

# **BELFAST AREA DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PARTNERSHIP**

## **Seminar**

### **Domestic Violence – A Workplace Issue?**



**Belfast Area**  
Domestic Violence Partnership

# N. Ireland Policy Context

- Tackling Violence at Home Strategy 2005 and Action Plan 09 (Dept of Justice and DHSSPS)
- Priority for Action 2009/2010
- Children Order N.I. 1995
- ACPC Regional Policy and Procedures 2005
- N.I. Policing Plan 2009-20012
- Homelessness Strategy 2005
- Human Rights Act 1998



**Belfast Area**

Domestic Violence Partnership



# Policy Developments in other jurisdictions

**Scotland:** Safer lives: Changed lives June 09

**Wales:** The Right to be Safe – Welsh Assembly Strategy, March 10

**England:** Responding to Violence against Women and Children - The role of the NHS March 2010

**London:** “The Way forward” A call for action to end violence against women April 09



# The Belfast Area D V Partnership re established 2008.....

*“To develop local partnerships for shared understanding  
and work to tackle Domestic Violence in the Belfast Area”*

Structure, Terms of Reference and Operational Policy Sept 08

- Strategic Advisory Group
- 4 Working Groups
- Chief Officers Group

Temporary Co-ordinator appointed Dec 08

Strategic Action Plan agreed Feb 09





# Progress to date ....

Strategic Advisory group meetings 3 monthly

Action plan developed/ agreed Feb 09

Working Groups established and meeting regularly

Partnership Newsletters Spring 09 and Winter 2009

Interagency Services Audit completed



# Key Themes and Working Groups

Prevention

Protection and Justice

Support

Training and Development





# Prevention Working Group

**Workplace Policies:** Policy template developed. Focus group with service users.

Partnership Seminar re workplace policies May 2010

Seminar Business in The Community Feb 2010.

**Directory of Services:** Small grant application successful from Belfast Community Safety Partnership. Directory reviewed, updated and reprinted

**Schools:** Domestic Violence Awareness Information pack to be distributed to all schools in the BELB

The top of the slide features several overlapping, wavy lines in shades of light blue and white, creating a decorative header effect.

Thank you.



**Patricia Lyness**

**Belfast and Lisburn  
Women's Aid**

**Working to End Domestic Violence**

women's aid

Belfast and Lisburn

# Domestic Violence is....

“The intentional and persistent physical or emotional abuse of a women, or of a woman and her children in a way that causes pain, distress or injury.”

*Women's Aid*

women's aid

Belfast and Lisburn



# Domestic Violence is....

“Threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional) inflicted on one person by another where they are or have been intimate partners or family members, irrespective of gender or sexual orientation.”

Inter-Departmental  
Tackling Violence at  
Home Strategy 2005

women's aid

Belfast and Lisburn

# Facts and Figures

- Domestic Violence is a violation of Article 5 of the UN Declaration of Human Rights – that “no one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.”
- Over 30% of all domestic violence starts during pregnancy
- Estimated 32,000 children in NI are living with domestic violence (UNICEF)
- 24 Hour Domestic Violence Help Line managed 24,663 calls an increase of 14% on 2007/08.

women's aid

Belfast and Lisburn



# Domestic Violence – A Crime

- PSNI Statistics for 2008/09 show 23,591 Domestic Incidents
- This means they respond to a Domestic Incident every **22 minutes of every day of the year in Northern Ireland**
- Total of 9211 crimes with a domestic motivation
- **Represents on average 1 domestic related crime every 60 minutes in Northern Ireland**
- 24 recorded murders – 7 classed as having a domestic motivation = over 29% of all murders
- Where the gender of the victim was known 76% of adult victims were female

women's aid

Belfast and Lisburn

# Facts and Figures

- Sexual offences (1943)
- Robbery (650)
- Armed robbery (508)
- Hijacking (125)
- Theft or unauthorised taking of a motor vehicle (2954)
- Arson (2002)
- Dangerous driving (746)
- Handling stolen goods (220)
- Offences under anti-terrorism legislation (7).

women's aid

Belfast and Lisburn

# Women's Aid - Safety Protection & Support

- 3 refuges with over 100 bed spaces staffed 24 hours providing crisis intervention, needs and risk assessment and safety and support planning
- Outreach service supporting women and children to remain at home if safe to do so
- Work with children and young people in refuges, outreach and through education and prevention programmes in schools
- Inter-Agency Partnerships
- Information and training on Domestic Violence to a range of agencies/organisations
- Volunteering opportunities
- Influencing change.







