

Dear Sir/Madam

I am the Area Management Co-ordinator of Foyle Women's Aid, please find below my response to the "Hidden Crimes Secret Pain" document on behalf of our organisation. I have also included Foyle Women's Aid ethos and aims as requested.

Yours Sincerely

Area Management Co-ordinator.

Description of Organisation

The vision of Foyle Women's Aid is to eliminate Domestic Violence in the community by working for, and with all women and children affected by Domestic Violence, to ensure their voices are heard and their needs met.

Foyle Women's Aid core aims are as follows:

- To provide temporary Refuge to women and their children suffering mental, physical or sexual abuse within the home.
- To encourage each woman to take control of her own future, whether this involves returning home or beginning an independent life.
- To recognize and care for the emotional needs of the children and young people involved.
- To offer support and advice to any woman who asks for it, whether or not she is living in a Refuge and to offer supportive aftercare to women leaving the Refuge.
- To educate and inform the public, the media, the courts, social services and other agencies, always mindful of the fact that the abuse of women is a direct result of the general position of women in our society.

HIDDEN CRIMES SECRET PAIN – RESPONSE.

- 1 Yes
- 2 To start with education from nursery upwards. Break down the secrecy by talking about sexual violence. Make it mandatory training on Sexual Abuse for professionals e.g. nurses, doctors, police, social workers, solicitors and judges. The training should be based on victim's experiences. Teach parents how to protect their children and create more awareness around child protection and sexual abuse. Public messages media, ads, bill boards. Make it clear what sexual violence is and how to report it. Teach children how to identify support networks of people they trust to talk to. Build capacity in children how to keep themselves safe and how to tell. Programmes already developed but not fully resourced should be identified and rolled out.
3.
 - Child protection groups with proper Interagency representation
 - Education Board.
 - NSPCC
 - NEXUS
 - Mental Health
 - Women's Aid
 - PSNI Care Unit
 - Victim Support
 - Rainbow
 - Childline
 - Well Women
 - Adult Survivor Groups and other mentioned in the document. The equality issues within the group needs to be addressed between statutory and voluntary. A link directly into senior management so that this group is not just a talking shop. Resourced effectively.
4. Children need to have mandatory Sex Education and programmes with discussion regarding keeping themselves safe and information and education right through school, it should be mandatory and not at parents discretion. Primary, secondary and 3rd level.

We do have research that has been carried out by NSPCC on young people's attitudes to violence including sexual violence that should be reviewed. Focus groups with adult survivors and those who provide services for adult survivors to draw also on their experiences. The Heather Report which has extensive information from survivors. Local research to be carried out with school children and young people on experiences and knowledge and understanding of abuse and sexual violence.

5. Education mandatory for all key professionals who may encompass Sexual Violence Community Education. Parent programmes on how best to protect children. How to develop your communication with children to support them to talk of experiences. Women's Aid, Helping Hands and other protective programmes that could be delivered to a wide range of workers and parents to help increase awareness.
6. Yes it is essential that government give clear messages regarding Sexual Violence. One of the most effective ways of doing this is by developing a robust Sexual Strategy which will be fully resourced to be delivered in order that we deal effectively with all aspects of Sexual Violence provision, protection and prevention. Political will to address Sexual Violence needs to be very explicit from government down.
7. Victims very often respond to good documentary programmes that are sensitively made and provide information on the impact of Violence and Sexual Violence and how to access help. Media also need to self-monitor the sexual messages and how they can impact positively on sexual abuse and violence. Education and training needs to be provided to those who work in media about how they impact and the impact of poor reporting has on the victims. They need to take responsibility and be held accountable for inaccurate and damaging reports. Media could support the development of educational programmes for schools and young people. Magazines and literature that children read can have more informed information on Abuse and Sexual Violence. Should be vetted and challenged on inappropriate literature and advertising that is quite often marketed at young people.
8.
 - There needs to be public awareness campaigns on Sexual Violence similar to the Zero Tolerance Campaigns run in Scotland on Domestic Violence, media, newspapers, posters.
 - Healthy Relationships should be mandatory in all schools for all ages.
 - Women's Aid have this pack developed and one working in a number of schools, this could be resourced and sent to all schools.
 - Protective Behaviours Programme could be rolled out also for Primary Schools.
 - Codes of Conduct for employees around inappropriate behaviour and harassment. Employers signing up to No Tolerance of Sexual Violence.
 - Awareness programmes for parents regarding talking to their children about sex and respect and how to deal with peer pressure regarding sexual relationships.
 - Community groups being trained up to run programmes and discussion around health relationships, personal protection programmes, website information, safety on the Internet courses, education on perpetrators operate and how adults can protect

children, personal protection on how drinking/drugs makes you vulnerable. Again some of this work has been developed and it could be resourced regionally.

