

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

Tuesday 5 December 2006 at 10.00 a.m.

Conference Room, 4th floor, Millennium House, Belfast

Present: Conal Devitt (NIO) – Chair
Christine Hunter (PBNI) *for Cheryl Lamont*
Annie Campbell (WAF)
Sharon Harley (NIO)
Mairead Lavery (PPS)
Joan Hynes (NICtS)
Kevin Shiels (DV Unit)
Marie Austin (DV Unit)
Janis Hatchell (DSD)
Duane Farrell (Help The Aged/Age Concern) *for Grace Henry*
Pauline Mooney (PSNI)
Mary Quinn (EHSSB)
Mervyn Bates RM (NICtS)
Peter O'Brien (Law Society)
Colm Elliott NSPCC

Apologies: Susan Reid (Victim Support)
Hilary Harbinson (OFMDFM)
Leslie Frew (DHSSPS)
Deirdre Webb (EHSSB)
Michael Graham (NIHE)
Margaret Black (NHSSB)
Liz Shaw (SHSSB)
Catherine Reilly (UCHT)
Clare Irvine (OLR)

In attendance: *for Item 10 only*
Edel Robinson (NIO)
Jo O'Reilly (NIO)

1. Introduction

1.1 Mr Devitt (Chair) welcomed everyone to the tenth meeting of the Regional Steering Group.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 19 September 2006

2.1 Members agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 19 September 2006 without amendment.

3. Matters arising

3.1 Representation for CoSO/Rainbow

Mr Shiels reported that a letter had issued to CoSO (Coalition on Sexual Orientation) seeking a representative to sit on the Regional Steering Group. No response has been received to date. Ms Harley informed members that a representative from the Rainbow Project had contacted her to seek representation on the Group and that she had advised that representation was being sought from CoSO (umbrella organisation for LGBT groups) in the first instance.

3.2 *Action Plans for 2006/07 - Local Domestic Violence Partnerships*

Mr Shiels informed members that the DV Unit had requested a copy of each Local Domestic Violence Partnership's Action Plan. Two of the thirteen Action Plans are still outstanding (Sperrin Lakeland and Lisburn). Members agreed that the DV Unit should copy local plans to the three Sub-Groups to consider whether the work taking place at a local level complements/supplements the work being carried out by each Sub-Group. Should RSG members wish to receive a copy of the Action Plans they should contact the DV Unit.

3.3 *Letter of thanks to former members*

Mr Devitt informed members that a letter of thanks to former members of the Regional Steering Group had issued.

3.4 *Letter of thanks to the Scottish Executive*

Mr Devitt reported that a letter of thanks had issued to the Scottish Executive for the use of the TV Ad depicting psychological abuse.

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 met on 28 November 2006 and provided an update on developments:

- *Appointment of Chair and Deputy Chair*
From January 2007, Mr Peter O'Brien will take over from Ms Harley as Chair of the Sub-Group. Ms Alice Beggs (NICtS) will assume the role of Deputy Chair.
- *Action Plan 2*
Members are considering what should go into the Protection and Justice section of the next Action Plan.
- *Cost of Protection Orders*
Letters had issued to the Law Society and the Legal Services Commission in relation to the costs incurred by victims who seek protection orders (in particular for working women who do not qualify for legal aid).
- *NICtS Consultation on Civil Court Fees*

The Sub-Group had submitted a response to the NICtS consultation paper on Civil Courts Fees.

- *Article for The Writ magazine*
Mr Mervyn Bates RM had drafted an article for The Writ magazine on 'Undertakings in Family Homes and Domestic Violence Proceedings'. A copy of the *draft* article was circulated to members for information. The final article will be published in due course.

4.2 **Information Sub-Group**

Mr Shiels (in Ms Reilly's absence) informed members that the Information Sub-Group had met on 5 October 2006 and provided an update on developments:

- *Young People's Behaviour and Attitudes Survey*
The Young People's Behaviour and Attitudes Survey is due to take place in Autumn 2007. In the meantime, a pilot will run in March/April 2007. NISRA are considering a number of questions (drafted by the DV Unit) for inclusion in the pilot. The questions will be issued to the Children and Young People Sub-Group and the Information Sub-Group for consideration. Annie Campbell informed members that Amnesty International had recently conducted a similar survey and agreed to send details to the DV Unit.
Action: Ms Campbell to forward details of the Amnesty survey to the DV Unit
- *Updating Domestic Violence Guidance for Faith Communities*
The DV Unit will issue draft Domestic Violence Guidance for Faith Communities for consultation in the near future.
- *Guidelines for Employers and UK Corporate Alliance*
Further consideration will be given at its next meeting as to how the Sub-Group can encourage more organisations to adopt a workplace policy and sign up to the Corporate Alliance Against Domestic Violence. It is envisaged that contact will be made with Trade Unions and umbrella organisations.
- *Collection and management of domestic violence data*
A Specification of Requirements has been completed for the proposed research on Domestic Violence Data Collection and Management and will shortly go out for tender. It is hoped that a report and recommendations on the way forward will be available by end May 2007.

