

**Meeting of the Inter-Departmental Steering Group on Sexual
Violence
13th March 2009
E4.02, Castle Buildings**

In attendance:

Dr Maura Briscoe – Chair
Marian McIlhone – Domestic and Sexual Violence Unit -DHSSPS
Gareth Johnston – Joint Chair – NIO
Julie Pollock – Domestic and Sexual Violence Unit -DHSSPS
Janice Smiley - CJPD - NIO
Peter Philip – CJPD - NIO
Sharon Harley – CSU - NIO
Dorina Edgar - DE
Dr Olive Buckley – GP/FMO
Joyce McKee – Principle Social Worker - EHSSB
Clare Quigley – on behalf of Liz Shaw – SHSSB
Patricia Nicholl – OSS - DHSSPS
Phil Tooze – Youth Justice Agency
Marie Patterson on behalf of Alan Smyth – NIO Prisons Branch
Marion Magill – on behalf of Jan Harvey - DEL
Patricia Carey - OFMDFM

Apologies:

Alan Smyth –Marie Patterson attending – NIO Prisons Branch
Damien Brady - DCAL
Jan Harvey – Marion Magill attending - DEL
Jim Simpson - Principle Social Worker -WHSSB
Mairead Lavery - PPS
Maureen McCartney – Mental Health Unit - DHSSPS
Norma Downey – Child Care Policy - DHSSPS
Professor Jackie Bates-Gaston – NI Prisons Service
Dr Paddy Woods - DHSSPS
Liz Shaw – Clare Quigley attending - SHSSB
Eileen Kennedy – Principle Social Worker – NHSSB
Stevie Wilson – PSNI
Dr Brian Gaffney –Health Promotion Agency
Andrew Rooke – NI Probation Board
Martin Bradley – Chief Nursing Officer DHSSPS
Dr Richard Erskine - NIO
Dr Paul Quinn – WHSCT

1. Welcome and Introduction

Dr Maura Briscoe introduced herself and welcomed everyone to the meeting. Each attendee introduced themselves and indicated their areas of responsibility. Marian advised that the Domestic Violence Unit had merged with Sexual Violence Unit from 11th March 2009.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 7th February 2008 and matters arising

Clare Quigley noted an amendment to the minutes reflecting Liz Shaw as a representative from the Southern Health and Social Services Board, not Eastern Health and Social Services Board.

3. 2008/09 Action Plan – report on Progress

Marian McIlhone provided a PowerPoint presentation on Strands 1 and 2 of the 2008/09 Action Plan.

- Strand 1 – Leadership and Direction

Key Action 1 – Provide Leadership and Direction – Marian explained that on-going reports and updates are provided to Minister, Inter-departmental Steering Group and Strategy Sub Groups.

Key Action 2 – Annual Action Plans - Annual Action Plans are updated and reported to Strategy Sub Groups and provided to Inter-departmental Steering Group and Inter-Ministerial Group for approval.

Key Action 3 - Develop a wider understanding of the profile, prevalence and impact of sexual violence and abuse in NI - A sexual Violence module was included in the NI Crime Survey 2008/09 to establish the prevalence and nature of sexual violence and abuse. The results of the survey will be available in the summer. The response so far indicates a statistically valid result.

Marian advised that all the above key actions had been completed in 2008/09's Action Plan.

- Strand 2 – Prevention

Key Action 1 - Develop and deliver a Public Information Campaign– Marian explained that a Public Information Campaign (PIC) Sub Group had been set up and Julie had drafted an overarching Communications Strategy. The original meeting of the PIC was scheduled in March however due to the low numbers attending it has been postponed to 1st April. The Communications Strategy is

considered a live document which will develop throughout the implementation of the Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy.

Furthermore the Sexual Violence Unit has been working closely with Government Advertising Unit in OFMDFM to initiate work on media advertising.

Marian explained that there has already been work taken forward in relation to the Public Information Campaign. The Anti-Rape Poster Campaign launched in December 2008, (joint initiative with DHSSPS, PSNI, and NIO Community Safety Unit) in Universities, pubs and clubs in Belfast and Londonderry. This Poster Campaign will run again at Easter time.

This Key action is therefore part completed and will be included in next years Action Plan 2009/10.

Key Action 2 - Improve education in Schools and Further and Higher Education Institutions to increase awareness among children and young people – Department of Education have introduced a revised curriculum into schools, which includes information for children on relationships and mutual respect, to be completed by end of school year 2010.

