

# **Mid-Term Review of the Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy**

**Prepared for Department of Justice**

**October 2020**

## Terms

DfC	Department for Communities
DHRs	Domestic Homicide Reviews
DoH	Department of Health
DoJ	Department of Justice
DV	Domestic Violence
DVLA	Domestic Violence Listing Arrangement
DSVP	Domestic and Sexual Violence Partnerships
DVPP	Domestic Violence Perpetrator Project
HSB	Harmful Sexual Behaviour
HSCT	Health and Social Care Trust
IMG	Inter-Ministerial Group
IRIS	Identification and Referral to Improve Safety programme
ISVA	Independent Sexual Violence Adviser
LDSVP	Local Domestic and Sexual Violence Partnership
MARAC	Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference
MOB	MARAC Operational Board
NIHE	Northern Ireland Housing Executive
ODP	Outcomes Delivery Plan
PCSP	Police and Community Safety Partnership
PPS	Public Prosecution Service
PSNI	Police Service of Northern Ireland
SAG	Stakeholder Assurance Group
SARC	Sexual Assault Referral Centre
SBNI	Safeguarding Board Northern Ireland
SDB	Strategic Delivery Board
SIB	Strategic Investment Board
SVRG	Sexual Violence Reduction Group
TEO	The Executive Office
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls
VSNI	Victim Support Northern Ireland
WAFNI	Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland

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## Executive Summary

### Introduction

The seven year *Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy* was published jointly by the Department of Health (DoH) and the Department of Justice (DoJ) in March 2016. The Strategic Investment Board (SIB) was appointed by the departments comprising the Strategy's Strategic Delivery Board (SDB) in May 2020 to undertake a mid-term Review with terms of reference to review the scope and content of the strategy and action plans, progress to date against the strands and priorities, and to assess the impact of the strategy, and review governance arrangements. The review was undertaken between mid-May and September 2020 and involved a document and data review (including a review of international strategies); stakeholder engagement; and an analysis and assessment of impact. Due to the impact of COVID 19 all consultations were undertaken by Zoom/video conference or telephone.

### Key findings

- Reported domestic and sexual violence and abuse continue to increase in Northern Ireland, with the lifelong impact on victims representing a high cost to NI society (est £1bn p.a.)
- Domestic and sexual violence and abuse are cross cutting issues, affecting all departments, but current leadership for the strategy is heavily reliant on DoJ and DoH, despite major resources allocated by DfC, and prevention lead being DE
- There is international, national and local consensus on the need for a strategy to address domestic and sexual violence, to reflect prevention, services and justice, and the current structure of the strategy around these strands are well regarded, known and understood
- Victims of domestic and sexual violence and abuse are predominantly women but the profile of victims and offenders is changing, and there is a need to avoid stereotyping both victims and perpetrators
- Although there is some data collated specifically relating to Northern Ireland, there is a reliance on extrapolation from GB data and gaps in knowledge of emerging trends/issues.
- A considerable amount of work has taken place during the first 4 years of the strategy, however, there is concern the pace of change has been slow, and there is a lack of clarity as to the impact of individual actions.
- The number of actions included on action plans has been increasing year on year, but the scale of individual actions varies widely; and there is concern that actions are an aggregate of work in progress by departments or organisations.
- To date, there has been a focus on actions relating to protection, services and justices rather than prevention
- Currently the evaluation framework is lacking, although there is a widespread recognition of the need to move to an OBA framework.
- Despite work to date, high level metrics that can be monitored show a continuing rise in incidents and crimes and poor outcomes/long case processing times
- There is a lack of clarity around the role of LDSVPs in the delivery of the Strategy. Currently a lot of funding and provision of services is fragmented. Poorly resourced and often reliant on good will.
- The SDB is currently an inter-departmental group that has narrow membership, although functioning well for its members
- The membership of the SAG, although wide, needs to reflect the diversity of services providers/users

## **Recommendations**

- There is a continued need for an Executive strategy to address domestic and sexual violence and abuse in NI, which should be cross departmental and **funded appropriately**
- This policy area requires continued **leadership and cooperation** at the highest level of Government, and effective mechanisms to demonstrate clear commitment by the Executive to DV and SV are required
- There is a need to increase Ministers' and Permanent Secretaries' awareness of DV/SV including its impact and costs, through improved information and front line engagement with service providers and users
- A commitment from Ministers relating to all strands of the strategy is required including Education to address prevention/early intervention
- The strategy should **retain the 5 strands** around leadership, prevention, support, protection and justice
- The strategy should **include both DV and SV, and consider reflecting family violence**. It must reflect lived experience and **avoid stereotypes**, although reflecting this is a gendered issue. The views/ needs of minority groups must be reflected and also should adequately address or signpost to emerging issues e.g. CSE, FGM, sex workers
- The SDB/SAG should **determine gaps in research and commission high quality, independent, research** specific to NI to inform strategic direction and ensure effective targeting of action/resources
- The strategy should have a **meaningful evaluation framework**, that supports the PfG, with stakeholders agreeing a **baseline and measures of success across all five strands**
- **Actions should be linked to strategic objectives and outcomes**, and prioritised to maximise impact
- Actions should be **collaborative**, focused on areas where the SDB/ SAG can add value i.e. where they include cross cutting initiatives
- There should be a **review of the balance of actions** going forward, with **greater emphasis on prevention and early intervention**, with relevant departments (including DE and DfC) taking more responsibility for meaningful delivery
- Actions should be evidence based, ambitious and support real change
- Ways in which progress in **delivery can be accelerated should be explore** e.g. avoid repeating pilots and repiloting what is already known to work elsewhere
- SDB/SAG should **learn from the implementation lessons from COVID**, for example, where the IAG has resulted in challenging existing ways of working to accelerate responses by services
- All actions should be OBA with clear mechanisms for evaluation of interventions based on the Magenta Book, HM Treasury guidance on evaluation
- The SDB should measure and collate the collective impact of actions
- Greater clarity should be provided around the LDSVPs' remit in shaping and delivering the Strategy
- Funding of actions should be ensured to facilitate coordinated and consistent provision of services and support, recognising that delivery of actions may require dedicated resourced roles
- Consideration should be given to widening the SDB membership to include the voice of the voluntary sector (e.g. chair of partnership) and to include the DfE to reflect importance of workplace engagement

- It is recommended that the link between the SDG and SAG is strengthened to ensure effective two way communication that recognizes the expertise of front line agencies as well as providing channel for dissemination of information from centre out
- The wide membership of the SAG should be retained, but it is recommended that it builds on the successful workshop approach to maximise and draw value from the wide range of expertise on the SAG (across the whole of NI)
- It is recommended that going forward there is alignment of the Gillen Review and the implementation of the DV and SV strategy and action plans

## 1. Introduction

### Introduction

The seven year *Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy* was published jointly by the Department of Health (DoH) and the Department of Justice (DoJ) in March 2016. Its vision is “to have a society in which domestic and sexual violence is not tolerated in any form, effective tailored preventative and responsive services are provided, all victims are supported, and perpetrators are held to account”.

The Strategy identifies twenty priority areas, which underpin the development of yearly action plans under five strands:

- Leadership;
- Prevention and Early Intervention;
- Services;
- Support; and
- Protection and Justice.

For the purpose of this Strategy, the definitions of domestic and sexual violence and abuse are as follows:

### Scope of review

The Strategic Investment Board (SIB) was appointed by the departments comprising the Strategy’s Delivery Board in May 2020 to undertake a mid-term Review of the Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy. The objective of the work being to provide an independent and objective assessment relating to five areas shown in Figure 1.

**Domestic Violence and Abuse:**

*‘threatening, controlling, coercive behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, virtual, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional) inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or any form of disability) by a current or former intimate partner or family member.’*

**Sexual Violence and Abuse**

*‘any behaviour (physical, psychological, verbal, virtual/online) perceived to be of a sexual nature which is controlling, coercive, exploitative, harmful, or unwanted that is inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or any form of disability).’*



**Work undertaken**

The review was undertaken between mid-May and September 2020, and involved a number of distinct work phases comprising of a document and data review (including a review of international strategies); stakeholder engagement; and an analysis and assessment of impact. Appendix 1 contains a list of the background reports and data reviewed. A list of those consulted is contained in Appendix 2. This review was undertaken during the COVID 19 pandemic and so all consultations were undertaken by Zoom (or, in a limited number of cases where organisations had restrictions relating to video conferences, by telephone).

**Table 1: Methodology for the Mid-term Review of Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy**

<b>Document and data review</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ PSNI and published statistics on incidence/prevalence and trends</li> <li>➤ DSV Strategy/implementation and action plans</li> <li>➤ Strategic context e.g. PfG, Marshall, Gillen reviews, CJINI and associated reports</li> <li>➤ Review of international strategies – Canada, New Zealand, Sweden, Denmark</li> </ul>
<b>Stakeholder engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Structured one to one interviews, all undertaken via Zoom</li> <li>➤ 50 consultees - all members of SDB and SAG invited to participate</li> <li>➤ Also CJINI and Gillen Implementation Team</li> </ul>
<b>Analysis and assessment of impacts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Review of actions plan, implementation plan</li> <li>➤ Assessment of progress against the actions, priorities and strands</li> </ul>



## **2. Domestic and Sexual Violence in Northern Ireland**

### **The prevalence and incidence of domestic and sexual violence in Northern Ireland**

Domestic and sexual violence in Northern Ireland is widespread and increasing: there were approximately 3,500 sexual recorded crimes in 2018/19 and more than 32,000 domestic incidents, which equates to some 88 per day. Of the 32,000 domestic incidents, more than 19,000 domestic motivated crimes were recorded.

There is also emerging evidence that the number of incidents of domestic violence has further increased as a result of the COVID 19 pandemic. The “lockdowns” that have resulted have also led to an increased focus on domestic violence as across many countries the incidence and numbers of calls to helplines have increased.<sup>1</sup> In Northern Ireland, almost 2,000 domestic abuse calls were made to police in the first three weeks of April, which was during the COVID 19 lockdown<sup>2</sup>, representing a 10% increase on the number usually received.

Domestic violence and abuse represents a significant and increasing proportion of overall crime. In 2019/2020, in Northern Ireland, it accounted for 17.5% of all police recorded crime compared to 8% in 2004/2005. Approximately one third of all rape, violence with injury and without injury is domestically motivated. In addition, there were four homicides with a domestic abuse motivation in 2018/2019 and five in 2019/2020.

Domestic and sexual violence disproportionately affects women. Victims of sexual violence (78%) and domestic violence (69%) are more likely to be female. However, whilst victims of domestic abuse are likely to be in their 20s and 30s, some 60% of victims of sexual crimes are against girls aged under 18. The profile of victims is also changing. Comparing 2010/11 to 2019/20, there are now proportionately more male victims of domestic violence and abuse – 31% males in 2019/20 compared to 25% in 2010/11. There are also proportionately more younger and more older victims.

In domestic and sexual violence and abuse cases the majority of offenders are male (85% of domestic cases). Just under a third are ex-spouse/partner and 27% current spouse/partner. Although again, this picture is changing as increasingly cases involve parent/child relationships, which accounted for 23% in 2018-2019.

### **The economic and social costs of domestic abuse**

The economic and social costs of domestic and sexual violence and abuse represents a significant cost to the Northern Ireland economy and its society, and estimated to be approximately £1bn per annum. The Gillen review estimated the cost of domestic violence in Northern Ireland (2011/2) to be £674.3m, and the costs of sexual violence and abuse excluding child victims of rape and sexual assault (2011/2) to be £257.3m.

The Home Office’s has published research into the unit costs of domestic abuse in England and Wales, which takes into account the full range of costs including:

- Costs in Anticipation (protection and prevention)
- Costs as a Consequence (harm, and damage, health and victim services)
- Costs in Response (police and criminal justice system).

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/06/world/coronavirus-domestic-violence.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-52440662>

The average length of abuse experienced by a victim is three years, and the methodology used reflects that there is likely to be an overlap between various injuries and harm occurring and healing. The incidence is based on the Crime Survey.

Overall, for the year ending March 2017, domestic abuse is estimated to have cost over £66 billion in England and Wales alone as shown below.

Table 2: Total and unit costs of domestic abuse, England and Wales (2016/17) <sup>3</sup>									
Costs in anticipation	Costs as a consequence				Costs in response				Total
	Physical and emotional harm	Lost output	Health services	Victim services	Police costs	Criminal legal	Civil legal	Other	
£6m	£47.3m	£14.1m	£2.3m	£0.7m	£1.3m	£0.3m	£0.1M	£0.01m	£66.2m
Costs in anticipation	Costs as a consequence				Costs in response				Unit cost total
	Physical and emotional harm	Lost output	Health services	Victim services	Police costs	Criminal legal	Civil legal	Other	
£5	£24,300	£7,245	£1,200	£370	£645	£170	£70	£5	£34,015
<1%	71%	21%	4%	1%	2%	<1%	<1%	<1%	100%

Source: Oliver R, Alexander B, Roe, S and M Wlasny (January 2019) The economic and social costs of domestic abuse. Home Office Research Report 107.

The Home Office calculations (2016/2017) show significant unit costs attached to different types of abuse:

- Domestic homicide £2.2m
- Rape £77,300
- Violence with injury £73,560
- Stalking £30,000
- Violence without injury £30,000

The PSNI figures for 2018/19 (see Appendix 4) show 31,682 reported incidents and more than 16,000 of domestic abuse recorded crimes. Applying the unit cost from the Home Office’s research would equate to an annual cost in Northern Ireland of £1.077m and £550m.

On average over the last 12 years there has been 4 domestic homicides a year in Northern Ireland, the cost of which would represent £8.8m alone.

Using published unit costs from the Home Office for different types of crimes, the costs of domestic violence/abuse and sexual violence have been estimated to be in excess of £600m, however it should be noted that this excluded the costs of non-molestation order breaches so £600m is known to be an underestimate of the total costs.

<sup>3</sup> Oliver R, Alexander B, Roe, S and M Wlasny (January 2019) The economic and social costs of domestic abuse. Home Office Research Report 107.

Table 3: Estimates of annual cost of domestic and sexual violence in Northern Ireland	
DV Costs in NI (based on HO unit costs by offence*)	Annual cost by offence
Homicide	£8.8m
Violence with injury	£327.4m
Violence without injury	£171.0m
Harassment	£49.4m
Rape	£26.3m
Other sexual offences	£6.1m
Robbery	£0.2m
Theft	£1.3m
Criminal damage	£2.3m
Total (excluding non molestation order enforcement and other offences) Includes health and social care, policing costs and wider costs such as loss of income. Gillen estimated	<b>&gt;£592.9m</b>
DV Costs	£674m
SV Costs	£257m

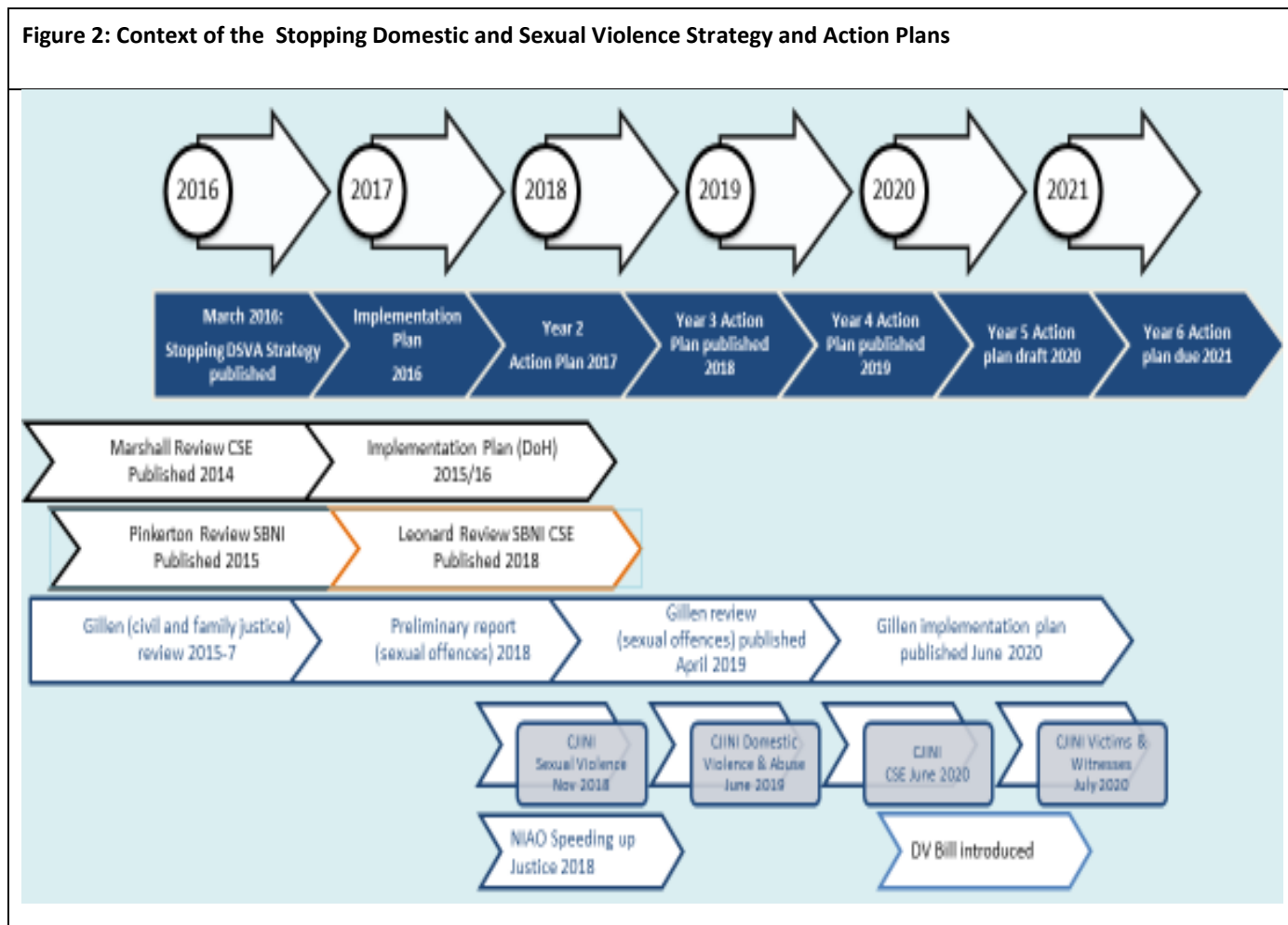
### 3. Context

#### Introduction

Since the Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence Strategy was published in 2016, there have been a number of inspection reports and other independent reviews that are of relevance to the strategy, which have each resulted in recommendations to address domestic and /or sexual violence or the experience for witnesses and victims.

As well as these reports and reviews, the Programme for Government is also central in terms of setting the strategic priorities for the Northern Ireland Executive.

**Figure 2: Context of the Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence Strategy and Action Plans**



#### Programme for Government

The Programme for Government (PfG) sets the strategic context for both the Budget and the Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland.

Prior to the return of the Executive in January 2020, the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) had been working to a cross departmental Outcomes Delivery Plan (ODP) as a basis for delivering public services. This is based on the framework of outcomes developed by the Executive that had been formed after the election in May 2016.

The ODP sets out the headline actions that individual Departments have put in place to progress towards the previously agreed overarching objective of *“Improving wellbeing for all - by tackling disadvantage and driving economic growth”*.

Outcomes relevant to the domestic and sexual violence strategy include: Outcome 7: We have a safe community where we respect the law and each other and Outcome 12: We give our children and young people the best start in life.

Indicators used to measure these include

- Prevalence rate (% of the population who were victims of any NI Crime Survey crime)
- A Respect Index
- % the population who believe their cultural identity is respected by society
- Average time taken to complete criminal cases
- Reoffending rate

Although none of the indicators under Outcomes 7 and 12 directly relate to the domestic and sexual strategy, the work taken forward under the strategy in terms of supporting children and their families would be expected to contribute to the outcome.

The new Programme for Government for the current Executive is in development and is due to be published in 2021.

### **Other strategies**

There are a number of other strategies and areas of work that interrelate with the domestic and sexual violence strategy, including the Victim and Witness Strategy and the Children and Young People's Strategy.

#### **[Victim and Witness Strategy 2013](#)**

Published in June 2013, the Victim and Witness Strategy, 'Making a difference to victims and witnesses of crime: improving access to justice, services and support', contained 51 actions to be delivered over a five year period. It sought to build upon many of the recommendations from the Committee for Justice inquiry into the services available to victims and witnesses of crime. It was to address issues such as the status and treatment of victims and witnesses; improved communication across the criminal justice system and communication with victims and witnesses of crime; providing support and special measures, improved understanding; and gathering information and research on the experiences of victims and witnesses. The timeframe for implementing this strategy overlapped in part with the domestic and sexual violence and abuse strategy. Equally, there are significant synergies between the aim and objectives of both strategies.