4.3 **Children and Young People Sub-Group**

Mr Shiels (in Ms Shaw's absence) informed Members that the Sub-Group had not met since 13 September 2006 (next meeting scheduled for 17 January 2007). Therefore, the minutes of the RSG meeting held on 13 September would provide the most up-to-date position on issues being dealt with by the Group. Mr Shiels added that Ms Dorina Edgar from the Department of Education's Pupil Support Unit would attend the Sub-Group's meeting in January 2007 to update members on how domestic violence should be covered under the Personal Development

strand of the new curriculum and on the domestic violence section of the revised Child Protection guidance.

5. Draft Multi-Agency Training Strategy

5.1 A copy of the draft Multi-Agency Training Strategy had been issued to the Group. Mr Shiels asked members to share the document with colleagues in their respective organisations for consideration and to seek support for the Training Strategy and commitment to its implementation. Each organisation would be expected to cover the cost of domestic violence training for all relevant staff and to view the training as part of its normal business. Members agreed to respond by 31 January 2007. The revised draft Strategy will be issued to all Sub-Groups and Local Domestic Violence Partnerships for comment.

Action: DV Unit to issue draft Training Strategy to Sub-Groups and Local Domestic Violence Partnerships

Action: All Members to forward comments to the DV Unit by 31 January 2007 indicating also whether their organisation will commit to the Training Strategy and adopt domestic violence training as part of their normal business for relevant staff

5.2 Mr Shiels informed members that the Training Strategy Working Group had identified a need for a Training Co-ordinator and that he had submitted a bid to DHSSPS for £50k to cover the estimated annual cost from April 2007. The outcome of the bid should be known by end January 2007. Members agreed that if the bid was not successful, implementation of the Training Strategy would not be feasible and that the launch of the Strategy should be deferred until funds became available.

6. Recent Media Campaign - update

6.1 Mr Shiels informed members that he had met recently with AV Browne Advertising to discuss the media performance of the first burst of the Domestic Violence Campaign which took place in August/September 2006. A copy of the AV Browne evaluation paper is attached at Annex 1. Mr Shiels highlighted the following points:

TV campaign

- TV campaign was planned as a medium-weight, 550 ratings campaign which ensured an effective frequency as the average person would have been exposed to the commercial at least 7 times over the course of the four-week campaign
- The campaign ran on a combination of UTV, Channel 4 and GMTV

Radio campaign

- The radio campaign was planned as medium weight on all the stations, to achieve c.3-4 OTH (Opportunities to hear) per week.
- The campaign ran on all available audited commercial stations: Cool FM, Downtown, Belfast City Beat, Mid-FM and the Q

Network which covers the North West, Coleraine, Omagh and Enniskillen areas In addition, the campaign aired on Classic Fm

- Two new stations which launched in November 2005, U105 and Seven FM with transmission areas covering Greater Belfast and Ballymena respectively did not have audited Rajar listenership figures at the time of going to air and were therefore not used for this campaign. However they are now approved and are likely to be used for the second burst of activity
- There were two commercials - the existing 30 sec ad which addresses all elements of domestic violence (Many Forms) and the 40 sec ad which targeted male victims
- The two commercials aired in approx equal rotation

Outdoor campaign

- *Washrooms*
The campaign ran in 67 venues, i.e. pubs/clubs & entertainments venues - with 103 panels per burst. 35 of these were in male washrooms and 68 in female washrooms
- *Buses – A2 Rear of Drivers*
The weighting of this activity took into account the statistical breakdown of domestic violence incidents per DCU area. There was an excellent amount of overshoot achieved, particularly on the A2 Rear of Driver posters with some still being displayed right up to December.

6.2 Mr Shiels reminded members that the next burst of media activity would take place from 8 January 2007 – 28 January 2007 (3 weeks). TV, radio and outdoor will feature.

6.3 Mr Shiels reported that the Doll's House TV ad will run in the Republic of Ireland during November/December 2006 (the TV ad will give details of our Helpline number):

- RTE 1 and 2 between 25th November and 10th December
- TV3 between 1st and 10th December
- TG4 between 1st and 10th December.

6.4 There was a positive response from members to the last burst of activity and in particular to the new TV ad depicting psychological abuse. An evaluation of the media campaign will be carried out following the second burst of publicity at end of January 2007.

6.5 Mr Shiels informed members that the Information Sub-Group would consider the next phase of the media campaign in early 2007. Consideration will be given to some sort of focus on perpetrators in accordance with our media strategy.

7. 24-Hour Domestic Violence Helpline Report, July 2006 – September 2006

7.1 Members considered the Domestic Violence Helpline Report, which covered the period July 2006 – September 2006. Ms Campbell highlighted a number of points:

- Calls in the month of August were the highest recorded in 2007 and calls for September were the second highest recorded
- There was an increase in calls from minority ethnic women during the period of the report
- Calls from family and friends increased during the media campaign (3% increase) as did calls from men
- Advertising through television was a significant source of Helpline information for callers
- A few male perpetrators sought advice through the anonymity of the Helpline service
- Anecdotal evidence gathered by Helpline staff indicated that the campaign also raised public awareness on the various forms that domestic violence can take, and that domestic violence is more than abusive physical behaviours.

