

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

Tuesday 6 June 2006 at 10.00 a.m.

Conference Room, 6th Floor, Millennium House, Belfast

Present: Kevin Shiels (DV Unit) – Chair
Liz Shaw (SHSSB)
Deirdre Webb (EHSSB)
Catherine Reilly (UCHT)
Cheryl Lamont (PBNi)
Annie Campbell (WAF)
Michael Graham (NIHE)
Sharon Harley (NIO)
Briege Robinson (PPS) *for Mairead Lavery*
Linda Robinson (Age Concern)
Clare Irvine (OLR)
Eric Strain (NICtS) *for Mandy Kilpatrick*
Susan Reid (Victim Support)
Marie Austin (DV Unit)

Apologies: Conal Devitt (NIO)
Leslie Frew (DHSSPS)
Pauline Leeson (CiNI)
John Devaney (EHSSB)
Hilary Harbinson (OFMDFM)
Pauline Mooney (PSNI)
Peter O'Brien (Law Society)
Brendan Devlin (DSD)

Observer: Jo O'Reilly (NIO)

1. Introduction

1.1 Mr Shiels (acting Chair) welcomed everyone to the eighth meeting of the Regional Steering Group and in particular Ms Briege Robinson (representing Mairead Lavery PPS) and Mr Eric Strain (representing Mandy Kilpatrick NICtS).

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 7 March 2006

2.1 Members agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 7 March 2006 without amendment.

3. Matters arising

3.1 Domestic Violence Helpline – office refurbishment and new telephone system

Mr Shiels reported that Minister David Hanson, Mr Leslie Frew and Mr Paddy McIntyre (NIHE) attended a photo opportunity at the recently refurbished Domestic Violence Helpline office on 4 April 2006. All were impressed with the refurbished accommodation and the new telephone system. Ms Campbell advised that the accommodation and telephone system provided a great boost to the morale of the staff concerned and had improved the quality of service provided. Apart from a technical hitch in relation to the telephone system, which is being dealt with by BT,

all was working well and Members were invited to contact Women's Aid Federation if they wished to visit the facilities.

3.2 Training Strategy Working Group

3.2.1 Mr Shiels informed Members that a number of nominations to the Training Strategy Working Group had been received and that a meeting with the nominees would be arranged shortly to consider the way forward.

Action: DV Unit to arrange meeting of Training Strategy Working Group

3.2.2 Mr Shiels advised that a survey questionnaire had just been issued to the Chief Executive of each HSS Trust and Board to ascertain the level/type etc. of domestic violence training provided to all staff in each organisation. The information from the survey which was being requested by the end of June 2006 would be useful to the Training Working Group

3.2.3 Victim Support/Women's Aid Protocol

A copy of the Victim Support/Women's Aid Protocol was distributed to Members at the meeting. Ms Harley advised that there was no opportunity during Criminal Justice Week to launch the Protocol and asked Members to notify her if there was an opportunity to launch the document at any dv event their organisation may be holding in the near future.

4. Update on work on Sub-Groups

4.1 Domestic Violence and Law Sub-Group

Ms Harley informed Members that the Domestic Violence and Law Sub-Group had last met on 25 April 2006. Members are currently looking at defining the purpose of the Sub-Group. Other issues being considered by the Sub-Group are dealt with as substantive items in the minutes.

4.2 Information Sub-Group

Ms Reilly's informed Members that the Information Sub-Group had met on 14 March 2006 and 25 April 2006 and provided an update on developments:

- **DV Website:** A domestic violence website - within the DHSSPS home site – is being developed. Members will be given the opportunity in due course to view the draft website and make comments/suggestions. Visitors to the site will be given instructions on how to clear their history

- **Routine Enquiry:** Margaret Graham - DHSSPS Nursing Officer, has responsibility for finalising the DHSSPS circular on routine enquiry and issuing (to Trusts and maternity Units)

Note: Ms Webb informed Members that nothing had reached the Trusts as yet and agreed to follow up on the matter with Ms Graham

- **DV Statistics:** A way forward on the collection and management of domestic violence data is still being considered. The possibility of commissioning specific research on the matter is currently being explored

- **Guidance for Faith Communities:** The Faith Communities Working Group met on 11 May to consider updating the existing 'Domestic Violence Guidance for Faith Communities' (published in 1999). Representatives from some of the main Churches attended the first meeting. However, further efforts are being made to expand the Group and/or encourage submission of comments on drafts from other Faith Communities. The next meeting of the Working Group is scheduled for 7 July 2006.

