

**MEETING OF THE SUPPORT SUB GROUP OF THE INTER DEPARTMENTAL
STEERING GROUP ON SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND ABUSE**

2.00 pm Friday 18 September 2009

Room E4.18, Castle Buildings, Stormont

Present:

Marian McIlhone	Domestic & Sexual Violence Unit, DHSSPS (Chair)
Julie Houston	Domestic & Sexual Violence Unit, DHSSPS
Jeanette Bratty	Domestic & Sexual Violence Unit, DHSSPS (Secretary)
Peter Philip	Criminal Justice Policy Division, NIO
Dr Olive Buckley	GP/FMO
Marie Patterson	Northern Ireland Prison Service
Deirdre Teague	Women's Aid Federation NI
Martin Crummey	NSPCC
Deirdre McNamee	Public Health Agency
Mark McLaughlin	NI Direct
Helena Bracken	NEXUS

Apologies:

Sarah Williams	Press Office, DHSSPS
Sharon Harley	NIO
Angela McLernon	Nursing Officer, DHSSPS
John O'Doherty	The Rainbow Project
Michael Lynch	Men's Action Network
Sarah Coulter	Nexus Institute
Annie Campbell	Women's Aid Federation NI
Dr Paddy Woods	DHSSPS
Joyce McKee	RHSCB
Lisa Bunting	NSPCC
Maureen McCartney	Mental Health Unit, DHSSPS
Norma Downey	Childcare Policy Division, DHSSPS
Patricia Nicholl	Office of Social Services, DHSSPS
Margaret McCrory	Public Health Agency
Kathryn Campbell	Government Advertising Unit
Val Owens	Independent Consultant
Joan Hynes	Northern Ireland Court Service
Nick Carson	Public Protection Arrangements Northern Ireland
Paul Cassidy	Domestic and Sexual Violence Unit, DHSSPS

Introduction

1. Marian welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Jeanette Bratty as the new secretariat for the Group. She also introduced Mark McLaughlin from NI Direct. It was noted that for future meetings Gillian Clifford from Women's Aid Federation NI would replace Annie Campbell on the Group.

Minutes of Previous Meeting

2. The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed and updates on the action points were reported on as follows:-

AP1 - Marian to investigate and report back to the group on the introduction of legislation which now removes counselling as a recognised qualification under psychotherapy services.

3. Marian advised the group that she has raised this issue with Colin McMinn, in DHSPSS Mental Health Unit. The position is that the Health Professions Council (HPC), which regulates nurses, physiotherapists and other health care workers, has begun consultation on their plans to register psychotherapists and counsellors. This consultation began in July 2009. This is to ensure that all psychotherapists and counsellors possess the correct competencies required to ensure patient safety and are correctly regulated. There are also plans to publish a psychological therapy strategy in Northern Ireland later this year.

AP2 – Marian to raise the potential for amalgamation of the sexual violence and domestic violence strands to counter overlap with Maura Briscoe, Gareth Johnston and Declan McGeown.

4. Marian advised the group that a meeting will take place next week with NIO and DHSSPS officials to discuss configuration of the Sexual Violence and Domestic Violence Strategies.

AP 3 – Members to consider ideas for stocktake and respond to Colin Ramsey at colin.ramsey@dhsspsni.gov.uk by 7 August 2009.

5. No feedback was received. However, the Regional Steering Group at their meeting had expressed concern that if the two areas were amalgamated domestic violence may not get sufficient focus.

AP4 – Julie Houston to circulate Draft Regional Directory of Services to Support Sub-Group members for review in advance of publication.

6. Actioned.

AP5 – Colin Ramsey to circulate details of NEXUS Conference being held on 21 October 2009.

7. Actioned.

Purpose of the Meeting

8. The main purpose of the meeting was to ask the Support Sub-Group to review the draft directory of services. To add to the quality assurance process, members of the Public Information Campaign Sub-Group were also invited to attend this meeting.

Development of Regional Directory of Services

9. Marian provided some background to the decision to develop a Regional Directory of Services. The Directory was to be developed to detail current service provision in Northern Ireland and also identify gaps in services and make recommendations on how these could be addressed. NEXUS had been appointed to produce the Directory of Services.
10. Helena Bracken delivered a presentation to the Group on progress in developing the Directory of Services and the difficulties the researchers had encountered in collating the information.
11. Helena informed the Group that the research undertaken had identified little consistency in services across Northern Ireland. She welcomed feedback on the draft directory and suggested that both the content and format could be improved.
12. She then briefly outlined the methodology adopted by the two NEXUS researchers to develop the directory.
13. Deirdre Teague mentioned that Women's Aid provide a service for people who are trafficked and it was agreed that this should be included in the Directory.

ACTION POINT 1: Helena to include details of service provided by Women's Aid for individuals who are trafficked.

