

# **Minutes of the fifth meeting of the Regional Steering Group on Domestic Violence**

**Thursday 8 September 2005 at 10.00 a.m.  
Room 144, Parliament Buildings, Stormont**

## **Present:**

Andrew Hamilton (DHSSPS) – Chair  
Conal Devitt (NIO)  
Anne Graham (NIWAF)  
James Knox (Rainbow)  
Maxine McCutcheon (MAP)  
Paul Doran (PBNI)  
Eamon McTernan (WHSSB)  
Hilary Harbinson (OFMDFM)  
Jacqui Durkin (NICtS)  
Pauline Leeson (CiNI)

Edell Fitzpatrick (PPS)  
Margaret Black (NHSSB)  
Catherine Reilly (UCHT)  
John Devaney (EHSSB)  
Robin Dempsey (PSNI)  
Peter O'Brien (Law Society)  
Kevin Shiels (DV Unit)  
Marie Austin (DV Unit)  
Elaine Farrell (DV Unit)

## **Apologies:**

Ken Nixon (Resident Magistrate)  
Michael Graham (NIHE)  
Margaret Donaghy (MCRC)  
Deirdre Webb (EHSSB)  
Susan Reid (Victim Support)  
David Mann (DE)

Ken Wilson (DHSSPS)  
Clare Irvine (OLR)  
Brendan Devlin (DSD)  
Grace Henry (Help the Aged)  
Leslie Frew (DHSSPS)

## **In attendance:**

Sharon Harley (NIO)  
Cheryl Lamont (PBNI – Observer)

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Mr Hamilton welcomed everyone to the fifth meeting of the Regional Steering Group and in particular Cheryl Lamont (PBNI) who will replace Paul Doran as a member of the group.

### **2. Minutes of the meeting held on 29 June 2005**

- 2.2 Members agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 29 June 2005 without amendment.

### **3. Matters arising**

#### **3.1 *Vulnerable Adults Forum Representation***

Mr Hamilton advised members that Grace Henry was due to update the group on the position in relation to representation for vulnerable adults. Members will be updated at the next meeting.

#### **3.2 *Funding***

Mr Hamilton advised that although there had been no challenge to the agreed allocation of additional £200K DHSSPS money, the funding could not be formally approved yet as the Minister had not approved the total DHSSPS budget. Nevertheless preparations for spending the additional money should still proceed.

#### **3.3 *Lesbian Line Representative***

Members were advised that a representative from Lesbian Line would now sit on the Information Sub Group.

#### **3.4 *Disability Representative***

Mr Shiels advised that, on advice from Equality colleagues, a letter had been issued to Ms Bridget O'Rawe, Tyrone and Fermanagh Hospital, seeking nomination for representation on the Regional Steering Group. A response had not been received and it was agreed that a reminder letter should issue.

**Action:** DV Unit to issue a further letter to Ms O'Rawe seeking nomination for representation on RSG.

### **4. Update on work on Sub-Groups**

#### **4.1 *Domestic Violence and Law Sub-Group***

In Ken Nixon's absence, Ms Harley reported that the launch of the Domestic Violence and Law DVD/Video would take place on 15 September 2005 in Belfast City Hall. She advised that although invitations had issued, few replies had been received and members who wished to attend should respond immediately.

#### **4.2 *Information Sub-Group***

Ms Reilly informed members that the Sub-Group was due to meet again in 13 September 2005 and provided an update on recent meetings:

- Much of the work of the Sub-Group had been around development of the forthcoming publicity campaign;
- The Sub-Group had considered a possible audit of schools to establish the number that had taken up Domestic Violence training and to identify providers. This matter will be discussed in more detail at the next Sub-Group meeting;
- Contact had been made with all Directors of Nursing Services in Northern Ireland to establish the current position regarding existing arrangements or any plans to introduce Routine Enquiry

of Pregnant Women. The responses have been very positive, and consideration is being given to whether a DHSSPS Departmental circular is needed to set out a new Northern Ireland policy on the matter;

- An invitation had issued to the Multi-Cultural Resource Centre for representation on the Sub-Group, but to date no reply had been received.

