

**Minutes of the third meeting of the Regional Steering Group on
Domestic Violence**

**Wednesday 11 May 2005 at 9.45 a.m.
The Mount Business and Conference Centre**

Present:

Andrew Hamilton (DHSSPS) – Chair	Robin Dempsey (PSNI)
Grace Henry (Help the Aged/Age Concern)	Clare Irvine (OLR)
Ken Nixon (Resident Magistrate)	Paul Doran (PBNI)
Jacqui Durkin (NICtS)	Sharon Harley (NIO)
Brendan Devlin (DSD)	Pauline Leeson (CiNI)
Maxine McCutcheon (MAP)	Liz Shaw (SHSSB)
Kevin Shiels (DV Unit)	Eamon McTernan (WHSSB)
Marie Austin (DV Unit)	Peter O'Brien (Law Society)
Elaine Farrell (DV Unit)	Hilary Harbinson (OFMDFM)
Michael Graham (NIHE)	John Devaney (EHSSB)
Edell Fitzpatrick (DPP)	Susan Reid (Victim Support)
Anne Graham (NIWAF)	James Knox (CoSO/Rainbow)
Margaret Donaghy (MCRC)	

Apologies:

Leslie Frew (DHSSPS)
Conal Devitt (NIO)
Catherine Reilly (UCHT)
Margaret Black (NHSSB)
David Mann (DE)
Ken Wilson (SSI)
Dominic Burke (Vulnerable Adults Forum)

1. Introduction

1.1 Mr Hamilton welcomed everyone to the third meeting of the Regional Steering Group. He particularly welcomed new member, Ms Susan Reid (Victim Support Northern Ireland), Margaret Donaghy who was attending for the first time and Elaine Farrell who is working part-time within the DV Unit.

2. Membership

2.1 *Vulnerable Adults Forum representative*
Mr Hamilton advised members that Dominic Burke, the current Vulnerable Adults representative, had proposed that Grace Henry, who is also a member of the Regional Adult Protection

Forum, should represent Vulnerable Adults on the RSG as well as Help The Aged and Age Concern. Grace Henry said her preference would be for two separate representatives. However, she agreed to discuss the matter with Dominic Burke and advise the group accordingly.

Action: Grace Henry to discuss with Dominic Burke and advise DV Unit of outcome

2.2 *Request for health representative on RSG*

Mr Hamilton reported that the Eastern Health and Social Services Board's Director of Nursing, Ms Mary Waddel, had requested representation on the RSG. Ms Deirdre Webb, Assistant Director of Nursing, EHSSB had been nominated. Members agreed that it would be useful to have a nursing/health representative, particularly as the Strategy was recommending a policy on routine enquiry of maternity patients etc and that Ms Webb should be invited to join the RSG.

Action: Kevin Shiels to write to Ms Waddel and Ms Webb in relation to the matter.

3. **Minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2005**

- 3.1 Members agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2005 without amendment.

4. **Matters arising**

4.1 *Workplace guidance*

Kevin Shiels reported that a draft workplace policy on domestic violence and abuse would be issued shortly by Central Personnel Group within the Department of Finance and Personnel to all Civil Service Departments for consideration. A copy would also be circulated to Trades Union side within the civil service. The Domestic Violence Unit would be contacting other public sector organisations via umbrella organisations such as Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA), Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) and the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) Northern Ireland Committee, in relation to the distribution of guidelines to employers in the wider public and private, voluntary and community sectors. Individual organisations would also be approached in relation to the matter.

Action: Kevin Shiels to contact NICVA, CIPD and ICTU initially to discuss the best way forward in encouraging employers to adopt guidelines and workplace DV policies.

4.2 *Meeting between Sub-Group Chairs and Chairs of Local Fora*

A copy of the minutes of the meeting held on 26 April 2005 between RSG Sub-Group Chairs and Chairs of Local Fora was circulated to members for information. HSS Board members (from Eastern, Southern and Western Boards) confirmed that communication links

existed between them and Domestic Violence Forum Chairs and that minutes of meetings were circulated on receipt. It was agreed that a more formal arrangement for communication between RSG Board representatives and Local Fora Chairs should be considered. It was envisaged that this arrangement would also apply to Area Child Protection Committees (ACPC's) and Childcare Partnerships.

