

# Equally Safeguarded

Increasing capacity to support children and young people affected  
by domestic violence and abuse



**March 2020**

A report based upon findings from a Scoping Exercise and Training Needs  
Analysis conducted by SBNI on behalf of the Domestic Violence and Abuse  
Sub-Group

Produced by Women's Aid Federation NI



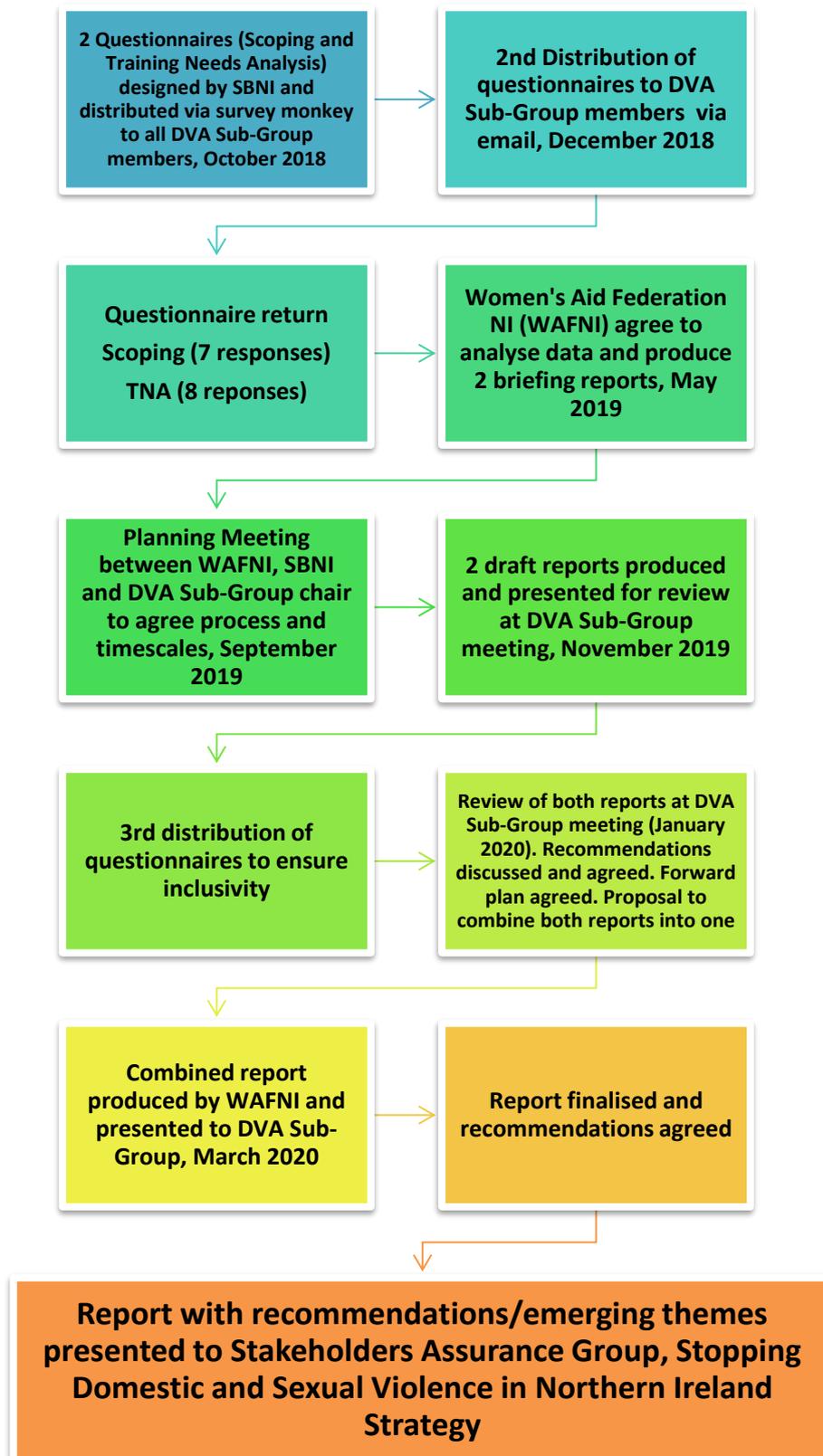
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## Scoping Study and Training Needs Analysis - The Process