#### 4.3 *Children and Young People's Sub-Group*

Mr Shiels advised members that Mr Wilson (Chair) would be taking early retirement with effect from end October 2005. In Mr Wilson's absence, Mr Shiels updated members on the recent Sub-Group meeting:

- Mr John Devaney had been appointed Deputy Chair of the Sub-Group;
- Ms Maddie Bell (Barnardo's) gave a presentation on the Domestic Violence Risk Assessment Model which had been used to assess the severity of risk posed by domestic violence within families where children are present. It is hoped that the roll-out of the model across the four Board areas will commence early next year;
- The Sub-Group agreed that it would take responsibility for domestic violence on the school curriculum subject to the agreement of the Information Sub-Group which currently has responsibility for this issue. The Information Sub-Group has a heavy workload and the issue straddles the remit of both Sub-Groups;
- Mr Wilson, Mr Shiels and Ms Austin had meet with Mary Potter (DENI) to consider ways in which domestic violence could be addressed through child protection guidance procedures for schools. It was agreed that the Chair of the Children and Young People Sub-Group should meet with Department of Education colleagues on a six-monthly basis to consider further domestic violence and child protection issues.

## 5. **Domestic Violence and Abuse Strategy and Initial Action Plan**

### 5.1 *Consideration of final drafts sent to members on 10 August 2005 and agreement of RSG members*

Mr Shiels advised members that he had received a number of amendments to the draft Strategy and Action Plan and that consideration will be given to incorporating them into the final document. Feedback would be provided in writing where suggested amendments are not being incorporated. Members endorsed the final drafts of the Strategy and Action Plan (dated 3 August 2005).

## 5.2 *Arrangements for launch on 10 October 2005*

Mr Shiels informed members that, following the submission to Ministers Hanson and Woodward seeking approval to print and publish, Minister Hanson had agreed to launch the Strategy and Action Plan and had expressed a preference for all relevant Ministers to sign the foreword. After discussion members agreed that the Minister's speech should be followed by short presentations (about 10 minutes) from 3 speakers covering the 3 strands of the strategy (prevention; protection and justice; and support) with each speaker summarising the approach on behalf of all relevant agencies. The speeches should be interspersed with showings of the TV Ad, Radio Ad and Domestic Violence - The Law on Your Side Video. It was agreed that the following members would deliver a presentation on a specific strand of the Strategy:

- Prevention – John Devaney
- Support – representative from a Local Domestic Violence Partnership
- Protection – Edell Fitzpatrick

Ms Graham informed members that NIWAF would not have a difficulty with a member of Women's Aid speaking about support generally i.e. not just from a Women's Aid perspective. Mr Shiels agreed to contact Frances Donnelly regarding a Women's Aid representative from a Local Domestic Violence Partnership, to make the presentation on support services. Mr Shiels suggested that a meeting with the speakers prior to the launch would be useful. It was also agreed that some space should be set aside for agencies to display information leaflets and cards at the launch.

**Action:** Mr Shiels to contact Frances Donnelly regarding a speaker for the launch

**Action:** DV Unit to arrange a meeting week with the three speakers asap.

## 5.3 Members agreed to advise the Domestic Violence Unit whether or not they would be attending the launch and if they wished any member of their organisation to receive an invite. Formal invitations to the launch will issue shortly.

**Action:** DV Unit to e-mail all Regional Steering Group and Sub Group Members regarding attendance at the launch.

## 6. **Publicity Campaign (including revised TV Ad) and contributions to costs from departments.**

### 6.1 Members viewed the new TV ad and posters. Mr Shiels agreed to liaise with AV Browne and Barkers in relation to the following proposed amendments:

- Remove "step family" from the poster and add "partner"
- Add more dots at to end of main text, followed by "or you".