Action: Board representatives to discuss communication arrangements with Local Fora Chairs

4.3 *Departmental responses on funding of Domestic Violence Unit*

A copy of responses received from individual Departments in relation to future funding of the Domestic Violence Unit (when current staff return to Assembly) was tabled at the meeting.

4.4 *Update of Media Campaign including summary of evaluation*

Kevin Shiels reported that he and Sharon Harley had met with representatives from AV Browne and Millward Brown to receive a presentation and discuss the evaluation of the recent media campaign. A paper detailing the findings was tabled at the meeting. Anne Graham advised that there had been a 34% increase in calls to the Domestic Violence Helpline in the 3 weeks while the TV ad was being shown and NIWAF were currently analysing all the relevant figures. Anne Graham agreed to provide a copy of the results of the analysis to members when available. Pauline Leeson suggested that consideration be given to monitoring the level of calls from children and young people to determine if there had been an increase. e.g. calls to Childline.

Action: Anne Graham to forward up-to-date Domestic Violence Helpline statistics to DVU for circulation.

4.5 Sharon Harley explained that the Doll's House advertisement would be run again by the NIO during Community Safety Week (W/C 20/6/05). The availability of textphone and language line would be promoted as part of the advertisement.

4.6 *RSG Members Profiles*

Member profiles were circulated at the meeting. Marie Austin asked that members who had not forwarded profiles do so as soon as possible.

Action: Members who have not yet done so to forward profiles to Marie Austin

5. **Update from Sub-Group Chairs on work of Sub-Groups**

5.1 *Domestic Violence and Law Sub-Group*

Ken Nixon advised Members that the Domestic Violence and Law Sub-Group had met on 14 April 2005. Minutes of the meeting had been circulated to the Group. He reported that Marie Brown from Foyle Women's Aid had replaced Hilary Sidwell on the group and that Monica McWilliams had accepted an invitation to join the group. Ken Nixon

informed the Group that a video, which traced a victim's journey through the court system, had been produced and would be launched in September 2005.

Edell Fitzpatrick reported that the DPP/PPS would be launching a new Domestic Violence Policy in June to coincide with Criminal Justice Week. She advised that the document would be available to the public and it would be useful to include contact details of relevant organisations.

Action: Members to forward contact details to Edell Fitzpatrick

5.2 *Information Sub-Group*

In Catherine Reilly's absence, Kevin Shiels provided Members with an update on the recent Information Sub-Group meeting. He advised that a letter had been issued to Margaret Donaghy from the Multi-Cultural Resource Centre in relation to representation on the Sub-Group

Eugene Mooney from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) had presented a short report to the Sub-Group on the type and availability of domestic violence statistics recorded in Northern Ireland. The report was commissioned in mid 2004 by the Information Sub-Group of the Regional Forum . An ad hoc Sub-Group has now been established to consider the issues around the collection of statistics and data.

A meeting had also been scheduled for 23 May 2005 with CCEA and NIWAF to discuss education/training in schools. Members of the Children and Young People's Sub-Group had also been invited to attend.

5.3 *Children and Young People's Sub Group*

In Ken Wilson's absence Kevin Shiels provided Members with an update. The re-named *Children and Young People's* Sub-Group had met on 9 March 2005. The Sub-Group was trying to identify what preventative programmes/materials are being used in schools and consider how the Sub-Group could extend one or more of the programmes to a wider area, or, maybe pilot a programme on a collaborative basis. It was agreed that the Local Fora should be asked to help identify preventative programmes in their respective areas.

Mr Wilson had written to Ms Pauline Leeson (CiNI) for advice on how to access the views of children and young people affected by domestic violence.