# Section 1

# Overview and approach



## 1.1 Introduction and overview

This report has been based upon the findings generated from two processes, a Scoping Exercise and a Training Needs Analysis. Both processes were planned and initiated by the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI), in consultation with the Domestic Violence and Abuse Sub-Group (mandated by the Stakeholder Assurance Group of the *Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland, 7-year strategy*). Both processes form an action listed under the *Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy, draft 4-year action plan* under the Prevention and Early Intervention strand, priority 9 and 11 (page 3)<sup>1</sup>.

## 1.2 Background to the Domestic Violence and Abuse Sub-Group

The Domestic Violence and Abuse Sub-Group is coordinated by SBNI and has approximately 20 members. Membership is drawn from all Health and Social Care Trusts (HSCTs), Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), Public Health Agency (PHA), Probation Board NI, Youth Justice Agency and the Education Authority (EA). There is also representation from a wide range of voluntary organisations who work within the area of domestic violence and abuse including, Include Youth, Barnardos, NSPCC, Women's Aid and Nexus.

The Sub-Group's annual business plan (2018-2019) states 3 core aims:

- 1 To work with government departments and their agencies to prevent domestic violence and abuse (DV&A) from occurring.
- 2 To work with partners engaged in the DV&A arena to raise awareness among parents/carers and professionals of the effect of DV&A on children and young people living with DV&A.
- 3 To work with partners engaged in the DV&A arena to promote education for children and young people living with DV&A, in how to recognise, respond and seek help in relation to DV&A.

The plan also states that the Sub-Group will:

*Participate in the regional Stakeholder Assurance Group (SAG) to ensure the voice of children and young people is represented.*<sup>2</sup>

## 1.3 Overview of process

In October 2018, 2 questionnaires were designed by SBNI as follows:

1. A questionnaire to scope extent and highlight gaps in terms of service provision in relation to children and domestic violence and
2. A questionnaire to highlight extent, up take and availability of training provision and identify gaps in current training provision.

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<sup>1</sup> Justice-ni.gov.uk. Department of Health and Department of Justice. (Online) (Viewed February 2020). *Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy Draft 4-year action plan*. Available from: <https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/stopping-domestic-and-sexual-violence-and-abuse-northern-ireland-seven-year-strategy-march-2016>.

<sup>2</sup> Domestic Violence and Abuse Sub-Group Annual Business Plan 2018-2019

Both questionnaires were distributed via Survey Monkey to all members of the Domestic Violence and Abuse Sub-Group. Due to a limited response initially and problems with the Survey Monkey Approach, this was forwarded once again, for direct return via email with a return date of **21 December 2018**. A total of 15 questionnaires were returned (7 responses to the Scoping Questionnaire and 8 responses to the Training Needs Analysis Questionnaire). Questionnaires were received from a broad representation of the Domestic Violence and Abuse Sub-Group, including Health and Social Care Trusts, statutory bodies as well as voluntary organisations.

Women's Aid Federation NI (a member of the Domestic Violence and Abuse Sub-Group) agreed to conduct an analysis of all responses received and produce two draft briefing papers (one for the Scoping Study and one for the Training Needs Analysis) which would clearly set out preliminary findings for both processes. The draft briefing papers were presented and further discussed at the Sub-Group's meetings on **20th November 2019** and **15th January 2020** and the following points were noted:

- While the response rate to both processes was limited, it was agreed the quality of responses submitted was excellent and findings produced are very valuable.
- All present did not think there would be value in repeating either exercise fully as questionnaires have now been distributed three times.
- It was agreed that both draft reports would be combined into one overall report to promote consistency and highlight the interconnectedness between the two processes.
- It was agreed that once finalised, the combined report could be shared with the Stakeholder Assurance Group of the *Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland, 7 Year Strategy*.<sup>3</sup>

Subsequent to the meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> January, WAFNI agreed to undertake further work to combine the findings from both processes into one overall document which is now presented in this briefing report.

