



Belfast Area

Domestic Violence Partnership

OPERATIONAL POLICY

SEPTEMBER 2008

REVISED MARCH 2010, JULY 2012

CONTEXT

"Tackling Violence at Home" a Strategy for addressing Domestic Violence and Abuse in N. Ireland (2005-2010) sets out key government priorities for tackling violence and abuse in the home.

The Action Plan which is an integral part of the Strategy aims to ensure an effective multi-agency response under four themes, Prevention, Protection, Support and Other Priorities. At a local level 5 area Domestic Violence Partnerships have been established across N. Ireland to respond and work to the priorities identified in the Action Plan. These priorities form the basis of the Belfast Area Partnership's Action Plan. However it is recognised that local issues will be identified and should be highlighted and shared with the Regional Strategy group for consideration and inclusion in future action plans.

The Strategy has recently been extended to 2013.

MISSION STATEMENT

To continue to develop and maintain local partnerships for shared understanding and work together to tackle Domestic Violence and Abuse in the greater Belfast area.

AIMS

1. To work together effectively to provide an integrated approach to support adults and children experiencing Domestic Violence and Abuse
2. To develop effective interventions and appropriate services to support adults and children experiencing Domestic Violence and Abuse
3. To support and lobby for initiatives that hold perpetrators accountable and effective interventions to address perpetrators behaviours
4. To identify and share information, research and best practice in order to influence policy and practice development
5. To provide Domestic Violence and Abuse training and education
6. To provide a strategic fit with the Tackling Violence at Home Strategy and Action Plan and other relevant policies and strategies
7. To ensure members of the Partnership are fully supported by their agencies (time, commitment) to participate in partnership matters
8. To review and evaluate the effectiveness of joint working
9. To identify any additional resources required to support the work of Partnership

VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

1. We believe that everyone has the right to feel safe and that Domestic Violence and Abuse is unacceptable and should not be tolerated
2. We value individual agency members and their contribution to eliminating Domestic Violence and abuse
3. As individuals and as a group we are committed to knowing and applying our partnership values, protocols and principles.
4. As individuals and a partnership integrity underpins our working for others and with each other
5. We respect that there are differences and diversity among individuals and member groups and are mindful of the expectations and constraints of partnership members
6. As individuals we are clear and explicit about confidentiality boundaries within the Partnership.

DEFINITION

The definition of Domestic Violence and Abuse set out in "Tackling Violence at Home" and which all local Domestic Violence Partnerships and relevant agencies should use 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.'



PARTNERSHIP MEMBERSHIP



- ◆ Age N.I.
 - ◆ Barnardo's
 - ◆ Citizen's Advice
 - ◆ Clergy/Church representatives
 - ◆ NICTS
 - ◆ PCSP
 - ◆ Education
 - ◆ GP
 - ◆ Housing Executive
 - ◆ NSPCC
 - ◆ Organisations representing Male Victims, Minority Ethnic Groups, Same-sex relationships
 - ◆ Social Security Agency
 - ◆ Solicitor/Barrister
 - ◆ Statutory Health and Social Services
 - ◆ Trade Unions
 - ◆ Victim Support
 - ◆ Voluntary /Community Groups/Woman's Information Group
 - ◆ Women's Aid
 - ◆ PSNI
 - ◆ PBNI
 - ◆ PCSP
- Other groups/ agencies and individuals may be invited to attend meetings as and when additional knowledge / expertise is required*

Membership Criteria

Agency representatives who provide/deliver services to victims of domestic violence meeting the following criteria;

- ◆ Statutory Agency representatives
- ◆ Individuals accountable to a regulatory professional body.
- ◆ Voluntary Agencies who have a service level agreement with a statutory agency and meet the NICVA Governance standards or equivalent.

Requests by agencies, organisations and individuals wishing to become members of the partnership will be considered by the Chair and Vice Chair in the first instance. Further approval may be sought from Strategic Advisory Group members.

STRUCTURE OF THE PARTNERSHIP (See Diagram page 7)

Chief Officers Group

This group will meet once a year and will consist of senior staff from member agencies. The purpose of the meeting will be to enable the Partnership to present its work to the Chief Officers and by doing so ensure On going ownership of the work of the Partnership from a high level in each agency.

Strategic Advisory Group

The role of the Strategic Advisory Group is to drive the work of the Partnership and to influence, at a strategic level, policy and practice developments. The group should be aware of emerging trends and issues and ensure these are appropriately included on working group agendas. The group will also have a key role identifying the needs and resources required to sustain the partnership and as resource negotiators.

Membership

- ◆ Age N.I.
- ◆ Barnardo's
- ◆ Chairs of each Partnership Working Group
- ◆ PCSP
- ◆ Education
- ◆ GP
- ◆ Housing Executive
- ◆ MCRC/ NICEM
- ◆ PBNI
- ◆ PSNI
- ◆ Social Security Agency
- ◆ Statutory Health and Social Services – Social work, Health Visiting, Maternity, A&E, Human Resources, Community Development, Mental Health
- ◆ Trade Unions
- ◆ Victim Support
- ◆ Woman's Aid

WORKING GROUPS

There will be four working groups and all agencies represented on the Partnership will be expected to participate in at least one of these either by attendance at meetings or by alternative means of communication

(1) Prevention and Support- will focus on education, awareness raising , and services available to assist prevention, early intervention and support including ideas for improving communication across agencies.

