

# **HIDDEN CRIMES, SECRET PAIN**

## **Proposed Regional Strategy for Addressing Sexual Violence in Northern Ireland**

NHSSB Area Public Consultation, 7.00pm on Thursday 22 March,  
Tullyglass Hotel, Ballymena

### **COMMENTS:**

Notice should be taken of the similarities between the cause and effects of sexual violence and domestic violence, and that it might be possible to synergise the work on both and perhaps share resources.

Concern raised at 'joined-up thinking' in particular with the CJS: Will the victim be believed and supported fully.

Victims must be helped to testify. Encourage people to come forward.

Q: Will the strategy be adequately resourced?

Q: Will the PSNI take independent, automatic action against repeat offenders?

Long term consequences of sexual violence need to be understood further to inform strategy and service provision.

Thought must be given to the impact on child victims in addition to physical and mental health i.e.:

- School performance
- Criminal record
- Drug addiction
- Multi-factor victimisation

"Garnerville not suitable" Police based venues for care and attention of victims not seen as suitable by all.

Support for victims (especially children) in aftermath of allegations important.

The use of confidential cases studies as a tool to help inform the way forward.

Voluntary sector organisations could do a lot more to assist with additional resources. Women's Aid provide a one-stop shop. Can this be used?

Services must be flexible to suit the individual needs of all victims (times, services, accessibility)

MASRAM vs. / + MARAC? Duplication / dovetailing of services? Can they learn from each other?

Family support needs to be there and promoted.

24-hour helpline is good idea. Women's Aid provide a 'round the clock service at present for domestic violence.

Some prevention projects exist already; can these be tailored and used? [What are these?]

Department of Education need to be involved as they have a hugely important role to play.