6. **Funding and possible themes for current financial year's media campaign**

6.1 Departmental representatives had been asked at the RSG meeting in February to make bids for contributions to the 2005/06 media campaign fund. Each representative provided an update:

- Kevin Shiels advised that DHSSPS had confirmed £40,000;
- Sharon Harley advised that the NIO had confirmed £50,000 (in addition to £28,000 allocated to re-run Doll's Hosue advert during Community Safety week) ;
- Jacqui Durkin advised that NICtS were not able to commit at this stage, however if it was apparent that there was an under spend later in the year a bid would be reconsidered;
- Claire Irvine advised that DFP were unable to commit at present;
- Hilary Harbinson advised that OFMDFM were unable to commit at present;
- Edell Fitzpatrick advised that DPP was unable to commit at present;
- Brendan Devlin advised that he would be unable to give a firm response until August;
- Kevin Shiels advised that there had been no response as yet from DE.

Action: David Mann, DE, to consider and report position of DE to DV unit

6.2 *Suggestions for media campaign themes*

Mr Shiels reported that the Information Sub-Group had suggested working towards an all-inclusive theme for the next media campaign. He advised that, due to financial reasons, it would not be possible to run a new TV ad, but radio and other advertising could be considered. Members agreed that the Information Sub-Group should consider ideas for future campaigns and bring them back to RSG for approval. Mr Hamilton extended an invitation to other RSG representatives not already represented on the Information Sub-Group to join in the media discussions at the next meeting of the Information Sub-Group scheduled for 7 June 2005.

Action: Members to contact Marie Austin if they wish to attend Information Sub-Group meeting.

7. Programme for performance of the play "Don't say a Word"

7.1 Marie Austin advised Members that 47 people to date had accepted invitations to the performance of the play on Domestic Violence "Don't Say a Word". The play will be performed on 2 June 2005 at 2.00 p.m. in the Crescent Arts Centre, Belfast. Mr Hamilton asked that members encourage senior management to attend the performance and Marie Austin agreed to issue a promotional flyer to Members to help encourage attendance. Sharon Harley advised that she would extend the invitation to the play to CSP's.

Action: Marie Austin to issue flyer on "Don't say a Word" to Members.

Action: Members to confirm attendance

- 7.2 Mr Hamilton advised that previous panel discussions had included PSNI, Women's Aid, and the actress Ms Patricia Byrne. He enquired if any other Members wished to be included on the panel. Paul Doran and Robin Dempsey confirmed that they would be happy to sit on the panel. Anne Graham informed members that NIWAF would nominate a representative to sit on the panel. Pauline Leeson advised that she would make efforts to get someone from CiNI to represent children and young people on the panel.

Action: Pauline Leeson to arrange representation from CiNI for panel discussion.

Note: Deirdre Teague, Helpline manager, will represent NIWAF and Ms Patricia Byrne has agreed to sit on the panel.

8. Raising The Standards Conference 6 & 7 February 2006

Kevin Shiels explained that the next Raising The Standards conference is to be held in the Hilton Hotel, Belfast on 6 and 7 February 2006 and that DHSSPS and NIO would be hosting the conference. The Raising The Standards Committee, which meets on a quarterly basis to share good practice on domestic violence, comprises representatives from England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland and Guernsey. The conference would aim to bring together Statutory and non-Governmental Organisations to share ideas and practices across the various jurisdictions. The theme of the February 2006 conference will be "Working Together to Prevent Abuse" with focus on *Prevention, Education and Inter-Agency Co-operation*. Members were asked to give some consideration to possible presentations for the conference, which would demonstrate voluntary and statutory agencies working together effectively. Members agreed to forward suggestions to the Domestic Violence Unit for consideration. Invitations would issue shortly and all Members would be invited to attend.

