

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

10am Tuesday 2nd December 2008

Castle Buildings

Present:

Marian McIlhone	Sexual Violence Unit, DHSSPS (Chair)
Julie Pollock	Sexual Violence Unit, DHSSPS
Anne Marks	PSNI
Peter Philip	Criminal Policy Unit, NIO
Christine Hunter	PBNI
Angela McLernon	DHSSPS
Sarah Coulter	NEXUS Institute
Dr Paddy Woods	DHSSPS
Deirdre Teague	Women's Aid

Apologies:

Annie Campbell	Women's Aid
Martin Cartin	WHST
Dr Olive Buckley	GP/FMO
Joyce McKee	EHSSB
Maureen McCartney	DHSSPS
Michael Lynch	Men's Action Network
Norma Downey	DHSSPS

Introduction and Minutes of Previous meeting:

1. Marian welcomed the group and minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed and action points discussed. Under AP1, Marian will continue to follow up.

ACTION POINT 1 - Marian to follow up on making contact with Kevin Keenan and Pat Newe to engage with the Regional Adult Protection Forum in relation to engaging with the Sexual Violence Strategy.

2. In relation to AP2 (NSPCC mapping of Children Services) and AP3 (Probation Board - Children's services planning document) Marian confirmed that both documents had been forwarded to the Department and passed to NEXUS. Marian gave a brief update on the current project that NEXUS Institute will complete to fulfil key actions 4 and 6 (pages 24 and 25 of 2009/09 action plan). NEXUS Institute were successful in their application for project funding and have started work on mapping services for victims in NI and developing a Directory of Services, which will include care pathways and identify gaps in services.

3. AP4 related to guidance on therapeutic support for children and vulnerable adults pending criminal investigation in relation to their cases (Key Action 5, page 24 of 2008/09 action plan). Peter confirmed that he was awaiting feedback from Avery Bowser, NSPCC, who is taking the lead in this area for NI. Currently the Home Office is reviewing their Achieving Best Evidence (ABE) Guidance for Children and this has been delayed. Anne explained that there will be a meeting of the ABE Group on Thursday 4th December and she will provide update to the group. Peter also explained he will be meeting with the Home Office next week and will also provide feedback.

ACTION POINT 2 - Anne and Peter to provide feedback on meetings regarding ABE guidance on therapeutic support for children and vulnerable adults pending criminal investigation in relation to their cases.

4. Marian explained AP5 (Marian to liaise with Social Services for more information re Key Action 7 – Assist employers with duty of care to staff working in the area of sexual violence and abuse or who have experienced sexual victimisation) and will gather information on current protocols regarding the duty of care to staff working in the area of sexual violence.

ACTION POINT 3 - Marian to follow up with Social Services to gather information on support for employees.

5. AP6 from the previous meeting has been cleared and Marian explained that Seamus Logan had recently moved to the Service Delivery Unit and Eileen Kennedy will be replacing him on the Support sub group.
6. The group agreed the minutes of 5th September 2008.
7. Marian advised that the issue of communications of the strategy as a whole had been highlighted and Marian reminded all representatives that they are acting on behalf of their individual organisations and should therefore ensure information is communicated from meetings to their organisations.

Update on 2008 – 2009 Action Plan – Points discussed:

8. Marian explained that the first action plan may have been too ambitious and suggested that next year the action plan should be more focused and prioritise key areas which can progress each year. The Action Plan 2008 – 09 has a lot of areas that have been more time consuming than first anticipated, therefore a more focused approach to further action plans was suggested. The group agreed.
9. The group had been provided with an updated version of the Action Plan 2008 – 09 for Strand 4: Support section and the meeting would follow through each action point to update further.

Key Action 1 – Set up a Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) in Northern Ireland (page 23)

10. Marian explained that the Business Case is expected to be with the Department this week and this is imperative in order to secure the capital funding. The main challenge relates to the low number of recorded statistics. The SARC will also include Family Planning and GUM clinics, which are services that the victim requires, and will provide much needed additional outreach services on a regional basis. That said, it is recognised that as the strategy becomes more successful in encouraging victims to come forward the other services (Family Planning and GUM) may need to decrease within the SARC in the future.
11. The proposed operational date for the SARC is December 2010, however, with the 3 months needed for statutory regulations there may be a delay until April 2011; however, the SARC Project Group are focused to get the SARC services right, as opposed to rushing it's development.

Key Action 2- Improve timescales for delivery of adult counselling services. (Page 23)

12. Marian provided an update on the Review of Counselling services with Consultants in DFP. Marian and Sarah confirmed that a lot of the work has been completed by the consultants behind the scenes. Sarah also confirmed that the consultants had moved from the NEXUS office in Derry to the Belfast office. DFP will collect similar data in the statutory sector. The NHSSB has been the pilot area for the review and it will move out across all board areas. Marian explained that the intention is that the review will expand into children services next year. Marian commended both NHSSB and voluntary sector organisations on their help and support with this work.