#### **[Children and Young People's Strategy 2017-27](#)**

In December 2016, the Department of Education launched a consultation on the Executive's Children and Young People's Strategy 2017-2027. This document was expected to set out the Executive's priorities for the lives of children and young people and the outcomes they want to achieve and how players will work together to ensure they are achieved. The intention was that this Strategy would direct all Executive led programmes, policies and services that have an impact on children's lives. The specific outcome of 'ensuring children and young people live in safety and stability' does directly relate to domestic and sexual violence strategy.

The headline indicators proposed to measure achievement against this outcome include:

- The number of 16/17 year olds presenting as homeless
- The number of first time entrants into the criminal justice systems
- The number of young people who are victims of crime

- The number of repeat applications made in relation to child contact orders

With the return of the Executive the Strategy for 2019-2029 was published in December 2019. The revised strategy recognises the impact of domestic violence and abuse children and states “We will continue to work together to implement the ‘Seven Year Strategy for Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse” in addition, two of its areas of greatest focus as identified as i) children and young people experiencing neglect, sexual abuse or domestic violence and ii) children and young people who are victims of sexual exploitation.

### Independent Reviews

#### [Gillen Review \(May 2019\)](#)

In April 2018, the Director of Public Prosecutions Stephen Herron, together with other members of the Criminal Justice Board, commissioned an independent review of arrangements around the delivery of justice in serious sexual offences. Although prompted by the high profile alleged rape trial of sports players in Northern Ireland it addressed known concerns about the journey through the criminal justice system and the high “drop out” rate of those cases proceeding through the system. The review was led by The Right Honourable, Sir John Gillen, a former Lord Justice of Appeal supported by an independent advisory panel.

Reporting in May 2019, Sir John’s report ***Review of Arrangements to Deliver Justice in Serious Sexual Offence Cases*** contained 253 recommendations and 16 key recommendations, cutting across the criminal justice system and into wider areas, including education and prevention and societal attitudes to sexual crime.

In June 2020, the DoJ published the ***Implementation Plan: The Gillen Review into the law and procedures in serious sexual offences in Northern Ireland***,<sup>4</sup> setting out an agreed approach to address the issues raised by Sir John. Fourteen priority areas were identified, and delivery is already underway with 11% of the recommendations now reported to be implemented in full. Some £1.6m of funding has been committed for 2020/2021 to support implementation.

Although this was initially envisaged as a three-year implementation plan, it has been extended to five years due to COVID 19 and other issues.

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<sup>4</sup><https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/justice/the-gillen-review-implementation-plan.PDF>

**Figure 3: Summary of Strategic Priority Areas**



**Source: Implementation Plan: The Gillen Review into the law and procedures in serious sexual offences in Northern Ireland, June 2020**

A multi-agency Strategic Justice Group on Sexual Harm has been established to oversee delivery, which will report to the Criminal Justice Board. This multi-agency approach reflects the inter-dependencies within the justice system and the need for actions to be delivered in a coherent and co-ordinated way. The Gillen Review Implementation Team (GRIT), part of the Access to Justice Directorate in DoJ, will be responsible for overseeing this work.

The Gillen Review and associated Implementation Plan are significant in the context of the Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence Strategy. The Review highlighted the urgent need to transform how the justice system deals with sexual crime and delivery of the Plan should contribute to all five strands of the Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence Strategy.

[Marshall review \(2013-4\)](#)

In September 2013, the then Minister for Health, with the support of the Ministers of Justice and Education, established an independent, expert-led inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in Northern Ireland. That inquiry was led by Kathleen Marshall, former Commissioner for Children and Young People in Scotland, and focused on both children and young people living at home in the community and those living in care.

The Marshall Report was published on 18 November 2014, making 17 key recommendations and a further 60 supporting recommendations, of which nine of the key recommendations and 29 supporting recommendations were for Health and Social Care, and the remainder for the Departments of Education and Justice, schools, PSNI, the PPS, RQIA and the SBNI.

The review emphasised the need to link strategies to address domestic violence and CSE, recognising that the underlying vulnerability to risk of CSE including domestic violence.

### **CJINI (Inspectorate reports 2010-2020)**

The Criminal Justice Inspectorate in Northern Ireland (CJINI) was originally given the power to inspect nine named organisations, under the Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2002. Further additions were later made by Order and as a result of s.45 of the Justice and Security (Northern Ireland) Act 2007 its scope now encompasses organisations including DAERA and the Health and Social Trusts, as well as criminal justice agencies. Funded by DoJ it provides an independent Inspectorate, and is required to make all its reports publicly available. In recent years, the CJINI has undertaken several reviews, and published reports relating to domestic and sexual violence.

### **Without Witness (November 2018)**

This was the report of a thematic inspection of the handling of sexual violence and abuse cases by the criminal justice system in Northern Ireland. Key findings identified in that reports, and of relevance to this review include:

1. Data for court figures were only available for sexual offences (as the court systems did not record offences with a domestic motivation specifically)
2. Specific comments were made by the CJINI in relation to DSV Strategy and implementation plan and the contribution stakeholders were able to make through the Stakeholder Assurance Group.
  - a. Some stakeholders commented that the Strategy was **focused predominantly on the needs of female victims**, although other stakeholders who mainly supported female victims felt that there had been an attempt to 'gender neutralise' the Strategy to such an extent that it did not sufficiently serve to address the issues of either gender. It is clear that domestic and sexual violence and abuse are gendered offences, with the majority of victims being female (just below 80% for sexual offences and just below 70% for domestic abuse offences in 2016-17), but it is important that services provided for victims are tailored to the needs of that individual, whatever their gender, sexuality, age, ethnicity or if they have a disability or not. The provision of these services should therefore be evidence-based and developed in consultation with victims and their advocates.
  - b. Stakeholders also commented that the implementation plan was **focused more on the issue of domestic violence** and abuse rather than sexual violence and abuse. Some felt the bringing together of the two strategies had reduced the focus on sexual violence and abuse. Given the overlap of these two types of offences, as well as the many similar issues for health and justice agencies in addressing the issues arising from them, it is understandable why a unified strategy was developed but it is important that issues in dealing with cases of sexual offences outside of a domestic context remain a focus.
  - c. **The lack of associated funding** for the work. Some examples of actions under the previous Strategy were given which had made little progress, such as programmes for un-adjudicated perpetrators and the development of an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor scheme. Inspectors were advised this was partly due to a lack of specified funding.
  - d. Despite the joint nature of the strategy and the focus on the departments and their agencies working together, there was still **no information sharing agreement** in place between the PSNI and Social Services



Relevant strategic recommendations were

- The PPS should develop their next and future corporate and business plans to reflect the priority the organisation places on dealing with domestic and sexual violence and abuse
- The PSNI and the PPS should produce an implementation plan to further develop the prosecution team approach for cases involving sexual offences within three months of the report
- The DoJ should include, in Action 6 of the Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence Strategy implementation plan, legislation which contains a requirement for jury directions to be given in sexual offence cases to enable them to approach court evidence in a more informed way

And relevant operational recommendations

- The PSNI should continue to assess and evidence that resource distribution across the areas of child abuse, rape crime and domestic abuse and adult safeguarding is proportionate and sufficient to manage demand and victim confidence effectively.
- The resourcing levels in the Public Protection Branch should be reviewed and re-assessed within a year of the publication of this report.
- The PPS undertake further work within six months of this report to fully deliver the standards contained in the Victim Charter and in the PPS Victim and Witnesses Policy, to ensure communication with victims is more empathetic, understandable, accurate, consistent and appropriate for the needs of the recipient. DoJ should ensure that rape, serious sexual offences and child abuse offences be added to the list of specified offences under the Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 2015.
- The PPS should, within three months of this report, develop an action plan to further improve how Counsel is utilised in cases involving sexual offences.

#### [Equal Partners \(April 2019\)](#)

In 2019 the CJINI reported on the voluntary and community sector in criminal justice. It noted the significant scale of the voluntary and community sector in criminal justice with 58 organisations directly linked to criminal justice system but significant number wider involvement: e.g. 182 involved in victim support, 225 ex-offenders, 410 crime prevention; and that these organisations were increasingly reliant on central government funding.

Some Third Sector groups thought changes to core funding, with greater emphasis on service delivery and full cost recovery mechanisms, posed a threat to their capacity to input to the development of these strategies and action plans including the domestic and sexual violence and abuse Strategy.

They noted that the DfC takes the lead on the Third Sector and was developing a new Voluntary and Community Strategy and a regional infrastructure support mechanism, both of which completed their consultation processes but were delayed due to the absence of the Northern Ireland Executive.

CJINI commented that the theme of better collaboration permeates the literature and discussions throughout the CJS (and all of the public sector). They raised the issue of how engagement among statutory, voluntary, community and social enterprises could be managed to prevent all out competition (where competition is inevitably necessary according to compliance sources for value for money assessment) reducing the collaborative effort.

Specifically they commented on the domestic and sexual violence and abuse Strategy noting that *“the engagement with the Third Sector in this strategy exhibited shortcomings around clear agreement of the*

*actual need, and the imbalance between statutory and non-statutory bodies in the discursive process was presented by the Third Sector as a barrier to having these viewpoints recognised. There were also difficulties with joint funding where individual departments' aims fell short of the combined response that was required"*

Of note was also "Orphan outcomes" i.e. aligning funding where outcomes are not directly linked to departments but are cross cutting.

#### No Excuse (June 2019)

The CJINI has undertaken three thematic inspections specifically focussing on domestic violence and abuse, the most recent reporting in June 2019. The first report in 2010 made 8 strategic and 5 operational recommendations. However, a follow up report in 2013 found that only one of these recommendations had been implemented fully, and six had been partially achieved.

Strategic recommendations were:

- The PSNI should develop an action plan, within six months of this report, to further develop the approach to dealing with cases of domestic violence and abuse and address the issues highlighted in relation to:
  - the training and development of new recruits and first responders in the areas of harassment, stalking and coercive and controlling behaviour; and
  - the risk assessment practices in cases of domestic violence and abuse
- The PSNI and MARAC Operational Board should develop an action plan, within six months of this report, to further develop the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements for cases of domestic violence and abuse in Northern Ireland
- The PSNI and the PPS should develop an implementation plan to further develop the prosecution team approach for cases involving domestic abuse or with a domestic motivation within three months of this report
- The Criminal Justice Board, in conjunction with its partners, should, in the nine months following the publication of this report, ensure the delivery and roll out of Northern Ireland-wide schemes to enhance the criminal justice system's approach to domestic violence and abuse, in relation to:
  - where volume is assessed to be sufficient, providing services to enable the clustering of domestic abuse cases to a designated court in each Administrative Court Division; and
  - a properly costed contract for an IDVA service to address the safety of victims at high risk of harm

Operational recommendations were:

- The DoJ should review, with input from relevant stakeholders, how potential inadequacies in current legislation regarding the act of choking or strangulation by defendants could be addressed
- The DoJ should develop plans for and consult upon legislation to introduce protection orders for stalking and harassment
- The PPS, with support from criminal justice partners, should review the use of special measures in cases of domestic abuse to assess compliance with paragraph 48 of the Victim Charter and take action to address any issues arising.

#### [Child Sexual Exploitation in Northern Ireland \(June 2020\)](#)

A recent report in June 2020 focussed on CSE in Northern Ireland. This report concluded that “[d]eveloping a comprehensive picture of the extent and nature of child sexual exploitation, led by the PSNI in conjunction with the DoJ, will be vital in understanding and agreeing collaborative approaches across statutory and non-statutory partners to tackle it and create a shared child protection response.”

The report recommended that within six months of the publication of the report, the DoJ should take forward a cross-departmental strategic response to tackle child sexual abuse and exploitation, which should be linked to any existing and future strategic plans for child protection, and noted that a cross-departmental strategy that sets out desired outcomes for children at risk of sexual abuse including child sexual exploitation is absent. They also found there was no tangible trend data to evidence how children at risk of child sexual exploitation had been helped.

They reported that consultation for a Children and Young People’s Strategy 2017-27 had noted that ‘addressing child sexual exploitation remains a priority for the Executive,’ but that there were continued challenges relating to information sharing, detecting CSE and the development of a coherent data set. In addition, specific goals or indicators to improve this or child protection were absent.

The CJINI noted that the DoJ and DoH ‘Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland: A Seven Year Strategy’ had been published in 2016, and accepted that measures within it were relevant to tackling CSE, but it considered the response to CSE should be ‘a distinct piece of work. However, cross-referencing provisions related to modern slavery and the response to CSE was also important. As statutorily required, the DoJ has published an annual modern slavery strategy but this does not refer explicitly to CSE.

#### [Victims and Witnesses: The care and treatment of victims and witnesses by the Criminal Justice System in Northern Ireland \(July 2020\)](#)

CJINI published its latest review of the care and treatment of victims and witnesses by the criminal justice system in July 2020. The review looked at the experience of the victim or witness from when crime occurs and charts the contact they have with the organisations within the criminal justice system and the support they receive on their journey.

They noted that charters intended to provide information, support and protection along with a dedicated victim and witness unit had been introduced. These steps were intended to help victims and to ensure they were able to participate in criminal proceedings. However, the inspection found “evidence of dedicated individuals from across the criminal justice system and the voluntary sector working to identify personal needs and provide meaningful support to children and adults who were both victims and witnesses, during a very difficult time in their lives”, but also found that victims and witnesses remained fundamentally unaware of their rights to information, support and protection and that services to assist them were still not being consistently delivered to a quality standard across Northern Ireland.

**NIAO Report Speeding up Justice (March 2018)**

The Audit Office has also reported on the justice system, with their March 2018 report focussing on the throughput of cases in the court system. It concluded that the system failed to deliver value for money, and noted that *“a key feature of how the system in Northern Ireland has been a failure to complete cases within reasonable timescales. Crown Court cases in Northern Ireland typically take more than 500 days from the date an offence is reported until a verdict is delivered in court, twice as long as in England and Wales. Around 12 per cent of Crown Court cases in Northern Ireland take in excess of 1,000 days to complete”* resulting in case attrition and poor experiences for court users (witnesses and victims).

At a leadership level (strategic level):

- The DoJ should deliver an effective communications strategy to raise community awareness of the Victim and Witness Charters and how victim and witness services can be accessed easily.
- Senior leaders across the criminal justice system need to be active members of the Victim and Witness Steering Group and be Victims Champions for their organisations.

On the ground (operational level):

- Better training for PSNI student officers, officers and VWCU staff.
- Review when investigation updates were provided and standard letters issued to victims and witnesses.
- Better partnerships between the criminal justice system and Victim Support Northern Ireland including how police first responders provide victims with information & a review of the victim needs assessment process.
- This report also made a series of recommendations to improve the throughput of cases and improve the experience for court users. In addition, the NIAO also recommended that the DoJ should establish an effective system for monitoring the implementation of the CJINI’s recommendations to support improvement.

#### 4. Overview of the Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence Strategy in Northern Ireland

##### Overview of vision, strands and priorities

The overall vision of the Strategy, which was published in 2016, is “to have a society in which domestic and sexual violence is not tolerated in any form; to have effective tailored preventative and responsive services; and to ensure that all victims are supported, and perpetrators are held to account”.

Five strands and twenty priority areas were identified for taking the Strategy forward over a seven year period. There is no dedicated funding attached to this strategy, although some departments provide core funding to some support organisations and for some key services.

New initiatives under the strategy tend to be funded by individual departments or jointly depending on availability of funds and competing priorities within departments.

Table 4 below lists the twenty priorities within the Strategy.

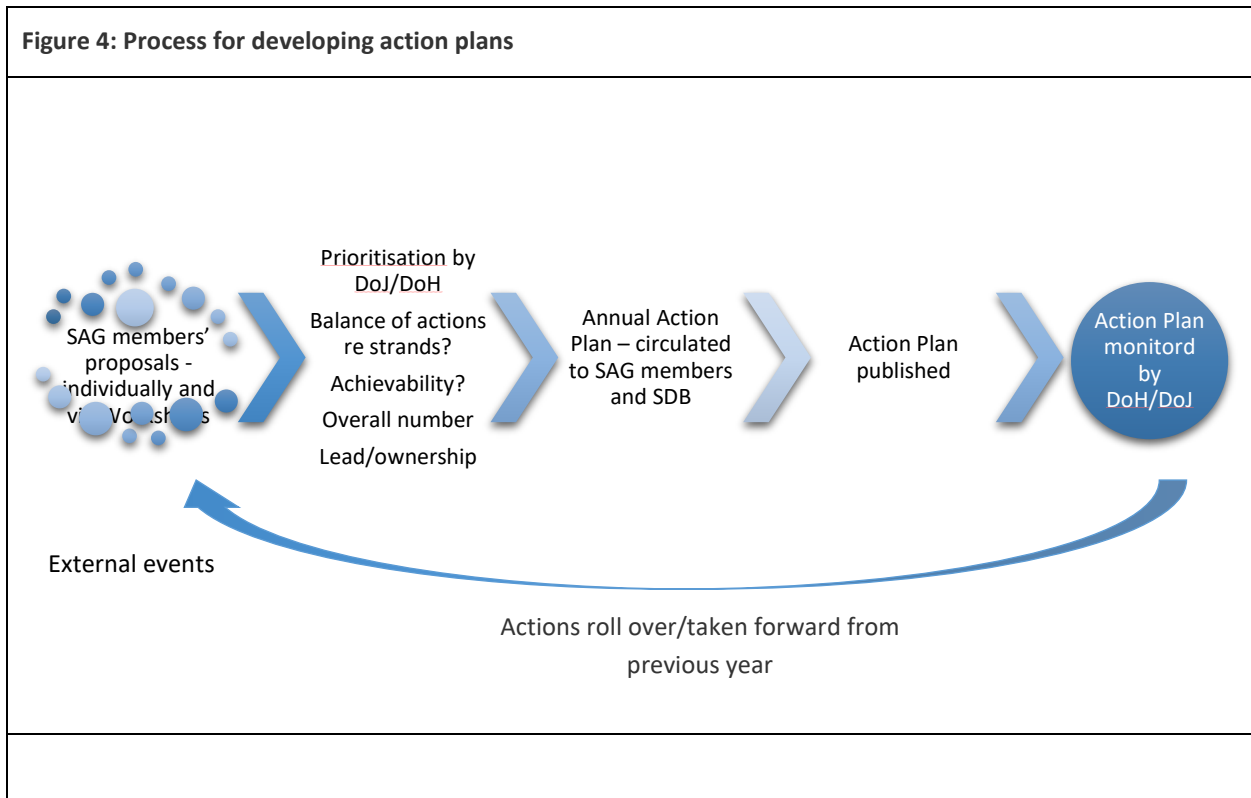
Table 4: Driving Change through Co-operation and Leadership		
1	All Government Departments reaffirm their commitment to working together and in partnership with other organisations to continue to promote societal change in attitudes and in the provision of services, support and justice for victims of domestic and sexual violence and abuse.	DoH, DoJ, DE, DfC, DoF Strategic Delivery Board Inter-Ministerial Group
2	On behalf of the Northern Ireland Executive, the Departments of Health and Justice will provide co-leadership and strategic direction to promote change.	DoH, DoJ Strategy leads
Prevention and Early Intervention		
3	Establish a baseline on societal attitudes to domestic and sexual violence and abuse.	DoH, DoJ, DE, DfC DoJ crime survey
4	Teachers will have the necessary skills to teach about sensitive subjects, including child abuse, and domestic and sexual violence and abuse.	DE
5	Teachers will be alert to pupils experiencing distress and trained to respond appropriately.	DE Operation Encompass
6	Teachers will have access to a range of age appropriate and evaluated resources to support the teaching of sensitive subjects.	DE iMatter programme
7	Quality assurance arrangements will be established to ensure that the preventative curriculum offered in schools is effective.	DE 'Keeping Safe' project
8	Relevant Government Departments and their agencies will work together to promote preventative safeguarding for adults at risk of harm.	DoH, DoJ NIASP
9	Relevant Government Departments and their agencies will work with the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI) and the Children's and Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP) to prevent domestic and sexual violence and abuse from occurring and to tackle child sexual exploitation.	DoH, DoJ, DE SBNI scoping support services and training needs
Delivering Change through Responsive Services		
10	An integrated pathways approach to facilitate the four key elements of service provision for those who present with domestic and sexual violence and abuse: encourage disclosure and recognise signs of violence and abuse; respond to disclosure; identification of harm; and coordinated action following disclosure.	DoH, DoJ, DfC Advocacy (likely to include housing support); IRIS
11	The development of a safety plan will be an integral part of the pathways approach to domestic and sexual violence and abuse for children, young people and adults, in order to support individuals (and families) through the immediate and longer term consequences of violence and abuse.	DoH, DoJ, DE, DfC MARACS

<b>12</b>	A renewed emphasis on awareness training, on how to recognise, respond, and seek help; and this may include facilitating safe disclosure in line with recognised standards.	DoH, DoJ, DE, DfC Workplace Policy Guidance IRIS PSNI training
<b>13</b>	The commissioning and provision of services informed by the views of those who have been affected by domestic and sexual violence and abuse, or are at significant risk of it.	DoH, DoJ, DE, DfC Stakeholder Assurance Group
<b>14</b>	Appropriate partnership networks to increase multi-agency recognition and responses to domestic and sexual violence and abuse.	DoH, DoJ, DE, DfC MARACs Local D&SV Partnerships
<b>Support</b>		
<b>15</b>	Victims of domestic and sexual violence and abuse will be provided with the appropriate outreach and advisory services, and consideration will be given to their individual needs.	DoH, DoJ, DfC Domestic & Sexual Abuse Helpline Advocacy (likely to include housing support) IRIS
<b>16</b>	Evaluation of the provision of emergency housing support based on emerging and complex needs.	DfC Refuge provision Sanctuary scheme
<b>17</b>	The emotional and psychological needs of individuals who have suffered as a result of violence and abuse are recognised and addressed in order to improve outcomes.	DoH, DoJ, DfC Domestic & Sexual Abuse Helpline Advocacy (likely to include housing support) IRIS
<b>Protection and Justice</b>		
<b>18</b>	Focused protection, support and information will be available for all victims throughout their engagement with the Justice System.	DoJ Advocacy Listing arrangements
<b>19</b>	Ongoing assessment of the capacity of the Justice System to respond to current, new and emerging issues will be undertaken in relation to both the protection of victims, and the response to harmful and violent behaviour.	DoJ MARACS
<b>20</b>	Continue to develop and deliver initiatives and interventions, based on best practice, to effectively address harmful, violent and abusive behaviour.	DoJ Behavioural Change Programmes Stalking Legislation Domestic Abuse offence DHRs

**Process for developing action plans**

The Strategy has been operationalised through a series of annual action plans, beginning with the Year One Implementation Plan, published alongside the Strategy. To date there has been an initial Implementation Plan, and four subsequent Annual Action Plans. A consolidated list of the actions from all the five plans is included in the appendices.