## 1.4 Process limitations

The limitations with the scale of both the Scoping Exercise and the Training Needs Analysis must be acknowledged. However, it must also be noted, those who did respond to both processes, provided comprehensive, in-depth and informed responses, ensuring the process was rich in qualitative data and responses highlight clear understanding of context and need in relation to both service provision and training available. Thanks, is extended to all Sub-Group members who responded for the time and effort invested in this. Both processes have generated valuable data which can be used to inform future planning in relation to both service development/delivery and training.

There is learning to be gained from both processes. The responses received provide a useful insight and perspective on available services from expert agencies and have informed the development of robust recommendations. However, it must be noted, these have been based upon a limited sample of respondents. It is also useful to note the learning to be gained from

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<sup>3</sup> Heath-ni.gov.uk. Department of Health and Department of Justice. [Online]. [Viewed January 2020]. Available from: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dhssps/stopping-domestic-sexual-violence-ni.pdf>

this process for future scoping and research activities including the importance of questionnaire design, distribution process and the need to ensure all relevant organisations have the opportunity to contribute to the process in an accessible format. The time constraints on organisations to contribute to the process must also be taken on board.

Finally, it must also be noted, the data captured and presented in this report was accurate at time of receipt. Situations and services change, and the findings of both the Scoping Study and Training Needs Analysis provide a snapshot in time which may change in the future. It will be useful to repeat both processes in 2-3 years' time, building upon the learning reflected to ensure accurate ongoing environmental scanning and data capture.