13. Marian also explained that the Priorities for Action (PfA) Targets are currently 13 weeks for 2009/10 for psychological therapy, however, they will change to 9 weeks 2010/11. The Department has provided additional funding to HSSB's to increase provision and meet PfA targets. This is to build up service provision for victims in anticipation of the Sexual Violence Strategy beginning to successfully impact on people who need support (increased need for services).

14. Deirdre queried if any work had been completed on how people disclose. Marian explained that the NI Crime Survey will include a Sexual Violence component in order to find out the prevalence of sexual violence and abuse in NI and includes questions on how and to whom people disclosed to.

15. Deirdre explained that there may be a gap around support for victims other than counselling services. Deirdre further explained that her experience on the Domestic Violence Helpline was that women were ringing a number of times anonymously before they would come forward in person for help. She continued that those victims who

come forward for counselling services are ready to talk about their experience. There is perhaps a gap in those who need to talk anonymously before getting to counselling services. Sarah confirmed that when they come to NEXUS they are ready for counselling. The group agreed that this gap is likely to be identified in the mapping of services and would need to be addressed. There may be an opportunity for the SARC to support this purpose.

16. The group also recognised that the interim period of disclosing and support is a key time in the victim's experience and that GP's and health professionals' etc need to be better equipped for them to identify disclosure and then sign-post to relevant organisations. Marian explained that the Directory of Services may include a desk aid for GP's and health professionals providing contact details for appropriate services which would be helpful.

Key Action 3 – Provide service delivery plans for support of victims and their families. (Page 23)

17. Marian explained that there had been some success with referencing services for victims in PfA documents and that through the strategy more resources had been committed for counselling services for the duration of CSR to assist with meeting PfA targets.

Key Action 4 – Map existing range of services including how they integrate with each other, identify gaps in services and make recommendations. (Page 24)

18. Marian explained that additional funding was secured through Project Funding and that NEXUS Institute as mentioned above were successful in their application and will complete a mapping exercise and a Directory of Services for Victims of Sexual Violence and Abuse including Care Pathways to identify gaps in the current services. Sarah confirmed that Helena in the Derry Office was managing the

project and that letters and questionnaires had already been sent out. The draft Directory is due early next year and will be published by April 2009.

19. Christine explained that the Probation Board Victim and Witnesses group would have information similar to the mapping exercise. The Prison Victim Information Scheme is chaired by Gareth Johnston and this may also be a useful link to more information. Peter agreed to liaise with Sarah on any information in this area that may be of help in compiling the Directory of Services

ACTION POINT 4 - Peter to liaise with Sarah regarding information for the mapping exercise and Directory of Service.

20. Marian explained that the intention is to launch the Directory of Services at the same time as the Public Information Campaign officially launches. A Communication Strategy is currently being developed to support the Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy and will include a media campaign.
21. Marian outlined the recent launch of the PSNI pilot poster campaign on Monday 3rd December, in all universities, bars and nightclubs in Belfast and Derry. This is a collaborative initiative between PSNI, DHSSPS and Community Safety Unit. The campaign focuses on Male and female messages on consent and alcohol. The posters and postcards will be displayed throughout the Christmas period in washrooms in these premises.
22. Deirdre explained that the recent Amnesty research on opinions of students about sexual violence and abuse were worrying and that something is needed to address these issues. The group discussed the potential use of Science Shop, (which provides students with topics of research to choose from and complete research free of

charge) in evaluation of the pilot poster campaign. Marian agreed to liaise with PSNI on the suggestion.

ACTION POINT 5 – Marian to suggest the use of Science Shop to PSNI for the evaluation of the pilot poster campaign.

23. Deirdre explained that Women's Aid, funded by NIO, would be attending the 'Poppy Project', a pilot project in London to help women who are currently being trafficked to seek asylum after 30 days, with the objective of determining the feasibility of running a similar pilot programme in NI. Christine also explained that there are no or little statistics in relation to ethnic minorities. Deirdre confirmed that this was the case but the Domestic Violence helpline receives a lot of calls from ethnic minorities seeking refuge and support. Marian requested a breakdown of the DV Helpline in relation to ethnic minorities for this year and last year to assist in taking forward the media campaign.

ACTION POINT 6 - Deirdre to forward a breakdown of calls to the DV helpline in relation to ethnic minorities.

Key Action 5 – Produce Guidance on Therapeutic support for children and vulnerable adults pending criminal investigation in relation to their cases. (Page 24)

24. Peter explained that he was awaiting update from Avery Bowser. Please find attached update from Avery Bowser at Annex 1.

Key Action 6 – Provide Information. (Page 25)

25. Marian explained that Key Actions 4 and 6 are linked by the Project in place to deliver a mapping exercise of services and a directory.

