

Newsletter

September 2012

Inside: Message from the Chairperson, Partnership News, News from Home, Children's News, Baby News, Children's Research, Further Afield, In Brief and Quotes of Note.

QUB and Belfast Domestic Violence Partnership collaborate to organise a Conference for students.

The event which was aimed at students from a range of backgrounds was held on the 27th January at QUB focussing on Domestic Violence and the importance of Partnership working. Approximately 80 students from a range of backgrounds attended. Partnership members attended the event to assist with facilitating the workshops. Speaker presentations are available on the partnership website.

website www.belfastdvp.co.uk



Feedback from a student

Pictured above: Carol Diffin, Partnership Chair, John Devaney, QUB, and Stephanie Holt Trinity College Dublin.

"I would like to say thanks for the invite to the DV PDD. It was my favourite out of all that I have been to. It made me think about domestic violence in new ways, the speakers were entertaining whilst informative and the lunch was great! There was just the right amount of presentations, the workshops were great for interaction with students of other disciplines and the DVD was a 'perfect' choice to relay the powerful 'leaving' message. You have added fuel to my fire with regards to my research into children and abuse in the home. Thank you again for the excellent learning opportunity!"



Message from the Chairperson



Welcome to the September edition of the Belfast Domestic Violence Partnership Newsletter. As the Partnership reaches its fourth anniversary I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has continued to contribute and support the work of the Partnership.

At a recent meeting of the Partnership Strategic Group the work, involvement and commitment of all members of the working groups since the Partnership commenced in 2008 was acknowledged and commended. It was also considered timely to review the current Partnership structures and as a result a number of changes have now taken place in line with strategic developments and these are outlined below.

With the implementation of the MARAC process across the region and establishment of the Regional MARAC Operational Group it was agreed that a Partnership MARAC group should be established to ensure effective communication flows from the Partnership to the Operational Group. The Protection and Justice working group will continue to focus on the areas outlined in the Partnership's Action plan such as child contact issues.

It was acknowledged that due to the similarities and potential for overlap in the work of the Prevention and Support groups that these two groups should merge. This also reflects the regional structures. Finally it was agreed that there would be no change to the Training and Development group. I hope that you find these changes acceptable as we move forward into our fifth year.

You will see from the Newsletter that on 23rd November 2012 the Belfast and South Eastern Domestic Violence Partnerships will be jointly hosting a Conference titled "Children: The Invisible Victims of Domestic Violence". In preparation for this Conference and to give you a taste of things to come we have focused this Newsletter particularly on children's issues, locally and further afield.

I hope that you will be able to join us on 23rd November for what promises to be a very interesting, informative and challenging day.
Carol Diffin, Chair

Diary dates.

Seminar "Working Together to Tackle Domestic Violence/Abuse"

**10am-1.00pm 28th September
Venue: Small Wonders Two
Morpeth Street**

(Beside Shankill leisure Centre)

**24th and 27th September
Pre- Consultation Stakeholder Events
Knockbracken Hall, Knockbracken
Health Care Park.**

**26th September Protection and Justice
Working Group. 30 Adelaide Park.**

**13th November Support/ Prevention
Working Group Meeting
30 Adelaide Park.**

**15th November Training and
Development Working Group
30 Adelaide Park**

**21st November Training and
Development Working Group meeting
30 Adelaide Park**

CHILDREN: THE INVISIBLE VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

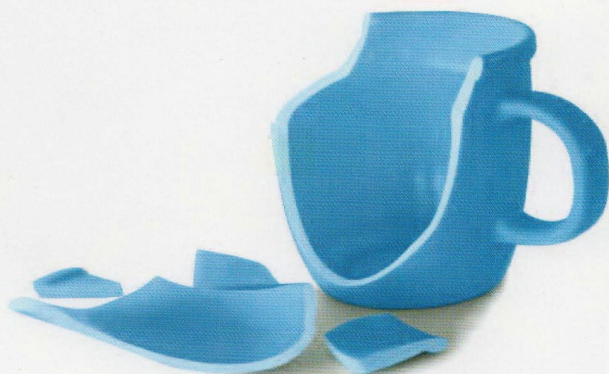
Belfast and SET DV Partnerships Conference

**23rd November 2012
9.00 am — 3.30 pm
Venue New Forge Country Club**

Partnership News

Domestic Violence

It's not the only thing that gets broken.
Stop Domestic Violence now.



