

# **TACKLING VIOLENCE AT HOME**

**ACTION PLAN: APRIL 2009 TO SEPTEMBER 2010**

## Foreword

We welcome the publication of this fourth Action Plan under *“Tackling Violence at Home – A Strategy for Addressing Domestic Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland”*.

The launch of the Strategy in October 2005 marked a milestone in the Government’s response to domestic violence by establishing an agreed multi-agency, cross-government strategy for addressing domestic violence in Northern Ireland. Some of the achievements since then include:

- establishment and funding of a free-phone 24-hour domestic violence helpline;
- a series of media campaigns to encourage anyone affected by domestic violence to seek help;
- establishment in Northern Ireland of an Inter-Ministerial Group on Domestic and Sexual Violence.

However, much remains to be done. Initiatives in the 2009/10 Action Plan include:

- the regional roll out of the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference, which helps identify and protect high risk victims of domestic violence;
- the delivery of a range of educational programmes to school children teaching them about personal safety and developing healthy non-violent relationships;
- the roll-out of the routine domestic violence enquiry to A&E Departments, minor injuries units, GPs surgeries including out-of-hours services, and to services for older people;

We have established in Northern Ireland a local Inter-Ministerial Group on Domestic and Sexual Violence which gives locally-elected politicians an important role in ensuring that the Strategy delivers on its objectives and that the issue of domestic violence remains high on the agenda of every Government Department or agency concerned.

It would be remiss of us to overlook the valuable contribution in this area made over many years by the voluntary and community sector. We wish to thank the many organisations whose hard work and dedication to supporting the victims of domestic violence and their children has been instrumental to the success of the strategy so far.

There are clear links between domestic and sexual violence and we are glad to note that the Government's sexual violence strategy "*Tackling Sexual Violence and Abuse – A Regional Strategy 2008-2013*" was launched in June 2008.

We now have strategies in Northern Ireland addressing both domestic and sexual violence and abuse. However it is evident that the many areas of overlap will require a carefully co-ordinated approach to the delivery of both strategies if we are to ensure that victims of domestic and sexual violence and abuse remain the clear focus of our actions.

We must continue to ensure that those who suffer domestic violence and abuse are given the help and support they need and we will be looking to the Regional Strategy Group to deliver on the actions in this Action Plan and to report real progress to the Inter-Ministerial Group.

**Michael McGimpsey**  
**Minister for Health, Social**  
**Services and Public Safety**

**Rt Hon. Paul Goggins**  
**Minister of State**  
**for Northern Ireland**

**Caitriona Ruane**  
**Minister for Education**

**Margaret Ritchie**  
**Minister for Social Development**

**Sammy Wilson**  
**Minister of Finance**  
**and Personnel**

**Gerry Kelly**  
**Office of the First Minister**  
**and Deputy First Minister**

**Robin Newton**  
**Office of the First Minister**  
**and Deputy First Minister**

**STRAND ONE: PREVENTION**

<b>Key Action</b>	<b>Action Summary</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Lead Department</b>	<b>Target date</b>
<b>Domestic Violence Workplace Policies</b>	All statutory bodies (including members of RSG) should be encouraged to develop, implement and maintain domestic violence workplace policies and practices.	<b>Domestic and Sexual Violence Unit (lead) Prevention Sub-Group</b>	<b>DHSSPS</b>	<b>2009/10</b>
	Identify and engage six significant private sector companies to develop and implement workplace policies.	<b>Domestic and Sexual Violence Unit (lead) Prevention Sub-Group</b>	<b>DHSSPS</b>	<b>2009/10</b>
	Arrange an event which publicly acknowledges the commitment of employers deploying resources to tackling domestic violence in the workplace.	<b>Domestic and Sexual Violence Unit (lead) Prevention Sub-Group</b>	<b>DHSSPS</b>	<b>2009/10</b>
<b>Resource Manual for health and social services professionals</b>	To develop a resource manual in consultation with Health and Social Care (HSC) professional bodies. Manual to take account of training needs and also include specific questions in relation to Child Protection.	<b>Domestic and Sexual Violence Unit (lead) Regional Strategy Group and its Sub-Groups Professional Groups</b>	<b>DHSSPS</b>	<b>2009/10</b>