# Section 2

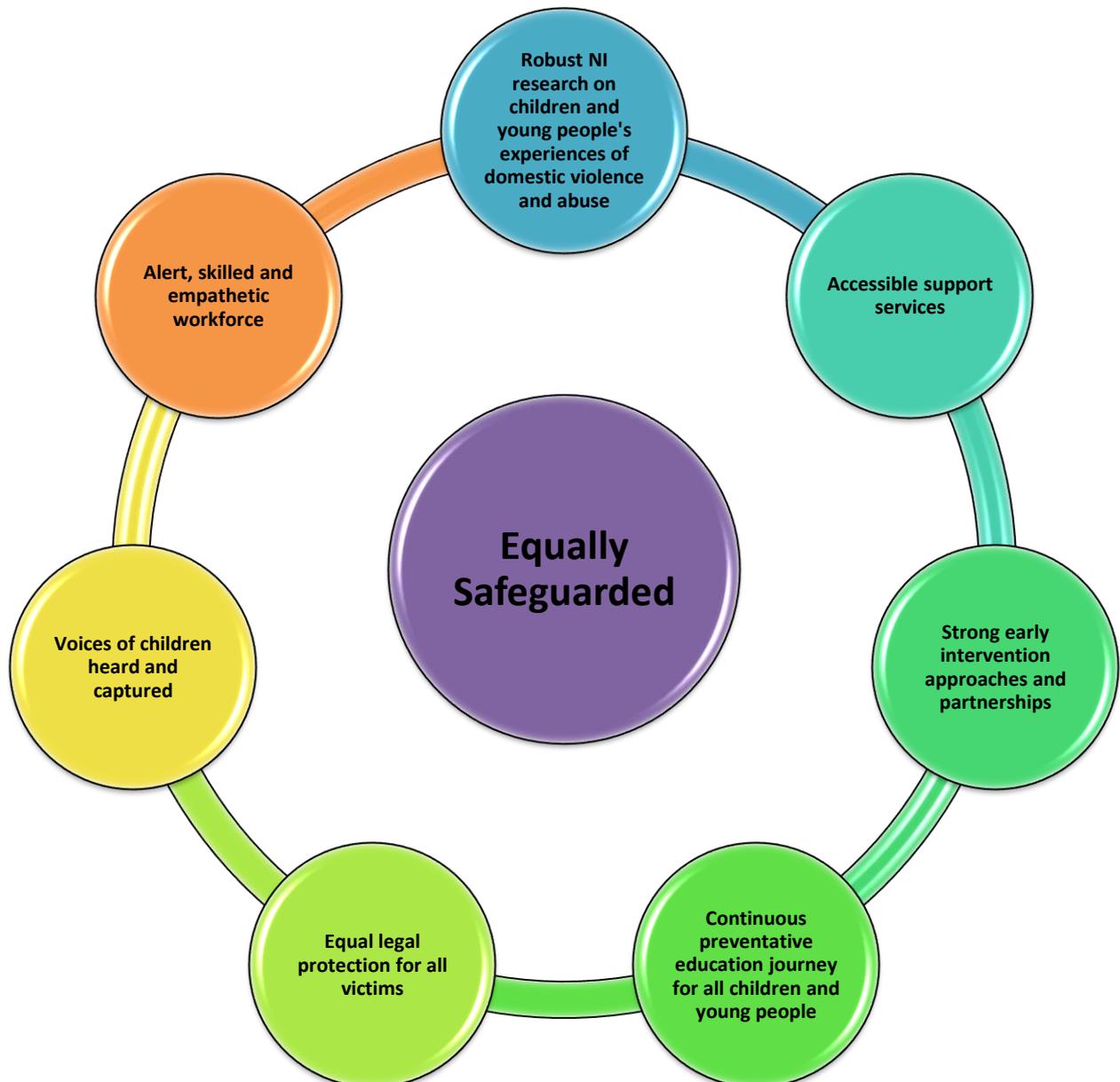
## Scoping Exercise

*It is important to ensure children and young people in NI who are affected by DVA have equal access to high quality evidence-based services / support. These should be age appropriate.*

Member, Domestic Violence and Abuse Sub-Group



## 7 Core emerging themes/recommendations from scoping study



The primary purpose of the scoping exercise was:

*To capture the scope and extent of services (those currently on offer and those planned) for children and young people who experience domestic violence and abuse and to highlight perceived gaps in current service provision.*

A copy of the questionnaire distributed is attached as an appendix (Appendix 1). A total of 7 questionnaires were received in response to the scoping questionnaire. Questionnaires were received from a broad representation of the Domestic Violence and Abuse Sub-Group, including Health and Social Care Trusts, PSNI, statutory bodies as well as voluntary organisations. Voluntary organisations provided a regional response (e.g. NSPCC and Women's Aid NI).

## 2.1 Questions asked

The questionnaire asked 6 key questions as follows:

- 1. What services does your organisation/agency deliver directly to children and young people affected by domestic violence and abuse?**
- 2. Please outline any services your organisation/agency are planning to develop for children and young people affected by domestic violence and abuse over the next 12 months.**
- 3. Do you have a public website that provides details of services for children and young people affected by domestic violence and abuse?**
- 4. Does your organisation or agency deliver any school-based programmes on domestic violence and abuse?**
- 5. Can you identify any gaps in services for children or young people affected by domestic violence and abuse? (if yes, please give details)**
- 6. Please provide any additional relevant information in relation to services for children and/or young people provided by your organisation/agency.**

While limitations in terms of distribution and response have been highlighted in the previous section (1.4) of this report, it must be noted, those who did respond to the scoping exercise provided a comprehensive response. The process highlighted some important and useful findings. Findings are summarised in the pages that follow.

## 2.2 Current services

Respondents were asked: *What services does your organisation/agency deliver directly to children and young people affected by domestic violence and abuse?*

**Findings are as follows:**

- Some respondents (e.g. PHA and EA) do not provide direct services.