# nipsa

---

**Campaigning on behalf  
of all victims of  
Domestic Violence  
at work or at home**



# Domestic Violence

---

- **Why it is a workplace issue**
- **How you, as employers/HR practitioners can identify and support employees**





# Impact on the Workplace

---

- **A deterioration in an employee's performance;**
- **Increased and unexplained absenteeism;**
- **Poor time-keeping;**
- **Threat to job security and prospects**



# Domestic Violence

---

**Did you know...**

**In Northern Ireland the direct cost of domestic violence to services and lost economic output is estimated to amount to £180m each year**

*Campaigning on behalf of all victims of Domestic Violence*





# Key Reasons for Developing a Workplace Policy

---

- Recruitment and retention
- Staff morale and productivity
- Disciplinary action
- Public image and reputation



# What should a Workplace Policy cover?

---

- A policy statement that has clear aims and states the organisation's commitment to treat domestic violence seriously;
- A clear definition of domestic violence;
- An acknowledgement that the majority of victims are women but that men are also affected as are women and men in same-sex relationships;
- A clear statement that the organisation is committed to the principle that domestic violence and abuse is unacceptable behaviour and that everyone has a right to live free from fear and abuse;



# What should a Workplace Policy cover?

- A statement that, where domestic violence occurs or has the potential to occur in the workplace, the paramount consideration of the employer is to ensure the health and well-being of employees and to ensure that, where appropriate, perpetrators of abuse are challenged and held to account to reduce the potential for re-offending;
- Details of the first point of contact for employees who need to discuss issues around domestic violence;
- A commitment to early intervention by identifying ways of creating a supportive environment and to creating confidential mechanisms for employees experiencing domestic violence to seek help and information in order to empower them to make their own decisions;





# What should a Workplace Policy cover?

---

- A commitment to offering ongoing support to employees experiencing domestic violence including time off, for example, for counselling, visits to a solicitor or support agencies, for re-housing or re-organising childcare;
- The possibility of relocation or redeployment where this would be appropriate and supportive of the employee;
- A commitment to training and educating on domestic violence issues. This might involve some basic awareness training for all staff and more detailed training for certain staff eg personnel or welfare staff;



# What should a Workplace Policy cover?

---

- Provision of resources within the workplace, such as posters, leaflets etc to raise awareness about the domestic violence helpline and other support services; and
- Mechanisms for monitoring and reviewing the policy's effectiveness and for regularly updating information on help available and how to contact support services.



# Ways to Help

---

- **Allowing flexible or more flexible working or special leave to facilitate practical arrangements that are required such as: seeking legal advice, attending counselling, attending support group meetings, arranging re-housing, attending court, or to alter childcare arrangements;**
- **Offer financial support by way of an advance in pay;**
- **Provide access to appropriate, confidential, independent professional counselling;**
- **Allow the individual to change work patterns or workload;**



# Ways to Help

---

- **Facilitating a transfer to another post or relocation for safety reasons;**
- **Awareness training for all staff so that they understand why there is a need for a workplace policy and know how to behave and help in the situation;**
- **Diverting telephone calls;**
- **Diverting emails to a separate folder;**
- **With consent advising colleagues of the situation on a need-to-know basis and agreeing what the response should be if the abuser/alleged abuser contacts the office.**



# **Belfast Health & Social Care Trust Domestic Abuse Support Service**

**Orla Barron/ Equality Manager  
17<sup>th</sup> May 2010**



Belfast Health and  
Social Care Trust

**Domestic Abuse**  
Confidential Support for all Trust Staff

# Background

- Belfast HSC Trust – 22,000 staff
- Tasked with delivery of best health and social care services to Belfast population of some 340,000 people + regional services
- Purpose of new organisation was to improve health and well-being and reduce health and social inequalities



Belfast Health and  
Social Care Trust

**Domestic Abuse**  
Confidential Support for all Trust Staff

# Why a workplace policy on domestic abuse?

- Duty of care
- Moral /Ethical reasons
- Human Right – fundamental right to be free from abuse
- Business case – it is a workplace issue – impact on performance, health and social well-being, motivation, concentration, absenteeism etc



# How common is domestic violence in the workplace?

- Not uncommon for abuser to seek out abuse partner at work –risk for victim & colleagues
- Approx. 18,700 violent workplace events committed by partner
- 74% employed battered women are harassed by their partners at work, either in person or over the phone





# Journey so far

- February 08 – workplace policy and plan of action with Trade Unionside
- Based on original good practice example of SEBT Legacy Trust and Unison
- Working in partnership with Trade Union side
- Executive Team + TJNF ratified approach in April 08



Belfast Health and  
Social Care Trust

**Domestic Abuse**  
Confidential Support for all Trust Staff

# Support Worker

- Trawled for expressions of interest for voluntary role of support worker
- Recognised importance of diversity of officer –gender, age, location, professional background, level
- 30 support workers shortlisted with managerial approval
- 2 day intensive training –Women's Aid, MAP, Rainbow Project, PSNI, DVU at DHSSPSNI, Staffcare and Social Work



# Role

- Not to “rescue”
- To listen, to inform of options, to signpost, to offer practical and emotional support
- Practical examples – time off for appointments, court dates, salary advance, act as intermediary, change location, contact number, hours of work



# Awareness

- Raise awareness of domestic abuse, impact on workplace, support service for staff
- Official launch in December 08 – attended by Chief Executive and Chair
- Newspaper articles, information on intranet, payslips, posters
- Lunchtime awareness sessions
- Targeted training – Occupational Health, Managers, Staff

**Domestic Abuse**  
Confidential Support for all Trust Staff



Belfast Health and  
Social Care Trust



# Continuous Journey

- Pilot for 18 months
- Regular review meetings with DASOs
- Regular co-ordination groups
- Met women who experienced domestic abuse -“Domestic Violence happens to “ **regular**” people”
- An evolving and challenging piece of work, but worthwhile



Belfast Health and  
Social Care Trust

**Domestic Abuse**  
Confidential Support for all Trust Staff