<b>Key Action</b>	<b>Action Summary</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Lead Department</b>	<b>Target date</b>
<b>Media Campaign</b>	To produce a paper for RSG considering options for future domestic violence media campaigns.	<b>Domestic and Sexual Violence Unit (joint lead)</b> <b>Community Safety Unit (joint lead)</b> <b>Prevention Sub-Group</b>	<b>DHSSPS/NIO</b>	<b>September 2009</b>
<b>Domestic Violence Website</b>	To develop an accessible and user friendly independent Domestic Violence Information Website.	<b>Domestic and Sexual Violence Unit (lead)</b> <b>Prevention Sub-Group</b>	<b>DHSSPS</b>	<b>2009/10</b>
	To encourage partner agencies to put a link on their individual websites referring to the Domestic Violence Information Website.	<b>Domestic and Sexual Violence Unit (lead)</b> <b>Regional Strategy Group and its Subgroups</b>	<b>DHSSPS</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
<b>Education in Schools</b>	Schools will be provided with guidance and staff given training to support the implementation of the revised curriculum, including specific guidance to support the new area of Personal Development.	<b>Partnership Management Board (PMB) (joint lead)</b> <b>Department of Education (joint lead)</b>	<b>DE</b>	<b>2009/10</b>
	To ensure that training for schools' designated teachers for child protection includes awareness of domestic violence, and its impact on children.	<b>Department of Education</b> <b>Child Protection Support Service For Schools (CPSSS)</b>	<b>DE</b>	<b>2009/10</b>
	To ensure that all schools recognise the impact on children of an abusive family setting in their child protection policy.	<b>Department of Education</b>	<b>DE</b>	<b>2009/10</b>

<b>Key Action</b>	<b>Action Summary</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Lead Department</b>	<b>Target date</b>
	To secure funding and develop a strategic approach to deliver the Helping Hands/No Fear/Heading for Healthy Relationships packages across Schools.	<b>Women's Aid Federation NI DHSSPS</b>	<b>DHSSPS</b>	<b>2009/10</b>
<b>Children and Young People</b>	Work with CiNI to develop a range of preventative and awareness raising materials for children and young people, examining new ways of communicating information to challenge prevailing attitudes to domestic violence.	<b>Domestic and Sexual Violence Unit Prevention Sub-Group Children and Young People Sub-Group</b>	<b>DHSSPS</b>	<b>2009/10</b>
<b>Routine Enquiry</b>	To conduct a survey to ensure that all maternity units have introduced a routine enquiry as policy in compliance with DHSSPS Policy Circular No: HSS NMG 01/06 and to assess its impact.	<b>Domestic and Sexual Violence Unit Nursing and Midwifery Group of DHSSPS</b>	<b>DHSSPS</b>	<b>2009/10</b>
	To roll-out the routine domestic violence enquiry to A&E Departments, minor injuries units, GPs surgeries including out-of-hours services, and to services for older people.	<b>Domestic and Sexual Violence Unit Prevention Sub-Group</b>	<b>DHSSPS</b>	<b>2009/10</b>
<b>Hard-to-reach/ vulnerable</b>	To engage with hard-to-reach, vulnerable groups (such as elderly, BME, LGB) to explore ways to tackle domestic	<b>Domestic and Sexual Violence Unit</b>	<b>DHSSPS</b>	<b>2009/10</b>

<b>Key Action</b>	<b>Action Summary</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Lead Department</b>	<b>Target date</b>
<b>groups</b>	violence within these groups.	<b>Prevention Sub-Group</b> <b>The Rainbow Project</b>		