The Department of Employment and Learning are also commissioning consultancy review of pastoral care in further education colleges which will embrace issues such as Drugs and Alcohol, sexual violence and Domestic violence and teenage pregnancy.

This key action will be included in next years Action Plan.

Key Action 3 - Promote personal safety for those who are most at risk – Marian explained that this relates to initiatives such as the Anti-Rape Poster Campaign and the Community Safety Unit campaigns 'Get Home Safe', and is linked to Public Information Campaign.

Marian explained that this is on-going and will be incorporated in the Communication Strategy and therefore considered completed in relation to 2008/09 Action Plan.

Key Action 4 - Promote closer working – Marian advised that this is integral to the implementation of the strategy and is progressed through the meetings of the sub-groups, which meet at least three times a year. Other events such as 'Mind of the Abuser Workshop'

and the St. Mary's Conference in Manchester also provide opportunities to promote closer working.

This action is completed in 2008/09 Action Plan.

Key Action 5 - Training for staff - A Training Sub Group has been established to take forward design and delivery of regional training. The Sub groups are also liaising with Skills for Justice in developing National Occupational Standards for tackling domestic and sexual violence/abuse.

Marian also explained that the PSNI are developing standard operating procedures for rape investigations and that the PSNI have developed a Rape Investigators Course for relevant officers. This is first of its kind in the UK.

This action will be carried forward to the 2009/10 Action Plan.

Key Action 6 - Prevent sexually harmful behaviour –Marian explained that this action will be included in the Public Information Campaign and addressed with the introduction of the New Public Protection Arrangements NI.

This action is part completed and will be taken forward in 2009/10 action plan under the Public Information Campaign.

Gareth Johnston provided an update on the Protection and Justice Strand.

- **Stand 3 – Protection and Justice**

Key Action 1 - Modernise the law on Sexual Offences in Northern Ireland – Gareth explained that the Sexual Offences NI Order 2008 was launched on the 2nd February 2009 resulting in the: simplification of the law on sexual offences; the definition of rape being expanded and the age of consent lowered to 16 in NI.

This key action is completed in 2008/09 Action Plan.

Key Action 2 - Legislate for risk assessment and management of sex offenders in the community – Gareth explained that new guidance had been provided by Secretary of State on 6th October 2008. New Public Protection Arrangements Northern Ireland (PPANI) came into effect on

6 October 2008 and these new arrangements are being used by the Agencies involved in risk management.

This key action is completed in 2008/09 Action Plan.

Key Action 3 - Introduce legislation on public protection sentences -

Gareth explained that the Criminal Justice (NI) Order 2008 introduced sentences which enable for dangerous and violent offenders to be detained indefinitely, or for an extended period, based on risks posed to the public. Also, options such as extended custodial sentences, being released on license and electronic monitoring can be used under this order, and a recall unit for those who break their curfew or license is currently being set up. It is planned to introduce Electronic monitoring (or 'tagging') by 1st April 2009.

This action is therefore complete.

Key Action 4 - Review how sexual violence and abuse cases are handled and managed –

The Minister commissioned Criminal Justice Inspectorate to complete an inspection. The Criminal Justice Inspectorate are an independent body which will therefore provide scrutiny and recommendations. The interim results should be available by the summer. Furthermore, the Public Prosecution Service (PPS) is delivered training for Prosecutors and Police on handling of rape cases and on the new Sexual offences (NI) Order 2008.

This key action is part completed and the recommendations from CJINI Report will be taken forward in the 2009-10 Action Plan.

Key Action 5 - Implement procedures to help address sexual offending behaviour and reduce the risk of re-offending –

The pilot sex offenders programme for 18 to 21 year olds commenced in June 2008 and will carry forward into 2009/10, as well as the pilot Violent Offender and Sex Offender Register (ViSOR), with a view to make information more widely available amongst police, prisons and probation offices to facilitate end-to-end multi agency offender management.

This key action is part completed and will be included in 2009/10 Action Plan.

Key Action 6 - Identify and promote best policy and practice in the treatment of victims of sexual violence and abuse –

The PPS have provided best practice training for staff on cases of rape and sexual violence. Gareth added that a new Victim's Code of Practice and Handbook is scheduled for publication in April. Under Special Measures, work is underway in developing Achieving Best Evidence

Practitioners Guidance (linked to Support Strand key action 5). The NSPCC are taking the lead and this piece of work will be carried into next year's action plan.