A guide to services in
the Greater Belfast and South Eastern Trust areas.

Promotional Resources

An application made to Castlereagh Community Safety Partnership for Criminal Confiscation Receipts Funding enabled the Belfast Domestic Violence Partnership to review and update their Directory of Services in partnership with South Eastern Domestic Violence Partnership. The revised directory now contains up to date information on Domestic Violence Services in the Greater Belfast and South Eastern areas and is a useful resource for staff and those experiencing Domestic Violence/ Abuse. Copies are available from the Coordinator or can be downloaded at www.belfastdvp.co.uk

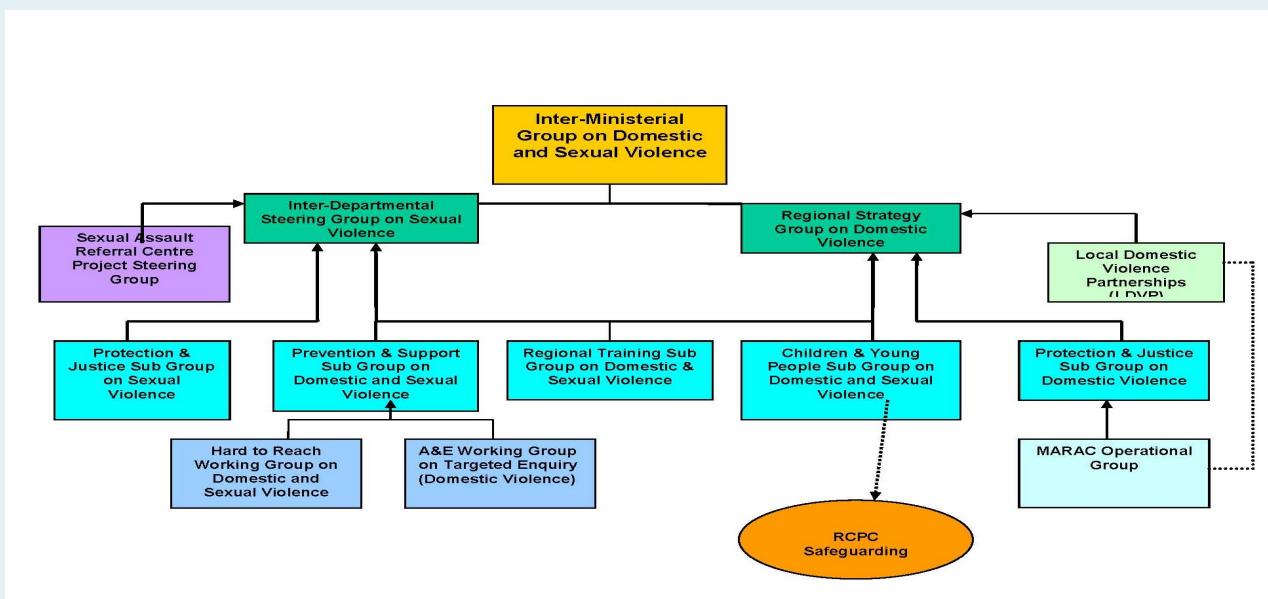
In addition the funding also enabled the purchase of promotional resources which highlight the 24 hour Domestic Violence Helpline number—contact the Coordinator for further information.

Tackling Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse a Regional Approach.....

The inaugural meeting of the amalgamated Regional Strategy Group on Domestic and Sexual Violence took place on June 21st.

A joint Action Plan for Domestic and Sexual Violence was published to cover the period April 2012 to September 2013. This is the first time that a joint Action Plan, to deliver on the objectives of both strategies has been developed. (copies are available from the coordinator)

The new joint Strategy is due to be published by September 2013 and a series of Pre consultation Stakeholder events are planned to determine the priority issues for the new strategy with key stakeholders who currently sit on the established governance groups. (see Diary Dates for detail) The proposed new structure is highlighted below.



Partnership News...

£900,000 FOR BELFAST AND LISBURN WOMENS AID — SUPPORTING CHILDREN & FAMILIES AFFECTED BY DOMESTIC ABUSE

(Source Press Release 26th Jan 12)

A ground breaking Northern Ireland project to provide early intervention support for children and their families affected by domestic violence has been awarded a major grant from the Big Lottery Fund.