- BHST provide family centres and therapeutic support service (While the programmes offered are not specifically for children affected by DV, interventions are tailored to address the impact of such life experiences for these children).
- NHSCT outlined a range of services although not all of these are specific to children (e.g. Public Health Nursing & Midwifery (including Family Nurse Partnership) – Routine enquiry in antenatal and post-natal period. Educational and supportive work. Family Nurse Partnership – Intimate Partner Violence Pathway Pilot 2018 – 2019. Workplace policy in place. Emergency Department Pilot – recognising and responding via creating a proactive, safe place to disclose. Trust chairs the Northern Domestic & Sexual Violence Partnership etc.
- NSPCC provide the Domestic Abuse: Recovering Together (DART) service in Belfast Trust area. DART is an evidence-based group work programme that helps children overcome the adverse effects of living with domestic abuse and deal with day-to-day living more successfully. It is a ten-week programme developed for children 7-14 years and seeks to build and develop the mother and child relationship through group work sessions. **This programme is due to cease in March 2020.**
- Women’s Aid across NI provides focused support for children and young people through a range of specialist support services and programmes, specifically designed to meet the needs of children and young people who have been affected by domestic violence. Women’s Aid provides refuge accommodation, community support, one to one support and group work. This includes group work programmes such as Helping Hands, Heading for Healthy Relationships, Transformers and programmes which aim to develop self-esteem and build confidence and resilience.
- PSNI stated: *“In relation to direct services for children, at any domestic abuse incident where children are part of that family, we will complete welfare checks, safeguarding and referrals to social services. Where a child is a victim of domestic abuse, Police will investigate this matter jointly with Social services; this can also include children or young people who have witnessed domestic abuse”.*

## 2.3 Plans for development of services

Respondents were asked: *Please outline any services your organisation/agency are planning to develop for children and young people affected by domestic violence and abuse over the next 12 months?*

Responses show limited plans for development of services with some organisations struggling to sustain what they currently have and some services due to cease (e.g. NSPCC DART programme). Any plans for development mentioned were subject to funding.

Comments included:

*HSCB are funding training for 3 staff to assess the risk posed to them by adults involved in Domestic Violence (NHSCT)*

*In February 2019, Women’s Aid launched an innovative 10-year strategy for children and young people. The strategy “See, Hear, Act” will guide service development and delivery across Women’s Aid in Northern Ireland over a ten-year period. The strategy is fully benchmarked to the Government’s Northern Ireland strategy for children and young people and is based upon the 8 factors of wellbeing for children and young people presented in the Children’s Services Cooperation Act (Northern Ireland) 2015. The strategy will be launched in February 2019. The strategy details all areas of service planning and delivery which seek to improve the lives of children and young*

*people who we engage with and presents 8 overarching commitments. The implementation of the strategy is funding dependent (Women's Aid).*

*Currently our DART service will cease in 2020 and no current services for children and their fathers (NSPCC).*

## 2.4 Public website

Respondents were asked: *Do you have a public website that provides details of services for children and young people affected by domestic violence and abuse? If so, please provide details.*

### Findings are as follows:

While most respondents have a public website, many of these are generic and do not specify details of services for children and young people affected by domestic violence and abuse.

Comments included:

*PHA have a public website with links to other services and resources however no specific details of services for children and young people affected by Domestic Violence and Abuse*

*The Trust has a public facing website which details Children's Services however it does not specifically detail services for children affected by DV.*

*The WAFNI website details services for children affected by domestic violence and abuse. This has links to all 9 Women's Aid groups across Northern Ireland. Each Women's Aid group has its own independent website which provide specific information on services for children. Some provide links to other local services.*

*Yes. [www.northerntrust.hscni.net](http://www.northerntrust.hscni.net) with various links and information Also dedicated page on Intranet for staff – links to other websites*

*Yes, NSPCC external website gives details of services we provide.*

Both NSPCC and Women's Aid have websites that detail services for children affected by domestic violence and abuse.