- **Survey:** Sub-Group Members will consider domestic violence questions for inclusion in the "Young People's Behaviour and Attitudes Survey" which surveys children aged 11-16. The next survey is scheduled for Autumn 2006.

- **Media Strategy:** A draft media strategy covering 2006-2008 will be discussed at the Information Sub-Group meeting on the 13 June 2006 and a representative from AV Browne Advertising will attend. The draft strategy will focus on the different types of abuse and target specific victims/groups etc. The draft strategy will also cover development of campaigns to put more focus on perpetrators. Approval has been received from the Scottish Executive to use the latest Scottish Ad depicting psychological abuse (dubbed for use in Northern Ireland).

- **Funding of Media Campaigns:** So far, the funding available for the media campaign for year 2006/07 is as follows: *Northern Ireland Office - £50k Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety - £30k Police Service of Northern Ireland - £20k Department of Social Development - some funding might be available once media campaign details have been confirmed.*

Mr Shiels informed Members that there was still a shortfall of £30k in the overall estimated budget for 2006/07 and any further contributions from departments or agencies would be welcome.

Action: Each RSG Member should make enquiries within their own organisation in relation to the possible contribution of funds to the media campaign

Note: DSD has now agreed to contribute £10k for year 2006/07

4.3 Children and Young People Sub-Group

Mr Shiels (in Mr Devaney's absence) informed Members that the Sub- Group had last met on 23 February 2006 and provided an update on developments:

- **Views of Young People:** A meeting between representatives of the Sub-Group and the NI Youth Forum in relation to the Participation Network Initiative will be arranged when a Chair has been appointed to the Forum. The aim is to establish a mechanism for seeking the views of young people on any policy/guidance etc that may impact on them.

- **Research Reports:** Two reports - "Research in Practice" by Catherine Humphrey's and Audrey Mull ender and "Domestic Violence: A literature Review" by Mary Barnish had been sent to the Children's Commissioner and Justice Gillen. A letter of thanks had been received from Justice Gillen who had found both reports instructive

- **DV on the school curriculum and guidance for schools:** Mr Delaney, Mr Shiels and Ms Austin had met with representatives from the Department of Education to

discuss DE representation on the Regional Steering Group and Children and Young People Sub-Group. A representative from the Department of Education will not be available to attend meetings on a regular basis. However, the Department is committed to assist in the development of preventative measures in schools and has agreed to include guidance on domestic violence within the Child Protection Guidance for Schools, which is currently being revised. Consideration will also be given to specific guidance for teachers and school staff. A copy of the note of the meeting with the Department of Education is attached at Annex 1.

Action: Mr Shiels to contact Ms Dorina Edgar from the DE Pupil Support Unit regarding the provision of progress reports for RSG and the Children and Young People Sub-Group

5. Update on launch (22 May) of Guidelines for Employers and UK Corporate Alliance Against Domestic Violence and follow-up action

5.1 Mr Shiels informed Members that Minister David Hanson had launched the document “Developing a Workplace Policy on Domestic Violence and Abuse - Guidelines for Employers” at Hillsborough Castle on 22 May 2006. A copy of the guidelines was circulated at the meeting. Mr Shiels advised that approximately 4200 copies of the Guidelines would be issued, by mid-June, to employers across Northern Ireland (those with more than 10 employees) to encourage them to adopt workplace policies. A short survey questionnaire was enclosed with the guidance asking employers to indicate their position as one of the 3 following options:

- (a) they intended to introduce a policy;
- (b) they would consider introducing a policy; or
- (c) they had no plans to introduce a policy.