Belfast and Lisburn Women's Aid (BLWA) has been awarded £900,000 from the Big Lottery Fund's Improving Futures programme which provides support for young people growing up in very difficult family circumstances and helps to transform their life chances.

Working alongside the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, and the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust, and North Down & Ards Women's Aid, BLWA are creating a specialist team, which includes a Health Visitor, with a strong focus on early intervention and prevention for women and their children living with domestic violence when they are first referred to Social Services.

The innovative team, the first of its kind in Northern Ireland, will work with social workers across the two health and social care trust areas to offer a range of services for women and their children and minimise the need for contact with social services in the future.

Speaking about the project, Patricia Lyness Management Coordinator at BLWA said:

"Domestic Violence has a significant impact on the health and well being of Women and their children resulting in serious injury, emotional harm and even death. It is a significant feature in social work caseloads and in referrals made to the Health and Social Care Trust Gateway teams

women's aid

Belfast and Lisburn



Belfast Health and Social Care Trust



South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust

MARAC

Operational Group

Bi monthly meetings have been held since September 2011. The Chairs of the 5 LDVPs sit on the group alongside PSNI and nominated representatives from voluntary and statutory agencies.

Two subgroups are being established to take forward work from the group

1. Practice /Training Group
2. Governance /Audit Group

MARAC Information Sharing Agreement (ISA)

It is anticipated that the document will be finalised at the September meeting. In the meantime the interim position re attendance at MARAC meetings stands until the ISA is signed off i.e. In addition to key statutory organisations participating in MARACs key voluntary organisations may also attend if the organisation has a service level agreement or equivalent funding arrangements in place with one of the statutory agencies and meets the NICVA Governance standards.

Leaflets

Two sets of MARAC leaflets have been agreed, one for victims and one for practitioners. These are in final draft and should be available in the near future.

IDVAs

A business case has been finalised and is currently with economists at DOJ, however it is likely to be the latter part of the year before implementation.

Operating Protocol

The second draft of this document is currently being reviewed by the MARAC Operational Group and will hopefully be finalised by the end of the year.

MARAC Children's Statistics N. Ireland

5281 Children across N. Ireland have been recorded in households where high risk victims have been the subject of a Multiagency Risk Assessment Conference since January 2010.

This figure suggests that approximately 173 children per month are living in high risk households in N. Ireland.

News from home....

Northern Ireland.....the facts

Number of PSNI Domestic Incidents

- The number of domestic abuse incidents reported to the PSNI increased by 11.1% (2,511 incidents) in 2011/2012 compared to the previous year.
- This is a total of **25,196 domestic incidents** in 2011/2012
- A domestic abuse incident is reported **every 21 minutes of every day of the year**.

PSNI: Crimes with a Domestic Motivation

- There were a total of **10,387** domestic abuse crimes in 2011/2012
- The level of 10,387 domestic abuse crimes recorded in 2011/2012 is the second highest recorded since 2004/2005
- That represents on average, approximately **1** domestic related **crime every 51 minutes** in Northern Ireland.

(Source WAFNI Briefing document on PSNI figures for 2100/2012)

The Right to Choose:

Statutory Guidance for Dealing with Forced Marriage

April 2012 Dept. of Finance and Personnel

This document which was published in April 2012 provides information, guidance and statutory guidance. The UK government passed legislation in 2007 to protect those who may be the subject of forced marriage and the N. Ireland Assembly endorsed the extension of the legislation to N. Ireland.

The Executive "regards forced marriage as an abuse of human rights and a form of Domestic Abuse, and where it affects children and young people, child abuse."

A full copy of the Guidance is available at:

www.dfpni.gov.uk/the-right-to-choose-forced-marriage.pdf

South of the Border.....

New scheme to support abused women in the Dublin District Family Law Court

The Minister for Justice, Mr Alan Shatter, T.D., and the Honourable Mrs. Justice Susan Denham, Chief Justice and Chairperson of the Courts Service Board, launched the project evaluation report for the Dolphin House Support and Referral Service on the 25th June 2012. The Support and Referral Service operates at Dolphin House as a partnership between Women's Aid, the Dublin 12 Domestic Violence Service and the Inchicore Outreach Centre with support from the Courts Service.

