

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

**THURSDAY 5 OCTOBER 2006 AT 3.00 P.M.
ROOM 21, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

Present

Catherine Reilly	Ulster Community and Hospital Trust (Chair)
Eugene Mooney	Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency
Maxine McCutcheon	Men's Advisory Project
Stephanie Mallon	Women's Aid Federation (for Oonagh Cullen)
Marlene Carmichael	Northern Ireland Office (for Edel Robinson)
Liz McCrystal	Skills for Justice
Máire Andrews	Men to Men
Kevin Shiels	Domestic Violence Unit
Marie Austin	Domestic Violence Unit
Elaine Farrell	Domestic Violence Unit

Apologies

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

1. Introduction and apologies

- 1.1 Ms Reilly welcomed everyone to the meeting and advised members that Ms Grace Henry (Help The Aged), who had sent in an apology for today's meeting, had replaced Linda Robinson (Age Concern) on this Sub-Group and on the Regional Steering Group.

2. Minutes of the meetings held on 13 June 2006

- 2.1 Members agreed the minutes of the meetings held on 13 June 2006 without amendment.

3. Matters arising

3.1.1 *Domestic Violence on the school curriculum*

Mr Shiels informed members that he would meet with Dorina Edgar (Department of Education, Pupil Support Unit) before the October Conference to ensure that we are aware of all that is happening in the Department of Education with regard to domestic violence and to ensure that actions that had been agreed in the past are being carried out by the Department. It is hoped that a representative from DE would also attend the Conference.

Action: DV Unit to follow up DE representative for the Conference

Note: Mr Shiels met with Dorina Edgar on 17 October 2006

- 3.1.2 Members agreed that a decision, on whether a proposed survey of schools (domestic violence training for teachers etc) should be undertaken, should now be postponed until the way forward on action

by the Education authorities is clearer. The DE is now indicating that Designated teachers will receive training during 2007/08 and a survey may no longer be appropriate at this stage. The matter should be placed on the agenda for further discussion at the next meeting.

3.2 *Young People's Behaviour and Attitudes Survey*

Mr Mooney informed members that, due to the execution of a large European Survey in schools, the Young People's Behaviour and Attitudes Survey due to take place in Autumn 2006 had been put on hold until late 2007. Mr Mooney reported that there were other options for gathering the necessary information and agreed to put together a paper detailing options and costings.

Action: Mr Mooney to provide DV Unit with paper on options and costings

3.3 *Draft Training Strategy*

Ms Reilly reported that the Training Strategy Working Group had held two meetings and was hopeful that after a further meeting it may be in a position to issue the latest draft Training Strategy for consultation.

3.4 *Routine Enquiry in Maternity Units*

Mr Shiels reported that the DHSSPS policy circular on routine enquiry in maternity units is due to be issued shortly. In the meantime, Trusts are moving ahead with implementation.

Note: DHSSPS Policy circular was issued on 12 October 2006 making Routine Enquiry policy for all pregnant women wef March 2007.

3.5 *Updating Domestic Violence Guidance for Faith Communities*

Ms Reilly informed members that the Working Group has had two meetings so far and expect to be in a position by the end of the year to consult widely on draft guidelines. The Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities will be approached to explore ways in which to engage minority faith groups. OFMDFM will also be consulted on the matter as they apparently have a network of contacts for minority groups.

Action: DV unit to contact NICEM when draft is ready

Action: DV unit to contact Billy Gamble OFMDFM when draft is ready

3.6 *Northern Ireland version of Resource Manual for HPSS Professionals and Draft Northern Ireland Good Practice Guidelines for Local Domestic Violence Partnerships and Individual Agencies*

Ms Shiels informed members that he had been considering a Northern Ireland version of the Resource Manual for HPSS Professionals and Draft Northern Ireland Good Practice Guidelines for Local Domestic Violence Partnerships and Individual Agencies but had made no progress since the last Information Sub-Group meeting, due to work on other priorities. Members agreed that guidelines should be developed on how Local Domestic Violence Partnerships should operate and that a separate document should be produced on good practice guidance for agencies. Members also agreed that the Resource Manual for HPSS Professionals should be extended to Health and Social Service professionals. This item will be placed on the agenda for consideration at the next meeting.

Action: DV unit to produce 2 separate draft documents and email for consideration by the Information Sub-Group. All relevant RSG groups and Local DV partnerships will then be consulted.

3.7 *Local Domestic Violence Partnerships' action plans*

Ms Austin reported that there were 4 Local Domestic Violence Action Plans outstanding despite a reminder being issued. It was agreed that a further reminder should issue. When all Plans have been received the DV Unit will prepare a summary of responses for information of members.

Action: DV Unit to issue reminder

Note: only 3 LDVP action plans now outstanding

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

4.1 Members agreed 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. It was agreed that the DV Unit should prepare a paper on the way forward for consideration at the next meeting. On 11 September 2006, Ms Reilly, Mr Shiels and Ms Harley attended a reception in Downing Street, hosted by the Prime Minister and Mrs Blair in recognition of those working on domestic violence policy and to promote the UK Corporate Alliance Against Domestic Violence. Members of the DV unit also attended the Corporate Alliance AGM in London on 28 September 2006.