The results of the survey will be analysed and available for any further action agreed by the Regional Steering Group. Members agreed that the widespread distribution of the new Guidelines was another important step in raising awareness and opening up the debate on DV. Feedback from the survey questionnaire would be helpful in gauging success of the initiative.

Note: A copy of the new guidelines in pdf format is available on request from the DV Unit. Further supplies of hard copies are also available on request.

5.2 A Northern Ireland launch of UK Corporate Alliance Against Domestic Violence was also held on the day. It was agreed that member agencies of RSG, sub-groups and local dv partnerships should be leading by example in promoting workplace policies and Mr Shiels asked that each Member contact their own Human Resource Department to encourage them to join the Alliance. Further information on the Alliance can be found at Annex 1 of the Guidelines for

Employers and also at: www.corporateallianceuk.com

Action: All agencies represented on RSG, its sub-groups and on local dv partnerships to encourage their HR Departments to adopt a workplace policy and be pro-active in implementing it and to join the Corporate Alliance Against DV

5.3 Minister Hanson had suggested that consideration be given to some sort of formal recognition for employers who do adopt a policy, e.g. a certificate of commendation from the Minister and the Regional Steering Group.

Action: DV Unit and NIO staff to consider certificate of commendation.

6. Developments on Non-Violent Relationship Programme (NVRP)

6.1 Members considered a paper on the re-establishment of the Non-Violent Relationship Programme. The South and East Belfast Trust is leading on the matter in conjunction with North and West Belfast Trust, Probation Board, and Women's Aid. The paper detailed progress on getting the project re-established from September 2006 in the greater Belfast area. Ms Lamont welcomed the progress and explained that the partner agencies still need to identify an office for the four staff Members who will provide the service. Ms Lamont asked that Members contact her if their organisation would be able to provide suitable accommodation within this financial year.

Action: Members to contact Ms Lamont if their organisation is able to provide suitable office space for NVRP staff

7. Review of Public Administration – impact on domestic violence structures at regional and local levels

7.1 Members welcomed the recent information bulletins issued by the Domestic Violence Unit in relation to progress within the HPSS on the Review of Public Administration. Ms Webb reported that North and West Belfast Trust and South and East Belfast Trust were due to amalgamate in September 2006. Ms Reilly added that the Ulster Community Hospitals Trust and the Down and Lisburn Trust were also scheduled to amalgamate. Members agreed that this item should be kept on the agenda for future meetings as the changes would likely impact on the membership of RSG etc and on the possible amalgamation of local dv partnerships.

8. Proposed calendar of events (Regional and Local)

8.1 Members agreed that a Calendar of Events should be compiled for distribution to Members of the Regional Steering Group, its Sub- Groups and the Local Domestic Violence Partnerships. A copy will be will also be placed on the Domestic Violence Website when finalised. Mr Shiels asked that Members send to the Domestic Violence Unit details of any events planned between now and end of 2006 to be included in the Calendar.

Action: All RSG members and Local DV Partnership chairs to send DV Unit details of forthcoming events, launches etc DV unit to collate responses from Members and circulate an updated Calendar of Events with future RSG agendas

9 Action Plans for 2006/07 – Local Domestic Violence Partnerships

9.1 Ms Shiels informed Members that Local Domestic Violence Partnership Chairs had been asked to send a copy of their Partnership's Action Plan for 2006/07 to the Domestic Violence Unit. So far responses have been received from only 2 but others had indicated that they were still being developed. Members agreed that the Domestic Violence Unit should follow up on outstanding action plans.

Action: DV Unit to issue reminder to relevant Local Domestic Violence Partnership Chairs

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

10.1 Members discussed and approved the draft programme for "Tackling Violence at Home - The Position One Year On" conference on 24 October 2006 in Comfort Hotel Antrim (attached at Annex 2). Conal Devitt as chair of Regional Steering Group will be invited to chair the event.