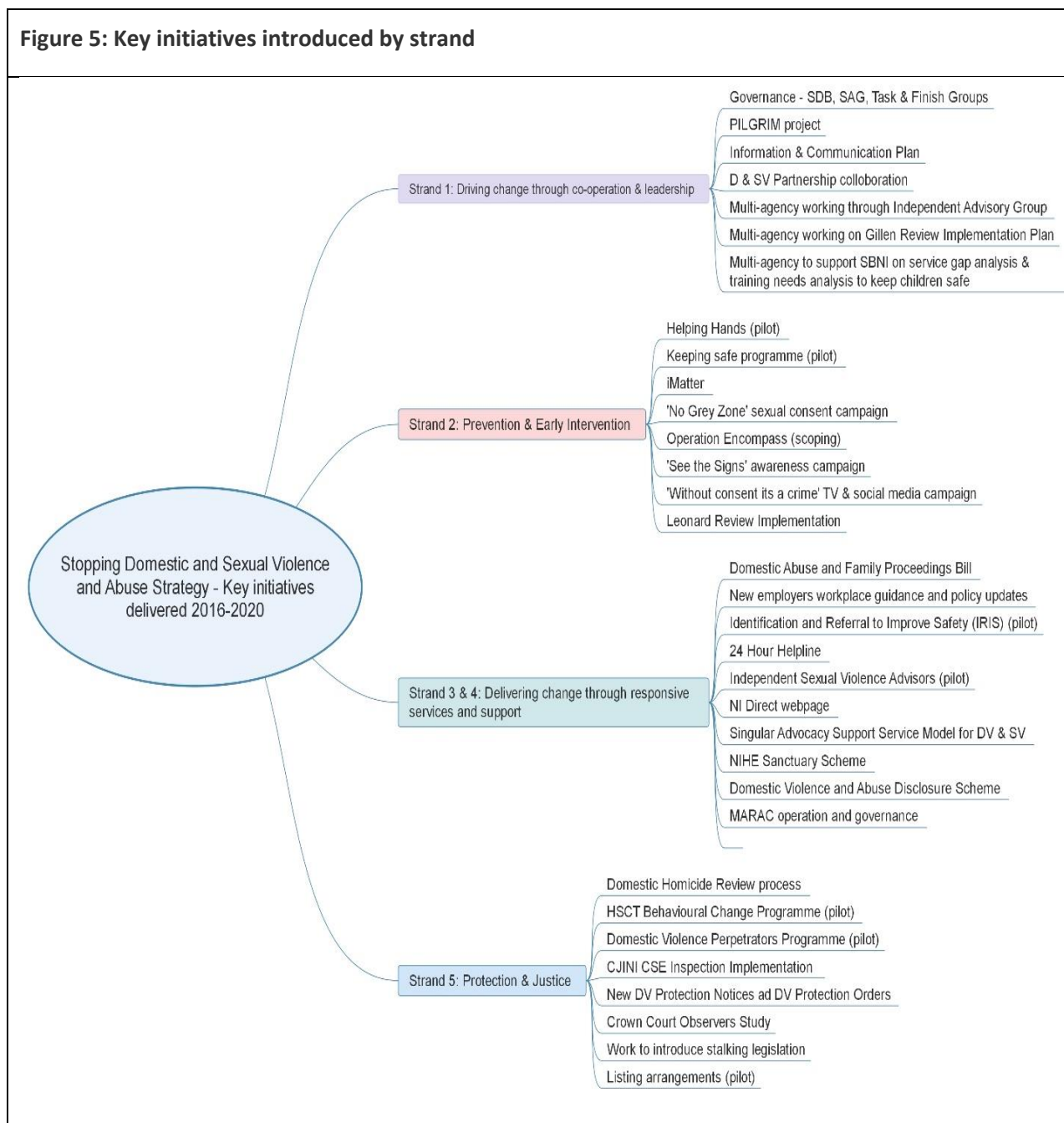
Figure 4 summarises the process for developing the annual actions plans. This is primarily a “bottom up” process with SAG members asked to put forward actions for inclusion. More recently this process of identifying actions has been facilitated through a series of SAG workshops. The actions put forward by members are also considered in the context of external events or other influencing factors. A compiled draft action plan is then circulated to SAG members for comment and subsequently to the SDB for approval. Progress against the action plans is monitored and reported on at the SAG and SDB meetings.



**Key initiatives by strand**

Figure 5 shows the different initiatives progressed between 2016 and 2020. A review of these shows that they are vastly different in terms of scope and scale. Some are small scale pilots, whilst others are much more substantive and require legislative change. Examples of the pilots include Helping Hands, Keeping Safe Programme, IRIS and the Domestic Violence Perpetrators Programme. Many of initiatives are also modelled on practices operating elsewhere.

Figure 5: Key initiatives introduced by strand



**Governance of the Strategy**

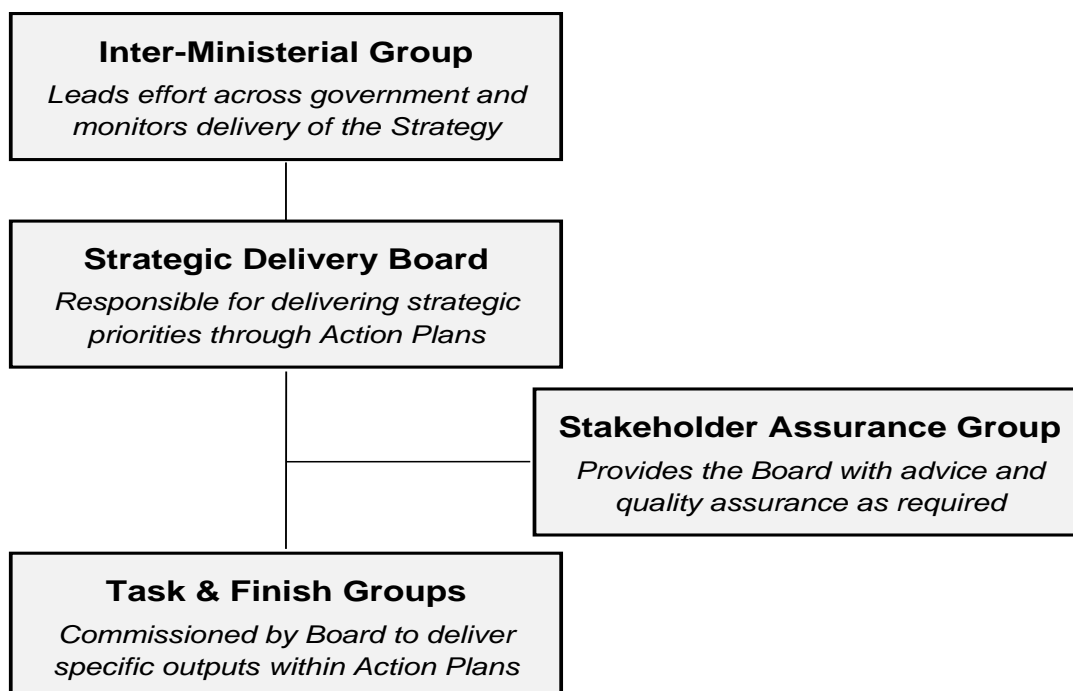
**Inter-Ministerial Group**

The strategy was to be overseen by the re-constitution of the Inter-Ministerial Group on Domestic and Sexual Violence (IMG), which is supported by a Strategic Delivery Board (SDB) comprised of senior government officials.

An Inter-Ministerial Group (IMG) had been in place since December 2007 to lead the effort across Government to ensure that domestic and sexual violence and abuse issues were integrated into the policy initiatives of all relevant departments. This was reinstated with the overall objective to promote cross-departmental cooperation and ensure that Action Plans arising from the Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy were developed and implemented.



The terms of reference for this group<sup>5</sup> indicated that the IMG was to meet biannually, with the membership being: Minister of Health (co-Chair), Minister of Justice (co-Chair), Junior Ministers, Executive Office, Minister for Education, Minister for Communities and Minister for Finance. Secretariat support was to be provided by the DoH and DoJ. The last meeting of the IMG was in November 2016. It has been decided that six monthly updates should be provided to the Executive on domestic and sexual abuse, retaining the ability to reconvene the IMG if required.



### Strategic Delivery Board

A Strategic Delivery Board is made up of cross-departmental senior officials, which oversees the Strategy's delivery, with advice and support from a Stakeholder Assurance Group (SAG). The SDB is a senior official level group, which is responsible for regular monitoring of progress and reporting to IMG.

Quality assurance of project level output takes place here, as well as challenge in terms of risks and issues and responsibility for communications for the Strategy as a whole. In previous years, the Board has reported to an Inter-Ministerial Group (IMG) on Domestic and Sexual Violence. The SDB is also responsible for the monitoring and oversight of the MARAC MOB, via annual reporting.<sup>6</sup>

### Stakeholder Assurance Group

This group is comprised of statutory, voluntary and community sector organisations with the aim being to provide advice and challenge to SDB through a 'cross sectoral frontline' perspective. Membership of the SAG is included in the Appendices.

### Task and Finish Groups

It was expected that ad-hoc project groups would be established for limited duration on a task and finish basis to deliver defined outputs from the Action Plans, for example, there are task and finish groups on

<sup>5</sup> IMG Terms of Reference (November 2016)

<sup>6</sup> MARAC MOB Draft Terms of Reference (undated)

specific areas – including the Communications Plan, Domestic Homicide Review and Operation Encompass. These groups report progress to the SDB and lead communication work for specific tasks.

#### Communications Plan Task and Finish Group

A time-bound task and finish group was established<sup>7</sup>, with membership drawn from the Stakeholder Assurance Group. It is chaired by the DOJ Head of Violence Against the Person branch, to:

- Consider how best to raise the profile of domestic and sexual violence and abuse and the work emerging from the Strategy;
- Identify opportunities for sharing information and communicating within the Strategy Governance Groups and beyond;
- Establish and assess potential content for the information and communication plan; and
- Consider and advise on the impact and implications information and communication proposals may have on current policy and practice

#### Domestic Homicide Reviews - Task and Finish Group<sup>8</sup>

The Group was to take forward the proposal to introduce domestic homicide reviews in Northern Ireland, which was consulted on in 2018. DHRs to involve key multi-agency ‘groups’:

- a senior oversight forum (SOF) of senior officials from statutory justice and health bodies, relevant multi-agency partnerships and third sector representatives; and
- an independently chaired DHR Panel responsible for conducting and reporting on each domestic homicide review.

#### Operation Encompass Task and Finish Group<sup>9</sup>

Operation Encompass Task and Finish Group<sup>10</sup> was established in 2018 to consider how notification to schools of domestic abuse incidents could be achieved through the use, or adaptation of, current processes and procedures and what material benefits would be secured through the introduction of Operation Encompass, over and above the use, or adaptation of, current processes. The groups was envisaged as being short lived, chaired by SBNI, with membership including Women’s Aid, PSNI, DE, DoH, DoJ.

<sup>7</sup> See communications Plan dated November 2018

<sup>8</sup> DOJ (August 2017) DH Reviews Governance Arrangements

<sup>9</sup> SBI (undated) ToR Operation Encompass Task and Finish Group

<sup>10</sup> Operation Encompass is an initiative operating in England and Wales, which involves reporting to schools, by police before the start of the next school day, when a child or young person has been involved or exposed to a domestic abuse incident the previous evening. The Operation Encompass

## 5. Mid-term Review Findings

The review of the strategy focused on four main areas:

- Aims and appropriateness of the strategy
- Progress against the actions, strands and priorities
- Effectiveness of governance arrangements
- Measuring impact

### Aim and appropriateness of the Strategy

#### Need for a Strategy

Overall there was widespread consensus from SDB and SAG members that having a strategy was valuable as it raises the profile of the issue and gives focus to the debate. It also was seen to help get departmental buy in.

*“The Strategy has helped to crystallise and focus the message”.*

*“The strategy? - absolutely it is needed, since the strategy has come into play it brings all the agencies together regionally, the trusts are all on the same page, all have the same goals and aims”*

*“Good mechanism for getting buy in”*

*“Good strategies tend to start with good analysis of problem, and what drives the problems and aligns the actions against these”.*

However, there was concern that with focus on the actions plans, the strategy had become the collection of individual actions rather than an overarching strategy that drives change.

Several consultees commented on the need for a strategy to be evidence based. However there was conflicting feedback from consultees as to whether there was sufficient research to provide an evidence base to enable understanding of trends and issues and needs. It was thought that although it might be possible to align the strands and priorities against the evidence it was unclear, and that the structure and links should be more obvious.

Some felt there was extensive research on what works from elsewhere, and that what was required was action. Other felt that too often England and Wales statistics were extrapolated to apply to Northern Ireland without understanding whether they were applicable. In addition, many of the front line organisations working with harder to reach or underrepresented groups felt strongly that evidence was poor around gender, sexuality, race, age, etc and that there was a clear need for a stronger evidence base especially as issues and demographics are changing.

#### Audience and Ownership

It was felt that the main audience for the strategy was the domestic and sexual violence sector, and that it provided reassurance that Northern Ireland has a strategic approach to it and is investing in it. It was recognised that it was unlikely that many victims would be aware of the strategy, but that it did provide assurance for key agencies such as Nexus and Women’s Aid etc and arm’s length bodies.

Currently, it is seen as a two department strategy, although it was signed off by the Executive at the time. Many felt it should be seen as an Executive strategy, but then raised the issues that TEO would usually be the lead department on an Executive strategy. It would then require further consideration as to where it should then sit and whether it is a health/justice document or cross departmental. Several people raised the issue of involvement of other departments such as Economy, Finance, Infrastructure and Agriculture.

The point was made by several from both the SDB and SAG that domestic and sexual violence are 'core business' for justice department/agencies, but within health or other organisations these may be seen as somewhat peripheral, competing with higher profile issues such as waiting lists or cancer treatment or schools.

### Scope of the Strategy document

#### Domestic and sexual violence

There was no clear consensus as to whether there should be both sexual violence and domestic violence included within the same strategy. Some consultees felt this was valuable, others that the domestic violence element was dominant. Some pointed out that the two issues were distinct, whilst others said there were commonalities and that by including both in the strategy it reinforced the issue. There is no doubt that the Gillen review has raised the profile of sexual violence element of the strategy. Overall, there was consensus that the strategy needed to ensure that both domestic and sexual violence have equal weight.

Many organisations e.g. PPS and PSNI have separate lead staff or teams or organizational structures for domestic violence and sexual violence, which then meant often two people were attending the SAG meetings. As it is often the same organisations/people attending many of the same forums, this was not always viewed as a productive use of time but it was recognised that often the two issues are interrelated.

#### Gendered

In terms of the focus of the strategy, there were again mixed responses. Several consultees felt that the focus should be on women reflecting the gendered nature of domestic violence and sexual violence. However, there was also concern that *"the word woman doesn't appear in the document"*, and instead phrases such as victim/person are used, making it non gender specific. What did come through from the consultation was the need to recognise that harder to reach groups should not be *'pushed to the back of the queue'* and that the strategy should reflect the needs of trans and LBQ communities, which are often underrepresented but face growing concerns.

Some consultees raised the potential to take a "whole family" approach as more typical in other countries. Many consultees raised the need for the strategy to recognise the impact of domestic violence on children more.

#### Omissions

Omissions to the strategy raised by consultees included the increasing role of CSE and trafficking, as well as FGM. Another omission raised was that of sex workers, (although it was pointed out that this would require all island focus as many work both north and south). There was also concern raised at the *"lack of minority ethnic voices"* on the SAG and that was reflected in the strategy and actions; as was the need to recognise there are growing populations in Northern Ireland for whom English is not their first language.

There was also concern raised that much of the discussion about domestic and sexual violence ignores the needs of older people and those with disabilities. Concerns about continued use of stereotypical image was raised by many of the front line charities/organisations. There was concern that the focus is often on intimate/partner perpetrators, rather than reflecting a much more complex situation that can involve abuse by other family members, in settings other than home such as care homes, and also abuse by professionals.

### Balance between victims and perpetrators

Several consultees raised the fact that, to date, there has been greater focus on victims, and that there is need for the strategy to recognise that imbalance and address resources and focus on perpetrators.

Several commented on the need to break the cycle that often persists across generations - *“we are seeing women who have come to us as children, and we need to break the cycle and make preventative intervention work”*

### Funding

Consultees frequently raised concern that the strategy did not come with any particular funding streams.

### Communication

A coordinated communications plans was seen as a valuable part of the strategy, however, some consultees felt there was a need to raise the profile of the strategy itself and the work being undertaken.

### Duration

In terms of the duration of the Strategy, there was a recognition that a huge amount of effort was required to get the strategy developed that it needed to be for a sufficiently long period of time to merit that, but that it then is in danger of becoming outdated, and with numerous staff changes it means many who are involved in implementing and delivery have not been involved in its development.

To avoid the rigidity of a strategy document, one suggestion was to have a strategic framework, which might offer greater flexibility and opportunities to set the operating context and actions flow from that.

### Strands and priorities

Many thought the strands were well-structured and logical, and that they were broadly right. It was thought that they were helpful for partners to see where they fit in and where they can contribute. There was much less focus on and knowledge about the 20 priorities.

It was recognised that some of the strands and priorities have been more successful than others – particularly where there is a department with a dedicated policy area.

Table 5: Summary: Aims/Appropriateness of the Strategy		
Area	Strengths	Weaknesses
Need for strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Widely agreed strategy is needed</li> <li>➤ Provides focus to bring agencies together</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Often not directly referred to – many in operational roles more focused on the action plans day to day</li> </ul>
Format of strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Too strongly led by Justice and Health</li> <li>➤ Needs to recognise key role of other departments esp. DfC and DE</li> <li>➤ Strands well liked</li> <li>➤ Structure of strands provides good framework</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Audience is not the end user</li> <li>➤ Needs to be flexible enough to reflect emerging issues/changing priorities</li> <li>➤ Needs more focus on prevention and education rather than on victims /downstream issues</li> <li>➤ Need to focus on perpetrator as well as the victim</li> </ul>
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Mixed views as to whether sexual violence and domestic violence should both be included in single strategy. On balance yes, but needs to be balanced so both have equal weight</li> <li>➤ Mixed views on issue of gender neutrality of strategy</li> <li>➤ Some felt there were omissions: e.g. FGM, sex workers, CSE</li> </ul>	
<b>KEY POINTS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Strategy is needed – given importance and scale of challenges</b></li> <li>➤ <b>Strands provide a useful framework. But not clear what success looks like and how it will be measured</b></li> <li>➤ <b>Strategy needs to be flexible to reflect change - reflect needs of all inc older, young, LGBT, men, different status</b></li> <li>➤ <b>Content should be rooted in “lived experience”</b></li> <li>➤ <b>Unfunded implementation plan is a major challenge</b></li> <li>➤ <b>Need for greater focus on the perpetrator</b></li> </ul>		

**Progress against the actions, strands and priorities**

**Overview of action plans**

At the time of this Mid-term review, five action plans have been published. In total there are 148 actions contained within these five plans. Analysis shows that the number of actions per plan has increased year on year, with 13 in the first plan rising to 44 actions in Year 5. Over the years many actions have rolled over and therefore appear in multiple plans.

