

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

**10am Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2009**

**Castle Buildings**

**Present:**

<b>Marian McIlhone</b>	<b>Domestic and Sexual Violence Unit, DHSSPS (Chair)</b>
<b>Julie Houston</b>	<b>Domestic and Sexual Violence Unit, DHSSPS</b>
<b>Colin Ramsey</b>	<b>Domestic and Sexual Violence Unit, DHSSPS (Secretary)</b>
<b>Peter Philip</b>	<b>Criminal Justice Policy Division, NIO</b>
<b>Sarah Coulter</b>	<b>Nexus Institute</b>
<b>D/I Anne Marks</b>	<b>PSNI</b>
<b>John O'Doherty</b>	<b>The Rainbow Project</b>
<b>Michael Lynch</b>	<b>Men's Action Network</b>
<b>Christine Hunter</b>	<b>PBNI</b>
<b>Angela McLernon</b>	<b>Nursing Officer, DHSSPS</b>

**Apologies:**

<b>Annie Campbell</b>	<b>Women's Aid Federation NI</b>
<b>Deirdre Teague</b>	<b>Women's Aid Federation NI</b>
<b>Martin Cartin</b>	<b>WHSC</b>
<b>Dr Olive Buckley</b>	<b>GP/FMO</b>
<b>Dr Paddy Woods</b>	<b>DHSSPS</b>
<b>Eileen Kennedy</b>	<b>RHSCB</b>
<b>Joyce McKee</b>	<b>RHSCB</b>
<b>Lisa Bunting</b>	<b>NSPCC</b>
<b>Maureen McCartney</b>	<b>Mental Health Unit, DHSSPS</b>
<b>Norma Downey</b>	<b>Childcare Policy Division, DHSSPS</b>
<b>Patricia Nicholl</b>	<b>Office of Social Services, DHSSPS</b>

**Introduction**

1. Marian welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that the primary purpose was to have a stock take prior to the summer leave period.

## **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: - Peter to clarify awareness raising measures with NIO colleagues on the pilot project being delivered by Women's Aid to assist victims of Human Trafficking.*

3. Peter explained that the pilot had been launched with extensive press coverage in April. However Women's Aid will not have a key role in raising awareness of the pilot, their remit is solely to care for the victims found. That said, the Immigration and Human Trafficking Subgroup of the Organised Crime Task Force has recognised that raising awareness of the problem of human trafficking is a key issue. NIO met with colleagues in the Republic of Ireland in May. Colleagues in the South have their own specific issues and are addressing them on their own. A poster campaign will run in Northern Ireland affiliated to the current "Blue Blindfold" campaign which is the national campaign currently running in England and Wales related to human trafficking which targets the general public as opposed to victims.

*AP2 – Julie to check the status of the draft of National Occupational Standards for preventing and tackling domestic and sexual violence/abuse and forward to members as appropriate.*

4. Colin advised that he had taken this up with Nicola Kerr, National Occupational Standards (NOS). Nicola has advised that the NOS have gone forward for approval to the UK Commission for Standards and Skills. The UK Commission are extremely busy at present and although they have raised no concerns or issues, there is no indication as to when

approval may be granted although it is hoped that there may be movement before the end of the Summer period. Once approved, it is anticipated that the Home Office in GB will look for money to develop a toolkit towards tackling domestic and sexual violence therefore we will have to consider how best to take things forward from an NI perspective at that time.

5. Marian advised that this would be an issue for the Training Subgroup to take forward when appointed.

*AP 3 – Peter to check the position with regards to additional £1.8m announcement in GB for SARC’s and see if this is ring-fenced or accessible.*

6. Peter advised that he had checked with the Home Office and as envisaged funding was for England and Wales only. Marian explained that she had highlighted the issue of funding within the briefing for the recent Inter Ministerial Group meeting in London which had been cancelled at the last minute.

*AP4 – John to forward copy of Rainbow Project research to Colin.*

7. John provided members with an overview of the “Through our Eyes” report which had been successfully launched on 2 June. The report was commissioned to look at the perceptions and experiences of lesbian, gay and bisexual people towards homophobic hate crime and policing in Northern Ireland. The report produced several key findings and made four recommendations to be taken forward. Members were encouraged to read the report which is available at <http://www.rainbow-project.org/dev/files/report.pdf>

*AP5 – Domestic and Sexual Violence Unit to review and amend the Support Strand of the 2009/10 Sexual Violence Action Plan and circulate to Support Group members to review and approve.*

8. Marian advised that the 09/10 Action Plan had been finalised and was now in the process of being signed off by the Minister.