9. All voluntary groups, youth clubs, employers, businesses especially nightclubs, bouncers, taxi drivers have zero tolerance of sexual misconduct within their premises and training. Information and training carried out in football clubs, leisure centres, sport centres, rugby clubs and Codes of Conduct within sporting teams on and off the pitch.
10. Government should resource adequately all of the programmes that need to be carried out to educate and create awareness of this issue. Make it mandatory for professionals and organisations that work with children.
Make it mandatory for all these sectors to include Domestic Violence, stalking and other behaviour in their Child Protection policies.
Mandatory training for all professionals
Support and resources in the voluntary and community sector to run programmes
Demonstrate political will to tackle the problem.
11. Further local research. Review of statistics gathering. Interagency groups sharing information on Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence. Interagency groups communication and structures, reviewed and restructured. Mandatory resourcing of these groups feedback into senior management. Remembering that most victims of sexual crime don't report, it is crucial we look at the barriers to reporting and in my experience these gaps in issues need to be addressed to give us an accurate picture of the extent of the problem. They should be victim lead. A big support gap for victims.
Court Support Work that is currently being carried out by Women's Aid and others should be resourced and rolled out regionally. One regional centre based 2 hours drive away is not an appropriate support for victims of sex crimes and will not be supported in the North West and rural areas. This creates further barriers to help.

12.

- Training and information on protection for all professionals.
- Programmes of support for all victims resourced.
- Information developed for vulnerable adults and those working with vulnerable adults. Link up of information sharing between Domestic Violence and Child Protection and Vulnerable Adults Groups.
- Development of reporting procedure to support victims.
- Development and roll out of Domestic Violence Risk Assessment (Marac), which should be linked to Masram.
- Review and monitoring of systems.
- Further research with victims.
- Register for perpetrators of Domestic Violence. Remembering the links between violence and sexual abuse.
- Intervention programmes for victims – resourced.
- Information to be clear.
- Training on these links to be between agencies and user groups.

13

- Child Protection procedures and training for all agencies mandatory.
- Clear reporting mechanisms
- Training in the community with parents, help them to raise their own children's awareness.
- Training with education review of child protection procedures to include Domestic Violence.
- A support line to help anyone who needs support with reporting or clarifying concerns.
- Interagency Child Protection panels to include Domestic Violence and increased information sharing.
- Link to Vulnerable Adults Forums, more training for staff and how to access support.
- Improved communication between voluntary and statutory sectors.
- Risk assessment of those most vulnerable and identified.
- Increased awareness around young people who perpetrate for all agencies. Further support for those that seek help to change.
- Ongoing and increased monitoring in families where there is a perpetrator of Domestic Violence or Sexual Abuse.
- Increasing education, information, support, advice.
- Increase the support network in statutory and voluntary agencies.
- Programme Support or families dealing with Sexual Abuse.
- Increased monitoring and information.
- Sharing if those not in Criminal Justice System.

14

- Support parents, carers, professionals by reviewing and rolling out training with clear guidelines.
- Sanctions for agencies that don't adhere to guidelines
- Link up of the forums of Domestic Violence, Sexual Abuse and Vulnerable Adults.
- Legislation to promote information sharing, victims to be paramount.

15

- Perpetrators should be convicted (clear strong message to victims)
- Guidelines for sentencing should be clear. Judges, magistrates and all in the legal system should have regular training on Sexual Abuse and its impact on the victim.
- The process for reporting sex crimes should be reviewed and the support gaps identified.
- Increased resources to support victims through the Criminal Justice System with emphasis on the impact on the victim.
- The law should better support victims.
- Review of the law when perpetrators of Domestic Violence, murder partners and have full control over children when they don't take responsibility for the crime.
- Contact procedures reviewed and children witnessing Domestic Violence should be protected by the law. They should be paramount.

16

- Clear guidelines and support for parents to work with young people on this issue.
- Training for youth clubs, voluntaries and guidelines about identifying young people that may be vulnerable.
- Programmes and education in schools

17

- Raised awareness amongst children and young people about exploitation and how this can happen, how to protect themselves.
- Raised awareness in voluntary and statutory sector on the profile of perpetrators and grooming behaviour.
- Increased awareness regarding vulnerable adults, more robust and transparent procedures regarding support for those deemed most vulnerable.
- Risk assessment in Domestic Violence and information sharing.
- Community Awareness
- Trafficking and child exploitation information should be provided to community organisations. At present the law and how its been interpreted not protecting children in families were Domestic Violence and Sexual Abuse has been an issue.

18

- Programmes for undergrad/post-grad – University levels
- Community awareness raised.
- A website with information to encourage children to find information if they need support.
- Helpline
- Adequate resources for all of the above. Spend money here and you will save a lot of money in the future providing services to adult victims.