Action: Members to consider the draft programme further and forward any comments to the DV Unit ASAP

10.2 The 3 sub-group chairs - John Devaney, Catherine Reilly and Sharon Harley - and another member of each sub-group (possibly from the voluntary sector) will form three presentation teams. One from each team will give a presentation on progress so far under the headings Prevention - Catherine or an other; Protection and Justice - Sharon or an other; Support and Other Priorities - John or an other

Action: Sub-Group Chairs to put item on agenda for next Sub-Group meeting

10.3 There will be 3 x 45-minute workshops in the afternoon to consider priorities for the 2007/08 Action Plan with the same teams leading the discussion. The Domestic Violence Unit and representatives from the Community Safety Unit will provide administrative support. The teams will then report back to the full meeting.

10.4 It is intended that the 2 nominees from each sub-group (6 in total) will get together with Domestic Violence Unit and Community Safety Unit staff to form a 10 - person steering group to organise the conference and to meet with Local DV Partnership Chairs over the coming months. However, the main organising functions will fall to the Domestic Violence Unit and Community Safety Unit.

10.5 Ms Harley commented on the falling number of Members attending meetings of the Regional Steering Group and its Sub-Groups. Members suggested that this issue and the general roles and responsibilities of the RSG and its Sub-Groups could be considered at the conference.

11. Any other business

11.1 **Barnardo's Risk Assessment Model:** Members considered a report by Ms Maddie Bell on the Barnardos Domestic Violence Risk Assessment Model - Training and Mentoring Programme with Health and Social Services Staff Northern Ireland. At present, the Model is being rolled out within the Northern, Southern and Eastern Health and Social Services Board areas. The Western Board are considering when best to implement the model (WHSSB are piloting the NI Needs Assessment framework in Foyle Social Services Trust) and as a result have not requested any training.

Action: DV Unit to contact WHSSB regarding possible implementation of the model

11.2 **Adoption of Strategy Definition of DV:** Members considered a paper detailing the definition of domestic violence used by relevant departments and agencies. The adoption of the Strategy's definition of domestic violence was a specific action in the Action Plan that accompanied the Strategy. Some departments/agencies had not informed the Domestic Violence Unit of the definition used and Members agreed that reminders should be issued to relevant departments/agencies.

Action: DV Unit to contact relevant departments/agencies who had not yet responded regarding definition used

11.3 **Parliamentary Questions on DV:** Mr Shiels informed Members that Ms Iris Robinson (DUP) had asked 4 Parliamentary Questions on domestic violence. Questions related to the number of deaths in Northern Ireland caused by domestic

violence (broken down by gender); the amount of money spent on Refuges in Northern Ireland; and the number of incidents of domestic violence reported in Northern Ireland. The PSNI were unable to provide a gender breakdown of the number of incidents of domestic violence, as this type of breakdown is only available for the number of crimes recorded. The other question related to services available for male victims.

11.4 MARAC Pilot: Ms Lamont asked that an update on the pilot MARAC be put on the agenda for the next meeting.

Action: DV Unit to contact Ms Mooney regarding MARAC update for next meeting

11.5 Research on Feasibility of One-stop-shop: Ms Harley informed Members that Deloitte had submitted the final report on the research into One-Stop-Shop options for Northern Ireland. The report will be considered by the One-Stop-Shop Steering Group and will be tabled for discussion at the next Regional Steering Group meeting.

Action: One-Stop-Shop Research report to be placed on agenda for discussion at the next RSG meeting

12. Dates of the next meeting

12.1 The following dates were agreed for the next meetings of the Regional Steering Group:

- Tuesday 19 September 2006 at 10.00 a.m.
- Tuesday 5 December 2006 at 10.00 a.m.

Meetings would usually be held in Parliament Buildings. However, (depending on the political situation) meeting rooms may not be available in Parliament Buildings for the dates agreed. Mr Shiels asked that Members contact the Domestic Violence Unit if they would be able to provide a suitable meeting room for any of the dates above.

Action: Members to contact DV Unit if able to provide meeting rooms for dates above

Note: Ms Lamont is able to provide a room for the RSG meeting on 5 December 2006 (PBNI, 80 to 90 North St, Belfast).

