

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

**THURSDAY 25 JANUARY 2007 AT 2.30 P.M.  
C2.2 CASTLE BUILDINGS, STORMONT ESTATE**

**Present**

Catherine Reilly	Ulster Community and Hospital Trust (Chair)
Maxine McCutcheon	Men's Advisory Project
Stephanie Mallon	Women's Aid Federation
Liz McCrystal	Skills for Justice
Kevin Shiels	Domestic Violence Unit
Marie Austin	Domestic Violence Unit

**Apologies**

Grace Henry	Help The Aged
Una Lynch	Queen's University, Belfast

**In attendance** (*for item 12 only*)

Rab Phipps, DHSSPS Drugs and Alcohol Unit

**1. Introduction and apologies**

1.1 Ms Reilly welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**2. Minutes of the meetings held on 5 October 2006**

2.1 Members agreed the minutes of the meetings held on 5 October 2006.

**3. Matters arising**

3.1 *Updating Domestic Violence Guidance for Faith Communities*  
Mr Shiels informed members that the Draft Domestic Violence Guidance for Faith Communities had been circulated to the Faith Communities Working Group for comment and that the next step would be to issue a revised version to the Regional Steering Group, its Sub Groups and Local Domestic Violence Partnerships for consideration. If time permitted between tasks in the Assembly Mr Shiels and Ms Austin would progress the draft further. Ms Mallon suggested that the final draft be edited to ensure consistency in relation to style before it is issued for wider consultation.

**4. Draft Training Strategy – position of members' organisations on commitment to the Strategy**

4.1.1 Ms Reilly reported that the Training Strategy Working Group was due to meet on 5 February to consider comments received in relation to the draft training strategy, which was circulated to members of the Regional Steering Group, its Sub-Groups and Local Domestic Violence

Partnerships on 7 December 2006. Ms Austin reported that to date no comments had been received but the DV Unit was aware that some local partnerships had been arranging meetings to discuss the draft. Some members expressed concern that the timeframe for comments (31 January 2007) was too tight. It was agreed that the meeting of the Training Strategy Working Group should be postponed and that the deadline for comments should be extended to 23 February 2007.

**Action:** DV Unit to notify relevant groups of the extension to the deadline and postpone the Training Strategy Working Group meeting scheduled for 5 February 2007.

- 4.1.2 Mr Shiels informed members the outcome of the bid he had submitted to DHSSPS for £50k to cover the estimated annual cost of a Training Co-Ordinator (from April 2007) was not yet known. Mr Shiels reminded members that if the bid were not successful, implementation of the Training Strategy would not be feasible and that the launch of the Strategy would be deferred until funds became available.

## **5. Guidelines for Local Domestic Violence Partnerships on their Constitution and Operation and Good Practice Guidance for Individual Agencies**

- 5.1 Members considered the final draft Operational Guidelines for Local Domestic Violence Partnerships and agreed that the Guidelines should be referred to Ms Eithne Gilligan (Women's Aid Federation) for consideration in view of her recent work with various partnerships. The guidance could then be finalised and sent to Local Domestic Violence Partnerships. Members agreed that the final Guidelines should issue to Local Domestic Violence Partnership Chairs under a covering letter from Ms Reilly (Chair) encouraging adoption.

**Action:** Ms Mallon to refer draft Operational Guidelines for Local Domestic Violence Partnerships to Ms Eithne Gilligan for consideration

- 5.2 Members considered the draft 'Good Practice Guidelines for Agencies who may come into Contact with Victims of Domestic Violence and Abuse' and agreed that the guidelines should be issued to the Regional Steering Group, its Sub-Groups and Local Domestic Violence Partnerships for consultation in mid-March.