## 2.5 School based programmes

Respondents were asked: *Does your organisation or Agency deliver any school-based programmes on domestic violence and abuse? If so, describe briefly.*

### Findings are as follows:

Only Women's Aid and NSPCC mentioned delivery of school-based programmes:

- NSPCC: The Keeping Safe programme has been piloted across NI and is currently being implemented in approximately 65 primary schools, including 5 special schools. Keeping Safe is a whole school education programme, developed in partnership with the Department of Education Northern Ireland which aims to teach every primary school child (4-11-year olds) age appropriate messages to keep them safe from bullying, neglect, physical, emotional, sexual, and domestic abuse. Two workshops for parents based on NSPCC PANTS and the Share Aware materials have been developed and will be facilitated by NSPCC in schools. These have also been filmed and developed into video content for parents. The programme has been robustly evaluated to assess if it is giving children the knowledge, understanding and skills to

keep safe, helping teachers to become comfortable in teaching keeping safe messages and giving parents confidence to communicate with their child about keeping safe messages. The results of this evaluation will be available in 2019.

- Women's Aid has developed a capacity building model to train teachers to implement the Helping Hands programme in a classroom setting. The Helping Hands programme has an extensive reach in primary schools through the development and annual implementation of Social Guardian training, training 160 teachers a year. This two-day training course delivered by Women's Aid staff across NI, equips teachers to deliver the Helping Hands programme to key stage 2 children. The Helping Hands programme seeks to increase children's understanding of feeling safe and to help them to explore and promote behaviours, which will contribute to a safe environment. It seeks to build children's self-esteem and confidence and to help them to develop and articulate a vocabulary of feelings. In particular, it explores the right to feel safe and encourages children to seek support when needed by helping them to safety plan and to develop a support network of individuals who can listen and take action to keep them safe (their Helping Hand). To date, 1,445 teachers from 582 primary schools across NI have been trained. This programme is currently being externally evaluated. Women's Aid across NI is currently in the process of developing a standardised healthy relationships programme for delivery at post primary level. This will focus on rights within relationships, dynamics of unhealthy relationships, and sexual consent. It will also address values and attitudes in society and explore the bystander effect.

## 2.6 Gaps in service provision

Respondents were asked: *Can you identify any gaps in services for children or young people affected by domestic violence and abuse? If so, please provide details.*

### Findings are as follows:

Some found this difficult to answer due to limited awareness of current service provision. One respondent commented:

| *Difficult to answer as range of services across the region is not fully known.*

GAPs identified (not prioritised in any way) include:

- Tailored age appropriate services for all children and young people.
- Core funding for children and young people's services.
- Relationship education in all post primary schools.
- Earlier intervention approaches within universal services.
- Greater focus on community engagement.
- Introduction and roll out of operation encompass.
- Extend Social Guardian training for key stage 1 teachers.
- Availability of services for perpetrators of domestic violence.
- Development of perpetrator/family programmes.
- Assessment of risk and therapeutic intervention.
- More "In school" support, including one to one/counselling for children who have experienced violence and abuse within the home.
- Training for all professionals who work with or on behalf of families who may be experiencing domestic violence and abuse.
- Comprehensive review of risks presented in child contact arrangements (with a clear children's rights lens)

- Commissioning of robust NI research on children's experience of domestic violence, particularly coercive control.

Comments included:

*The Trust commissions a range of supports and services for children affected by DV from Women's Aid. While not so much gaps, these services could be extended if the Trust were to further invest in SLAs to enable Women's Aid to deliver these programmes (BHSCT).*

*It is important to ensure children and young people in NI who are affected by DVA have equal access to high quality evidence-based services / support. These should be age appropriate (PHA).*

*Hugely important to ensure children and young people receive information on a regular basis throughout education regarding positive and healthy relationships and what to do if they have concerns in any personal relationships (PHA).*

*From a public health perspective early intervention/ prevention is a critical aspect within universal services. There needs to be greater focus on community engagement work around DVA and its impact on children and young people (PHA).*

