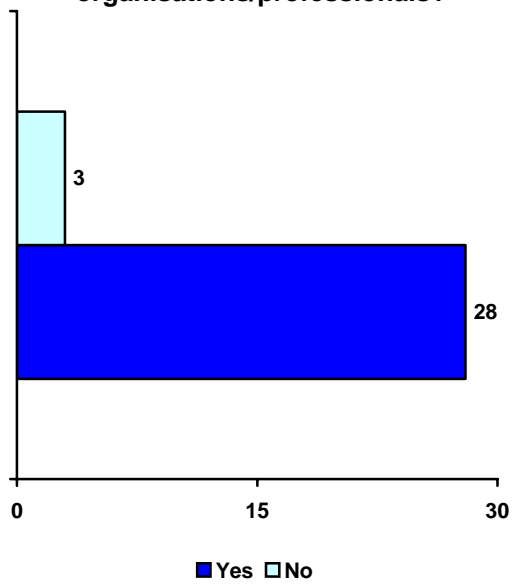
- Common themes within the definitions of 'Domestic Violence' offered by respondents included physical, emotional and/or verbal abuse, violence or the threat of violence, usually involving people in the same family or in close relationships and living together. (Appendix 2).

Q5 Please indicate what type of information you collect (relating to Domestic Violence)

Main points

- Just over 30% of respondents indicated that they collect information about domestic violence. Information collected by respondents relates to both the victims and the perpetrators of domestic violence, including: gender, age, disability, relationships, whether children are involved, number of incidents and factors that might have contributed to domestic violence.

Q6 If confidentiality was assured and data protection policies adhered to, would you be willing to share your information with other organisations/professionals?



Main points

- Almost all respondents indicated that if confidentiality was assured and data protection policies adhered to, they would be willing to share information with other organisations/professionals.

Appendix 1

Q1. Do you have a written policy on Domestic Violence?

(a) Yes

(b) No

Q2 Do you ask those people you come into contact with if they have experienced Domestic Violence?

(a) Yes

(b) No

Q3. Do you record information about the number of Domestic Violence incidents you come into contact with?

(a) Yes

(b) No

If you answered 'Yes' to Q3 please answer the remaining questions

Q4. Please state the definition of Domestic Violence that you use when collating data.

Q5. Please indicate what types of information you collect (*tick all that apply*)

(a) Gender of Victim

(b) Gender of Perpetrator

(c) Age of Victim

(d) Age of Perpetrator

(e) Ethnicity of Victim

(f) Ethnicity of Perpetrator

(g) Whether the victim is pregnant

(h) Whether the victim is disabled

- (i) Relationship of victim to perpetrator
- (j) Whether victim is living in the same house as the perpetrator
- (k) Whether children were present
- (li) Age of children present
- (mj) Type of violence committed
- (n) No. of Domestic Violence Incidents committed
- (o) Duration of Domestic Violence Incidents i.e. span
- (p) Factors resulting in Domestic Violence i.e. Drugs, Alcohol etc
- (q) Who was the first point of contact for the victim
- (q) Is the perpetrator known to social Services?
- (s) If the perpetrator is known to PSNI?
- (t) If a Court Order has been issued?

Q6. If confidentiality was assured and data protection policies adhered to, would you be willing to share your information with other organisations/professionals?

- (a) Yes
- (b) No

Q7. How do you record your Domestic Violence statistics?

- (a) Manually
- (b) On Computer

If you answered 'On computer' to Q7 please answer Q8

Q8. What computer packages do you use?

MANY THANKS FOR COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE

Appendix 2

Examples of the definitions of 'Domestic Violence' offered by respondents.

- a. **The abuse of power in a close relationship of current or former partners.**
- b. **The use of physical or emotional force or threat within a close adult relationship.**
- c. **The use of physical or emotional threat within an adult relationship in a way which causes harm or distress.**
- d. **Physical or mental abuse of another person.**
- e. **Physical violence and threatening behaviour.**
- f. **Violence in the home by a person sharing accommodation.**
- g. **Physical or emotional trauma.**
- h. **Any incident of abuse, physical or psychological, that occurs within the family set-up.**
- i. **Behaviour that could give rise to significant harm to another person with whom the perpetrator lives.**
- j. **Domestic violence includes, threats or physical and verbal abuse.**
- k. **Emotional or physical abuse.**
- l. **Suffering of abuse , medical, physical or verbal from partner or significant other family member.**
- m. **Any quarrel, altercation or strife between family members.**
- n. **Domestic violence typically involves a pattern of physical, sexual and emotional abuse and intimidation, which escalates in frequency and severity over time. It can be understood as the misuse of power and the exercise of control by one partner over the other in an intimate relationship, usually by a man over a women, occasionally by a women over a man (though without the same pattern of societal collusion) and also occurring amongst same sex couples. It has profound consequences in the lives of children, individuals, families and communities.**
- o. **Domestic Violence is any form of physical and sexual violence, emotional or psychological or financial abuse perpetrated in the context of marriage, co-habitation or within immediate relationships, which has a damaging impact on victims.**