**Action:** DV Unit to issue draft guidelines for consultation in mid-March

## **6. Workplace Guidelines for Employers and UK Corporate Alliance Against Domestic Violence**

- 6.1.1 The Sub-Group had agreed at its last meeting that consideration should be given to ways in which more employers could be encouraged to adopt workplace policies and join the UK Corporate Alliance Against Domestic Violence (CAADV). Members considered a paper prepared by the DV Unit on possible ways forward and agreed that:

- The Chair should write to each of the 126 employers who indicated (in response to the workplace policy questionnaire issued in May 2006) that they would consider introducing a domestic violence workplace policy to ascertain whether they

have: a) introduced a policy b) have a date for the introduction of a policy c) are still considering introduction of a policy and reminding them about CAADV

- Further contact should be made with Trade Unions – NIPSA; UNISON; NIICTU and teachers unions etc– and umbrella organisations such as Business in the Community; Chief Executive’s Forum; NICVA; Confederation of British Industry (CBI); Education Skills Authority etc - to update them on developments and to seek their assistance in a) promoting the uptake of domestic violence workplace policies, and b) encouraging membership of the CAADV
- Organisations such as Local Councils should be targeted through Community Safety Partnership personnel. Similarly all HSS Trusts and Boards could also be targeted
- The Regional Steering Group, its Sub-Groups and Local Domestic Violence Partnerships should be asked to review, at their next meetings, the position of all their member agencies in respect of workplace policies and CAADV and inform the Information Sub-Group of the position.

6.1.2 Members updated the Group on the position of their own organisations in respect of workplace policies and CAADV membership:

- Ulster Community Hospitals Trust is consulting on a workplace policy and is pursuing membership of CAADV
- Women’s Aid Federation has a workplace policy but has not yet joined CAADV
- Men’s Advisory Project has a workplace policy and will pursue membership of CAADV
- Skills for Justice does not have a workplace policy and is not a member of CAADV.

**Action:** All members to promote the adoption of a workplace policy (if none in place) and membership of CAADV within their own organisation

## **7. Update on research for the collection and management of domestic violence data**

7.1 Ms Robinson informed members that a specification of requirements (incorporating changes to reflect comments received from the Sub - Group) on the collection and management of domestic violence data had been sent to procurement at the end of November. Procurement currently have a backlog of work but it is hoped that the invitation to tender will issue within the next couple of weeks.

## **8. Position on 2007/08 Action Plan**

8.1 Mr Shiels Informed members that feedback from ‘The Position One Year On’ Conference which was held on 24 October 2006 helped inform the drafting of Action Plan No. 2 (2007/08) which was circulated to members on 19 December 2006 for consideration and comment. Mr Shiels encouraged members to consider the inclusion of any initiatives that their respective organisations will be involved in within the Action Plan timeframe. Some members expressed concern that, given the

Christmas holidays, the timeframe for comments was tight (31 January 2007). Members were advised to contact Ms Sharon Harley, Community Safety Unit NIO to seek an extension but were also advised that comments should be submitted asap after the deadline as the Action Plan was due to be finalised and printed by end March 2007. **Action:** Comments on the draft Action Plan No.2 (2007/08) to be sent to [sharon.harley@nio.x.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:sharon.harley@nio.x.gsi.gov.uk)

## **9. Media campaign – update on latest burst of publicity and arrangements for specific meeting to discuss the media strategy for 2007/08 and possible focus on perpetrators**

9.1.1 Ms Mallon informed members that there had been an increase in calls to the Domestic Violence Free-phone Helpline during the media campaign. Ms McCutcheon added that, during the media campaign, she had received calls from male victims who mentioned that the TV Ad had prompted their call.

9.1.2 Mr Shiels informed members that Raising The Standards colleagues from Jersey (Channel Islands) had been granted permission from the Scottish Executive to use the psychological abuse TV Ad and have it dubbed for their own media campaign. Jersey colleagues have also been given copies of our radio ads, however it is not known whether they will be used.

9.1.3 Members agreed that a specific meeting to consider the next burst of the publicity campaign should be arranged for mid-April 2007 when the position re media campaign budget should be known. Members agreed that RM Mervyn Bates should be invited to the meeting as it is proposed that during 2007/08 there should be an attempt to put some focus on perpetrators. This matter will be considered further at the meeting scheduled for 30 March 2007. Ms Mallon agreed to ascertain whether Women's Aid in other regions had been involved in media campaigns that focused on perpetrators.