This key action is part completed and will be included in 2009/10 Action Plan.

Key Action 7 - Identify and support the introduction of appropriate professional development and skills programmes – The Criminal Justice Inspectorate has been asked to review the quality of training and skills development programmes as part of their thematic inspection and make recommendations for improvement. Skills for Justice have also been reviewing learning and development programmes for staff working with victims. Both pieces of work are continuing and interim results on the CJINI inspection should be available during 2009/10, recommendations from CJINI Report will be included in the 2009-10 Action Plan.

This key action has been completed and will be taken into the Training Plan in 2009/10 Action Plan.

Key Action 8 - Scope interim improvements in statistical information about sexual violence – Gareth explained that this action has been taken forward with the module in the NI Crime Survey (covered by Marian under the Leadership and Direction Strand update, key action 3).

This key action has been completed.

Marian provided the update for Support Strand.

- **Strand 4 – Support**

Key Action 1 – Set up a Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) in Northern Ireland – Marian explained the update would be provided by Dr Olive Buckley later in the meeting.

Key Action 2 – Improve timescales for delivery of adult counselling services – Marian explained that a review of Counselling Services commenced in September 2008 with Consultants in DFP beginning with NHSSB as pilot region. Information and data has been gathered and worked on and the Pilot of new systems thinking will run April to September 2009.

The Intervention will then roll out across the region working on principles of good practice by March 2010.

This action will be carried forward to 2009/10 Action Plan.

Key Action 3 – Provide service delivery plans for support of victims and their families – Marian explained that there has been liaison with HSSB's and HSCT's to agree that services to victims of sexual violence and abuse are included in PFA targets for 2008/09 and 2009/10.

This action is completed.

Key Action 4 – Map existing range of services including how they integrate with each other, identify gaps in services and make recommendations – (Linked to Key Action 6 – Provide information) NEXUS Institute were successful in their project funding application and are completing a mapping exercise to identify gaps of services to victims of sexual violence and abuse and provide recommendations on how to address these. To be completed by March 2010.

Key Action 5 – Produce guidance on therapeutic support for children and vulnerable adults pending criminal investigation in relation to their cases – Marian explained that a sub group has been set up by the Victim and Witnesses Task force to draft a NI version of Achieving Best Evidence (ABE). (Linked to Protection and Justice Strand key action 6).

This key action will be carried forward to 2009/10 Action Plan.

Key Action 6 - Provide information - Marian explained that this is linked to Key Action 4 – Mapping a range of services. A draft Directory of Services is being completed by NEXUS Institute which includes details of all services that exist for victims of sexual violence and care pathways. The launch of the Directory is planned for May 2009.

Key Action 7 - Assist employers with duty of care to staff working in the area or sexual violence and abuse or who have experienced sexual victimisation – Marian explained that this has progressed but not in a coordinated way , in that all agencies and organisations are providing their own support services. Recent progression has included the Standards for Supervision for Nursing effective from 1st April 2008 and

Supervision standards/policy for social work in Children's Services.

This Key Action is therefore part completed and will be carried forward to 2009/10 Action Plan and linked with work resulting from key action 7 (CJINI Inspection) in developing a Training Plan.

Key Action 8 - Agree a uniform tool for assessing risks from children and young people displaying sexually harmful behaviour – Marian explained that the AIM 2 Model has been developed and accepted by all agencies as the uniform tool for assessing risks.

This key action is completed.

4. Update on Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC)

Dr Olive Buckley provided a PowerPoint presentation on behalf of the SARC Project Group on the progress of the SARC. Please see Annex A.

Dr Briscoe queried the issue of children's services in relation to sexual violence and abuse. Olive explained that at present children are not being seen by Forensic Medical Officers (FMO) and Paediatricians as there are insufficient resources. This goes against best practice of joint Paediatrician/FMO examinations and also compromises the FMO's evidence in court. There is a lack of expertise in this area and hopefully the introduction of the SARC will help services develop.

5. Action Plan 2009/10 for signing off and approval

Marian asked the group if they had any comments on the draft action plan for 2009/10 and explained that the draft 2009/10 action plan has been reviewed by the Sub Groups and that once agreed will be presented to the Inter-Ministerial Group on the 6th May 2009 for signing off by the Ministers.