Action: Members to forward suggestions for presentations to Marie Austin

9. Resources Paper (RSG 5/2005)

A copy of a paper detailing existing expenditure by Government Departments and Agencies on domestic violence and possible priorities for spending additional resources had been circulated to Members prior to the meeting. The Group split into 3 groups to consider the paper. Some of the issues discussed included: collaborative approach to funding by departments and agencies; possible candidates for funding; allocation of additional DHSSPS funding; and other sources of funding. Each group reported their findings back to the main group and after discussion agreed the following:

- Funding should be allocated to Local DV Partnerships, Non-Violent Relationship Programme (NVRP), Barnardo's Risk Assessment Model for Children and the Domestic Violence Development Fund.
- Allocation of the DHSSPS additional funding was agreed as follows:
 1. Domestic Violence Helpline estimated £50k approx in-year and recurrent
 2. Local DV Partnerships £40K in-year and £70k recurrent, with RSG approving the actual application of funds by the local partnerships.
 3. NVRP £40k in-year and recurrent, provided that additional funding becomes available from other Departments/sources to make it feasible
 4. Barnardo's Risk Assessment £20k in-year and £40k recurrent
 5. DV Development Fund £50k in-year
- Other possible sources of funding identified by members included National Lottery, Comic Relief, Assets Recovery Agency and Trusts/Boards (e.g. for supporting Barnardo's project and NVRP).
- Other projects that RSG should consider for funding included Contact Centres and Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC).

Members agreed that a set of basic criteria should be developed to determine allocation of resources from the DV Development Fund. Also as bids process under the spending review would normally be launched in May/June, it was agreed that an inter-departmental bid for implementation of the Domestic Violence Strategy and funding of specific projects should be considered.

Action: DV Unit to consider development of basic criteria for bids to Development Fund

Action: Strategy should refer to need for inter-Departmental bid for resources to fund DV initiatives that spanned agencies and Departments.

10. Draft Domestic Violence and Abuse Strategy

A copy of the Draft Strategy had been e-mailed to Members on 29 April 2005. The Group split into 2 groups to consider the shape and broad content of the strategy and to identify possible dates for publication and launch. Each group reported their findings to the main group and agreed the following:

- The general content and thrust of the strategy was agreed;
- Separate sections on Prevention; Protection and Justice; and, Support with some more substance on what the strategy would

do should be inserted into the document (before the Action Plan);

- Reference should be made to Departments who had obtained additional resources or submitted bids; and the need for inter-Departmental DV bid should be highlighted;
- A 5-year timescale should be mentioned with a commitment to review then for continuing relevance;
- Explanation to be inserted regarding the use of the word “victim”;
- Action Plan should be published simultaneously but separately from the Strategy Document;
- Case studies should be considered for inclusion.

Kevin Shiels advised Members that the Draft Strategy would be considered by the DHSSPS Departmental Board at its meeting on 24 June 2005. The intention if approved would be to get Ministerial clearance by mid-July and arrange printing for likely publication and launch by end September 2005.

Action: Kevin Shiels to amend Draft Strategy in light of discussions and to circulate to members

Action: specific Members to e-mail case studies to Marie Austin.

11. Any other business

11.1 *Forthcoming Home Office Consultation on Forced Marriage*

Sharon Harley informed Members that the Home Office intend issuing a consultation document on whether to create a specific criminal offence relating to Forced Marriage in England and Wales. The Northern Ireland Office, having consulted with colleagues in the Northern Ireland departments determined that Northern Ireland should not take part in this particular consultation exercise. Rather the NIO have asked to be kept informed of developments in England and Wales. If considered appropriate at some future stage, a Northern Ireland consultation exercise could be undertaken.

11.2 *Domestic Violence Homicide Reviews*

Sharon Harley informed the group that under the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004, there was a requirement for homicide reviews to be conducted. She advised that England and Wales were taking the lead in developing review guidelines, which were due to be published in September 2005. Community Safety Unit, is taking the lead in developing guidelines for Northern Ireland and will be engaging with other stakeholders in due course.

11.3 *Evaluation of the Non-Violent Relationship Programme*

Paul Doran advised members that the Steering Committee of the Non-Violent Relationship Programme would be launching an Evaluation of the Programme on 10 June 2005 at Northern Ireland Council for

Voluntary Action (NICVA), 61 Duncairn Gardens, Belfast. Invitations will be issued to all RSG Members.

12. Date, time and venue for next meeting(s).

- 12.1 Further meetings of the Regional Steering Group have been arranged for 29 June 2005 at 10.00 a.m. and 8 September 2005 at 10.00 a.m. Both meetings will be held in Room 144, Parliament Buildings.