- Remove logos from both posters and add “text phone and language line available”
- Consider whether strapline “anyone can suffer so anyone can call” could be added to end-frame of TV Ad.

**Action:** Mr Shiels to liaise with AV Browne and Barkers in relation to the amendments and e-mail new version of the poster to members when available.

- 6.2 \*Mr Shiels reported that Departments had been contacted regarding contributions for funding towards the publicity campaign. However, some responses were outstanding. It was suggested that for future campaigns the possibility of receiving part-funding from private companies should be explored.

**Action:** Mr Shiels to contact the DHSSPS and NIO Information Offices regarding any possibility of future funding for campaigns from private companies.

## 7. **Draft Criteria for DV Development Fund – Draft Guidance and Criteria and sub-group to consider applications**

- 7.1 Members considered draft guidance and application form for the Domestic Violence Development Fund. The Domestic Violence Development Fund is only available, at present, for 2005/06 and the total amount available is £50,000. The Fund is intended to improve current circumstances, not to replace existing funding arrangements. Applications will be invited for projects with one-off expenditure (with no on-going costs) and which will end on or before 31 March 2006. Members agreed that applications for funding should be considered for projects which are linked directly to two specific aims of the Strategy:

- To further increase and develop awareness generally about domestic violence and the measures in place to help the victims and;
- To educate children and young people and the wider general public that domestic violence is wrong and is unacceptable and to enable them to make informed choices.

Mr Hamilton added that in addition to the aims of the Strategy mentioned, certain parameters would need to apply in relation to the minimum and maximum amount of funding that could be applied for. Members agreed that, when finalised, the guidance and application form should be issued to members of the Regional Steering Group and its Sub-Groups for distribution and that NICVA should be consulted in relation to distribution through its networks.

**Action:** DV Unit to consider the minimum and maximum amount of funding in relation to the Development Fund

**Action:** DV Unit to contact NICVA in relation to publicising availability of Development Fund

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\* Note: Department of Education have confirmed that they are not able to contribute to funding.

## **8. Draft Regional Guidelines on Good Practice and Standards**

- 8.1 Mr Shiels reported that a first draft of Regional Guidelines on Good Practice and Standards had issued to the Chairs of the Local DV Partnerships for consideration. He requested that RSG members consider the document and forward any comments to the Domestic Violence Unit. Mr Shiels advised that an ad-hoc sub-group would be formed to consider and develop the document further. Any member wishing to be part of the sub-group should forward their details to Ms Marie Austin.

**Action:** Members to forward suggestions/amendments to Draft Regional Guidelines on Good Practice and Standards to Domestic Violence Unit.

**Action:** Members wishing to be part of the sub-group to forward details to Ms Austin

## **9. Draft framework on the collection and management of domestic violence data.**

- 9.1 Mr Shiels informed members that statistics colleagues in DHSSPS and NIO were considering draft guidance on the collection and management of domestic violence data and that a copy would be issued to all members in due course.

## **10. AOB**

- 10.1 Mr Shiels reported that the Southern Health and Social Services Board were hosting a consultation day on 26 September 2005 to enable joint consideration of the proposal for establishment of a Southern Area Domestic Violence Partnership to replace the existing three Domestic Violence Forums in the Southern Board area. Mr Shiels advised that he would update members at the next RSG meeting.
- 10.2 Inspector Dempsey circulated a Domestic Violence pocket guide, which was recently produced by PSNI. A supply of the pocket guide will be available at the Strategy launch.
- 10.3 Ms Harley enquired if there had been any further developments on funding for the NVRP. Mr Hamilton advised that the matter had yet to be resolved but it would be kept on the agenda for future discussion.

## **11. Date, time and venue for the next meeting**

11.1 The next meeting of the Regional Steering Group was arranged for Tuesday 6 December 2005 at 10.00 a.m. in Room 144, Parliament Buildings.