The analysis of actions by strand shows that only 13.5% of actions relate to the Prevention and Early Intervention strand. Some 45% of the actions relate to Services and Support and 28% on Protection and Justice.

Table 6: Number of actions by strand by year						
	Strand 1: Co-operation and leadership	Strand 2: Prevention & Early Intervention	Strand 3: Delivering change through responsive services	Strand 4: Support	Strand 5: Protection & Justice	TOTAL
Action Plan Year 1	2	-	10		1	13
Action Plan Year 2	1	2	6	5	9	23*
Action Plan Year 3	4	5	5	6	8	28
Action Plan Year 4	8	5	10	3	14	40*
Action Plan Year 5	5	8	21		10	44
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>66</b>		<b>42</b>	<b>148</b>
<b>Note: *A number of actions include multiple parts and each has been included as a separate action.</b>						
<b>Source: Annual Actions Plans</b>						

### Delivery of actions – responsibility and progress

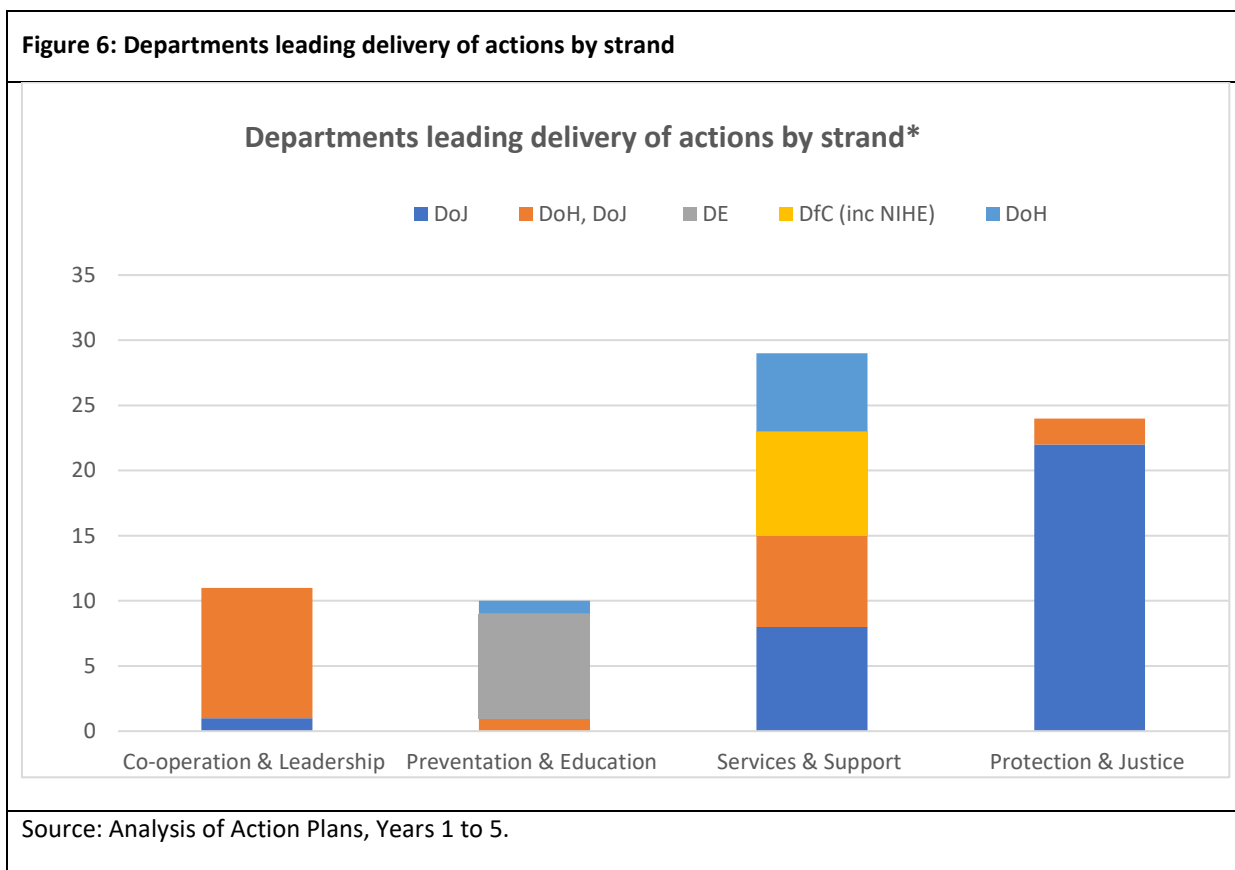
Analysis of responsibility for leading on actions shows that the majority (56%) of actions are delivered by only one partner. However, there is evidence of some collaboration, with 44% of actions where responsibility for delivery is against two or more partners.

Overall, DoJ plays a significant role in delivery, involved in 56% of actions across strands. DoH is involved in a further 39% of the actions. DE and DfC are also involved, though to a much lesser extent, i.e. 13% and 14% of actions respectively.

Figure 6 shows actions lead/jointly lead by departments by strand, indicating that DoJ is involved across all strands, particularly so on protection and justice. Likewise, DoH has some involvement in all strands, whereas DE and DfC’s involvement is focused on specific strands: DE on prevention and early intervention and DfC on services and support.

A review of progress in delivering the actions shows that most of Year 1-4 actions have been delivered i.e. 84% delivered and 16% ongoing. (Year 5 actions were excluded from this part of the analysis as it cover the period April 2020 to March 2021, and delivery on most of the actions are ongoing. It is also recognised that timescales for the delivery of some of the Year 5 actions may also be affected by COVID).

Figure 6: Departments leading delivery of actions by strand



### [Stakeholders views on progress against the actions, strands and priorities](#)

Consultees were asked whether they thought progress had been made, and if so in which areas, and where they felt there had been successes and challenges.

Overall, consultees thought that reasonable progress had been made on actions, although many felt that things could have happened more quickly had it not been for a difficult political situation and competing with other demands on services, especially acute health services. There was concern raised that the first two years of the strategy were very much about *'finding their feet'* and building trust and relationships. However, that since 2018 the relationships and confidence are there, but there was concern expressed that changes to civil servants could undue this and that they did *"not want to be starting again from scratch to rebuild"*.

### [Role of the Action Plans](#)

Front line organisations reported that they were more familiar with the Action Plans than the strategy document itself. Several said that the action plans focused their work, and provided a useful framework to measure their own progress.

### [Development of the Action Plans](#)

Some consultees felt that the development of the action plans was largely *"bottom up"* rather than top down i.e. being an aggregation of different stakeholders' actions. But others said that the process of developing the action plans had *"improved drastically over the last few years, and developed better flow upwards"* although recognising that more integration would be achieved.

However, there was a feeling that the action plans ended up being reflection of what departments /organisations are doing anyway and what the stakeholder SAG wants to see in it, rather than being based on evidence and/or need. There was also a sense that there was not enough challenge about what actions were needed



There was comment made by consultees that all the actions in the action plans were given equal weight, but *“some of the actions are big and sprawling and some need prioritised. Some emphasis on those that are achievable to get them past the post”*. There was also feedback that there was a need to look at the barriers to achieving some of the actions, for example where legislation was required. As such, some felt that actions should be categorised into those that can be done immediately and those that are longer term, in effect they *“could be smarter about the actions.”*

A recurring theme from the consultees was the need to hear victims’ voices and lived experiences, and particularly in relation to children. *“We should be drawing on what children actually say rather than ticking boxes and patronising children and young people”*.

There was no consensus as to the volume of actions in the action plans, rather it was more important to have the right actions.

*“Not a massively long list would prefer to have fewer but more impactful actions”*

*“key point is what do they all add up to – how do know they are the right things?”*

*“we should scale back the actions, make them manageable, prioritise and then sign off on them year on years – there should be more quality assurance around what is being delivered”*

There was concern from some that the timetable was ambitious and if not achieved it gave the impression of slippage, whereas there was a feeling that progress had been made especially given the absence of the Executive.

#### Content of the Action Plans

There was an awareness that the actions were less focussed on prevention and early education, and actions under this strand were regarded as piecemeal. This was strongly echoed by others in the voluntary sector, who commented that preventative work in post primary education was very ad hoc.

*“Ideologically we know what we want to do, but we need to be more strategic about how we do things – sex education in NI archaic and years behind other countries”*

*it needs to be on a statutory footing, as not all schools will allow it in”*

*“you can write a wish list, as long as you like, but unless there is a commitment of resourcing an awful lot of this work on actions is done by good will be agencies”*

There was also concern that the action plan was not accompanied by any costings of financial estimates.

Overall, several consultees said that they thought the action plans lacked innovation and ambition, and that there was already good practice from other jurisdictions that could be learned from and applied.

There was a concern that services could be overwhelmed when we move out of pandemic and into recovery phase, which was likened to coming out of the post conflict environment, where the legacy of the lockdown could be very long term. This could be at a time when due to financial pressures services may close leaving gaps that the trusts are unable to fill

Table 8: Summary:: Format, development and delivery of action plans		
	Strengths	Weaknesses
Content of plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Plans are helpful in keeping focus.</li> <li>➤ Some good individual initiatives. Stakeholder like the fact that plans are annual - gives sense of action</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Action plans appear a list more than a strategy – need to be the right actions</li> <li>➤ Voice of the victim needs to be stronger</li> <li>➤ Prevention and early intervention could be strengthened</li> </ul>
Delivery so far	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ View there has been good progress on protection and justice</li> <li>➤ Perception of specific successful initiatives inc: domestic homicide review, Ad campaigns, Domestic Abuse Offence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Delivery too slow, with related actions rolling over</li> <li>➤ Concerns at lack of progress re-education /prevention</li> <li>➤ More Executive/senior leadership needed</li> <li>➤ Over reliance on pilots, slow to mainstream</li> <li>➤ Lack of funding hindering delivery</li> </ul>
Evidence of collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ SAG and workshops have brought stakeholders together</li> <li>➤ COVID 19 crisis accelerated collaboration – very positive feedback on the work of the IAG</li> <li>➤ Agencies competing for funding is unhelpful</li> <li>➤ Where possible need to avoid duplication and provide clarity on roles</li> </ul>	
<b>KEY POINTS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Visible Executive/senior leadership is critical and should be evident in actions</b></li> <li>➤ <b>Need much stronger focus on prevention and early intervention actions</b></li> <li>➤ <b>Real gear change on delivery needed</b></li> <li>➤ <b>Better linking of actions to outcomes – what is action delivering?</b></li> <li>➤ <b>Funding is a real stumbling block – not resourced to deliver</b></li> <li>➤ <b>Need to learn from good COVID response</b></li> </ul>		

#### Overall assessment of delivery against the strands and priorities

Whilst the analysis and the consultation demonstrated there has been good progress in delivering individual actions, this has not yet translated into evidence of results against the strands and priorities. Many of the interventions are pilots which are relatively small in scale and have not thus far been mainstreamed. In other cases schemes/interventions are in planning and still have to be delivered.

In the overall assessment of delivery against the strands and priorities below, ‘delivered’ is used to indicate where the delivery is considered complete against the strand/priority; ‘Work ongoing’ is used to indicate those areas where work is on-going but has yet to translate into delivery against the strand/priorities; and ‘Work required’ where progress has yet to be achieved.

Table 7: Overall assessment of progress against the strands and priorities			
STRANDS (5)	PRIORITY (20)	Status	COMMENTARY
<b>Co-operation &amp; leadership (2 priorities)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All Government Departments reaffirm their commitment to working together</li> <li>DOH &amp; DOJ will provide co-leadership and strategic direction to promote change</li> </ul>	<b>Work required</b> <b>Delivered</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Varied commitment across departments.</li> <li>➤ DoH/DoJ strong working relationship.</li> </ul>
<b>Prevention and early intervention (7 priorities)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a baseline on societal attitudes to domestic and sexual violence and abuse.</li> <li>Teachers will have the necessary skills to teach about sensitive subjects</li> <li>Teachers will be alert to pupils experiencing distress and trained to respond appropriately.</li> <li>Teachers will have access to age appropriate/evaluated resources to teach on sensitive subjects.</li> <li>QA will be established to ensure that the preventative curriculum offered in schools is effective.</li> <li>Relevant Depts/agencies to promote preventative safeguarding for adults at risk of harm.</li> <li>Relevant Depts/agencies work with SBNI and CYPSB to prevent abuse and tackle CSE.</li> </ul>	<b>Work ongoing</b>  <b>Work ongoing</b> <b>Work ongoing</b>  Work required  <b>Work ongoing</b>  <b>Work ongoing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ No baseline on societal attitudes as yet. Planned for 2020/2021.</li> <li>➤ Helping Hands &amp; Keeping Safe (small scale pilots). Require decision on mainstreaming.</li> <li>➤ Operation Encompass still at scoping stage.</li> <li>➤ QA arrangements not evident. Call for more to be done in schools.</li> <li>➤ SBNI services and training needs analysis complete but needs to be implemented.</li> </ul>
<b>Responsive services (5 priorities)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An integrated pathways approach to facilitate the four key elements of service provision</li> <li>The development of a safety plan will be an integral part of the pathways approach</li> <li>A renewed emphasis on awareness training, on how to recognise, respond, and seek help</li> <li>The commissioning/provision of services informed by the views of those who have been affected</li> <li>Appropriate partnership networks to increase multi-agency recognition and responses</li> </ul>	<b>Work ongoing</b>  <b>Work ongoing</b> <b>Work ongoing</b>  <b>Work ongoing</b>  <b>Delivered</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Advocacy Support Service in planning.</li> <li>➤ MARACs/MOB - review recommendations to implement.</li> <li>➤ Some positive feedback on media campaigns. View more to be done. IRIS – small scale pilot (2 GP federations).</li> <li>➤ SAG workshops positive. Some good multi-agency work- IAG, SAG workshops &amp; LDVSPs. Voice of stakeholders could be reflected more</li> </ul>
<b>Support (3 priorities)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Victims will be provided with the appropriate outreach and advisory service</li> <li>Evaluation of the provision of emergency housing support based on complex needs.</li> <li>Needs of those who have suffered are recognised/addressed in order to improve outcomes.</li> </ul>	<b>Work ongoing</b> <b>Work ongoing</b>  <b>Work required</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 24 Hour Helpline in place. Rowan SARC great facility. Further work around services needed e.g. growing waiting lists for counselling, specific services to reflect victim profile.</li> <li>➤ Roll out of Sanctuary Scheme to other tenures ongoing</li> <li>➤ Strategy level outcomes not defined so measurement not feasible.</li> </ul>
<b>Protection and justice (3 priorities)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focused protection, support and information will be available for all victims</li> <li>Ongoing assessment of the capacity of the Justice System to respond to current, new and emerging issues</li> <li>Develop and deliver initiatives and interventions, based on best practice, to effectively address harmful, violent and abusive behaviour.</li> </ul>	<b>Work ongoing</b> <b>Work ongoing</b>  <b>Work ongoing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ To be delivered (in part) through the Gillen Implementation Plan.</li> <li>➤ Working towards stalking legislation.</li> <li>➤ New Domestic Homicide Review Process.</li> <li>➤ Perpetrator programmes (small pilots). Require decision on mainstreaming.</li> </ul>

## Effectiveness of governance arrangements

### Key agencies/organisation – landscape

The landscape in terms of the organisations and agencies involved in supporting domestic and sexual violence victims is complex, with a mix of statutory and voluntary organisations, operating at multiple levels i.e. Northern Ireland wide, regionally and locally. There is therefore mixed provision of services and support across Northern Ireland and across user groups, and there are some duplications and overlaps in some partnerships and organisations’ roles and remits.

Most groups are operating against the backdrop of time and resource constraints. Many of those consulted are not working full time on domestic or sexual violence. Their involvement in domestic (and sexual) violence and abuse initiatives is often in addition to other full time roles. Funding for many was reported as being a major issue, with funding often short term, at a small scale and based on competitive bids against each other.

Table 9: Key agencies/organisations involved in the delivery of the Strategy			
	Statutory	Voluntary agencies including:	Partnerships
NI wide	Departments: DoF, DoH, DoJ, DAERA, DfI, DfC (inc NIHE) DE, DfE EA, CCEA SBNI PPS PBNI CJINI & OLCJ	Victim Support NSPCC Women’s Aid (federated – local groups) Nexus Rainbow MAP MAN HourGlass Cithrah Disability Action	SARC Rowan (located in NHSCT) LDSVPs x 5 (aligned with HSCTs) MARAC Operational Board (Chaired by PSNI) MARACs x 10 IAG Chaired by PSNI Weekly during Covid) Law Society/Bar Council
Regional	PSNI (SV and DV teams aligned with HSCTs) HSCTs x 5	Ci NI Cara	
Local	PCSPs x 14 (aligned with LAs except Belfast where 4).		

### Strategic Delivery Board

Members of the SDB themselves thought this to be a worthwhile and valuable group, providing inter-departmental visibility of issues and an opportunity to work collaboratively. Some commented that to date the SDB has comprised senior civil servants discussing what was occurring within departments, and that it might benefit from “one or two external voices”.

There was considerable praise for the tenacity and level of interest in the SAG from the SDB and particularly by the co-chairs, and many recognised that progress was often made due to the drive and networking of these key individuals.

There was a recognition that Departments of Health and Justice were in the driving seat and a sense that was probably right, but there was also comment that other departments perhaps should be more involved to give cross department engagement on the issue, for example Economy relating to work place issues.

### Stakeholder Assurance Group

Almost every consultee commented on the fact that this was a very large group, which made meetings difficult, but also recognised that it was difficult to see who should not be represented at the table. Therefore, all accepted that they probably had to recognise that the meetings are for dissemination of information and reporting on progress.

However, the move from SAG meetings towards workshops was strongly welcomed, with many praising the format, structure and facilitation of the workshops. These were viewed as valuable events that many despite heavy workloads made a point of attending.

Given that many people attending the SAG do not have domestic violence or sexual violence as their core responsibility or, where they do, they have multiple membership/organisations/forums to attend, the need to ensure clarity over the SAG meetings/workshops was stressed. Given the complexity and fragmentation of this issue many people who attend the SAG commented that they are already engaging/consulting or regularly meeting with the same people at other organisations' forums. Despite this, most still felt the SAG to be a useful separate forum to share information and what going on.

The consultees representing the statutory agencies in particular commented that it provided a useful forum to hear first-hand from front line organisations. However, many of the consultees from front line organisations felt that their voice was not heard (other than at the workshops, and that their expertise was not always drawn on). Several also commented that they had to go to the departments and that it was very Stormont/Belfast centric, and would welcome more outreach by civil servants to understand what they are doing and local issues/experience.

Concern was raised that whilst many around the table were salaried, many of the voluntary agencies were attending on an unpaid basis, underlining the need to ensure time is used as effectively as possible.

The inherent tension of competing organisations was raised. Inevitably voluntary agencies will be often bidding for very limited funding against each other, and this may make open discussions at times difficult.

**SDB** - *“Currently the SDB is beautifully tight, but it doesn't always feel connected to the outside – perhaps once yearly input from external organisations would be beneficial”.*

**SAG** - *“very focused and purposeful, clear agenda. You know what you are going to, and can prepare for the meeting a very good forum for sorting out at a higher level the issues that are current, and to get answers quite quickly.”*

**IAG** - *“Good things happened quickly [with the IAG] – services were up and running in a couple of weeks on a collaborative basis, that ordinarily would have taken a year or more. There was a sense of urgency that brought people together – how do we draw on this?”*

### Inter-Ministerial Group

Several commented that this had not met for a long time, and that it had been difficult to get Ministers' time, although it was recognised that having an IMG does give the message that the subject is being treated seriously. There was a recognition, however, that it is not possible to have an IMG for all issues, and that alternative ways of keeping ministers informed may be possible without a formal IMG.

As one consultee commented the *“the Ministerial piece is important but there are a number of ways to address that without adding in governance structures. A Mechanism to ensure it is on the ministerial /executive agenda is needed but that does not necessarily have to be an IMG”*. However, a converse view was put forward by the voluntary sector, pointing out that *“if domestic violence is high on the political agenda then there should have been an IMG as soon as the Assembly went back in.”*

### Partnerships

Several consultees raised concerns about the role of the partnerships in connection with the strategy. Although each HSCT has responsibility to convene and chair a multi-agency partnership, the partnerships across Northern Ireland are very different. One consultee commented *“I have some concerns about the structural arrangements around the delivery of the strategy and where the local partnerships fit in and the funding for those”*. Some felt that with this Strategy there was little mention of the partnerships, so they struggled to find their footing and to understand their role within the delivery of the Strategy. There was a disappointment that partnerships were not recognised, and nor was there any funding stream to support the work of the partnerships which was considered crucial at the local level.