The drop-in service is free and confidential and offers women emotional support, helps them prepare for court and refers them to other domestic violence services for on-going support. During the pilot period (March-August 2011) the service supported 107 women attending the Dublin District Family Law court at Dolphin House to seek legal protection from domestic violence. During 114 drop-in visits women disclosed 179 incidents of emotional, physical, sexual and financial abuse.

www.womensaid.ie

Children's News

Children's Voices....

The quotes below are from children and young people using BLWA Services.

"When I phoned the police dad punched me"

"It was always a struggle to watch my favourite TV Programme . I used to have to turn the volume up to around 40 because of the yelling crashing over like waves."

"He made up lies to the social workers and called me a drama queen"

"I was always scared and worried dad would hit Mum again"

"He banged my Mums head off the wall then pushed her down the stairs, when I went to ring my granddad he hit me over the head"

I've held all this in for 14 years – It feels good to talk about it.



Children are rarely given opportunities to express their views, and some professionals are reluctant to talk directly with children and young people or involve them in decisions"

"Work with children needs to develop beyond the focus on safety planning. Children need support to cope and develop strategies for resilience"

Meeting the Needs of Children living with Domestic Violence in London Nov 2011

"Certain features of family life are associated with adverse outcomes for children and young people which include the impact of factors such as parental mental ill health, alcohol/ substance abuse, Domestic violence and living in poverty."

The Munro Report (2010)

"Infants and small children who are exposed to violence in the home experience so much added emotional stress that it can harm the development of their brains and impair cognitive and sensory growth"

UNICEF Behind Closed Doors 2006

"My House".....



**Drawing by Girl aged 8 using
Belfast and Lisburn Women's Aid Services**

Children's News

Barnardos N.Ireland— Believe in Children

Tuar Ceatha Services evaluation report published June 2012

The Black, Minority Ethnic and refugee (BMER) family support service was formed in response to the growing numbers and diversity of immigrant populations arriving in N. Ireland and is one of three projects falling under the umbrella of Tuar Ceatha services.

The project provides a range of programmes for parents including Early Intervention family support focusing on a range of issues including poverty, Relationships, Domestic Violence and mental well being.

The majority of parents using the service are aged 26-35 years and the vast majority of children aged 6 years and under.

In June 2012 the BMER service evaluation report was published and highlighted that "culturally competent working is manifested at every level of the BMER Support services". The report also highlights that "The service is reactive to individual family need , delivered by staff equipped with the information, knowledge and skills required to meet the needs of the families at the point of contact" www.barnardos.org.uk/tuarceatha



*"Tuar Ceatha" is
Gaelic for
rainbow!*

Womens Aid Federation N. Ireland publish a five year strategy for Children and Young People....."Our Place – Safe Space"



The Strategy was launched at the Long Gallery at Stormont on the 16th May by Health Minister Edwin Poots and Education Minister John O Dowd.

At the launch Minister Poots said: "Every child and young person deserves to live in a home free from any form of abuse - home should be their 'safe space'. It is important, therefore, that each and every one of us acts as social guardians to protect children and young people in every aspect of their lives."

Welcoming the aims of the strategy, Education Minister John O'Dowd said:

"I am committed, through the preventative curriculum, to teach children how to protect themselves from harm and encourage help-seeking behaviour. Barriers to learning, such as the distress caused by domestic violence, must be tackled proactively to give children the opportunity to fulfil their potential" (**News release N.I. Executive 16th May** www.northernireland.gov.uk)

The N. Ireland Children's Commissioner Patricia Lewsley-Mooney writes in the foreword of the strategy "I truly believe that with the right policies, adequate funding and a relentless commitment to children and young people's best interests, we can work together to create positive change. We can go forward collectively, with a shared commitment to creating a **safe space** for all children and young people in Northern Ireland"

Baby News

"All Babies Count" ***prevention and protection of vulnerable babies NSPCC 2011***

The NSPCC has launched its 'All babies count' campaign to highlight the vulnerability of babies and to call for better and earlier support for new parents.

