

Newsletter

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

Welcome to the first edition of the Belfast Area Domestic Violence Partnership Newsletter which I hope you will find helpful in keeping you up to date with Partnership news and developments.

As Children's Services Manager of the Gateway team in the Belfast Trust I am responsible for chairing the Partnership meetings. I am pleased to update you on the following progress and developments:

- The development of an Operational policy which outlines the new partnership structure consisting of
 - A Chief Officers Group
 - A Strategic Advisory Group
 - 4 Working Groups – Prevention, Support, Protection and Justice, and Training and Development.
- The appointment in December 2008, of a part time co-ordinator Mrs Margaret Kelly who is responsible for coordinating and facilitating the work of the partnership.
- The Strategic Advisory group met in January 2009, and signed off the Partnership Action plan which reflects the themes and actions of the DHSSPS Tackling Violence at Home strategy and Regional Action Plan 2008-2009.

The four working groups have met and are in the process of agreeing their agendas and work plans. Representatives from a wide range of agencies are involved in the groups and it is anticipated that sharing ideas and good practice will benefit all member agencies.



This is a challenging and exciting time for the newly formed Partnership as new initiatives such as MARAC are planned which will require agencies to work together to tackle the issue of Domestic Violence.

My thanks to all of you who have agreed to participate in the work of the partnership, your support is vital and appreciated.

Carol Diffin
Chairperson
Belfast Area Domestic Violence Partnership

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

WHAT OUR POLITICIANS ARE SAYING

"I do not understand the sentencing policy that goes on, we looked only recently at football hooliganism and the effect of violence on our street and everybody was shocked, and yet if such violence were to take place within the home it seems to be on some different scale, we seem to be satisfied with suspended sentences or plea bargaining or some sort of issue on that and I have to say that I find that totally unacceptable."

Basil McCrea UUP MLA Lagan Valley, 31st March, Assembly Debate

"We have a lot of facts and figures and statistics but every fact and figure and statistic is someone crying out for help"

Carmel Hanna SDLP MLA 31st March, Assembly debate

"Domestic violence seems to be treated differently than violence on the street, Quite frankly I believe that if a person is battered in their home or battered in the street I for the life of me can't see why the law should be different."

Lord Morrow DUP MLA Fermanagh and South Tyrone, 31st March, Assembly debate

"Human trafficking is modern day slavery. All the law enforcement agencies in the Organised Crime Task Force are working as one to catch the criminal gangs who are profiting out of human misery and suffering."

Paul Goggins Policing and Justice Minister, NIO, 25th March

"Evidence shows leniency towards perpetrators of Domestic Violence and sentencing which is much less than if the crime had been committed against a stranger."

Jennifer McCann Sinn Fein MLA, 30th March, Assembly Debate

(Source UTV News Tuesday 31st March 2009)

News in brief...

research, reports and resources

"VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, THE PERSPECTIVE OF STUDENTS IN N. IRELAND"

An Amnesty Poll on attitudes to violence against women shows that 46 percent of Northern Ireland university students believe that a woman is totally responsible or partially responsible for being raped or sexually assaulted if she acted in a flirtatious manner. See Full report at www.amnesty.org.uk

"STOLEN SMILES"

A summary report on the physical and psychological health consequences of women and adolescents trafficked in Europe. Report available at www.lshtm.ac.uk/hpu/docs/stolensmiles

NEW SUPPORT SERVICES FOR VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING 25TH MARCH 2009

Comprehensive care and support services for victims of human trafficking rescued in Northern Ireland will be available from the beginning of next month, chair of the Organised Crime Task Force, Paul Goggins MP has announced. The new package of support is funded by the Government with support from the PSNI and will be delivered by Women's Aid Federation (NI) and The Migrant Helpline. They will offer access to secure accommodation, healthcare and counselling for victims of human trafficking. It will also provide assistance with living expenses and full access to legal advice and translation services. See press release at www.nio.gov.uk/goggins-announces-extensive-new-support-services-for-victims-of-human-trafficking

POLICING BOARD PUBLISHES DOMESTIC ABUSE THEMATIC REPORT 24TH MARCH 2009

The Policing Board's Human Rights and Professional Standards Committee published its first Human Rights Thematic Inquiry examining how effectively the PSNI are tackling domestic abuse in Northern Ireland. The report details the PSNI's compliance with the Human Rights Act 1998 in this area and makes 14 recommendations for the police to consider as a means of further improving their service to victims of Domestic Abuse. See Full report at www.nipolicingboard.org.uk

"CENTRE FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM" LONDON ONTARIO

Check this site for a wide range of publications and resources on Domestic Violence www.lfcc.on.ca

DVD "DOMESTIC VIOLENCE THE LAW ON YOUR SIDE"

The DVD which was originally commissioned by the North and West Legacy Domestic Violence Partnership as a training tool, demonstrates the process of applying for a Non Molestation Order (copies available from Margaret Kelly).