### IAG

Although outside the governance arrangements for the strategy, there was repeated praise from consultees for the PSNI chaired IAG group, which has taken on a much stronger role during the COVID 19 pandemic. Many thought there was a need to take the learnings from COVID 19 and lockdown and the subsequent response, and build on it.

*“Good things happened quickly – services were up and running in a couple of weeks on a collaborative basis, that ordinarily would have taken a year or more. There was a sense of urgency that brought people tougher – how do we draw on this?”*

### Measuring the impact of the Strategy

#### Assessing impact

One of objectives of this mid-term review was to consider the cumulative impact the Strategy is having and how best to improve measurement of success.

Overall, it was difficult to measure the impact of the strategy, as indicators and measures were not defined at the start. Those consulted felt that the Strategy should have a much stronger outcomes focus which would enable a clearer prioritisation of the actions.

*“The strategy is not written in outcomes language - need to rephrase it in terms of outcomes and link it to PfG and be more cross departmental”*

*“Should agree under each strand and look at an outcomes approach for this year and eventually we will have a robust OBA framework for DV and SV”*

*“The Strategy should be investing in the research pieces that are NI specific to provide the evidence base to inform the thinking “*

Baseline data is needed in order to quantify the impact of the strategy against agreed indicators. There are certain challenges with the baseline data that could be used to measure the impact on the Strategy. In the case of domestic or sexual violence, increased prevalence may reflect improvement e.g. greater awareness, improved services or conversely higher rates of offending, recording or charging. There are

important aspects in terms of the counterfactual i.e. what would have happened without a strategy. How many of the actions may have gone ahead without the strategy or the extent to which many actions only proceeded due to the Strategy. Also there are complex multi-factors which make the assessment of direct cause and effect on domestic and sexual violence more challenging. The data also needs to be sufficiently disaggregated to understand trends and impacts e.g. by age, gender etc.

The Programme for Government uses indicators of prevalence of crime, time for completion and reoffending rates to measure outcomes. There is potential to use these high level indicators to monitor the Strategy and PSNI published domestic and sexual violence data on incidents, crimes and outcomes. Another approach would be a ‘bottom up’ assessment to assess aggregate impact of specific initiatives. At this point there is insufficient output and outcomes data across initiatives to complete a bottom up aggregate assessment.

**Table 10: Potential Indicators to Measure the Impact of the Strategy**

Objective/Outcomes specified in the DSV strategy	Indicators considered	Availability	Potential future source
Society where <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>domestic and sexual abuse is not tolerated</li> <li>with effective prevention services</li> <li>responsive victim support and</li> <li>perpetrators held to account</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Societal attitudes to/awareness of DV and SV</li> <li>Prevalence rate % of population victims of domestic abuse</li> <li>Prevalence rate of % of population victim of sexual abuse/violence</li> <li>Victims’ experience of services</li> <li>Ave time to complete a DV or SV case</li> <li>Conviction/outcome rate DV/SV offences</li> <li>Reoffending rate of DV or SV perpetrators</li> </ul>	Not available Not published Not published Not available DoJ data available for sexual offences only not domestic violence PSNI statistics/DOJ data – available for sexual offences only not domestic violence	Attitudinal surveys NI Crime Survey Service user surveys e.g. SARC, Victim Support Court monitoring statistics Probation statistics

Domestic abuse and violence - selected metrics

Comparisons over time on selected metrics on domestic violence and abuse show worrying trends IN Northern Ireland. Focusing on what can be currently measured, it shows that domestic abuse accounts for increasing proportion of total crime in Northern Ireland: 17.5% in 2019/20 compared to 8% in 2004-2005.

The number of domestic abuse incidents and crimes recorded continues to increase whilst overall recorded crime fell:

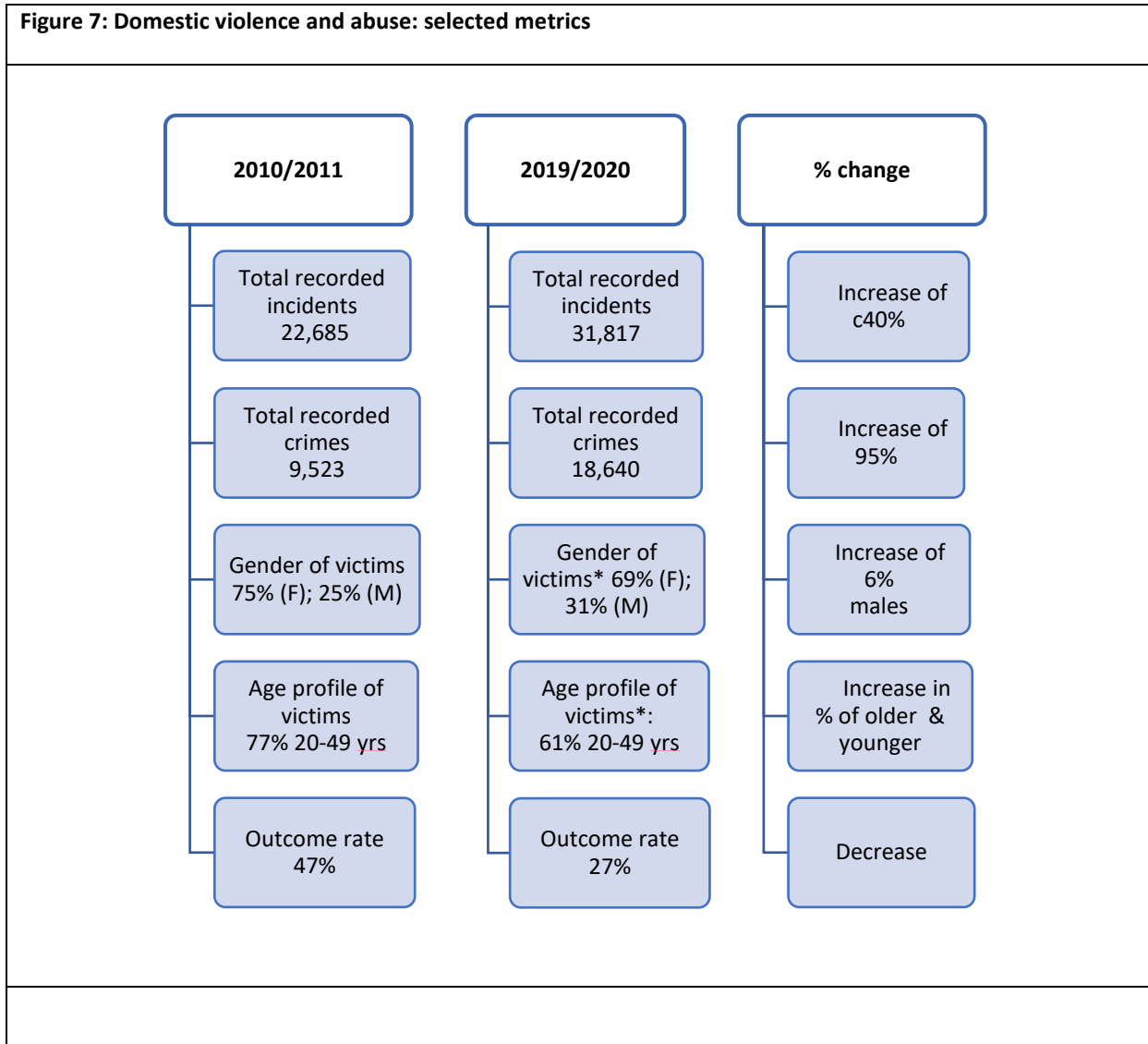
- 40% increase in incidents since 2010/11&
- 95% increase in crimes between 2010/11 & 2019/20.
- high no of incidents where no crime is recorded.

There is a changing victim /offender profile with proportionately more male victims, more younger and older people victims and the nature of the relationship between victim and offender changing - increase



in parent/child relationships. Data on ethnicity now published and during 2018/19 2% of victims were classified to Asian, Black or Mixed/Other ethnicity. There is currently no LGBTQ data published in PSNI statistics. The outcome rate for domestic abuse crimes has fallen from 47% in 2010/11 to 27% in 2018/19.

**Figure 7: Domestic violence and abuse: selected metrics**



Sexual violence and abuse – selected metrics

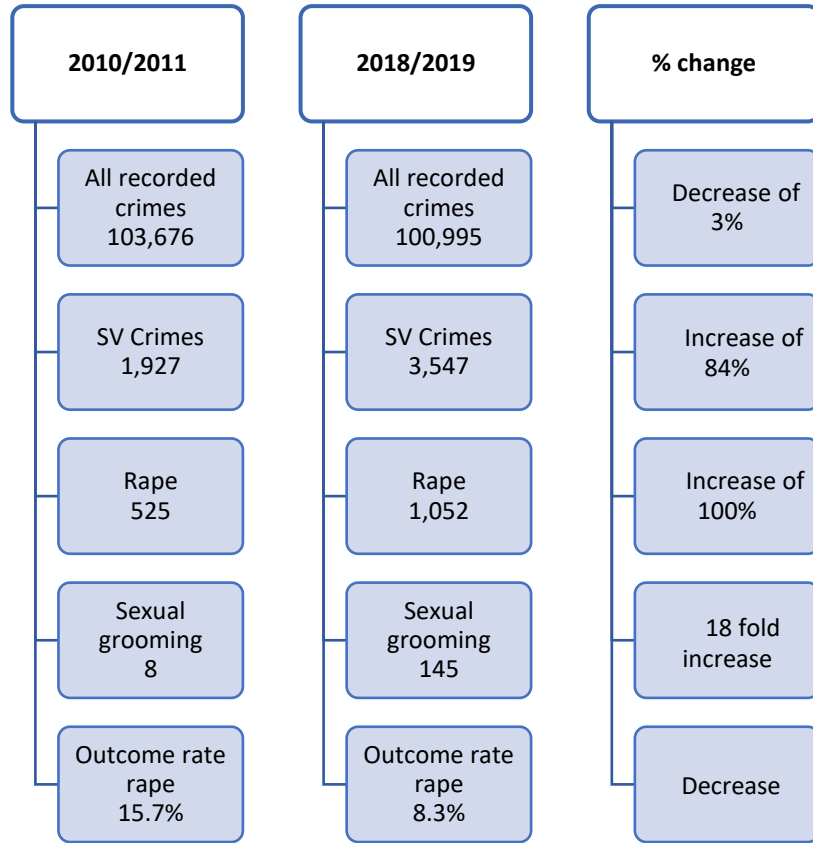
Selected metrics on sexual violence and abuse equally show concerning trends. Whilst overall levels of recorded crime have remained stable, sexual offences have doubled between 2010/11 and 2018/19. The number of rapes recorded during that period has doubled. There have also been large increases (some from low base) in sexual grooming, and incest and sexual activity involving children.

The outcome rates remained largely stable for crimes overall (28.5), but remained low for rape (8.3%) and attempted rape (12.8%). Both outcome rates have halved in last 9 years.

Comparing case processing time between 2014/15 and 2018/9 shows the average for all crimes increased from 143 to– 167 days (+24) and for sexual offences increased from 528 – 667 days (+139).



**Figure 8: Sexual violence and abuse: selected metrics**



## **6. International Context and Approaches**

### **Introduction**

Domestic violence is recognised in international law as a violation of human rights, and although early international treaties only provided protection against domestic violence implicitly, in the 1990s domestic violence began to receive more explicit attention with the passage of the General Comment No. 19 by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (1992) and the Declaration of Elimination of Violence Against Women (1993).

The past two decades have also seen numerous resolutions from the UN General Assembly on violence against women, including one that specifically addressed domestic violence.

The Council of Europe **Istanbul Convention** to which the UK is signatory was signed in May 2011, and places an obligation on the state to address gender based violence.<sup>11</sup> **Article 7 of the Convention**<sup>12</sup> states:

### **Comprehensive and co-ordinated policies**

“Parties shall take the necessary legislative and other measures to adopt and implement State-wide effective, comprehensive and co-ordinated policies encompassing all relevant measures to prevent and combat all forms of violence covered by the scope of this Convention and offer a holistic response to violence against women”.

The UK Government has committed to ratifying the treaty, and the Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (Ratification of Convention) Act 2017 applies to the whole of the UK including Northern Ireland.

### **UK & Ireland legislation**

Several jurisdictions have amended legislation in recent years to reflect need of victims of domestic and sexual violence. Typically these have recognised the issue of coercive and controlling behaviour. However, in England Wales and Republic of Ireland there is no separate offence of domestic abuse. In Scotland, the legislation there introduced a distinct offence. The proposed Bill in Northern Ireland more closely follows the approach taken in Scotland.

#### *England and Wales Domestic Abuse Bill 2020*

In England and Wales at present there is no specific offence of domestic abuse, unlike in Scotland. However, the draft Domestic Abuse Bill was published in January 2019, and the UK Government set out 123 commitments, both legislative and non-legislative, designed to promote awareness of domestic abuse; protect and support victims and their families; transform the justice process to prioritise victim safety and provide an effective response to perpetrators; and to drive consistency and better performance in the response to domestic abuse across all local areas, agencies and sectors.

Specifically the bills will: Create a statutory definition of domestic abuse, to include emotional, coercive or controlling and economic abuse; create the office of Domestic Abuse Commissioners; provide for a new Domestic Abuse Protection Notice and Domestic Abuse Protection Order; place a duty on local authorities in England to support victims of domestic abuse and their children in refuges and other safe

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.coe.int/fr/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/rms/090000168008482e>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.coe.int/fr/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/rms/090000168008482e>

accommodation; and prohibit perpetrators of abuse from cross examining their victims in person in the civil and family courts in England and Wales.

The draft Bill underwent pre-legislative scrutiny and was introduced in July 2019, and received a Second Reading in October but then fell with the dissolution of Parliament. The Bill as re-introduced included a number of changes, including the new duty on local authorities in England to provide support to victims and their children in safe accommodation and an extension of the automatic prohibition on cross-examination in person in family proceedings.

Although the Bill applied to England and Wales, at the request of the Scottish Government and the Department of Justice in Northern Ireland, the Bill includes analogous provisions for Scotland and Northern Ireland extending the extraterritorial jurisdiction of the criminal courts.

The UK courts already have extraterritorial jurisdiction over the following offences required by the Istanbul Convention:

- murder and manslaughter in most (but not all) circumstances (Article 35)
- sexual offences (including those required by the Convention) where the victim of the crime is under 18 (Article 36)
- forced marriage (Article 37)
- female genital mutilation (Article 38)

However, the Bill also extended extraterritorial jurisdiction to other offences required by the Istanbul Convention, including murder and manslaughter in circumstances where the courts do not already have such jurisdiction and sexual offences where the victim of the crime is 18 or over.

#### *Domestic Abuse and Family Proceedings Bill (Northern Ireland)<sup>13</sup>*

The Domestic Abuse and Family Proceedings Bill (the DA&FP Bill) was introduced to the Northern Ireland Assembly on 31 March 2020 includes: the creation of a new domestic abuse offence; two child aggravators associated with that offence; a statutory aggravation of domestic abuse associated with any other offence; and a number of associated changes to criminal procedures, evidence and sentencing in domestic abuse related cases.

It is considered that a significant proportion of current domestic abuse related offences will come within the remit of the new offence once in place. It is anticipated that the creation of a new domestic abuse offence will lead to a 2 - 4% uplift in the annual number of domestic abuse incidents and crimes already recorded by police.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> NIA Bill 03/17-22 EFM

<sup>14</sup> DOMESTIC ABUSE AND FAMILY PROCEEDINGS BILL Explanatory and Financial Memorandum

Table 11: UK and Ireland Legislation			
Jurisdiction	Legislation	Enacted	Provisions
<b>Wales</b>	Violence Against Women Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence Act (Wales)	2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Duty to prepare national strategy and Requirement to monitor indicators</li> <li>• Appoints National Adviser</li> <li>• Offences as in England – under the Serious Crime Act 2015</li> </ul>
<b>England</b>	Serious Crime Act	2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New offence of controlling and coercive behaviour in intimate/family relationship</li> <li>• No specific offence of domestic abuse</li> <li>• Sentencing guidelines: low-level CO to 2yrs 6mo custody/ On indictment 5 yrs max</li> <li>• Court may make a restraining order</li> </ul>
<b>Scotland</b>	Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act	2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific statutory offence of domestic abuse</li> <li>• Only legislation in UK with specific statutory sentencing aggravation to reflect harm that can be caused to children in an environment where domestic abuse takes place</li> <li>• Requires courts to consider imposing a Non-Harassment Order</li> <li>• Maximum penalty 14 years</li> </ul>
<b>Ireland</b>	Domestic Violence Act	2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consolidating Act: Domestic abuse as England comes under other sexual/violent offences</li> <li>• New act applies these to intimate relationship not just cohabiting/add aggravating factors</li> <li>• New offence of coercive control/ offence of forced marriage</li> <li>• Provides for emergency barring orders in certain circumstances;</li> <li>• Right of an applicant to be accompanied in certain proceedings;</li> <li>• Obtaining of the views of a child in certain proceedings;</li> </ul>
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	Domestic Abuse and Family Proceedings Bill	2020?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offence of domestic abuse : Includes controlling and coercive behaviour</li> <li>• Cross examination by perpetrator in family proceedings removed</li> <li>• Special measures automatic consideration</li> <li>• Max penalty on indictment 14 years</li> </ul>

### **International comparisons: Domestic, family and sexual violence strategies**

As part of the mid-term review, a review of international approaches to domestic and sexual violence including of publish strategies was undertaken, to include the format and structure of the document, oversight and governance and funding.

Key themes emerge from those that have been linked with countries that are showing the greatest impact (in this case taken to be good rankings on OCED measures of experiencing domestic violence within a lifetime or the 2019 Women, Peace, and Security Index ranks 167 countries on women's equality, reveals trends in women's wellbeing across 11 indicators.<sup>15</sup>

Key points show that the more successful approaches demonstrate:

- A clear ministerial/political lead at senior level
- Many have distinct (and often significant) funding ear marked/appropriated to support the strategy and its implementation
- Most are 5-10 year strategies with clear action plans associated with them, supported by annual reporting
- Many of the countries have built on National Action Plans based on UN guidance for National Action Plans<sup>16</sup>
- Overall there has been a move towards wider recognising that domestic and sexual violence, whilst gendered is changing with a recognition of the impact on previously marginalised groups – whether that is due to age, sexuality, race/ethnicity or disability.