Babies are eight times more likely to be killed than any other age group in childhood. And factors such as domestic violence, mental health problems, and drink and drug dependency among parents are known to be important risk factors in cases of abuse and neglect. The NSPCC has published new research that shows that nearly 200,000 babies across the UK are in families affected by these problems. www.nspcc.org.uk



39,000 babies under 1 year old lived in UK households affected by domestic violence in 2010

Approximately 32,000 children and young people are living with domestic violence in Northern Ireland.

"Up to 75% of children on child protection orders in some areas are on the registers at least in part because of concerns over domestic violence in the family."

The Enemy Within -
4 million reasons to tackle family conflict and family violence. March 2012
www.4children.org.uk

Domestic Violence may stunt babies intellectual growth

"Children who were abused or had witnessed violence against their mother had lower scores on the cognitive measures at all time points, and this effect was strongest among those who were traumatized during the first two years of their lives. Their IQ scores were an average of 7.25 points lower than those of children without early exposure, even after accounting for known risk factors, such as social and economic factors, mother's intelligence, weight at birth, birth complications, and quality of intellectual stimulation at home".

CONCLUSION: Emotional trauma during infancy may do permanent harm on a person's intelligence.

SOURCE: The full study, "Interpersonal Trauma Exposure and Cognitive Development in Children to Age 8 Years: A Longitudinal Study," is published in the Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health.

Children and Young People

Department of Health statistics show domestic abuse affects 750,000 children across the UK in a year and that up to 66% of children living in households with domestic abuse suffer violence themselves.

In up to 90% of cases, children are in the same or next room when the violence against their parent occurs.

NEW DEFINITION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND ABUSE TO INCLUDE 16 AND 17 YEAR OLDS

Victims of Domestic violence and abuse aged 16 and 17 will be recognised under a new cross –government definition. The news announced by Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg on 19th September will be implemented by March 2013.

Details can be found on the Home Office website: www.homeoffice.co.uk

Louise Casey publishes new report on Troubled Families

Louise Casey, head of the Government's Troubled Families Programme, has published a report looking at the problems families face. *Listening to Troubled Families* is based on 16 case studies and investigates the problems experienced, what caused the problems and what sort of help will enable them to change. Although the report acknowledges that there is domestic abuse in almost all of the so-called troubled families, it is seen as a minor factor.

www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/listeningtroubledfamilies

Meeting the needs of children living with Domestic Violence in London

"One in seven Children and Young people under the age of 18 will have lived with Domestic Violence at some point in their childhood. This is equivalent to at least 260,400 of London's children and young people"

Research report November 2011 by

Lorraine Radford, Ruth Aitken, Pam Miller, Jane Ellis, Jill Roberts and Ana Firkic
Refuge/NSPCC research project, Funded by the City Bridge Trust

www.nspcc.org.uk

The Enemy Within –4 million reasons to tackle family conflict and family violence

March 2012

www.4children.org.uk/Resources/Detail/The-Enemy-Within-Report

Further afield

Tackling Alaska's Domestic Violence Epidemic and its impact on Children

Speaking at the 15th International Congress of Circumpolar Health, Linda Chamberlain, founder of the Alaska Family Violence Prevention Project spoke about the effects of domestic violence on children.

Chamberlain referenced the fact that one in 10 Alaska Native women will report physical domestic violence.

Physical violence is relatively easy to track, Chamberlain said. Much harder to measure is the impact of domestic violence on children's mental health. Those children might not be physically harmed, but just living in a household coping with domestic violence can cause serious stress.

"The problem for children is unpredictability," Chamberlain said. "Wondering whether you'll be eating dinner or wearing it."

A host of health problems stem from exposure to "toxic stress" -- obesity, failure to thrive, bed wetting and asthma. There are significant connections between toxic stress and suicide or substance abuse problems, Chamberlain noted. Behavioural problems can often manifest in ways that look like attention - deficit disorder. And underlying problems of children who are medicated can be easily overlooked. Solutions start with "going back to basics," Chamberlain said, and focusing on relationships. Many providers prefer to work with both the parents and the child.

Chamberlain proposed adding another **"R" to the popular "three Rs" that are considered keys to education: Reading, writing, arithmetic and relationships.**

(Suzanna Caldwell August 12 - Alaska Despatch)

Impact of Family Violence on Children

"Family Violence research indicates that even when children are not direct targets of violence in the home, they can be harmed by witnessing its occurrence. Children who live in situations of family violence can suffer immediate and permanent physical harm, even death. They can also experience short and long-term emotional, behavioural and developmental problems, including post-traumatic stress disorder. In some cases of physical and sexual abuse, the victims have considerable problems with behaviour, negative peer involvement, depression, anxiety, violence to others, developmental delays, irregular school attendance and inappropriate sexual behaviour.