19

- Clear message from Government and Criminal Justice System
- Research
- Public health messages
- Awareness
- Better training on sexual violence for all sectors
- Further information about those who offend
- Clear sanctions for those who offend

20

- Training for Criminal Justice Magistrates, Judges, Barristers.
- Code of Conduct on how victims are treated within the system.
- Best practice policies to be introduced
- Increased communication with the victim
- Masram to be taken into account with Domestic Violence offenders.
- Marac to be rolled out.
- Views of victims sought in terms of current experiences in court (research)
- Further information and court support services to support victims with the process – feedback throughout.
- Training should be mandatory at University level and updated at regular intervals including Domestic Violence training.

21

- Information sharing across courts and amongst relevant professionals.
- Training for specialist support staff in cases such as these
- Link into support services
- All court staff trained
- Statutory requirement for all agencies involved to protect
- Monitoring of referrals, information and feedback for the victim

22

- One central database with all the information fed in centrally.
- Review of procedures of recording procedures
- Look at best practice from other places.
- Statutory and voluntary stats and support to set up these mechanisms.

23

- Review of practice currently and ongoing contact with users to ensure that changes that are much needed are carried out
- Consultation with the victims ongoing, all developments must be victim lead.
- Develop a more transparent complaints procedure for victims who have been treated very badly. Sanctions for those who work in criminal justice system who have behaved inappropriately.

24

- Talk to the wide range of agencies that do this daily along with victims. Victim proof all your services with access to user groups within the organisation. This must be a confidential and well supported process. Some voluntary groups have already developed this practice.

25

- To have a service that is understanding of their problems and the impact on their ability as witnesses and how this needs to be supported.
- Respect at all times
- To be kept informed
- Support throughout the process
- Information and easy access to services
- Resourcing of the appropriate services that provide support
- Encouragement to bring cases forward
- Awareness and public support
- Ongoing education
- Appropriate media education

26

Yes in some cases when groups are being run it is important that gender is acknowledged and choice given. Young people should also be with their peers and information and support age appropriate. Sexual orientation needs to be taken into account, choice should be given at all times.

27

- Interagency meetings with information sharing (legislation required).
Clean terms of reference.
- Important that those running programmes should have had training and understanding of the issues.
- Marac in terms of Domestic Violence
- Our referral form into the service for all
- Training for all groups involved
- Victims user group providing information to the Interagency group
- Regular review, evaluations carries out to measure impact to victims.
- Improved communication skills
- Training for all members and groups.

28

All.

Foyle Women's Aid are currently working at policy development and joint protocols.

29

- Further information
- Everyone carrying out the same practice, information sharing improved.
- Interventions can be identified and put in place
- Monitoring and protection increased

30

Yes but it could be linked to already existing Domestic Violence Helpline with specialist workers to take the Sexual Violence calls. No duplication of services needed. Monitoring and data collection in place so will save development costs.

31

- Website developed for appropriate agencies for children, young people, adults.
- Education
- Media Ads
- Awareness raising with communities
- Posters
- Awareness raising with MLA/Councillors
- Leaflets
- Directory
- Helpline
- Consult victims on message they want to hear
- User Group
- Clear messages of support and help for the victims.

32

To any service that will work with victims services irrespective of whether they are voluntary or statutory.

33 Varying skills and training depending on your role
Accredited training for those who deal specifically in this area.
Development of standards and practice.

34

- Pre-qualification training should be mandatory in all disciplines that would encounter Domestic Violence victims.
- Mandatory training should be delivered to all those agencies identified that work with victims and survivors both voluntary and statutory. Should be ongoing core training.
- The training needs to be rolled out to all groups working in this area that is currently not happening.
- Sexual Abuse training needs to be revised and updated and should include links to Domestic Violence and also grooming information.
- Monitoring systems for all of those trained set up
- A baseline of agencies working in this area and a training audit set up.
- This training should be updated at regular intervals to cover move on of staff and other changes etc. Different levels of expertise managers/staff on the ground.
- The training should be examined by a user group so that they are confident that all the issues are included.
- Training, monitoring, review , evaluation and database. This should also include Domestic Violence training and links identified.
- Hard to reach people should have training mandatory i.e. doctors, judges, barristers.
- Best practice guidelines for all agencies.

35 Yes including Domestic Violence training and links between domestic Violence and Sexual Violence. This training should always be reviewed and victims experiences reflected.

36 No I don't feel that they will be.

38 I think the needs of the Section 75 categories of people should be an ongoing process and should be identified in every development and actions taken to address how we reach these people and address their needs and this should be a core standard throughout the development of services.

If we keep victims at the heart of this process we will develop services and actions that will be more improved, effective and the barriers identified much easier.

Having read the document I feel that if we manage to achieve the existing priorities and all of the consultation findings in particular from victims we will go a long way to beginning to tackle the problem of Sexual Violence.