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: NOTES OF MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 6
APRIL 2006 IN ROOM 703 RATHGAEL HOUSE**

Present:

Eddie Rooney (DE)
Debbie Gowan (DE)
Jill Fitzgerald (DE)
Lorraine Finlay (DE)
Betty Robinson (ETI)
John Devaney (EHSSB)
Kevin Shiels (DHSSPS)
Marie Austin (DHSSPS)

1. Purpose of Meeting

1.1 The meeting was arranged at DHSSPS's request to discuss: DE representation on the Regional Steering Group on Domestic Violence. RSG wishes to seek assistance with developing domestic violence preventative measures in schools.

2. DE Representation

2.1 Eddie confirmed that DE has a responsibility to highlight domestic violence issues in schools and is committed to doing so. However, DE has difficulty providing a representative for every group that asks and has assigned a new post to prioritise and co-ordinate health issues.

2.2 It was agreed that DE staff could attend meetings at critical stages, e.g. to report on progress by 31 December 2006. John agreed it was better to have the work progressed rather than have regular attendance at meetings.

3. Guidance on Domestic Violence

3.1 Written Guidance for Schools

- The re-write of DE Circular 1999/10 'Pastoral Care: Child Protection' will include information for school staff on dealing with children affected by domestic violence, although it may not be a separate entity.
- The revision work will be a phased/section approach and will be available on the Department's website for ease of access, use and revision by end-December 2006. The website will have links to relevant sites. Jill will arrange for Dorina Edgar, Pupil Support Unit (PSU), to contact John. **Action: Jill**

- There may be a need to provide specific guidance for teachers similar in format to the Welsh publication 'Good Practice on Domestic Abuse'. This will be considered by PSU. **Action: PSU**

3.2 Training for Teachers

- A means of promoting domestic violence awareness among teachers is through new enhanced child protection training being developed by the Education and Library Boards. This training will cascade to teachers through schools' Designated Teachers and the Board's Designated Officers. The current training of Designated

Officers will need to be expanded to include domestic violence. DE agreed to explore this. **Action: PSU**

- John stressed the importance of training providers having local knowledge/expertise and suggested the Women's Aid Federation should be consulted.

3.3 Counselling for Pupils

- It was agreed that any school referral system and effective pupil counselling should provide for domestic violence issues. Those delivering the service should have specific skills in this area. • Increased resources for counselling provision will be available under the Children and Young People's Package.

3.4 The Curriculum

- CCEA is developing a new Personal Development Programme for schools and is currently working to develop guidance for Years 1 and 5. Year 1 is complete and Year 5 is due to be completed in June 2006.
- The guidance will be submitted to DE for approval. Lorraine will ensure that a copy is forwarded to the Steering Group. **Action: Lorraine**

5. Other Points Discussed

5.1 The Youth Sector

- There are benefits in incorporating domestic violence issues in youth sector education programmes.

5.2 Questionnaire

- The Steering Group's proposal to issue a questionnaire to all schools about teacher training on domestic violence was agreed, subject to agreement on the content.
- Eddie cautioned that the outcome of the exercise should be clear and the questionnaire carefully worded.
- Kevin agreed to email the questionnaire to Betty for consideration.

Action Betty/Kevin

**'TACKLING VIOLENCE AT HOME – THE POSITION ONE YEAR ON'
COMFORT HOTEL, ANTRIM - TUESDAY 24 OCTOBER 2006
DRAFT PROGRAMME**

Approximate timings

10.00 a.m.

Registration and Tea/Coffee

10.30 a.m.

Introduction to the day

10.40 a.m.

Keynote speaker

11.00 a.m.

Presentations – “Progress in first year of Strategy”

3x 20 min presentations

- Prevention (2 Members of Sub-Group A)
- Protection and Justice (2 Members of Sub-Group B)
- Support and Other Priorities (2 Members of Sub-Group C)

12.00 noon

Video ?

12.20 p.m.

Explanation of afternoon

12.30 p.m.

Lunch

1.30 p.m.

Look forward to 2007/08 Action Plan Priorities

3 workshops (prevention; protection and justice; and, support and other priorities)

2.20 p.m.

Feedback sessions

3x15 min report back sessions, with 5 min Q&A at the end of each

3.30 p.m.

Close