7.2 Mr Farrell highlighted the lack of data available on the age of callers to the Helpline. Ms Campbell explained the difficulties around extracting such information from callers in a crisis situation. It was suggested that Mr Farrell should explore the matter further with Women's Aid Federation.

8 Review of Conference (24 October 2006) and position on 2007/08 Action Plan

8.1 Mr Devitt thanked members for their attendance and involvement at the 'Tackling Violence at Home – The Position One Year On' Conference which was held on 24 October 2006. Feedback from the workshops helped inform the drafting of Action Plan No. 2 (2007/08) and the DV Unit will circulate same to members in due course for consideration and comment. Members are encouraged to consider the inclusion of any initiatives that their respective organisations will be involved in within the Action Plan timeframe. Ms Harley emphasised the need for organisations other than the DV Unit and the NIO to take the lead on relevant actions.

Action: DV Unit to circulate draft Action Plan to members for consideration. Comments to be sent to the DV Unit by **31 January 2007**

9. Review of Public Administration

9.1.1 Ms Quinn informed members that the new Chief Executives of the Trusts had taken up their posts to begin work on getting their new organisations ready for the move to the new Trust structures on the 1 April 2007. Directors should be in place by end 2006. The Trusts will operate in shadow format from February 2007. It is envisaged that there will be 7 Area Commissioning Bodies in line with the new council areas. Ms Quinn thought that an amalgamation of Local DV Partnerships to reflect the new trust areas was a strong possibility.

- 9.1.2 Ms Mooney reported that under the new RPA arrangements there would be 8 District Policing Units and the process to select DC Commanders is underway.
- 9.1.3 Mr Bates reported that there would be no changes to the County Court divisions under RPA. Mr Bates asked Ms Lavery if changes would be made to the way in which court summons are served in cases of domestic violence. At present the majority of summons are posted. Ms Lavery agreed to discuss the matter with colleagues. Ms Harley indicated that this matter would be considered for inclusion in Action Plan 2 (2007/08).
Action: Ms Lavery to discuss matter with colleagues
Action: Ms Harley to discuss with DV and Law colleagues
- 9.2 There was a general feeling of uncertainty around the implications of RPA at a local level. Members were clear on what the Regional Structures would look like but had a lack of understanding of what the Sub-Structures would look like. Ms Campbell indicated that Women's Aid was particularly concerned that the funding stream for Supporting People would shift from NIHE to the seven Councils. Mr Elliott agreed that there was a lot of uncertainty and he indicated that NSPCC would seek an urgent meeting with the directors of the new Councils when established.
- 9.3 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 Domestic Violence Partnerships.

10. One-Stop-Shop Research – Presentation by Deloitte and question and answer session

- 10.1 Ms Cathy Colgan, Ms Pamela Montgomery and Ms Angela Hodkinson from Deloitte attended the meeting to brief members on the research carried out by them: 'Feasibility Study on One Stop Shop for Domestic Violence'. A copy of the presentation has been issued with these minutes. A number of areas were covered in the presentation:
- Background to the Study
 - Approach taken
 - Research Findings
 - Option Development and Assessment
 - Conclusions
 - Recommendations: **1)** One Stop Shop options have the greatest potential to enhance range and quality of services available **2)** Recommend NIO work with its partners on Regional Steering Group to develop a pilot of 5.4 (see presentation) **3)** Pilot could possibly link with MARAC pilot in East Antrim
 - Next Steps: **1)** Joint working to refine pilot structures and engage support **2)** Appoint independent project manager to develop pilot **3)** Set baseline and outcome objectives **4)** Evaluate pilot and appraise rollout options.

10.2 Ms Campbell raised some concerns on behalf of Women's Aid, about the linking of MARAC and OSS services, and in particular around the imposition of another layer on top of the existing WA network which already provided a range of services. It was stressed that no decisions had been taken as yet on the way forward and that these would be matters for the RSG to decide. Ms Harley proposed that the Domestic Violence and the Law Sub-Group take forward the pilot project and oversee the development of a One Stop Shop. It was agreed that other key organisations should also be involved in discussions such as the NIHE and Social Services. Members agreed that the DV and Law Sub-Group should meet in February 2007 to discuss the matter further in the light of the forthcoming evaluation of the East Antrim MARAC pilot. The DV and Law Sub-Group would then report findings and recommendations to the Regional Steering Group for its meeting in March 2007.

11. Any other business

11.1 There were no issues raised.

12. Dates of the next meeting

12.1 The following dates were agreed for meetings of the Regional Steering Group in 2007 (venues to be arranged):

- Tuesday 13 March 2007 at 10.00 a.m.
- Tuesday 12 June 2007 at 10.00 a.m.
- Tuesday 11 September 2007 at 10.00 a.m.
- Tuesday 11 December 2007 at 10.00 a.m.

12.2 Parliament Buildings will no longer be available for meetings of the Regional Steering Group. Members should contact the Domestic Violence Unit if they would be able to provide a suitable room for RSG meetings (for at least 25 people) in 2007.

Action: Members to contact DV Unit if able to provide meeting rooms for future meetings