It is known that witnessing family violence is as harmful as experiencing it directly. Often parents believe that they have shielded their children from intimate partner violence, but research indicates that children see or hear many of the incidents. Children who witness family violence suffer the same consequences as those who are directly abused. In other words, a child who witnesses intimate partner violence is experiencing a form of child abuse."

(Source Royal Canadian Mounted Police Website) www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca

In Brief



Keir Stammer QC, Director Crown Prosecution Service speaks on

"Prosecuting Violence against Women and Girls - improving culture, confidence and convictions

www.cps.gov.uk

NSPCC Survey

finds violence in the home increases risk of antisocial behaviour in children May12

www.cypnow.co.uk

Protecting Victims of Domestic Violence : a new Immigration Policy

Home Office and Border Agency April 12

www.direct.gov.uk

IDVA Insights into domestic violence prosecutions

Data from the CAADA Insights Service
January to December 2011

www.caada.org.uk

A guide for black and minority ethnic (BME) women and children

"THREE STEPS TO ESCAPING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS"

www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/crime/3-steps-escaping-dv/english-3-steps

'Violence Against Women and Girls Newsletter' August 2012 published by the Home Office.

Issues covered include:

- ♦ The two new stalking offences created by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- ♦ Piloting a domestic violence disclosure scheme
- ♦ The development of new training materials for those who wish to chair Domestic Homicide Reviews.

www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/crime/vawg-newsletters/vawg-summer12

Safeguarding Refugee and Asylum Seeking Children

[Child Abuse Review Vol. 20: 307-310 \(2011\)](#)

Children living with Domestic Abuse.

www.withscotland.org/download/children-living-with-domestic-abuse

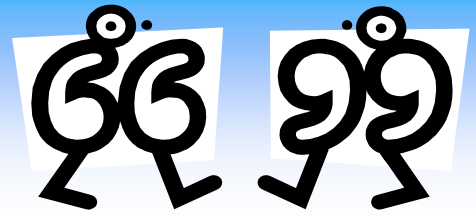
Policing Plan 2012-2015 Summary

www.policing.org.uk

Community Safety Strategy for N. Ireland 2012-2017

www.dojni-gov.uk

Quotes of note....



"The issues around Domestic and sexual violence are hugely important and they are high on my agenda."

Health Minister Poots response to
"The Detail"
6th July 2012

"Domestic violence is unacceptable. It is a violation of children's rights and should have no place in their lives"

N. I. Children's Commissioner
Patricia Lewsley - Mooney At the launch of
"Our Place Safe Space" 16th May 12

"Domestic violence is a serious problem, and I want to ensure that maximum protection is afforded to vulnerable people who are the victims of such violence"

Justice Minister Ford Assembly Questions and
Answers Jan 2012

"Listen to children and allow them a voice –it is likely to achieve absolutely priceless results"

Billy Dove MBE JP Nov 11

"Violence against women and children is one of the great social injustices of our time"

Ed Miliband



CHILDREN: THE INVISIBLE VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

**Belfast and SET
Domestic Violence Partnerships
Conference**

**23rd November 2012
9.00 am — 3.30 pm
Venue: New Forge Country Club**

Useful links and numbers

Useful sites:

Belfast & Lisburn Women's Aid www.belfastwomensaid.org.uk

Housing Advice www.housingadviceNI.org

Children's Law Centre www.childrenslawcentre.org

Northern Ireland Assembly www.niassembly.gov.uk

Northern Ireland Policing Board www.nipolicingboard.org.uk

Northern Ireland Office www.nio.gov.uk/index/public-consultation/documents.htm

Amnesty International www.amnesty.co.uk

Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People www.niccy.org



Articles and information for next edition to:
Margaret Kelly, Belfast Area Domestic Violence Partnership Coordinator
30 Adelaide PK
Belfast BT9 6FY
T 02890 666049 margaret.kelly@belfastwomensaid.co.uk
www.belfastdvp.co.uk