*Indirectly the Trust does not offer any services for parents who perpetrate DV therefore children are either subject to the Child Protection Register or Care Proceedings longer than necessary due to the inability to progress timely assessments / treatment (BHSCT).*

*Perpetrator/family programmes where family intends to remain together both assessment of risk and therapeutic intervention (NHSCT).*

*The need to implement: Operation encompass*

*For social guardian training to be delivered to stage 1 children – early prevention*

*Healthy relationship programme to be delivered in every post primary school in Northern Ireland (EA)*

*The biggest gap in services is, we believe, a serious lack of core funding for vital services. As the external funding climate is becoming more complex and the drive for efficiency cuts has become apparent, sustainability for services has increasingly become a major priority for all Women's Aid groups. We would wish to see a commitment from Government to invest in core funding for the delivery of vital Women's Aid services across Northern Ireland, for children and young people affected by domestic violence. This is a responsibility that sits with every government department under the Children's Services Cooperation Act (Northern Ireland) 2015. (Women's Aid)*

*We believe support services need to be strengthened within educational settings. We would wish to see more one to one support/counselling services in schools for all children and young people who are affected by poor mental health, including those who may be experiencing domestic violence in the home (Women's Aid).*

*Women's Aid believes the issue of child contact where there is domestic violence needs to be robustly reviewed through a children's rights lens. We strongly believe (and research shows) that contact with a perpetrator of domestic violence is not always in the best interests of the child and can in fact present significant levels of risk (Women's Aid).*

*We would wish to see the delivery of robust NI research which clearly focuses on children and young people's experience of domestic violence as equal victims. We think this research should focus on the issue of contact and the risks presented to children and young people. We would also welcome a focus upon coercive control and its impact on children. We believe such research should involve children and young people in safe and creative ways (Women's Aid).*

## 2.7 Additional relevant information

Respondents were asked: *Please provide any additional relevant information in relation to services for children and/or young people provided by your organisation/agency.*

Only 1 respondent commented further:

*ChildLine provides helpline/online support for children including support/advice re DA  
ChildLine Schools service in primary schools, Speak out Stay safe covers all forms of abuse but does not focus solely on DA (NSPCC).*

While there are certainly limitations with this scoping exercise it has highlighted some key issues and important points regarding service provision for children and young people affected by domestic violence and abuse.

The process has been particularly useful for identifying gaps and provides a good foundation for future service planning in terms of responding to domestic violence and abuse.

The Domestic Violence and Abuse Sub-Group has agreed to share this report of findings with the Stakeholder Assurance Group of the *Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland Strategy*. This can be used to inform all future strategic and action planning including allocation of budgets.

## 2.8 Summary and strategic recommendations

The scoping exercise was useful to scope existing service provision for children and young people experiencing domestic violence. It also highlighted gaps in service provision. It has been useful to discuss the findings of the process at the Domestic Violence and Abuse Sub-Group meeting on 15 January 2020 and following this meeting the Sub-Group would like to propose the following **7 key recommendations**. Recommendations have been benchmarked against the 7-year government strategy *Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland Strategy* and reflect the strategic priorities reflected in this document, many of which are still outstanding. It is important to note, all recommendations are important and all are interlinked and interdependent.

### Recommendation 1 – Accessible support services

There is a need for an investment of long-term funding to consolidate, sustain and develop core services for all victims of domestic violence, including children and young people. Accessibility of services is vital and should not be dependent on a post code lottery. Access to services is a key issue highlighted in the *Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland Strategy*<sup>4</sup>:

***A key issue which arose in the pre consultation events was equality of access to services for all individuals affected by domestic and sexual violence and abuse, irrespective of who they are or where in Northern Ireland they live.***