Joyce McKee explained that in light of the new Public Health Agency and Regional Health Board that the new Action Plan needs to ensure that there are clear roles and responsibilities noted in agreement with the new Chief Executives.

Clare Quigley commented that in relation to the sex offenders register, there is a flow of people across the across the boarder and questioned how we manage this within the action plan. Gareth explained that this is currently being managed and NIO are liaising

with the South of Ireland on a local level, the Home Office on a UK level, and the European Criminal Record System for the European aspect.

Phil Tooze commented that under the proposed Action for 2009/10 Action Plan on mapping of non-adjudicated sex offenders that the gaps are difficult to capture. Gareth explained that he appreciates the difficulty in this key action but currently there are non-adjudicated offenders taking part in the programmes running in WHSCT and there is a potential to find out how this can be used regionally.

Marian referred to the research provided by the psycho-sexual unit in WHSCT last year funded by 'CAWT' regarding treatment of non-adjudicated offenders both North and south of the border.

Phil Tooze suggested it may be worth considering the wording of the Key action. Gareth and Marian agreed to specify and amend.

Joyce explained that the wording may be best worded as 'mapping gaps in services for those assessed as posing a high risk or identified by CJS or health assessment

- **ACTION POINT – Marian and Gareth to review and amend 2009/10 Action Plan, Prevention strand, Key action 4 and Protection and Justice Key Action 3 on non-adjudicated offenders accordingly.**

Clare explained that there is an issue in relation to the volume/numbers of mental health hospitals holding long stay patients who are not part of the Criminal Justice System that have committed sexual offences. This may need to be reflected in the 2009/10 action plan. Gareth explained that personality disorders are being looked at currently and under CSR a specialist unit for personality disorders for people between health and prison. He expects that the most use will be by the sex offenders and therefore remove people who would normally be in the health service. Gareth explained that there is work already on-going but would review for the action plan.

- **Action point** - Gareth to establish the number of long term patients held in mental health hospitals who have committed sexual offences and consider this to be included in the 09/10 action plan.

Dr Briscoe suggested making the actions identifiable as complete, part complete or not completed in the 2008/09 action plan using a traffic light coded system to assist the IDSG and Sub Groups.

ACTION POINT – Julie to traffic light code the 2008/09 Action Plan.

Dr Briscoe commented that the targets for the 2009/10 action plan need to be SMARTer and advised that instead of 'on-going' or '31st March 2010' more specific target date should be provided. Patricia Nicholl agreed as it is not good practice to have an action plan stay in each year's action plan year on year and not completed.

ACTION POINT – Marian and Gareth to review target dates for key actions and ensure they are SMART.

Dr Briscoe summarised points raised throughout the meeting as follows:

- The need to reflect who the lead responsibilities for key actions fall to in light of the new RPA Structures and;
- that cross border linkages are made in relation to implementing the strategy.

6. Membership of the IDSG

Dr Briscoe explained that with the setting up of the new Regional Health Board and Public Health Agency it would be necessary to review the membership of the IDSG and asked if the group felt the IDSG was adequately represented and if there was anyone not included that should be represented.

Patricia explained that as it is early days, it may take time to know what responsibility falls to whom and who should be represented on this group. Joyce agreed but suggested that both of the new Chief Executives should be represented. Marian explained that both Chief Executive Designates had been invited to attend today's meeting. Once all roles and responsibilities have been identified representatives for Mental Health and Social Care from the Health and Social Care Board.

The group agreed that the representation remain the same at present but to be reviewed at the next meeting.

ACTION POINT – Membership of the IDSG to be reviewed at next IDSG Meeting.

Dr Briscoe queried how often this group should meet. The group agreed that as this meeting is for mid year update on progress and signing off of new Action Plan, then it should meet six monthly, and an extra-ordinary meeting can be arranged if necessary.

7. Inter- Ministerial Group on Domestic and Sexual Abuse

Dr Briscoe explained that the first meeting of the IMG was in May 2008. It was due to meet in October 2008, however, Minister McGimpsey was unwell and therefore the meeting was cancelled. The next meeting is set for 6th May 2009 and this will provide an opportunity to demonstrate the success of the first Sexual Violence and Abuse Action plan and seek endorsement of the new 2009/10 Action Plan.

8. AOB

No other business was raised.

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Wednesday 11th November 2009,
10.30am – venue to be confirmed.**

**Julie Pollock
Domestic and Sexual Violence Unit
DHSSPS
24 – 03 - 09**