**STRAND TWO: PROTECTION AND JUSTICE**

<b>Key Action</b>	<b>Action Summary</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Lead Department</b>	<b>Target date</b>
<b>Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)</b>	To oversee the successful roll out of MARAC throughout Northern Ireland, incorporating "Sanctuary Scheme".	<b>Project Management Group Domestic Violence Protection and Justice Sub-Group Regional Strategy Group NI Housing Executive</b>	<b>NIO DHSSPS DSD</b>	<b>2009/10</b>
<b>Homicide Review</b>	NIO as a member of the UK Steering Group will develop guidance on Domestic Violence Homicide Reviews with a view to establishing Domestic Violence Homicide Reviews in Northern Ireland	<b>Community Safety Unit, NIO (lead) Other criminal justice agencies and other statutory partners</b>	<b>NIO</b>	<b>2009/10</b>
<b>Integrated Family Courts</b>	To consider the development of proposals for an Integrated Family Court Pilot and the evaluation of that pilot.	<b>Northern Ireland Court Service Domestic Violence Protection and Justice Sub-Group</b>	<b>NI Court Service</b>	<b>2009/10</b>
<b>Programmes for perpetrators</b>	The Health Trusts and PBNI to work to ensure availability of a full range of perpetrator programmes (both criminal court and non-court mandated) across Northern Ireland which are standardised, quality assured and with built in support systems for victims family members and significant others	<b>PBNI (joint lead – convicted perpetrators) HSC Trusts (joint lead) Other statutory partners Women's Aid</b>	<b>NIO</b>	<b>2009/10</b>

<b>Raising Awareness</b>	Judicial Studies Board to provide the judiciary with relevant information on domestic violence awareness as it becomes available.	<b>Judicial Studies Board</b>	<b>NI Court Service</b>	<b>On-going</b>
<b>Raising Awareness (cont'd)</b>	Record "special measures" applications and capture special measures data. Evaluate the data produced.	<b>Public Prosecution Service Northern Ireland Court Service Domestic Violence Protection and Justice Sub-Group</b>	<b>NIO NI Court Service</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
	To provide 'special measures' training for all relevant staff in Public Prosecution Service and ensure prosecutors are kept up to date with relevant case law.	<b>Public Prosecution Service</b>	<b>NIO</b>	<b>On-going for all new staff</b>
	To provide training to prosecution and other relevant staff on the PPS Policy for Prosecuting Cases of Domestic Violence including policy/procedure to be adopted in cases where victims withdraw support for the prosecution.	<b>Public Prosecution Service</b>	<b>NIO</b>	<b>On-going for all new staff</b>
	To provide domestic violence awareness training on induction for all new staff within the Court Service.	<b>Northern Ireland Court Service</b>	<b>NI Court Service</b>	<b>Ongoing for new staff</b>

	To liaise with the Law Society, Bar Council and Vocational Legal Trainers to raise awareness of domestic violence issues on an ongoing basis among solicitors, barristers and law students.	<b>Civil Law Reform Division, Departmental Solicitor's Office (lead) Community Safety Unit, NIO DV Regional Strategy Group DV Regional Training Group</b>	<b>DFP</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
<b>Access to Justice</b>	To work in partnership with other key organisations to ensure access to justice by domestic violence victims by identifying existing barriers to justice and working together to remove them e.g. financial, cultural, linguistic, etc.	<b>Regional Strategy Group Domestic Violence Protection and Justice Sub-Group Women's Aid Federation NI NI Legal Services Commission</b>	<b>NIO</b>	<b>2009/10</b>
<b>Improve the sharing of information</b>	To explore the feasibility of the creation of a computerised register of domestic violence civil orders.	<b>PSNI Northern Ireland Court Service</b>	<b>NIO</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
	To develop the Causeway IT System to include the identification of criminal cases with domestic violence motivation thus improving communication and information sharing between the Criminal Justice Agencies.	<b>PSNI Public Prosecution Service</b>	<b>NIO</b>	<b>2009/10</b>

<b>Improving services for all victims</b>	To explore with Local Domestic Violence Partnerships the provision and gaps around best services for victims to ensure best services to victims are provided.	<b>Community Safety Unit, NIO (lead)</b> <b>Domestic Violence Protection and Justice Sub-Group</b> <b>Regional Strategy Group</b> <b>Local Domestic Violence Partnerships</b>	<b>NIO</b>	<b>2009/10</b>
	To implement the Public Prosecution Service Victims and Witnesses policy by providing training to all relevant staff.	<b>Public Prosecution Service</b>	<b>NIO</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
	To consider the recommendations of the Women's Aid Courtwatch research report on women's experiences of the family court in Northern Ireland.	<b>Domestic Violence Protection and Justice Sub-Group</b> <b>Women's Aid Federation NI</b>	<b>NIO</b>	<b>2009/10</b>
<b>Improving services for all victims (cont'd)</b>	To monitor the progress of the special measures pre-policy consultation and consider outcome.	<b>Domestic Violence Protection and Justice Sub-Group</b>	<b>NIO</b>	<b>2009/10</b>
<b>Improve evidence gathering</b>	To improve investigation and case management by Police and Prosecution Service by the delivery of joint PSNI/PPS training on Domestic Violence cases.	<b>PSNI (joint lead)</b> <b>Public Prosecution Service (joint lead)</b> <b>Domestic Violence Protection and Justice Sub-Group</b>	<b>NIO</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>