**Role of Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) and Public Health Agency (PHA)**

9. Marian explained that it was very important that the Domestic and Sexual Violence Unit, DHSSPS maintain a policy role and that responsibility for operational issues is transferred to the HSCB and PHA whom she would be meeting with that afternoon to discuss the transitional arrangements. Marian asked the group if there was anything that they would like collectively raised.

10. John asked if the group were aware that there was now legislation in place to remove counselling as a recognized qualification under psychotherapy services. The group was unaware of this issue and Marian undertook to investigate the matter further.

**ACTION POINT 1: Marian to investigate and report back to the group on the introduction of legislation which now removes counselling as a recognized qualification under psychotherapy services.**

11. Christine queried the extensive overlap between domestic and sexual violence strategies and respective steering and sub groups and asked if it was necessary to address both areas under separate strands. Marian advised that this was indeed the case and that one of the things we would

need to look at was the structures. While each strand had issues peculiar to it, there were a lot of areas of commonality and the same personnel involved in both fields. Angela advised that it would be useful to sit down and map and membership and common issues. Members agreed there may be merit in a joint approach so long as the sexual violence element was not diluted given the domestic violence strategy was further advanced having been launched in October 2005. Marian agreed to escalate the idea with Maura Briscoe, Gareth Johnston and Declan McGeown and report back at the next meeting.

**ACTION POINT 2: 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**

12. Marian asked the group for ideas as to how a stock take might be taken forward. She asked if it may be appropriate to look at the actions for next year in both domestic and sexual violence action plans and investigate correlation between the actions and report to Maura, Gareth and Declan for comment. Members were asked to consider how things might be progressed and provide comments to Colin Ramsey by 7 August 2009.

**ACTION POINT 3: Members to consider ideas for stock take and respond to Colin Ramsey at [colin.ramsey@dhsspsni.gov.uk](mailto:colin.ramsey@dhsspsni.gov.uk) by 7 August 2009.**

**AOB**

13. Christine advised that the Victims Commissioner was coming up from the South of Ireland on 29 June to meet with PBNI and invited members to come along if appropriate.

14. Christine asked if it would be possible for the group to have sight of the draft directory of services being produced by NEXUS. Sarah explained that the document was in its final stages and should be ready by the end of August to be submitted to DHSSPS. Marian explained that the directory would be made available to the group for endorsement.

**ACTION POINT 4: Julie Houston to circulate Draft Regional Directory of Services to Support Sub-Group members for review in advance of publication.**

15. Marian updated members on the Advertising Campaign whereby 5 media companies had been shortlisted down to three. The successful company would be appointed following presentations on 30 June. If feasible she explained that there may be merit in launching the directory alongside the campaign.
16. Marian also provided an update on the review of counselling services. The review was intended to increase capacity to ensure that the support would be available when the advertising campaign goes live. Sarah advised that Benny Matthews from the DFP consultants undertaking the review would be meeting with NEXUS shortly to provide an update and analysis but that early indications were favorable. Sarah also advised that NEXUS were holding their 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary conference on 21 October. Colin undertook to email members with the details.

**ACTION POINT 5: Colin Ramsey to circulate details of Nexus Conference being held on 21 October 2009.**

17. John asked if members were aware of any attempts to do outreach research work with other commercial sex workers and for example engage

with the HIV centre. Marian advised that currently there were no plans however there was potential to progress research with “hard to reach groups” e.g. ethnic minorities and that she would take John’s point on board. John also asked what format the advertising campaign would take with regards to key messages and graphics. Marian explained that the Public Information Campaign Sub-Group formed the main umbrella in driving forward the communications strategy, a key component of which was the media campaign. She indicated that the media campaign would comprise multiple messages and a vast and disparate audience, with delivery of the messages progressive over time and linked to the objectives of the communications strategy.

#### **Date of Next Meeting**

18. The next meeting was scheduled for Tuesday 29 September 2009 at 10.00 am, Castle Buildings, Stormont.

## **SUMMARY OF ACTION POINTS**

**ACTION POINT 1:** Marian to investigate and report back to the group on the introduction of legislation which now removes counselling as a recognized qualification under psychotherapy services.

**ACTION POINT 2:** 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.

**ACTION POINT 3:** Members to consider ideas for stock take and respond to Colin Ramsey at [colin.ramsey@dhsspsni.gov.uk](mailto:colin.ramsey@dhsspsni.gov.uk) by 7 August 2009.

**ACTION POINT 4:** Julie Houston to circulate Draft Regional Directory of Services to Support Sub-Group members for review in advance of publication.

**ACTION POINT 5:** Colin Ramsey to circulate details of Nexus Conference being held on 21 October 2009.