Key Action 7 – Assist employers with duty of care to staff working in the area of sexual violence and abuse or who have experienced sexual victimisation. (Page 25)

26. Marian explained that Skills for Justice are currently working to develop 'Tackling Domestic and Sexual Abuse National Occupational Standards' and this may help contribute to this key action. These can be accredited if desired and will provide skill packages for staff appropriate to the level of intervention with a victim.

27. Christine explained that the Probation Board have Care Services and are expected to go to Care Call for support. Staff must go once a year. Christine agreed to provide more information on the requirement for staff to use.

ACTION POINT 7 – Christine to provide further information on the use of Care Call within the Probation Board.

28. Marian explained that there was a meeting arranged for Friday 5th December with HSSB's to discuss additional funding for training and supervision of staff working with victims. Marian explained the training strategy will be moved to 2009/10 Action Plan. Christine confirmed that it is a difficult area to articulate, as all agencies try to tailor training and support to their organisational needs but this is an opportunity to take a more strategic approach.

Key Action 8 – Agree a uniform tool for assessing risks from children and young people displaying sexually harmful behaviour. (Page 25)

29. Marian explained that at the last meeting Seamus Logan had given her contact details for Nick Robinson who explained that all agencies accept AIM 2 as the uniform tool. Marian queried if anyone would have more information on the tool and Christine agreed to provide

more details on AIM 2. Marian also agreed to contact OSS on an effective date for AIM 2.

ACTION POINT 8– Christine to provide feedback on AIM 2.

ACTION POINT 9 – Marian to contact OSS for an effective date of AIM 2.

Additional Comments:

30. The group summarised that the key actions for next year must be more prioritised and focused. Marian suggested that work should include addressing ethnic minorities as the strategy had limited success in reaching out to ethnic minorities including trafficking as appropriate.

31. Marian also requested that all group members think about key priorities for the next Action plan. The purpose of the next meeting will be to provide an update on progress on 2008/09 Action Plan and agree actions for 2009/10.

32. Marian explained that the DHSSPS and PSNI are arranging an awareness day on 25th March 2009 primarily for MLA's and Public Representatives to provide information on what happens from the PSNI perspective and the Health perspective when a person is raped and the impact it has on their life.

AOB

33. Peter to provide feedback on the Capita Conference on 12th December in London in relation to the Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA) and the impact they have in the SARC's.

ACTION POINT 10 – Peter to feedback on the Capita Conference at next meeting.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Tuesday 17th February 2009, at 10am in
Castle Buildings.

**Summary of Action Points – Support Sub Group Tuesday 2nd December
2008**

ACTION POINT 1 - Marian to follow up on making contact with Kevin Keenan and Pat Newe to engage with the Regional Adult Protection Forum in relation to engaging with the Sexual Violence Strategy.

ACTION POINT 2 - Anne and Peter to provide feedback on meetings regarding ABE guidance on therapeutic support for children and vulnerable adults pending criminal investigation in relation to their cases.

ACTION POINT 3 - Marian to follow up with Social Services to gather information on support for employees.

ACTION POINT 4 - Peter to liaise with Sarah regarding information for the mapping exercise and Directory of Service.

ACTION POINT 5 – Marian to suggest the use of Science Shop to PSNI for the evaluation of the pilot poster campaign.

ACTION POINT 6 - Deirdre to forward a breakdown of calls to the DV helpline in relation to ethnic minorities.

ACTION POINT 7 – Christine to provide further information on the use of Care Call within the Probation Board.

ACTION POINT 8– Christine to provide feedback on AIM 2.

ACTION POINT 9 – Marian to contact OSS for an effective date of AIM 2.

ACTION POINT 10 – Peter to feedback on the Capita Conference at next meeting.

Annex 1

Avery Bowser's update re Key Action 5 - Produce Guidance on Therapeutic support for children and vulnerable adults pending criminal investigation in relation to their cases.

The sub-group set up by the Victim and Witness Task to draft a NI version of Achieving Best Evidence began work in September and we are due to have our fourth meeting tomorrow. Delays in setting up the group mean that the target for a final draft to be ready by March 2009 will not be met and it is likely that this will run into the summer. I have just written to Gareth Johnston to formally advise him of this change to the timetable. Further delay may be encountered in two areas, first identifying police and social services to work on the investigative chapters (which will then require a review of joint protocols for children and adults) and second, the England and Wales revisions of the pre-trial therapy documents have not been completed yet and we are planning to adapt them as part of the terms of reference. The ABE group are proposing to incorporate the pre-trial therapy documents as chapters of a NI ABE and this proposal will be put to the Task Force and the Criminal Justice Board for approval. The most recent England and Wales ABE contains a number of measures which are not legislated for in NI (e.g. Section 137 witnesses). The adaptation of ABE for NI is therefore highlighting a range of practice and legislative issues which might usefully be captured and considered further in the review of special measures. Our intention is to make sure the final document is amenable to expansion or revision of specific sections without the need to reissue the whole document.