<b>Anonymous registration for vulnerable voters</b>	Legislation allowing persons to register to vote anonymously if their safety would be at risk (e.g. from abusive ex-partners) should their name and address be accessible on the full electoral register.	<b>Northern Ireland Office, Electoral Unit</b>	<b>NIO</b>	<b>Legislation passed by September 2009 Implementation by December 2009</b>
<b>Child Contact</b>	To identify relevant research, training and good practice in Great Britain in relation to child contact cases which have domestic violence issues and consider the implications for Northern Ireland system.	<b>Domestic Violence Protection and Justice Sub-Group Women's Aid Federation NI</b>	<b>DFP</b>	<b>2009/10</b>
<b>Inter-jurisdiction issues</b>	Consider the jurisdictional implications regarding the enforcement of non-molestation orders.	<b>Domestic Violence Protection and Justice Sub-Group Women's Aid Federation NI</b>	<b>NIO</b>	<b>2009/10</b>
<b>Research and Analysis</b>	Obtain and consider quantitative data on the breach of non-molestation orders and occupation orders	<b>Domestic Violence Protection and Justice Sub-Group Public Prosecution Service</b>	<b>NIO</b>	<b>2009/10</b>
<b>Police Response to Domestic Violence</b>	To consider the recommendations of the Policing Board Thematic Inquiry on Domestic Abuse	<b>Domestic Violence Protection and Justice Sub-Group</b>	<b>NIO</b>	<b>2009/10</b>

**STRAND THREE: SUPPORT**

<b>Key Action</b>	<b>Action Summary</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Lead Department</b>	<b>Target date</b>
<b>Domestic Violence Helpline for victims</b>	Promote the helpline with different client groups through a range of medium.	<b>Women's Aid Federation NI</b>	<b>DHSSPS/NIO/DSD</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
	To agree a protocol with Respect in relation to the Helpline for Perpetrators.	<b>Women's Aid Federation NI NIO CSU Respect</b>	<b>NIO</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
<b>Domestic Violence Helpline form Perpetrators</b>	To provide a helpline service in NI for perpetrators and agree a protocol with Women's Aid Federation NI in relation to the 24 hour Domestic Violence Helpline for Victims.	<b>WAFNI, NIO CSU Respect</b>	<b>NIO</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
<b>Housing</b>	To develop a process to ensure that the most appropriate type of accommodation is available to the service user and identify pathways, i.e.: homeless (NIHE), refuge (Women's Aid), MARAC.	<b>Northern Ireland Housing Executive Women's Aid Federation NI</b>	<b>DSD</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
<b>Support for children and young people affected by domestic violence</b>	To develop commissioning guidance specific to Northern Ireland for different agencies working with children affected by domestic violence,	<b>Children and Young People Sub-Group Support Sub-Group</b>	<b>DHSSPS</b>	<b>December 2009</b>
	To ensure that the commissioning guidance is reflected in the NI Children's Services Plan which is updated annually.	<b>Children and Young People Sub-Group Support Sub-Group</b>	<b>DHSSPS</b>	<b>December 2009</b>