14. It was noted that services for children province-wide were limited. All Health and Social Care Trusts have gateway access to social work services for children; however, not all Trusts work in the same way, which impacts on points of entry to services.
15. Deirdre Teague asked if the Domestic Violence (DV) helpline was listed and queried whether the helpline should be at the front of the document as most people use the helpline as a first point of contact. Deirdre was advised that the

DV helpline was listed and that consideration would be given to her suggestion on the layout of the Directory.

ACTION POINT 2: Helena to ensure that this is taken forward by the researchers.

16. Discussion then followed on identified gaps in service provision, e.g. elderly people, ethnic minority groups, the travelling community and people in same sex relationships.

Target Audience and Format of Regional Directory

17. Marian suggested that the target audience for the Directory was victims/their family members, the public and professionals working with victims. She suggested that a full version of the directory could be provided for professionals that could be ring-bound for ease of updating, but it would be more appropriate to provide victims/their family members and the public with a discreet publication. Martin Crummey advised that there are two routes of entry to NSPCC via Childline and the online helpline number and suggested that these 2 specific numbers are included

ACTION POINT 3: Helena to amend the Directory to include both contact numbers for NSPCC by end of October

17. Marian informed the Group that she would send the Directory to Fionnuala McAndrew in the Health and Social Care Board for her to review and quality assure the information on statutory service provision.

ACTION POINT 4: Marian agreed to liaise with Fionnuala McAndrew to quality assure the statutory provision by end of October.

18. In-depth discussion followed as to the best way forward and the following issues were raised:-

- Would there be value in splitting the directory into voluntary and statutory sector provision?
- Could we colour-code the Directory e.g. by county?
- Could the directory be split into two versions, one for professionals and a version for victims?
- Could we develop a specific and discreet booklet for victims with simply a helpline number and point of entry?
- As websites are more commonly used now, could a website be developed?
- Could the directory be printed in different languages?

ACTION POINT 5: Helena to ensure that this is taken forward by the researchers.

19. Peter Philip suggested the directory could be cross-referenced in the NIO handbook for adult victims of rape which is currently being developed.

20. It was agreed that Jeanette would re-circulate the Directory to those who did not attend today's meeting asking for comments on the content.

ACTION POINT 6: Jeanette to circulate directory to those not present at today's meeting asking them to feedback comments on the content to her by 19 October.

Public Information Media Advertising Campaign

20. Marian advised the group that the advertising campaign will commence week beginning 2 November and that the same format/graphics used for the advertising campaign would be used for the directory. She informed the group that the advert is in testing phase and that the helpline number for the advertising campaign will need to be included in the directory.
21. Marian informed the group a decision had been made to use the Lifeline number for the advertising campaign given that Lifeline provides a 24-hour counselling service and offers additional complementary services to victims. The use of the Lifeline service will be monitored to help determine the effectiveness of the advertising campaign.
22. Olive Buckley supported the use of Lifeline for the helpline as it already has a widely recognised number and branding and carries a certain amount of credibility.
23. Helena Bracken stated that when they interviewed victims almost all said they would have used a helpline number if it had been available at the time of their attack.
24. Marian advised the group that she would be meeting with Lyle Bailie next week to receive feedback on the testing phase of the advertising campaign.

NI Direct Website

25. Julie Houston advised the group that it was proposed to have the NI Direct webpage up and running to coincide with the launch of the advertising campaign. She indicated that the webpage will carry the same branding as used in the

advertising campaign. The information posted on the website needs to be of value for victims and presently it can be quite difficult to find information on sexual assault on the current NI Direct website. She then asked Mark McLaughlin to give the group a brief overview of the NI Direct service.

26. Mark informed the group that NI Direct is a relatively new service which will eventually hold all government information in one place. The website is citizen facing and user friendly and includes useful information for members of the public. The website has been operational since March 2009 and to date has received 1,500,000 hits, mainly in relation to the swine flu outbreak.

27. The Essential Skills campaign was put forward as an example of what can be achieved on the NIDirect website. This campaign was broken down by county and it was suggested a similar model could be adopted for the webpage containing the directory of services.

28. Marian thanked Mark for attending the meeting and concluded that NIDirect provided the means to get information out into the public arena. However, it was agreed that the content and search engines for accessing information on sexual violence need to be improved and this is still a work in progress.

ACTION POINT 7: Any comments on NI Direct to be feed through to Jeanette by end October who will collate and feed back to Mark.

Future Format of Meetings

29. Discussion on this agenda item was carried over to the next meeting.

Date of next meeting

30. It was agreed that Jeanette would trawl for dates for the next meeting, which will be held before Christmas.

ACTION POINT 8: Jeanette to get date for next meeting and notify members

Jeanette Bratty

Domestic and Sexual Violence Unit

16 October 2009

SUMMARY OF ACTION POINTS

ACTION POINT 1: Helena to include details of service provided by Women's Aid for individuals who are trafficked.

ACTION POINT 2: Helena to ensure that this is taken forward by the researchers.

ACTION POINT 3: Helena to amend the Directory to include both contact numbers for NSPCC

ACTION POINT 4: Marian agreed to liaise with Fionnuala McAndrew to quality assure the statutory provision.

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