For example;

- ◆ Will encourage agencies and organisation to adopt workplace policies
- ◆ Will consider ways of working with schools and the education sector to promote preventative education programmes and awareness for staff, children and young people.
- ◆ Will consider services for people from a minority ethnic background and other hard to reach groups
- ◆ Will consider innovative methods of engaging and working with local communities to raise awareness and support for adults and children.
- ◆ Will consider ideas and methods for improving communication across services

(2) Protection and Justice – Will focus on the role of the criminal justice agencies such as Police, PBNI and Courts and how these agencies can work more closely together

For example;

- ◆ To support and lobby for initiatives that hold perpetrators (including non adjudicated perpetrators) accountable and effective interventions to address perpetrators behaviours
- ◆ Will consider ways of removing the barriers and improving access to justice for women such as the cost of non molestation orders, and ways to support women with no recourse to public funds
- ◆ To support and monitor the implementation of MARAC

(3) Training and Development–Will focus on sharing new initiatives, information and best practice across the Partnership

For example:

- ◆ Planning joint training events and an annual planning day
- ◆ Developing and contributing to appropriate training resources
- ◆ Supporting the Partnership website and newsletter

(4) MARAC — Will focus on sharing information, highlighting issues and sharing good practice across agencies locally and to the Regional Operational group.

For example:

- ◆ Contributing to the development of policies, guidance, and protocols
- ◆ Ensuring communication flows in to and out of the Regional MARAC Operational group
- ◆ Sharing best practice across agencies and to the Regional operational group
- ◆ Identifying MARAC Training needs

CHAIRPERSONS

Each working group will nominate a chair person and vice chairperson. These roles should rotate annually. The transition of chair/ vice chair should be planned in order to maintain stability.

PARTNERSHIP COORDINATOR

The Coordinator will be responsible for the coordination and development of Partnership activities as outlined in the Tackling Violence at Home Strategy and Action Plan and the Partnership Action plan. This includes supporting the work of the working groups and the dissemination of information, and current activities between member agencies.

The Coordinator is managed by Belfast Lisburn Women's Aid and reports to the Chair/ Vice Chair of the Partnership and the Strategic Advisory Group.



TERMS OF REFERENCE



1. The Partnership as a whole forum will meet twice a year – once for an annual planning day and once for an annual partnership event .
2. The Chief Officers Group will meet once a year.
3. The Strategic Advisory Group will meet once every three months.
4. The Working Groups will each meet at least once a quarter.
5. The location and venue of these meetings will be rotated. Dates of meetings should be agreed in advance for a 12 month period.
6. The Chair of the Partnership will be a designated Health and Social Services Senior Manager. The Chair of the Partnership will also chair the Strategic Advisory Group. A Vice Chair should be nominated.
7. The Chairs of the Working Groups will also sit on the Strategic Advisory Group to ensure all information is shared across all groups. Chairs and Vice Chairs of the Working Groups should be rotated annually. The Chairpersons of the Partnership Working Groups will sit on the Regional Strategic Sub-groups, in order to ensure appropriate information flows from the Regional Groups to the local Domestic Violence Partnership Working Groups.
8. Each member agency will be expected to nominate a person to represent their agency at Partnership meetings. This person should have a mandate from their agency to attend and participate on its behalf. If unable to attend, a member will be expected to provide an apology. If appropriate, absent members will be invited to submit written comments for discussion at the Partnership. Following three consecutive non-attendances at the Partnership by a member, the Chair of the group may contact the member to discuss agency representation. Any ongoing non attendance issues will be referred to the Strategic Advisory Group for their consideration.
9. The Partnership will commit to upholding the values and principles of multi-disciplinary and inter-agency working. Members will commit to working in partnership, ensuring a co-ordinated response, promoting joint working, co-operation and mutual support.
10. Members will share relevant information at meetings and contribute to the agenda as appropriate. Members will also inform their own agency of any implications resulting from decisions made at Partnership meetings.
11. Member agencies must ensure that their representatives on the Partnership have a formal mechanism to exchange information and to provide feedback effectively between the Partnership and their own organisation. This will allow for reciprocity of information and ensure the meaningful contribution of each agency to the Partnership.
12. All member agencies are expected to participate in the Working Groups.

TERMS OF REFERENCE (CONT'D)

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERS

1. To attend all meetings
2. To actively participate in the Partnership
3. To actively participate in the Working Groups and action any work that is agreed
4. To share new practice initiatives/policy/strategy from their own organisation with members of the Partnership

LINKS WITH OTHER POLICY AND PLANNING INITIATIVES

- ◆ Tackling Violence at Home Strategy 2005-2013 and Action Plan plans
- ◆ ACPC Regional Policy and Procedures
- ◆ N.I Children and Young Peoples Plan 2011 —2014
- ◆ Sexual Violence Strategy 2009
- ◆ Children Order N.I 1995
- ◆ Regional Child Protection Committee and Trust Child Protection Panel
- ◆ Community Safety Strategy 2012-2017 "Building Safer, Shared and Confident Communities"
- ◆ Family Support Strategy — Families Matter: Supporting families in N.Ireland Regional Family and Parenting Strategy March 2009
- ◆ UNOCINI
- ◆ N.I. Policing Plan 2012 –2015
- ◆ MARAC
- ◆ Relevant legislation and Court Service initiatives
- ◆ Domestic Violence Risk Assessment Model (Barnardo's)
- ◆ Human Resource Equality and Diversity Policies
- ◆ Investing in Health (DHSSPS)
- ◆ Priorities for Action (DHSSPS)
- ◆ N.I Adult Safeguarding Partnership and Belfast HSC Trust Local Safeguarding Partnership Plans
- ◆ The Right to Choose: Statutory Guidance for dealing with forced marriage 2012
- ◆ Homelessness Strategy 2012-2017



BELFAST AREA DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PARTNERSHIP