<b>Key Action</b>	<b>Action Summary</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Lead Department</b>	<b>Target date</b>
	To scope the range and level of services available to children across Northern Ireland (via Children's Services Planning).	<b>Children and Young People Sub-Group Regional Health and Social Care Board</b>	<b>DHSSPS</b>	<b>2009/10</b>
<b>People from a minority ethnic background and/or from the lesbian, gay and bisexual community</b>	To ensure that the unique needs of people from a minority ethnic background and/or from the LGB community are met in the provision of information, advice, services and training.	<b>Regional Strategy Group and its Sub-Groups Local Domestic Violence Partnerships The Rainbow Project</b>	<b>DHSSPS/NIO</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
<b>Young people affected by homophobic domestic violence</b>	To ensure that the unique needs of children and young people still living at home and who are victims of homophobic domestic violence by parents, carers and/or siblings are met in the provision of information, advice, services and training.	<b>Support Sub-Group The Rainbow Project</b>	<b>DHSSPS</b>	<b>2009/10</b>
<b>Young people who are perpetrators of domestic violence</b>	To establish the nature and extent of domestic violence perpetrated by young people (14-18 years old) with a view to addressing any identified needs.	<b>Support Sub-Group</b>	<b>DHSSPS/NIO</b>	<b>2009/10</b>
<b>Support for Adults</b>	To develop comprehensive guidance for practitioners working with vulnerable adults and link with any vulnerable adults strategy.	<b>Support Sub-Group</b>	<b>DHSSPS</b>	<b>2009/10</b>

**STRAND FOUR: OTHER PRIORITIES**

<b>Key Action</b>	<b>Action Summary</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Lead Department</b>	<b>Target date</b>
<b>Inter-Ministerial Group on Domestic and Sexual Violence</b>	Provide support to Inter-Ministerial Group.	<b>Domestic and Sexual Violence Unit (joint lead)</b> <b>Community Safety Unit (joint lead)</b>	<b>DHSSPS/NIO</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
	Provide information/recommendations to IMG.	<b>Regional Strategy Group</b>	<b>DHSSPS/NIO</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
<b>Training Strategy</b>	To co-ordinate the implementation of the Training Strategy, in conjunction with the Training Sub-Group, the Local Domestic Violence Partnerships and all relevant agencies/organisations.	<b>Training Coordinator</b> <b>Training Sub-Group</b> <b>Local Domestic Violence Partnerships</b>	<b>DHSSPS</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
<b>Data Collection</b>	Gather information on the service needs of and services currently available to, male victims of domestic violence.	<b>Domestic and Sexual Violence Unit</b> <b>Men's Advisory Project</b>	<b>DHSSPS</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
<b>Performance Indicators</b>	To develop the indicators outlined in Annex 5 of the Strategy to measure the success of the Strategy.	<b>Domestic and Sexual Violence Unit</b>	<b>DHSSPS</b>	<b>September 2009</b>
	To consider a survey to access victims/service users' views on the services provided by a range of	<b>Support Sub-Group</b>	<b>DHSSPS</b>	<b>September 2009</b>

<b>Key Action</b>	<b>Action Summary</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Lead Department</b>	<b>Target date</b>
	protection and support agencies.			
<b>Information Sharing</b>	To seek legislative change to allow for the sharing of personal information in the context of domestic violence for practitioners who work directly with victims or are involved in the assessment of risk.	<b>Northern Ireland Office Criminal Justice Law Branch</b>	<b>NIO</b>	<b>2009/10</b>
<b>Information Sharing (cont'd)</b>	To produce guidance for all relevant agencies on the sharing of personal information in the context of domestic violence.	<b>Domestic Violence and Law Sub-Group (lead) Regional Strategy Group Other Sub Groups Local Domestic Violence Partnerships</b>	<b>NIO</b>	<b>2009/10 (to coincide with the introduction of the new legislation mentioned above)</b>
<b>Sharing Good Practice with other Countries</b>	To continue Inter-Governmental Co-operation through the "Raising the Standards" Group.	<b>Domestic and Sexual Violence Unit (joint lead) Community Safety Unit (joint lead)</b>	<b>DHSSPS/NIO</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
<b>Annual Action Plans and Review of previous year's Action Plan</b>	To produce a regional Annual Action Plan to highlight specific action points and priorities.	<b>Domestic and Sexual Violence Unit Community Safety Unit (joint leads)</b>	<b>DHSSPS/NIO</b>	<b>June 2009</b>

Key Action	Action Summary	Responsibility	Lead Department	Target date
	To produce local Annual Action Plan to highlight specific action points and priorities.	<b>Each Local Domestic Violence Partnership</b>	<b>DHSSPS/NIO</b>	<b>June 2009</b>
	Hold 6 monthly meetings with Chairs of Local Domestic Violence Partnerships to review progress on action and development of local action plans.	<b>Domestic and Sexual Violence Unit Community Safety Unit</b>	<b>DHSSPS/NIO</b>	<b>June/December 2009, June 2010</b>