**Action:** Ms Mallon to contact Women's Aid in other regions in relation to media campaigns that focused on perpetrators.

## **10. Domestic Violence and Abuse Surveys**

### *10.1.1 Young People's Behaviour and Attitudes Survey*

Ms Robinson informed members that there had been a huge demand across Departments to have modules included in the Young People's Behaviour and Attitudes Survey (Autumn 2007). In light of this it has been agreed that the survey should be split into two separate surveys. Efforts are being made to have the domestic violence module included in both surveys. At present the domestic violence module is included in survey that has modules on sex, drugs etc.

10.1.2 Members expressed concern that:

- some of the questions (e.g. around a father abusing children) were in the field of child abuse; and
- the draft questions allowed a young person subjected to multi-abuse (for example, by a parent **and** by a boyfriend/girlfriend) to

tick a number of boxes (see Question 2). As a result it may prove difficult to decipher from responses who precisely was controlling her/him or who was hitting her/him etc.

It was agreed that members should consider the draft domestic violence questions further and forward comments to Eugene Mooney (cc Edel Robinson and Kevin Shiels) by Thursday 1 February 2007. In the meantime DV unit would arrange an early meeting with Eugene and Edel to discuss.

**Action:** Members to consider draft domestic violence questions and send comments to Eugene Mooney (cc Edel Robinson and Kevin Shiels) by Thursday 1 February 2007. DV Unit to meet with NISRA reps to discuss further.

- 10.2 Domestic Abuse in Bristol: Findings from the 2006 Snapshot  
A copy of 'Domestic Abuse in Bristol: Findings from the 2006 Snapshot' had been circulated for members' information. Ms Reilly informed the Group that she intends to meet with John Devaney (QUB) to consider the possibilities in replicating this study in Northern Ireland. Members agreed to consider the document further and send comments to Ms Reilly by 10 February 2007.  
**Action:** Members to send comments to Ms Reilly by 10 February 2007
- 10.3 End Violence Against Women – UK poll of 16 – 20 year olds  
A copy of 'End Violence Against Women – UK poll of 16 – 20 year olds' had been circulated for members' information. Ms McCutcheon reminded members of the importance of including a male element in studies/polls.
- 10.4 Torbay area survey  
A copy of the Torbay area survey had been circulated for members' information.
- 11. Request from Belfast and Lisburn Women's Aid and QUB on possible research on contact issues for children**
- 11.1 Mr Shiels informed members that Ms Patricia Lyness (Belfast and Lisburn Women's Aid) had contacted him in relation to possible funding for a joint research / scoping study (with QUB) to gather information on contact issues with regard to woman and children experiencing domestic violence. Mr Shiels advised that he had referred the matter to Eugene Mooney to explore the possibility of accessing departmental research funding.
- 12. Discussion with Rab Phipps, DHSSPS Drugs and Alcohol Unit on how the groups involved under the domestic violence and drugs and alcohol strategies should link at regional/local level**
- 12.1 Mr Rab Phipps attended the meeting to discuss with members how the groups involved under the domestic violence and drugs and alcohol strategies should link at regional/local level. Mr Phipps made a number of suggestions:
- A presentation on domestic violence could be given to drugs and alcohol groups at regional and local level;

- Each Local Domestic Violence Partnerships should consider recruiting a Drugs and Alcohol Co-Ordination Team (DACT) representative;

**Action:** Mr Phipps agreed to send Mr Shiels details of DACT representatives in each local area

- The Information Sub-group should consider submitting a request for research on the links between drugs and alcohol and domestic violence (There is a Drugs and Alcohol Research Information budget).

**Action:** Research to be placed on agenda for Information Sub-Group meeting scheduled for 7 September 2007.

### **13. Any other business**

There were no matters raised.

### **14. Dates for future meetings**

14.1 The following dates were agreed for the next meetings of the Information Sub Group (venues to be confirmed):

- Friday 30 March 2007 at 10.00 a.m.
- Friday 8 June 2007 at 10.00 a.m.
- Friday 7 September 2007 at 10.00 a.m.
- Friday 7 December 2007 at 10.00 a.m.