CONSULTATION SPECIAL MEASURES A REVIEW AND EVALUATION FEBRUARY 2009

The Northern Ireland Office (NIO), in partnership with its Statutory and Voluntary partners, is proposing to carry out a policy review of the effectiveness of special measures provisions first introduced in the Criminal Evidence (NI) Order 1999. See consultation document at www.nio.gov.uk/index/public-consultation/documents.htm

DOMESTIC ABUSE SUPPORT SERVICE

The Domestic Abuse Support Service for Belfast Trust staff was launched in the Ennis room of Belfast City Hospital on 9 December 2008. This important service is now operational and was formally endorsed by both the Chair and Chief Executive of Belfast HSC Trust.

As Northern Ireland's largest employer, it is vital that the well-being and health of staff is upheld along with the fundamental human right to live free from abuse. The impact of domestic abuse is not restricted to the home environment and does affect how a victim feels, interacts and performs in the workplace.

The service was designed and developed by the Trust in partnership with Staffside organisations. Expressions of interest were sought across the Belfast HSC Trust and Staffside and 30 officers from across a range of disciplines and backgrounds undertook a two day training course in September 2008. External organisations such as Women's Aid, PSNI, Men's Advisory Project, Rainbow Project, Staffcare and the Domestic Violence Unit at the DHSSPSNI contributed in the delivery of this training.



Pictured from left: William Mc Kee, Lily Kerr, Joan Peden, Pat Mc Cartan, Margaret Mc Kee

The aim of the confidential service is to provide a harmonious and supportive working environment for staff affected by domestic violence or abuse. A designated support officer can listen and give details of options and support available in the workplace and signpost the individual to the specialist agencies.

MARAC

In October 2005 the government launched its 5 year strategy for tackling domestic violence in Northern Ireland entitled Tackling Violence at Home. Annual action plans have been subsequently developed which put into practice the aims and objectives of the strategy through initiatives such as MARAC.

MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference) is a multi agency initiative whose purpose is to identify those persons at highest risk of serious harm from domestic violence. MARAC was developed in Cardiff, evaluated a success and has subsequently been rolled out across England and Wales as an example of current best practice in this area.

MARAC was successfully piloted in Northern Ireland between 2006 and 2008 in the Antrim area and during 2008 both DHSSPS and NIO committed joint funding totalling £300k for the regional roll out of the initiative. MARAC is now a key ministerial priority and is reflected in both DHSSPS' Priorities for Action and NIO's Public Service Agreement target in relation to reducing serious violent crime. The Inter-Ministerial Group on Domestic and Sexual Violence, chaired by Michael McGimpsey will be responsible for MARAC implementation.

Eight new MARAC Administrator posts have been created to manage the MARAC process locally and each of these will be embedded in the eight PSNI Public Protection units from spring 2009. The Administrators will organise the (fortnightly) MARAC conferences in which relevant agencies such as HSC Trusts, Probation Board and NI Housing Executive, may be asked to participate. A higher level MARAC Coordinator will help oversee their work and will be co-located with the PSNI's Community Safety Branch.

CONFUSED BY ABBREVIATIONS/TERMS.....?

MARAC	Multiagency Risk Assessment Conferencing
MODV	Men Overcoming Domestic Violence
PPU	Public Protection Unit
CAADA	Co-Ordinated Action against Domestic Abuse
IDVA	Independent Domestic Violence Advisor
LDVP	Local Domestic Violence Partnerships
SAG	Strategic Advisory Group
UNOCINI	Understanding the Needs of children in Northern Ireland
IDAP	Independent Domestic Abuse Programme

noticeboard



One-Stop Shop

Under one roof access for women experiencing domestic violence to:

Women's Aid Representative, Solicitor,
Domestic Violence Officer (PSNI), Housing/Benefits Advice

Crèche facilities and disability access available

Belfast & Lisburn Women's Aid
30 Adelaide Park, Belfast BT9 6FY
Tel: 02890 666049 Fax: 02890 682874

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

Useful numbers:

Women's Aid 24 hr helpline **0800 9171414**

Women's Information Group **02890 244119**

Northern Ireland Policing Board's Press and Public Relations Office **02890 408565 / 07801 738795.**

Articles and information for next edition to:

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