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<sup>15</sup> <https://giwps.georgetown.edu/the-index/>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/vaw/handbook-for-nap-on-vaw.pdf>

Table 12: International Approaches							
Jurisdiction (COE - UK signed but not in force)	Strategy focus – well publicized national strategy	Focus – increasingly on wider family, and marginalized groups	Ear marked/appropriated Funding	Accountability Leadership Cross Governmental/agency	OECD Prevalence in lifetime % (UK = 29)	WPS Index Intimate partner violence in past year % (UK = 5.0)	Popn 2020
Canada (n/a)	“It’s Time” Federal Strategy –2017	Gender based violence	\$100m (£57m) over 5 yrs +\$20.7m p.a.	Minister for Status of Women	1.9	1.1	37m
Australia (n/a)	National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and Their Children 2010-2022	Domestic and family violence and sexual assault	\$328m (£181m)	Council of Australian Governments (First Ministers of Federal Govs)	16.9	2.2	14.9m
Ireland (2019)	Second national Strategy on Domestic and Sexual and Gender Based Violence 2016-2021	Domestic, sexual violence against men and women, inc older people in community	Funded within DoJ	COSC National Office for the Prevention of Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence (set up 2007)	15.0	3.0	4.9m
Denmark (2014)	National Strategy for combating violence in close relationships – 2011 National Acton Plans since 2002	Violence in close relationships	\$US 6.5m (£5m) for implementation + £33m p.a. on services	Ministry of Children Gender Equality Integration and Society Affairs	32.0	4.0	5.8m
Sweden (2014)	National Strategy to Prevent and Combat Men’s Violence against Women (2017-2026)	Emphasis on men’s responsibility and participation	Euro 81m (2017-2020) (£73m) for implementation + Gender Equality Agency funded + allocation to local gov	Gender Equality Agency	28.0	5.0	10.1m
New Zealand (n/a)	Joint Venture for Family Violence and Sexual Violence (2018) – strategy in development	Family Violence and Sexual Violence	\$183m over 4 years (£92m)	“Joint Venture” business unit of 10 Gov Depts/agencies	35.0	5.7	4.8m

## 7. Recommendations

	Area	Rationale	Recommendation
1	<b>Rationale for Intervention</b>	Domestic and sexual abuse continuing to increase, lifelong impact on victims and represents a high cost to NI society (est £1bn p.a.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ There is a continued need for an Executive strategy to address domestic and sexual violence in NI</li> <li>➤ The strategy should be cross departmental and <b>funded appropriately</b></li> </ul>
2	<b>Responsibility for leading strategy</b>	<p>DV and SV are cross cutting issues, affecting all departments</p> <p>Current leadership is heavily reliant on DoJ and DoH, despite major resources allocated by DfC, and prevention lead being DE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ This policy area requires continued <b>leadership and cooperation</b> at the highest level of Government, and effective mechanisms to demonstrate clear commitment by the Executive to DV and SV are required</li> <li>➤ There is a need to increase Ministers’ and Perm Secs’ awareness of DV/SV including its impact and costs, through improved information and front line engagement with service providers and users</li> <li>➤ A commitment from Ministers relating to all strands of the strategy is required including Education to address prevention/early intervention</li> </ul>
3	<b>Strategic Framework</b>	<p>International consensus on need for strategy to reflect prevention, services and justice</p> <p>The current five strands well regarded, known and understood</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The strategy should <b>retain the 5 strands</b> around leadership, prevention, support, protection and justice</li> </ul>
4	<b>Scope of strategy</b>	Victims are predominantly women but profile of victims and offenders is changing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The strategy should <b>include both DV and SV</b>, and <b>consider reflecting family violence</b>. It must reflect lived experience and <b>avoid stereotypes</b>, although reflecting this is a gendered issue. The views/ needs of minority groups</li> </ul>

Area	Rationale	Recommendation
	<p>Reflected in other jurisdictions' strategies – move to reflect family violence not just partner.</p> <p>Many of same agencies involved in multiple organisations/structures.</p>	<p>must be reflected and also should adequately address or signpost to emerging issues e.g. CSE, FGM, sex workers</p>
5	<p><b>Strategic direction</b></p> <p>Although some data is collected there is reliance on extrapolation from GB, and gaps in knowledge/reliance on anecdote</p>	<p>➤ SDB/SAG should <b>determine gaps in research</b> and <b>commission high quality, independent, research</b> specific to NI to inform strategic direction and ensure effective targeting of action/resources</p>
6	<p><b>Measuring outcomes</b></p> <p>Currently the evaluation framework is lacking</p> <p>There is widespread recognition of need to move to OBA framework</p>	<p>➤ The strategy should have a <b>meaningful evaluation framework</b>, that supports the PfG.</p> <p>➤ Stakeholders should agree a <b>baseline and measures of success across all five strands</b></p>
7	<p><b>Scale of actions</b></p> <p>The number of actions has been increasing, but the scale of individual actions varies widely</p> <p>There is concern that actions are an aggregate of work in progress by depts./orgs</p>	<p>➤ <b>Actions should be linked to strategic objectives and outcomes</b>, and prioritised to maximise impact</p> <p>➤ Actions should be <b>collaborative</b>, focused on areas where the SDB/ SAG can add value i.e. where they include cross cutting initiatives</p>
8	<p><b>Balance of actions</b></p> <p>There has been a focus to date on actions relating to protection, services and justices rather than prevention</p>	<p>➤ There should be a <b>review of the balance of actions</b> going forward, with <b>greater emphasis on prevention and early intervention</b>, with relevant departments (including DE and DfC) taking more responsibility for meaningful delivery</p>



Area	Rationale	Recommendation
9	<p><b>Progress of actions</b></p> <p>Much action has taken place during the first 4 years of the strategy, however, there is concern the pace of change has been slow</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Actions should be evidence based, ambitious and support real change</li> <li>➤ Explore ways in which progress in <b>delivery can be accelerated</b> e.g. avoid repeating pilots and repiloting what is already known to work elsewhere</li> <li>➤ SDB/SAG should <b>learn from the implementation lessons from COVID</b>, for example, where the IAG has resulted in challenging existing ways of working to accelerate responses by services</li> </ul>
10	<p><b>Contribution of actions</b></p> <p>There is a lack of clarity as to the impact of individual actions.</p> <p>High level metrics that can be monitored show a continuing rise in incidents and crimes and poor outcomes/long case processing times</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ All actions should be OBA with clear mechanisms for evaluation of interventions based on the Magenta Book, HM Treasury guidance on evaluation</li> <li>➤ SDB to measure and collate the collective impact of actions</li> </ul>
11	<p><b>Delivery of actions</b></p> <p>There is a lack of clarity around the role of LDSVPs in the delivery of the Strategy. Currently a lot of funding and provision of services is fragmented. Poorly resourced and often reliant on good will.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Provide clarity around LDSVPs' remit in shaping and delivering the Strategy</li> <li>➤ Ensure funding of actions facilitates coordinated and consistent provision of services and support</li> <li>➤ Recognise that delivery of actions may require dedicated resourced roles</li> </ul>

Area	Rationale	Recommendation
<p>12</p> <p><b>Governance</b></p> <p><b>SDB</b></p> <p><b>SAG</b></p>	<p>The SDB is currently an inter-departmental group that has narrow membership, although functioning well for its members</p> <p>The membership, although wide, needs to reflect the diversity of services providers/users</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Consider widening the SDB membership to include the voice of the voluntary sector (e.g. chair of partnership) and to include the DfE to reflect importance of workplace engagement</li> <li>➤ Strengthen the link between the SDB and SAG to make this effective two way communication that recognises the expertise of front line agencies as well as providing channel for dissemination of information from centre out</li> <li>➤ Retain a wide SAG, but build on the successful workshop approach to maximise and draw value from the wide range of expertise on the SAG (across the whole of NI)</li> <li>➤ Ensure alignment of the Gillen Review and the implementation of the DV and SV strategy and action plans</li> </ul>

## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Background documents and reports reviewed to inform the Mid Term Review of the Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy (June 2020)

Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland, *Without Witness Public Protection Inspection I: A Thematic Inspection of the Handling of Sexual Violence and Abuse Cases by the Criminal Justice System in Northern Ireland*, November 2018.

Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland, *Equal Partners? An inspection of the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector's engagement with the criminal justice system in Northern Ireland*, April 2019

Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland, *No Excuse Public Protection Inspection II: A Thematic Inspection of the Handling of Domestic Violence and Abuse Cases by the Criminal Justice System in Northern Ireland*, June 2019

Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland, *Child Sexual Exploitation in Northern Ireland – An inspection of the Criminal Justice system's response*, June 2020

Department of Education, *Children and Young People's Strategy 2019-2029*, December 2019

Department of Health & Department of Justice, *Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy, Draft Year 4 Action Plan*, [date]

Department of Health & Department of Justice, *Developing a Workplace Policy on Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse: Guidance for Employers*, November 2018

Department of Health & Department of Justice, *Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy, Draft Year Three Action Plan*, [date]

Department of Health & Department of Justice, *Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy, Draft Year Two Action Plan*, [date]

Department of Health & Department of Justice, *Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy, Year One Implementation Plan*, May 2016

Department of Health, *24 Hour Domestic and Sexual Violence Helpline Evaluation*, September 2016.

Department of Health, *Progress Under Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Action Plan* [date]

Department of Health and Department for Justice, *Stopping Domestic Violence & Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland Strategy 2016*

Department of Justice, *Sexual Violence and Abuse Media Plan*, February 2020

[Department of Justice], *Action Plan on Recommendations from the CJINI Report, A Thematic Inspection of the Handling of Domestic Violence and Abuse Cases by the Criminal Justice System in Northern Ireland* October 2019

[Department of Justice], *Domestic Violence & Abuse: Policy Impact Assessment Template – Housing Instability/Homelessness*, July 2019

Department of Justice, *Action Plan on Recommendations from the Recommendations from the CJINI Report, Without Witness Public Protection Inspection I: A Thematic Inspection of the Handling of Sexual Violence and Abuse Cases by the Criminal Justice System in Northern Ireland*, June 2019

Department for Justice, *Sexual Violence Reduction Group (SVRG) Meeting Note*, June 2019

Department for Justice, *Sexual Violence Reduction Group, Draft Terms of Reference*, 2019

Department for Justice, *Note of Sexual Violence Reduction Group Meeting*, June 2019

Department of Justice, *Multi-agency guidance and toolkit for the conduct of Domestic Homicide Reviews in Northern Ireland*, April 2019

Department of Justice, *Domestic Homicide Review, A Consultation, Summary of Responses and Way Forward*, January 2019

Department of Justice, *Campaign Advertising to raise awareness of the issue of sexual violence and abuse, Specification Schedule*, 2019

Department of Justice, *Stalking: a serious Concern. A consultation on the creation of a new offence of stalking in Northern Ireland*, November 2018

Department for Justice, *Pilot Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programme*, 2018

Department of Justice, *Domestic Violence and Abuse Media Plan* [date]

Department of Justice, *Research into the criminal justice experiences of victims of sexual violence and abuse, Department of Justice response*, November 2017

Department of Justice, *Research into the Criminal Justice Experiences of victims of Sexual Violence and Abuse, Criminal Justice Action Plan*, November 2017

Department of Justice, *MARAC MOB, Terms of Reference* [date]

Department of Justice, *Update note for Strategic Delivery Board on MARAC Review* [date]

Department of Justice, *Review of MARAC 2017*, Analytical Services Group, Research and Statistical Bulletin 30/2017, October 2017

Department of Justice, Analytical Services Group, *Research into the experiences of victims of domestic violence: Summary of Key Findings*, March 2016

Department of Justice, *Draft Terms of Reference for MARAC Operational Board*, [date]

Department of Justice, *Domestic and Sexual Violence Governance*, [date]

Department of Justice, *Making a difference to victims and witnesses of crime Improving access to justice, services and support: A five-year Strategy*, June 2013

Department of Justice and Department for Health, *Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland: Information and Communication Plan*, November 2018

Department of Justice, Department of Health & Department for Communities, *Providing and Managing a 24 Hour Domestic and Sexual Violence Helpline, Specification of Requirement*, [date]

Gillen Review, *Report into the law and procedures in serious sexual offences in Northern Ireland*, May 2019 and Implementation Plan, 2020

Hillis, Alexandra, on behalf of the Department for Justice, *The link between alcohol and domestic and sexual abuse*, Literature Review, August 2017

*Local Domestic and Sexual Violence Partnership Newsletter*, Spring 2019

McWilliams, Monica and Doyle, Jessica, *Addressing Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse: Identifying Best Practice*, Transitional Justice Institute, Ulster University, October 2017

Northern Ireland Audit Office *Speeding up justice: avoidable delay in the criminal justice system*, March 2018

Oliver R, Alexander B, Roe, S and M Wlasny *The economic and social costs of domestic abuse*. Home Office Research Report 107, January 2019

Probation Board for Northern Ireland, *An Evaluation of the PBNI Promoting Positive Relationship Programme (PPRP)*, Directions for Future Practice, July 2016

Probation Board for Northern Ireland, *Addressing Unadjudicated Domestic Abuse, An evaluation of the pilot of PBNI's Promoting Positive Relationship Programme (PPRP) in the Western Trust*, Directions for Future Practice, June 2019

PSNI, *Trends in Domestic Abuse Incidents and Crimes Recorded by the Police in Northern Ireland 2004/05 to 2017/18*, October 2018 and update to December 2019

SBNI, Operation Encompass Working Group, Action Log Final, July 2019

SBNI, Operation Encompass Working Group, Terms of Reference [date]

SBNI, Operation Encompass Working Group, Note, December 2018

Stakeholder Assurance Group, minutes of meetings, 2016-2020

Stakeholder Assurance Group, Terms of Reference, [date]

Stakeholder Assurance Group, Record of SAG workshops, May 2018, October 2018, May 2019

Strategic Delivery Board, Terms of Reference, 2016

Strategic Delivery Board, minutes of meetings, 2016-2020

**Appendix 2: List of consultees**

**Strategic Delivery Board Membership**

Katie Taylor, DoJ	Eilis McDaniel, DoH	David Polloy, DfC
Mark Lee, DoH	Paul McConville, DoH	Michael Foster, DoH
Richard Irwin, DENI		

**CJINI: Rachel Lindsay**

**Gillen Implementation Team: Angela Fitzpatrick**

**Stakeholder Assurance Group consultees**

<b>Consultee</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Edel McKenna	Belfast DVP
Amanda McGurk	Cara-friend and HERe NI
Pauline Leeson	Ci-NI
Catherine Harper	Cithrah
Cecilia Whitehorn	Consultant
Angela Kane	DE
Andy Clement	DfC
Avril Hiles	DfC
Geraldine Devine	DfC
Kevin Doherty	Disability Action
Lisa Truman	DoH
Veronica Holland	DoJ
Colin Reid	Education Authority
Veronica Gray	Hourglass
Joyce McKee	HSCB
Teresa McAllister	HSCB/SBNI
Clare Moore	Irish Congress of Trade Unions
Ann McMahan	Law Society
Rhonda Lusty	MAP
Michael Lynch	Men's Action Network
Brenda Kelly	Nexus
Trevor Curran	Nexus
Emma Nelson	Nexus
Helena Bracken	Nexus
Patrick Yu	NICRE
Cecilia Robinson	Northern DVP
Caroline Holloway	NSPCC
Liz Arthur	PBNI
Caroline Conway	PPS
Claire McGuigan	PSNI
David McBurney	PSNI (by phone)
Aisling Twomey	Rainbow Project
Gavin Boyd	Rainbow Project
Sheila Simons	South Eastern DVP
David Douglas	Southern DVP
Claire Galloway	The Rowan

*Mid-term review of the Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy*

Geraldine Hanna	Victim Support
Sarah Mason	WAFNI
Sonya McMullan	WAFNI
Mairead McGilloway	Western DVP (in writing)



**Appendix 3: Pro Forma for Stakeholder Consultation**

Question guide for stakeholder consultations	
<b>Consultee Information</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remit and role of the organisation</li> <li>• Their role within it</li> <li>• Level of involvement with Strategy, Action Plans</li> </ul>
<b>Purpose and content of the Strategy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are people familiar with it? Is it needed? Is the purpose clear?</li> <li>• Who is the audience? Ownership?</li> <li>• How useful has it been for stakeholders?</li> <li>• How does this strategy fit with wider context? Core or sits to the side?</li> <li>• Views on the content within the strategy? Are these the right five strands and priority areas? Is it achievable, realistic or ambitious?</li> <li>• Is there is right balance across the strands? Between DV &amp; SV?</li> <li>• Are there areas of omission? If so what and why?</li> <li>• Are the five strands and 20 priority areas measurable?</li> <li>• Is it clear how success is measured? Extent to which end user is now better off (OBA)?</li> <li>• Major changes in the context in recent years? Are the aims of the strategy still valid? Are the five strands priority areas still appropriate?</li> <li>• Views on progress against the five strands and 20 priorities? What are the major successes? Where are the major gaps? And why? View on targets in the strategy?</li> <li>• Views on the format, content, readability</li> <li>• Views on how it is disseminated and communicated</li> <li>• Is the duration of the strategy right (Length – 7 years)</li> <li>• What should be the focus for the remainder of the strategy?</li> <li>• What would you like to see in the next strategy?</li> </ul>
<b>Process for developing the Strategy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Views on approach to developing the Strategy? Right people, right way?</li> <li>• What role did stakeholders play in developing the Strategy?</li> <li>• What worked well in developing the Strategy? Weakness in the process of developing the Plan?</li> <li>• Opportunities for others to contribute to the development of the Strategy?</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How could the process be improved?</li> <li>• Potential for using OBA in a future strategy?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Content of the implementation/action plans</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Views on the content of the Plans? Balance of actions?</li> <li>• Are the sufficient/too many actions each year?</li> <li>• Views on delivery so far? Successes, constraints? How much progress made against the five strands? Is progress reported on effectively and if actions deferred is it clear why/agreed?</li> <li>• Do we need anything on funding – where specific actions have/have not been funded?</li> <li>• Extent of journey travelled? What could potentially accelerate delivery?</li> <li>• What has worked well with the Plans? What would you keep?</li> <li>• What has not worked well? Why? What would you change?</li> <li>• Any actions omitted?</li> <li>• Evidence of joint working? More achieved through collaboration? Good examples?</li> <li>• Views on the duration of the Plans? Is this timeframe realistic?</li> <li>• Is the approach analytical and evidence based?</li> <li>• Does the sum of the ‘bottom up’ approach align with the strategy?</li> <li>• How to improve measurement of success?</li> <li>• What would you like to see in future plans? What should be the focus for the remainder for the final two action plans?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Process for developing the Action Plans</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the approach to developing the Action Plans right? Bottom up through the SAG workshops? How is this balanced with top down priorities? How has the approach changed over the years?</li> <li>• Process for agreeing and prioritising the action plans? Degree of change as it goes through the approval process?</li> <li>• Are stakeholders content with process? Areas for improvement?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Governance structures</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Views on the layers of governance structures (Inter-departmental Ministerial Group, Strategic Delivery Board, Stakeholder Assurance Group, Task and Finish Group), DSV Partnerships, others</li> <li>• Views on ownership and buy in</li> <li>• Degree to which there is overlap?</li> <li>• SDB – ToR understood, right membership (other departments?), quarterly meetings?</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SAG (how set up, right membership, format, meetings – attendance, function, Workshops – have they worked?, Relationship with SDB and IMG, Challenges for members (conflicts within SAG, time/resources)</li> <li>• Task and Finish Groups (how many, what for – how it is decided they will be required, do they work? Challenges/difficulties?) How are members for these chosen/volunteered? How do they report?</li> <li>• Is there a clear distinction between structures? Clear lines of responsibilities? Is there a clear linkage between the roles of the various groups?</li> <li>• How to better engage members of the group?</li> <li>• How effective are the current implementation, oversight and governance arrangements? Does this drive forward strategic progress, how could this be improved?</li> <li>• Is the SDB sufficiently cross-departmental with buy in from all Departments; does it drive collaborative and strategic change?</li> <li>• How could the governance structures be improved?</li> </ul>
<b>Learning from elsewhere</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Views on successful strategies in other jurisdictions? Good practice elsewhere? Why they work? How applicable in NI context?</li> </ul>
<b>COVID 19 context</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Particular challenges raised and how they might be reflected in future action plans and strategy</li> </ul>

**Appendix 4: Police Recorded Crime by Crime Type Northern Ireland 2018/2019**

Police recorded crime by crime type Northern Ireland 2018/19								
Crime Type	Police recorded crime	Recorded with domestic motivation	% recorded with domestic motivation	Unit cost - based on HO RR 107	Domestic abuse costs NI	Unit cost based on (HO RR99 2015/6 prices)	Sexual violence cost NI	
<b>VICTIM-BASED CRIME</b>								
VIOLENCE AGAINST THE PERSON								
<i>Homicide</i>	29	4	13.79%	£2,200,000.00	£8,800,000			<i>Note - not clear why RR107 values domestic homicide at £2.2m and other homicide at £3.2m in RR 99</i>
<i>Death or serious injury caused by unlawful driving</i>	138							
<i>Violence with injury</i>	14,110	4451	31.55%	£73,560.00	£327,415,560			
<i>Violence without injury</i>	16,874	5700	33.78%	£30,000.00	£171,000,000			
<i>Harassment</i>	5,274	1666	31.59%	£29,680.00	£49,446,880			<i>Note using stalking unit cost, probably an over estimate</i>
SEXUAL OFFENCES								
<i>Rape</i>	1,094	340	31.08%	£77,300.00	£26,282,000	£39,360	£43,059,840	<i>Note unclear why rape unit cost in RR 107 double that of RR99</i>
<i>Other sexual offences</i>	2,442	452	18.51%	£13,570.00	£6,133,640	£6,520	£15,921,840	<i>Using indecent exposure/sexual touching unit cost not 'other sexual offences' category</i>
ROBBERY	639	19	2.97%	£11,320.00	£215,080			<i>Using unit cost for robbery from RR99</i>
THEFT OFFENCES	30,658	938	3.06%	£1,380.00	£1,294,440			<i>Using unit cost for theft from person from RR 99</i>
CRIMINAL DAMAGE	17,658	1,728	9.79%	£1,350.00	£2,332,800			<i>Using criminal damage from RR 99</i>
OTHER CRIMES AGAINST SOCIETY								
DRUG OFFENCES	7,050							
POSSESSION OF WEAPONS OFFENCES	1,061							
PUBLIC ORDER OFFENCES	1,006							
MISCELLANEOUS CRIMES AGAINST SOCIETY	2,821	884	31.34%	?	?			<i>In domestic figures - primarily breach of non molestation order</i>
TOTAL POLICE RECORDED CRIME	100,854	16,182	16.04%		<b>£592,920,400</b>		<b>£58,981,680</b>	