Action: DV unit to prepare a discussion paper on the way forward for next meeting.

5. **Collection and management of domestic violence data**

5.1 Ms Reilly informed members that Ms Robinson, Mr Mooney, Ms Harley (Community Safety Unit, NIO) and the DV Unit had met to consider the best way forward on the collection and analysis of domestic violence data. The DV Unit had circulated a draft research proposal prepared by Mr Mooney to all members of the Regional Steering Group, its Sub-Groups and Chairs of the Local Domestic Violence Partnerships and had asked for comments. Members agreed that Mr Mooney, Ms Robinson, Ms Harley and the DV Unit should meet to consider any comments received and prepare a revised research proposal for the agreement of the Regional Steering Group. When the research proposal has been agreed Ms Robinson will develop a Specification of Requirements.

Action: DV Unit to arrange meeting

5.2 Ms Carmichael informed members that £40k had been allocated to this research for 06/07. However, if the work was not completed by the end of this financial year there would be no guarantee that the funds would be available for 07/08.

6. Conference 'Tackling Violence at Home - the position one year on' 24 October 2006, Comfort Hotel, Antrim

6.1 Members considered the revised draft programme for "Tackling Violence at Home - The Position One Year On" conference on 24 October 2006 in Comfort Hotel Antrim.

6.2 Three teams will each give a presentation on progress so far under the headings

1) Prevention - Catherine Reilly (UCHT) and Stephanie Mallon (WAF)

2) Protection and Justice – Mairead Lavery (PPS) and Clare Irvine (OLR)

3) Support and Other Priorities – Liz Shaw (SHSSB) and Caroline Holloway (NSPCC).

The same teams will lead the discussion in the workshops and report back to the full meeting.

6.3 Ms Austin informed members that the Conference Steering Group had recently met with Local Domestic Violence Partnership Chairs to discuss the format of the conference and consider progress in relation to the Strategy Action Plan. A number of Chairs provided information on initiatives in their local areas, which will be included in the progress report. Ms Austin asked that Sub-Group members inform the DV Unit if there are any initiatives from their respective organisations that they feel should be highlighted at the conference.

Action: All members to consider and inform the DV Unit of any initiatives they feel should be highlighted at the conference

6.4 Ms Austin reminded members that places for the conference were limited and that any outstanding conference registration forms should be returned as soon as possible.

Action: Members to return conference registration forms to the DV Unit

7. Recent Media Strategy - update

7.1 Members viewed the recent domestic violence TV ad depicting psychological abuse and listened to the Many Forms radio ad and the radio ad targeted at male victims. Ms Austin informed members that the same ads would run again in January 2007.

7.2 Ms Austin reported that over 4000 posters had been distributed to GP surgeries, dental surgeries, chemists, solicitors, courts, support groups and colleges throughout Northern Ireland.

7.3 Ms Mallon informed members that there had been an increase in calls to the Domestic Violence Free-phone Helpline during the media campaign and in particular an increase from first-time callers. Ms McCutcheon added that, during the media campaign, she had dealt with 14 calls from male victims (more than triple the amount from the previous month) and 3 calls from female perpetrators (triple the amount from the previous month). Ms Mallon and Ms McCutcheon agreed to

provide the DV Unit with final figures, including comparisons, in relation to calls received during the media campaign.

Action: Ms Mallon and Ms McCutcheon to forward information to the DV Unit for distribution to members

8. “You Don’t Have to Live in Fear of Domestic Violence - Advice for black and minority ethnic victims”

8.1 Members considered the Home Office draft document - “You Don’t Have to Live in Fear of Domestic Violence - Advice for black and minority ethnic victims”. It was agreed that a Northern Ireland version of this document should be considered for the 2007/06 Action Plan.

8.2 Ms Austin informed members that she has had difficulty in the past in engaging with ethnic minority groups. Ms McCrystal and Ms Mallon agreed to send to the DV Unit details of representatives from the Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities.

Action: Ms McCrystal and Ms Mallon to send NICEM details to DV Unit

9. Any other business

9.1 Women’s Aid Federation AGM and Conference

Ms Mallon informed members that the Women’s Aid Federation’s AGM and Conference – ‘Violence Against Women’ had been scheduled for Monday 27 November 2006 and advised that invites would issue shortly.

9.2 Calendar of Events

Ms Austin advised members that, in future, a calendar of forthcoming events would issue with the agenda and asked that organisations send details of any event they wish to be included in the calendar to the DV unit.

Action: Members to send details of events to DV Unit as and when they have details

9.3 Website

Ms Austin reported that the Domestic Violence Website, as a sub-site of the main DHSSPS website, would shortly go live (hopefully before the One Year On Conference).

10. Dates for future meetings

10.1 The following date was agreed for the next meeting of the Information Sub Group:

- Thursday 25 January 2007 at 2.30 p.m. – venue to be confirmed.