Appendix 5: Overview of International Approaches							
Country	Strategy/ Policies	When set up	Scope	Governance/organisational structures	Funding	Themes	Commentary
Canada	<a href="#">"It's time"</a>	First federal strategy published 2017	Gender based violence (GBV) to include cyber, physical, sexual, societal, psychological, emotional and economic	Minister Responsible for the Status of Women's Advisory Council on the Strategy to Prevent and Address Gender-Based Violence established on June 27, 2016.  The Advisory Council serves as a forum to exchange views, promising practices and research on issues related to gender-based violence.	\$100m over 5 years	Pillar 1 – Prevention Pillar 2 – Supporting survivors and their families Pillar 3 - Promoting responsive legal and justice systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Canada using <b>Gender Based Analysis Plus</b> in development of policies and programmes for 20 years</li> <li>• New <b>Gender Based Budgeting Act 2018</b> commits to consider impact of policies on all Canadians</li> <li>• Strategy aimed at achieving “whole of Government approach”</li> <li>• Development of a <a href="#">Gender Results Framework</a> to measure outcomes and record progress</li> <li>• Also a <b>Gender Based Violence knowledge centre</b></li> </ul>
New Zealand	Family Violence Prevention Strategy Te Rito	Response to Family Violence Prevention Plan Sept 2001	Family violence	Ministry of Social Development coordinated with Family Violence Advisory Committee		9 principles, 5 key goals and 5 year implementation plan covering 18 areas of action	
New Zealand	<a href="#">Taskforce for Action on Violence</a>	Was active from June 2005 to July 2015	Family violence, including abuse and neglect of children and older persons	Included decision-makers from the government and non-government sectors, the judiciary and Crown agencies, and wider advisory group		Four strands <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leadership</li> <li>• Changing attitudes and behaviour</li> </ul>	

Appendix 5: Overview of International Approaches							
Country	Strategy/ Policies	When set up	Scope	Governance/organisational structures	Funding	Themes	Commentary
	<a href="#">within Families</a>					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensuring safety &amp; accountability</li> <li>Effective support services</li> </ul>	
<b>New Zealand</b>	Joint Venture for Family Violence and Sexual Violence	Ongoing	Family Violence and Sexual violence	Parliamentary Under-Secretary to the Minister of Justice (Domestic and Sexual Violence) Lead Minister for whole-of-govt response to family violence and sexual violence. Supported by Ministerial group comprising Justice, Social Development, Children, Māori Development and Senior ministers.	Govt announced May 2020 an additional \$183m over next 4 years in MSD-funded specialist family violence services for victims/ survivors and perpetrators of family violence, including elder abuse.	<a href="#">New strategy in development</a>	New Family Violence Act 2018 took effect 1 July 2019, replacing the Domestic Violence Act 1995 <b>New Chief Victims' Adviser to Government</b>
<b>Australia</b>	<a href="#">National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022</a>	Published Feb 2011	Domestic and family violence and sexual assault	Endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG). Relevant Commonwealth, state and territory ministers to oversee implementation, monitor progress and develop further Action Plans <b>A National Plan Implementation Panel</b> involving representation from Commonwealth, state and territory governments, and non-government organisations supported by specific working groups		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6 national outcomes</li> </ul>	<b>National Centre of Excellence</b> to bring together research and evidence
<b>Western Australia</b>	<a href="#">Family and Domestic Violence Prevention Strategy</a>	To 2022	Developed within the framework of the National Plan. Follows on from WA Strategic Plan for Family and Domestic Violence 2009-2013	Department of Communities Endorsed by WA Family and Domestic Violence Senior Officer's Group (SOG), comprised senior reps from key state and Commonwealth govt agencies with direct or indirect responsibility for victims and perpetrators of family and domestic violence.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prevention and early intervention</li> <li>Safety for victims</li> <li>Accountability for perpetrators</li> </ul>	Currently consulting on a new 10 year strategy which will focus on access and inclusion, and consider the unique and diverse needs of Aboriginal people, people with disability, people from culturally and

Appendix 5: Overview of International Approaches							
Country	Strategy/ Policies	When set up	Scope	Governance/organisational structures	Funding	Themes	Commentary
				<p>Women’s Council for Domestic and Family Violence Services also represented.</p> <p>SOG plans, manages and monitors strategy across government response to the issue of family and domestic violence in WA.</p>			<p>linguistically diverse backgrounds, LGBTQ+ people, and people in regional and remote Western Australia.</p> <p><b>3 x 3 year stages of work set out clear focus of action for the duration of the strategy</b></p>
<b>England and Wales</b>	<a href="#">Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2016-2020</a>	Publish March 2016		Inter-Ministerial Group chaired by the Home Secretary		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prevention</li> <li>• Provision of services</li> <li>• Partnership</li> <li>• Pursuing Perpetrators</li> </ul>	<p>Lot of focus on overseas involvement</p> <p>Includes action plan</p>
<b>Wales</b>	National Strategy on Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence – 2016 - 2021	November 2016 follow on to the 2010 Right to be Safe Strategy	<p>Gender-based violence, domestic abuse and sexual violence</p> <p>Statutory duty under the <a href="#">Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015</a> to produce a strategy</p>	Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children – lead,		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support</li> <li>• Protection</li> <li>• Prevention</li> </ul> <p>Outlines 6 objectives Ministers expect to achieve by November 2021:</p> <p><b>Objective 1:</b> Increase awareness and challenge attitudes of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence across the Welsh Population</p> <p><b>Objective 2:</b> Increased awareness in children and young people of the</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>National Training Framework</b> which will help professionals deal with disclosures of abuse and ensure consistent training</li> <li>• <b>Whole Education Approach Good Practice Guide</b> on healthy relationships</li> <li>• <b>National Adviser for Tackling Violence against Women</b>, other forms of Gender Based Violence, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence</li> </ul>

Appendix 5: Overview of International Approaches							
Country	Strategy/ Policies	When set up	Scope	Governance/organisational structures	Funding	Themes	Commentary
						<p>importance of safe, equal and healthy relationships and that abusive behaviour is always wrong</p> <p><b>Objective 3:</b> Increased focus on holding perpetrators to account and provide opportunities to change their behaviour based around victim safety</p> <p><b>Objective 4:</b> Make early intervention and prevention a priority</p> <p><b>Objective 5:</b> Relevant professionals are trained to provide effective, timely and appropriate responses to victims and survivors</p> <p><b>Objective 6:</b> Provide victims with equal access to appropriately resourced, high quality, needs led, strength based, gender responsive services across Wales</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">National Indicators</a></li> <li>• Annual Progress Report</li> </ul>



Appendix 5: Overview of International Approaches							
Country	Strategy/ Policies	When set up	Scope	Governance/organisational structures	Funding	Themes	Commentary
Scotland	<a href="#">Equally Safe</a>	2018	Women and Girls live free from all forms of violence and abuse – and the attitudes that help perpetuate it	Violence against Women and Girls Joint Strategic Board to provide senior leadership and identify emerging issues;	“we will consider the focus of current dedicated funding for tackling violence against women and girls” – nothing committed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary prevention</li> <li>• Capability and Capacity</li> <li>• Justice</li> <li>• Accountability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Little specific set out and no identified funding</li> <li>• No reference to monitoring or evaluation</li> <li>• No SMART targets.</li> </ul>
Ireland	<a href="#">Second National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based violence (2016-2021)</a>	Follows on from first national strategy, which ran from 2010 to 2014	Domestic and sexual violence against women and men, including older people in the community	Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality lead  National Office for the Prevention of Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence ( <a href="#">COSC</a> )  Strategy overseen by a monitoring committee composed of stakeholders from all sectors working together in partnership and a senior oversight group of senior officials.	<b>COSC Executive office of Dept for Justice</b> – funds awareness raising and perpetrator intervention programmes directly	The overall aims of this strategy are <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change societal attitudes to support a reduction in domestic and sexual violence</li> <li>• Improve supports available to victims and survivors and</li> <li>• Hold perpetrators to account</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitored by annual report</li> </ul>
Sweden	<a href="#">National Strategy to Prevent and Combat Men’s Violence against Women 2017-2026</a>	Successive National Action Plans – well evaluated and lessons learned incorporated in future policies.	First European country to introduce a gender-specific criminal offence aimed to capture repeated nature of domestic violence inc all its components: physical, sexual and psychological violence. A specific domestic violence offence which aims to	<a href="#">Gender Equality Agency</a> established in 2018 (staff of 50 and clear remit arising from Gender Equality Inquiry)  In 2019 the new Government declared itself a <a href="#">Feminist Government</a> embedding gender equality across all department.	€ 81 million allocated for the period of 2017-2020 to implement the National Strategy An “impressive amount of resources is also set aside to fund research projects and institutes specifically dedicated to violence against women” (Greivo)  The Gender Equality Agency is funded by appropriation of SEK 41m per year <sup>17</sup>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A range of national action plans (NAPs) and other measures have since been implemented and evaluations and research are continuously carried out to improve the knowledge base further and design strategic interventions</li> </ul>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.government.se/4ae770/contentassets/8f596b339f08403ba040ed097cdc2be4/summary-of-the-report-policy-objectives-and-a-new-government-agency.pdf>

Appendix 5: Overview of International Approaches							
Country	Strategy/ Policies	When set up	Scope	Governance/organisational structures	Funding	Themes	Commentary
			capture the continuum of violence.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All Swedish data is disaggregated by sex to allow monitoring by gender</li> </ul>
Denmark	National strategy for combating violence in close relationships (2011) <sup>18</sup>	Launched 2014.	Since 2002, Denmark has adopted four National Action Plans to stop violence against women which have progressively broadened the scope	Ministry of Children, Gender Equality, Integration and Social Affairs	A total amount of 35 million kroner (US\$ 6.5 m) has been allocated for the implementation of the National Strategy to combat violence in intimate relations 2009-2012.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Usually ranks as the top country to be a woman</li> <li>Have changed terminology from domestic violence (in Danish – trouble at home) to ‘partner violence’ or the term, ‘men’s violence against women’</li> </ul>
Netherlands	Gender and LGBTI Equality Policy Plan 2018-2021		<p>Dutch policy focuses <b>on all victims and all forms of violence in dependency relationships and is therefore formulated gender-neutral.</b></p> <p>There is no separate approach to violence against women and domestic violence is not defined as a crime in and of itself</p>	<p>Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport fulfils the coordinating role in tackling violence against women and domestic violence.</p> <p>Municipalities have statutory duties re provision of services</p>		Within mainstream although municipalities funded to delivery services locally – but means they vary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social Support Act 2015 responsible for the “Safe at Home” shelters/ reporting/domestic violence services for those at risk of physical, mental or sexual violence or threat by a family member, housemate, spouse or former spouse or caregiver</li> </ul>

<sup>18</sup> <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-based-violence/good-practices/denmark/danish-campaign-targets-diversity-domestic-violence>

**Appendix 6: Consolidated list of actions**

STRAND	ACTION PLAN		ACTION	LEAD	PROPOSE COMPLETION DATE	CURRENT STATUS	
Driving Change through Co-operation and Leadership	• Imp Plan	•	Develop governance and accountability arrangements to support the implementation of the joint strategy and subsequent action plans	DoH DoJ	30 Jun 2016		
	COMMS PLAN						
	• Imp plan	•	Consider proposed content for an information and communication plan	DoH DoJ	31 Mar 2017		
	• 2	• 1	Develop and information and communication plan	DoH DoJ	31 Dec 2017		
	• 3	• 1,2	Continue to maximise opportunities to disseminate information and promote delivery of initiatives under the Strategy's comms plan	DoH DoJ	Mar 2019		
	• 4	• 1,2	Continue to maximise opportunities to disseminate information and promote delivery of initiatives under the Strategy's comms plan	DoH DoJ	Mar 2020		
	COMMS PLAN						
	• Imp plan	•	Consult on the need for changes in practice and legislative provisions inc a DV Disclosure scheme and a Domestic abuse offence	DoJ	31 Dec 2016		
	• 3	• 1	Review arrangements to deliver justice in serious sexual offence cases taking account of views of victims, legal practitioners and CJ orgs	DoJ	Jan 2019		
	• 3	• 1,2	Identify new initiatives to ensure continued focus on sexual violence and abuse	DoH DoJ	Mar 2019		
• 4	• 1	Work collaboratively with key partners providing for innovation, research and development including through the PILGRIM project and research into the prevalence and effects of training for police officers around the subject of rape myths	PSNI	Mar 2020			

	• 3	• 1,2	Convene a problem solving workshop to consider how we can optimise resources to address matters of concern raised by the SAG	SAG	Sept 2018		
	• 4	• 1,2	Convene two SAG workshops	SAG	May and Nov 2019		
	• 4	• 1.2	Strengthen working relationships between PCSPs and Local Partnerships and coordinate resources to ensure region wide learning	PCSPs and LDSVPs	Mar 2020		
STRATEGY REVIEW							
• Prevention and Early Intervention	• 4	• 2	Undertake a review of the Strategy to assess progress made against the priorities to inform future work	DoH, DoJ, DE DfC and DoF	Mar 2020	Likely to report August 2020	
	• 5	• 2	Finalise the review of the <i>Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy</i> and incorporate findings into future action plans.	DoH, DoJ	Oct 2021		
	LDSVP						
	• 2	1, 10, 14	Rebrand the LDVPs to include sexual violence and align local policies to deliver a regional approach (Note included under another strand)	DVPs DoH	30 Nov 2017 31 Mar 2018		
	• 4	1,2	Consider widening the remit of all local partnership to include sexual violence and abuse Local partnerships to continue to provide awareness of domestic and sexual violence and abuse, identify education and training needs of partners and identify 3 key actions to be take forward at a regional level	LDSVPS, Nexus, DoH and DoJ LDSVPS	Jun 2019 Mar 2020		
	• 5	1, 2	LDSVPs to continue to raise awareness of domestic and sexual violence and abuse across a range of targeted groups including, where possible, hairdressers and beauticians.	LDSVPs	Mar 2021		
	• 5	1, 2	LDSVPs to consider development of a regional presence and scope options for the development of a regional Partnership website and/or App.	LDSVPs	Sep 2020		
	• 5	• 1, 2	Develop a resource to support local areas (e.g. Local Councils, PCSPs) to understand the impact of domestic and sexual violence and abuse and to	DoH, DoJ	Sep 2021		

			explore the potential for social return on investment and collaborative working.			
RESPONSE TO GILLEN						
	4	1, 19,20	Develop an action plan to progress recommendations of the Gillen report and initiate work on their implementation	DoJ, DoH, DE PPS, PSNI	Ongoing	
	• 5	• 1, 19, 20	The Department is working with multi-agency partners to finalise a phased Gillen implementation plan which prioritises recommendations that will have the greatest impact on complainants going through the system, including children.	DoJ, DE, DoH, PPS & PSNI	Ongoing	
EDUCATION AND YOUNG PEOPLE						
	• 3	• 5	Consider how notification to schools of DV incidents could be achieved inc consideration of Encompass in NI and agree a way forward	DE DoH DoJ	Mar 2019	
	• 4	• 5	Further progress work relating to how notification to schools of DV incidents could be achieved inc consideration of Encompass in NI and agree a way forward	SBNI DE PSNI DoH DoJ	Mar 2020	
	• 5	• 5	Consider the introduction of a pilot scheme to notify schools of domestic abuse incidents, based on the principles of Operation Encompass.	SBNI, DE, PSNI, DoH & DoJ	Dec 2020	
	• 2	• 6	Develop protocol /guidance for schools to assist them in choosing resources to teach about DV appropriate to age/ability of pupils and consistent with NI curriculum Work with relevant organisation to review and update guidance re Relationship and Sexuality education resources	DE DE	30 Nov 2017 Dependent upon Ministerial commitment re availability of resources	
	• 3	• 6	Consider how relationships and sexuality education curriculum resources can support teachers covering issues related to domestic and sexual violence	CCEA	Mar 2019	

	• 3	• 6	Produce Material on the subject of healthy relationships for the iMatter programme	DE DoH DoJ	Oct 2018		
	• 4	• 6	Review and update the iMatter programme materials to ensure it is reflective of contemporary issues affecting young people including the area of Healthy Relationships	DE	Mar 2020		
	• 5	• 6	Review and update the DE iMatter programme materials to ensure it is reflective of contemporary issues affecting children and young people. This will include the subject area of “Healthy Relationships” and take account of the Leonard Review into responding to and managing Child Sexual Exploitation within Northern Ireland.	DE	Sep 2020		
	• 3	• 7	Consider the conclusions from the evaluation of the Preventative Education Projects for the teaching of the preventative curriculum in schools	DE	Early 2019		
	• 4	• 7	Following the conclusion of the pilot ‘Keeping Safe’ preventative education project, review and reassess current work programme in light of information arising from the evaluation of this pilot programme.	DE	Mar 2020		
	5	• 7	Following the conclusion of the pilot ‘Keeping Safe’ preventative education project, review and reassess current work programme in light of information arising from the evaluation of this pilot programme.	DE	Sep 2020		
	SAFEGUARDING BOARD						
	3	• 9	Link with the work of the SBNI DV Subgroup to deliver Priority 2 of SBNI’s Strategic Plan to provide a voice to children and yps affected by DV	DoH	Mar 2019		
	4	• 9,11	SBNI to undertake a scoping exercise of support services available to children affected by DV and a training needs analysis of staff working directly with those children	SBNI	Mar 2020		
	5	• 9, 11	To support the work of the SBNI Children’s DV sub-group by completing:	SBNI	Jun 2020 Sep 2020		

			(a) an analysis of the scoping exercise undertaken in 2019 of support services available to children affected by domestic violence; and (b) a training needs analysis of staff working directly with those children and make recommendations to address gaps identified.			
	OTHER					
	5	• 4, 5, 6	We will: (a) publish the Helping Hands evaluation and (b) take full cognisance of the Helping Hands evaluation; in supporting the case for funding in future years	WAFNI DE	Jun 2020	
<b>Delivering Change through Responsive Services</b>	Imp		Identify key information held by stakeholders relevant to service provision Assess how this can assist in informing and improving service provision	DoH DoJ DoH DoJ	31 Dec 2016 31 Mar 2017	
	2	10, 13, 14	Identify key information held by stakeholders, assess how this can assist in informing and improving service provision, and consider outcomes of academic research re international best practice	DoH DoJ	31 Mar 2018	
	TRAINING					
	3	12	PPS legal staff within the Serious Crime Unit and panel counsel will take ongoing specialised training relevant to the work of the unit & continue to review training provided to prosecutors and counsel to take int accounts raised in research and experience of victims	PPS	From April 2018	
	4	12	Continue to review training provided to prosecutors and counsel and take into account issues raised in criminal justice inspections	PPS	From Apr 2019	
	IRIS					
	3	12	Pilot and evaluate the IRIS programme and extend to male victims and sexual violence	DoH	Mar 2019	



	4	12	Pilot and evaluate the IRIS programme within selected GP federations	DoH	Mar 2020	
	5	12	Pilot and evaluate the Identification and Referral to Improve Safety (IRIS) Programme across East Belfast and Newry/Down GP Federations and consider findings to inform wider advocacy support (action 12 refers).	DoH	Mar 2021	
CROWN COURT OBSERVERS						
	3	13	Commence Crown Court Observers' study to gather information on victims' and witnesses' experiences of the court system in sexual offences cases	VSNI	Sept 2018	
	4	13	Continue to run Crown Court Observers' study to gather information on victims' and witnesses' experiences of the court system in sexual offences cases	VSNI	Mar 2020	
WORKPLACE CHARTER/POLICIES						
	2	10,14	Update guidance for employers on developing a Workplace policy to reflect new strategy	DoH DoJ	31 Mar 2018	
	4	10,14	Work collaboratively with interested parties to promote Employer guidance on how to develop a workplace policy on DV and abuse	DoH DoJ and SAG	Mar 2020	
	5	14	Update Health and Social Care Trust ('HSCT') Workplace Policies to cover both domestic and sexual violence and abuse and consider development of a regional approach.	HSCTs, Chairs of LDSVPs	Sep 2020	
	5	14	NICS HR to update its Workplace Policy to cover both domestic and sexual violence and abuse and to consider application for a 'Workplace Charter Mark for Domestic Violence'.	NICS HR, DoH, DoJ	Oct 2020	
ADVOCACY SUPPORT						
Support	2	19	Establish a framework for the introduction of a streamlined Advocacy Support Service (Note in Action Plan 2 this appears under priority 19 not 15 and in the Protection and Justice strand)	DoJ	31 Mar 2018	

	3	15	Develop a model for a streamlined Advocacy Support Service	DoJ DoH PSNI	Oct 2018		
	4	15,17	Finalise a model for a new Advocacy Support service for victims for consideration of the model and its future funding by the SDB	DoJ DoH PSNI	Mar 2020		
	5	15, 17	Subject to available funding, prepare for the implementation (in early 2021/22) of a new streamlined singular Advocacy Support Service, for victims of domestic and sexual violence and abuse.	DoJ & PSNI	Mar 2021		
	HELPLINE						
	Imp Plan			Evaluate the current provision of the Government's 24 domestic and sexual violence helpline Procure continued and future provision of 24 hour helpline	DoH DoJ DfC	30 June 2016 31 Mar 2017	
	2	15		Secure continued and future provision of the 24 hour domestic and sexual violence helpline (Note in Action Plan 2 appears under support strand)	DoH DoJ DfC NIHE	31 Mar 2018	
	3	15		Procurement exercise for the delivery of the 24 hour domestic and sexual violence helpline (Note is Action Plan 3 appears under support strand)	DfC DoH DoJ	Mar 2019	
	4	10,15		Ensure continued provision of a 24 Hour Domestic and Sexual Abuse Helpline.	DfC, DoH & DoJ	Mar 2020	
	5	10, 15		Ensure continued provision of a 24 Hour Domestic and Sexual Abuse Helpline.	DfC, DoH & DoJ	Mar 2021	
	OTHER INITIATIVES						
	2	15		Develop a webpage on NI Direct to provide information on DV and sexual violence	DoH	31 Oct 2017	
	3	12		Review the work of the Serious Crime Unit in relation to building confidence and delivering effective prosecutions and monitoring performance of independence counsel	PPS	From April 2019	

	4	12	Belfast DSVP to pilot awareness training session on adult child to parent violence and subject to evaluation other partnerships roll out	LDSVPs	Mar 2020	
	4	10,12	Complete year 3 of the DV and Abuse multimedia campaign to raise awareness of the issue and of the availability of the Disclosure Scheme	DoJ	Mar 2020	
	4	10,14	Consider whether any new DV and abuse initiative could impact on homelessness levels and what sets to be taken to address this	DoH DoJ DfC	Mar 2020	
	4	12,15	Raise awareness around domestic and sexual violence and associated among groups who may not identify or be recognised within conventional public policy	DoJ DoH	Mar 2020	
	4	12	Release a domestic abuse awareness campaign in consultation with partners and continue the No Grey zone sexual consent campaign	PSBI	Mar 2020	
	4	15,17	Complete the evaluation of the provision of support to victims of sexual violence and abuse through Independent Sexual Violence Advisors	VSNI	Apr 2019	
	5	14	Liaise with DAERA to consider the findings of the National Rural Crime Network 2019 'Captive and Controlled – Domestic Abuse in Rural Areas.'	DoH, DoJ, DAERA	Sept 2020	
	5	19, 3	Review the findings from the domestic and sexual violence modules (to be published around summer 2020 and March 2021) of the Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey and consider actions necessary to improve services to victims.	DoJ	Ongoing	
	5	10	Southern Health & Social Care Trust to pilot Domestic Violence and Abuse Worker within Acute Emergency Department.	SDSVP Chair	Mar 2021	
	5	10, 15, 17	Stakeholder Assurance Group to: Increase awareness and share learning on Technology Facilitated Domestic Abuse; and Develop a common hashtag related to domestic and sexual abuse that could be used by the sector across their social media.	SAG	June 2020	

	5	15	Work with advice and Stakeholder Assurance Group voluntary sector representatives to: raise awareness/provide information; and/or arrange training with a range of groups, including sporting organisations, Irish Travellers and supporting communities, subject to availability of funding.	DfC	Dec 2020 (for a first group)	
	SANCTUARY SCHEME					
	Imp Plan		NIHE to initiate discussions with DSD to consider extending the Sanctuary scheme to other forms of tenure	DfC	31 Mar 2017	
	2	16	Review the current Sanctuary scheme and consider options to extend it to other forms of tenure	DfC	30 Dec 2017	
	3	16	Develop policy proposals for the Sanctuary scheme	DfC	Dec 2018	
	4	16	Further develop the Sanctuary Scheme in conjunction with the NIHE – ensure awareness with tenants and develop robust referral process.	DfC	Mar 2020	
	5	16	(a) Implement the findings of the research project which considered the extension of the Sanctuary Scheme, to provide victims with the choice to remain safely in their homes or seek re-housing, to all Housing Executive tenants and not just those at high risk. (b) Work with the Housing Executive and the Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations to consider the extension of the Sanctuary Scheme to Housing Association tenants.	DfC	Mar 2021	
	REVIEW OF NIHE/WAFNI PROTOCOL					
	Imp plan		Review of the NIHE/WAFNI protocol	DfC	31 Mar 2017	
	2	16	Implement recommendations from the review of the NIHE/ WAFNI Joint working protocol	DfC NIHE	31 Dec 2017	
	ACCOMMODATION FOR MALE VICTIMS					
	2	16	Assess suitability of temporary emergency accommodation used for male victims of domestic violence	DfC NIHE	31 Mar 2018	

	3	16	Undertake research on and consider future options for the accommodation requirements of male victims	DfC	Marc 2019	
Protection and Justice	OTHER INITIATIVES					
	3	17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce sexual violence counselling waiting lists with Nexus NI</li> </ul>	DoH	Mar 2019	
	3	19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Progress work relating to findings from academic research</li> </ul>	DoJ	Mar 2019	
	4	19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Progress work relating to findings from academic research</li> </ul>	DoJ	Mar 2020	
	4	19, 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local policing team officers to be training in DV and abuse</li> </ul>	PSNI	Ongoing	
	4	18, 19, 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Independent Advisory Group meet quarterly to inform police response to DV and sexual violence and abuse</li> </ul>	PSNI	Quarterly during 2019/20	
	4	19,3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DV and sexual violence modules to be rotated in the NI Safe Community Survey in alternate years, with associated data published</li> </ul>	DoJ	Ongoing	
	4	19, 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participate in the National Regional Research Group</li> </ul>	PSNI	Ongoing	
	4	19, 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a first responder DVD to raise awareness</li> </ul>	PSNI	April 2019	

	2	19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake scoping work on the links between alcohol and domestic and sexual violence and abuse</li> </ul>	DoJ	31 Jan 2018		
	DV PROTECTON ORDERS						
	Imp Plan		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop appropriate guidance to allow for the implementation on a pilot basis of DV Protection Notices and Orders</li> </ul>	DoJ	31 Oct 2016		
	2	18,20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop the necessary processes to enable the implementation of DV protection Orders in NI</li> </ul>	DoJ	31 Mar 2018		
	3	18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce Domestic Violence Protection Notices and Domestic Violence Protection Orders in Northern Ireland.</li> </ul>	DoJ	Subject to legislative timescales		
	4	18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce Domestic Violence Protection Notices and Domestic Violence Protection Orders in Northern Ireland.</li> </ul>	DoJ	Subject to return of NIA		
	5	18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce Domestic Violence Protection Notices and Domestic Violence Protection Orders in Northern Ireland.</li> </ul>	DoJ	Subject to Assembly timings		
	COURT LISTING						

	Imp Plan		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To explore and implement the preferred option for enhancing the Derry specialist listing arrangements</li> </ul>	DoJ	31 Oct 2016		
	5	18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To consider and implement revised listing arrangements for domestic violence cases at Laganside Court, Belfast.</li> </ul>	OLCJ, DOJ, PPS and PSNI	Dec 2021		
	STALKING OFFENCE						
	4	19,20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider responses received and refine policy options on the needs for the introduction of a specific offence of stalking following consultation closure on 21 Feb 2019</li> </ul>	DoJ	From Mar 2019		
	5	19, 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement recommendations from the Stalking Consultation Report by continuing to raise the profile of stalking with criminal justice partners, by sharing best practice models and guidance in use in other jurisdictions. Develop legislation for the introduction of a specific offence of stalking and stalking protection orders to NI Assembly subject to the views of an incoming Justice Minister.</li> </ul>	DoJ	From Apr 2020		
	MARAC						

	2	19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider taking forward outcomes of the review of MARAC to include identifying areas for improving effectiveness and efficiency</li> </ul>	DoJ PSNI DOH	31 Mar 2018		
	3	19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Progress actions arising from the MARAC review</li> </ul>	DoJ PSNI DoH	From April 2018		
	4	19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a MARAC Operational Board to report to SDB on annual basis and implement actions from the MARAC review</li> </ul>	DoJ PSNI DoH MOB	Apr 2019 Mar 2020		
	5	19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multi-agency MARAC Operational Board ('MOB') to implement actions arising from the MARAC Review; and</li> <li>provide an end of year report to the Strategic Delivery Board, focusing on outcomes, performance measures and the impact of MARACS.</li> </ul>	MOB (chaired by PSNI)	Sep 2020 Jan 2021		
	NEW OFFENCES OF DV						
	2	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Progress the introduction of a new Domestic abuse offence</li> </ul>	DoJ	Subject to legislative timescales		
	3	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce a new Domestic Abuse Offence and statutory aggravator (Not in Action Plan 5 and 3 included under</li> </ul>	DoJ	Subject to legislative timescales		



			Protection and Justice in Action Plan 4 included under Support)				
	4	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce a new Domestic Abuse Offence and statutory aggravator (Not in Action Plan 5 included under Protection and Justice in Action Plan 4 included under Support)</li> </ul>	DoJ	Subject to return of NA		
	5	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce a new Domestic Abuse Offence and statutory aggravator.</li> </ul>	DoJ	Subject to Assembly timings		
	HOMICIDE						
	Imp Plan		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop an appropriate model to identify lessons learned and improve response to cases of domestic homicide</li> </ul>	DoJ	30 Nov 2016		
	2	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Progress the introduction of a domestic homicide review process to identify lessons learned and improve the response</li> </ul>	DoJ	31 Mar 2018		
	3	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver a series of measures to implement a Domestic Homicide Review process to identify lessons learned, share good practice, and improve the response</li> </ul>	DoJ	Mar 2019		
	4	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver a series of measures to secure introduction of a Domestic Homicide</li> </ul>	DoJ	Sep 2019		

			<p>Review Process Northern Ireland, including:</p> <p>(a) Recruiting a three independent Chairs, and, establishing multi-agency panels,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>				
	5	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver a series of measures to secure introduction of a Domestic Homicide Review Process Northern Ireland, including:</li> </ul> <p>(a) Recruiting a three independent Chairs, and, establishing multi-agency panels, as well as providing necessary training for them</p> <p>(b) Finalising multi-agency guidance and toolkit on the conduct of DHRs;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (c) Refining the DHR model, using an historic case(s).</li> </ul>	DoJ	<p>March 2020</p> <p>Summer 2020</p> <p>Summer 2020</p>		
	DERRY PERPETRATOR PROGRAMME						
	2	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fund and monitor the pilot court supervised DV perpetrator programme in Derry Mags Court</li> <li>• Oversee commencement and monitoring of a non-adjudicated DV perpetrator programme in the WHSCT</li> </ul>	DoJ	31 Mar 2018		
3	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor the operation of the Pilot DV Perpetrator Programme in Derry Mags court and WHSCT initiate</li> </ul>	DoJ PBNI	Mar 2019			

			evaluation on effectiveness to inform next steps			
	4	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider lessons learned from the Pilot DCV Perpetrator Programme in Derry Mags court and evaluate the domestic abuse behaviour programme in the WHSCT</li> <li>Prepare up to date report to review evidence base on effectiveness of behavioural change programmes and present to SDB</li> <li>Fund and oversee the continuation and monitoring of domestic abuse behavioural change programme to be delivered by PBNI across HSCT areas</li> </ul>	<p>DoJ PBNI</p> <p>DoJ DoH</p> <p>DoJ</p>	<p>Sept 2019</p> <p>Oct 2019</p> <p>Mar 200</p>	
	5	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In relation to domestic abuse behavioural change programmes:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) continue to fund and deliver programmes across Northern Ireland evaluate the effectiveness of the 2019/20 programmes, and longitudinal data from 2018/19 programmes, and consider the way forward; and</li> <li>(b) consider the outcomes of the lessons learnt from the Londonderry court mandated programme, to inform the way forward.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>DoH, DoJ PBNI, LDSVPs &amp; WAFNI</p>	<p>Mar 2021</p>	
DV DISCLOSURE SCHEME						

	2	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a framework for the introduction of a dedicated DV disclosure scheme</li> </ul>	DoJ	31 Mar 2018	
	3	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor and review the DV and Abuse Disclosure Scheme</li> </ul>	PSNI DoJ	Mar 2019	
	4	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluate the Domestic Violence and Abuse Disclosure Scheme and bring forward any necessary modifications, with PSNI continuing to work with partner agencies to ensure effective delivery.</li> </ul>	PSNI & DoJ	Mar 2020	
	5	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluate the Domestic Violence and Abuse Disclosure Scheme and bring forward any necessary modifications, with PSNI continuing to work with partner agencies to ensure effective delivery.</li> </ul>	PSNI & DoJ	Sept 2020	

## **Appendix 7: Summary of selected agencies/organisations and initiatives**

### DVPP<sup>19</sup>

In 2011, the Domestic Violence Listing Arrangement (DVLA) was introduced in Londonderry/Derry Magistrates' Court. This resulted in all domestic violence cases in the jurisdiction being clustered in specific court sittings, heard on specifically assigned days and by the same judge. Victim Support NI and Women's Aid are also available to provide moral and practical support, with the overall objective being to make victims feel safe, secure, and confident to attend court and give evidence. This was subject to a case study review and was commended under a OECD Public Governance Review of Northern Ireland in 2016. However, the review also concluded that the DVLA was not a fully-fledged specialist domestic violence court due to the exclusive focus on the victim i.e. that it did not include judicial supervision of offenders and there was no bespoke programme for perpetrators.

The Domestic Violence Perpetrator Project (DVPP) based in Londonderry /Derry Magistrates' Court, from 2018 there was proposed to enable the Judge of the DVLA to refer convicted offenders to a behavioural change programme prior to sentence and closely monitor and review their compliance with programme requirements. The pilot was to provide for 30 perpetrators to be included, with the programme evaluated by the DoJ.

### (D)SVA<sup>20</sup>

Since 2005, Independent Sexual Violence Advisers (ISVAs)<sup>21</sup> have been working in local areas across England and Wales to provide continuous support, advice and help for victims and survivors of sexual violence. There are two ISVAs in Northern Ireland. In 2015, Victim Support NI applied for funding to set up a dedicated ISVA service. Funding was secured from Comic Relief and the Department of Justice Northern Ireland. The pilot scheme went live in September 2016, staffed by two specially trained ISVAs.

Independent domestic violence advisors (IDVA) are intended to address the safety of victims at high risk of harm from intimate partners, ex-partners or family members to secure their safety and the safety of their children. They serve as a victim's primary point of contact, usually from the point of crisis to assess the level of risk, discuss the range of suitable options and develop safety plans. They are pro-active in implementing the plans, which address immediate safety, including practical steps to protect themselves and their children, as well as longer-term solutions. These plans will include actions from the MARAC as well as

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<sup>19</sup> DVPP Policy Paper (undated)

<sup>20</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/647112/The\\_Role\\_of\\_the\\_Independent\\_Sexual\\_Violence\\_Adviser\\_-\\_Essential\\_Elements\\_September\\_2017\\_Final.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/647112/The_Role_of_the_Independent_Sexual_Violence_Adviser_-_Essential_Elements_September_2017_Final.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/647112/The\\_Role\\_of\\_the\\_Independent\\_Sexual\\_Violence\\_Adviser\\_-\\_Essential\\_Elements\\_September\\_2017\\_Final.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/647112/The_Role_of_the_Independent_Sexual_Violence_Adviser_-_Essential_Elements_September_2017_Final.pdf)

sanctions and remedies available through the criminal and civil courts, housing options and services available through other organisations. IDVAs support and work over the short- to medium-term to put them on the path to long-term safety. They receive specialist accredited training and hold a nationally recognised qualification. Since they work with the highest risk cases, IDVAs are most effective as part of an IDVA service and within a multi-agency framework. The IDVA's role in all multi-agency settings is to keep the client's perspective and safety at the centre of proceedings.

The first 100 IDVAs were trained in 2005/06 and by 2009 there were over 700 in England and Wales. An evaluation of IDVAs in seven sites in England and Wales found that 'abuse stopped completely in two-thirds of cases where there was intensive support from an IDVA service including multiple interventions' but also highlighted that IDVA current capacity is 'estimated to be less than half of the 1,200-1,500 IDVAs needed for national coverage'.

The CJINI recommended that IDVAs be introduced in Northern Ireland, and raised concern in its 2013 report that they still have not been introduced, with some of the services having to be provided by existing organisations including Women's Aid, Nexus and MAP.

#### [IRIS<sup>22</sup>](#)

IRIS is a specialist domestic violence and abuse (DVA) training, support and referral programme for General Practices that has been positively evaluated in a randomised controlled trial. Run by a social enterprise set up in 2017. IRIS is a collaboration between primary care and third sector organisations specialising in DV and abuse. Core areas of the programme include ongoing training, education and consultancy for the clinical team and administrative staff, care pathways for primary health care practitioners and an enhanced referral pathway to specialist domestic violence services for patients with experience of DV and abuse. In Northern Ireland there are two pilots in East Belfast and Newry/Down District GP Federations in partnership with Women's Aid Federation NI, Nexus NI, MAP and Victim Support NI.

#### [MARACS](#)

MARACs were piloted in Cardiff in 2003, and following success there rolled out across England and Wales. 10 MARACs have been operational in each policing district in Northern Ireland. Their main aim is to reduce the risk of serious harm or homicide for a victim and increase the safety, health, and well-being of victims – whether adults or children.

They are overseen by a MARAC Operation Group, which is chaired by PSNI (?). It is unclear who should be on MARACs although review notes that there are gaps in attendance. The individual MARACs meet monthly or fortnightly depending on area. The MARAC Operation Board reports to SDB on an annual basis.

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<sup>22</sup> <https://irisi.org/>

A review<sup>23</sup> was undertaken by the DOJ in 2016, focussing on the effectiveness and efficiency of the MARACs, how they were operating and identifying potential for future development. Key points:

- decline in referrals to MARACs (1,339 referrals in 2016 - PSNI remain the largest source of referrals; No referrals were made from Education, MAP, A&E, Elderly Care services, or GP services.)
- the call for an Independent DV advisor from the MARACs
- gaps in input from agencies relating to male victims, and also GPs and health
- MARAC Operation Group was not well understood

### PSPs

PCSPs are statutory bodies established under the Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 and constituted in May 2012, they are overseen by a Joint Committee of representatives of the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB), which agrees the funding to be allocated to each council for its PCSP. There are 14 PCSPs in Northern Ireland, one for each of the local government areas (with Belfast having 4). PCSPs comprise membership from a number of different groups. Depending on the area, they have:

- 8, 9 or 10 political members (Councillors) nominated by the district council;
- 7, 8 or 9 independent members appointed by the Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB); and
- representatives from the following designated public bodies: PSNI, NIHE, Probation Board, YJA, HSCTs, EA and NIFRS.

In line with Belfast City Council's four policing districts, Belfast has four District Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (DPCSPs). These DPCSPs have: 6 political members (Councillors) nominated by Belfast City Council; and 5 independent members appointed by the Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB).

Each PCSP has a Policing Committee made up of political and independent members which carries out a distinct role in relation to policing functions. Partnerships are also able to establish delivery committees to take forward work in the community and any other pieces of work they may need, and are able to form links with other groups who may have an interest in policing or community safety.

They have three strategic objectives to support community policing and improve confidence in community safety.

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<sup>23</sup> Duncan L (March 2017) Review of MARACs DOJ Research and Statistical Bulletin 30/2017

### Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI)

The Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland was established in 2012 following the publication of the Safeguarding Board Act 2011. The SBNI has replaced the Regional Child Protection Committee (RCPC) with an extended role to include the wider area of safeguarding as well as statutory child protection.

It is the statutory mechanism for agreeing how Member Agencies will cooperate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and for ensuring the effectiveness of what the Member Agencies do.

### Sanctuary scheme

A Sanctuary Scheme<sup>24</sup> is a multi-agency, victim-centred initiative that aims to enable households at risk of violence to remain safely in their own homes by installing a ‘Sanctuary’ in the home and through the provision of support to the household.

### SARC (The Rowan)

The first SARC was set up in Manchester in 1986. They provide a “one stop location” where female and male victims of rape and serious sexual assault can receive medical care and counselling, and have the opportunity to assist the police investigation, including undergoing a forensic examination. They are seen as a model of good practice<sup>25</sup> in the provision of immediate aftercare to victims of serious sexual violence.

The Rowan is the regional Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) for Northern Ireland, the first purpose built SARC in the UK, located on the Antrim Hospital site. The service is jointly funded by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) and the Police Service for Northern Ireland (PSNI).

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<sup>24</sup><https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sanctuary-schemes-for-households-at-risk-of-domestic-violence-guide-for-agencies>

<sup>25</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/216046/dh\\_118041.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/216046/dh_118041.pdf)