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid

The Domestic Violence and Abuse Sub-Group recommends that budgets are reviewed and prioritised to not only sustain existing services but to enable them to develop based upon emerging need and demand. There is also a need to focus on services for fathers who perpetrate domestic violence and abuse. This includes behavioural change programmes which emphasise accountability and provide mechanisms and supports to address abusive behaviour. Services that have been piloted, tried and tested should be rolled out across Northern Ireland to ensure equality of access for all victims of domestic violence and abuse. Services available should include both generic and specialist support. This is highlighted in the *Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland Strategy*:

***Many individuals, partners and families will only want to access generic advice and support services for domestic and/or sexual violence and abuse. But others should be actively encouraged to access more specialist services.***

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## **Recommendation 2 – Strong early intervention approaches and partnerships**

The Domestic Violence and Abuse Sub-Group recommends a focused and strategic approach to early intervention with all relevant agencies working with families at the earliest possible point, to identify risks and provide support where necessary. This will require a skilled and responsive workforce, with a clear understanding of domestic violence and abuse and appreciation of the need for early intervention. We strongly recommend the further development of sound partnership approaches which will seek to identify families who are in need of support and provide appropriate pathways to support at the earliest possible point in time. There are various models of good practice operating currently including progressive partnerships between Trusts and voluntary organisations that can be built upon going forward.

Increasing statistics for children entering the care system as a result of abuse, present both concerns and challenges for all professionals working with children who may be at risk and clearly and strongly identify the need for early intervention with families at risk, including those experiencing domestic violence. To place the issue within a Northern Ireland context, DHSSPS statistics<sup>5</sup> reveal that at 31 March 2019, there were 24,289 children known to Social Services as children in need, 3,281 children were looked after. This was the highest recorded number of children in care since the introduction of the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, representing 75 children per 10,000 of the child population and 2,211 children were on the Child Protection Register. During 2018 - 2019, Social Services received a total of 34,578 referrals and a total of 3,139 child protection referrals were received by HSC Trusts. There were 1,992 new registrations to the Child Protection Register and 1,882 de-registrations during the year. Research has shown that domestic violence is one of the most predominant factors behind child protection referrals. The estimated cost of domestic and sexual violence

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<sup>5</sup> Health-ni.gov.uk. Department of Health [Online]. [Viewed February 2020]. Available from: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/child-social-care-18-19.pdf>

in Northern Ireland is £931 million<sup>6</sup>. A clear investment in earlier intervention as well as crisis support provision will not only reduce the public cost of domestic violence but also the human costs to families which is immense and potentially devastating.

### Recommendation 3 – Continuous preventative education journey for all children and young people

The Domestic Violence and Abuse Sub-Group believes all children and young people should receive clear messages from the earliest possible age (and throughout their education) that violence is wrong and never acceptable. All children and young people should have opportunities to explore the differences between healthy and unhealthy relationships, leading to an understanding that healthy relationships are based upon respect and equality. They must also be aware of support available to them and how to access this. The importance of preventative education is highlighted in the *Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland Strategy*:

***While it is important that those at risk are identified and interventions are put in place, it is equally important that children and young people should have information and develop skills in building healthy behaviours and relationships. Children should be provided with the opportunity to develop good mental health and emotional resilience to enable them to identify abuse and exercise prevention skills.***

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The Sub-Group wishes to see the full implementation of a continuous education journey throughout children and young people's lives where they can receive these key safeguarding messages at regular intervals. This will be informed by research and enhanced by quality training provision for teaching staff. The journey needs to be surrounded by a strong support framework for children and young people which builds upon excellent pastoral care and robust safeguarding policies and procedures. The existence of "in school" support is crucial and there is a need to expand upon such support including the introduction of counselling at primary school levels and expansion of same at post primary stage. It is also vital we do not label children based upon their experiences and that they get clear messages of hope and resilience for their future.

### Recommendation 4 – Robust NI research on children and young people's experiences of domestic violence and abuse

There is currently a distinct dearth of NI specific research focusing upon children and young people's experiences of domestic violence and abuse and subsequent impact upon their lives. The Domestic Violence and Abuse Sub-Group recommends the commissioning of robust

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<sup>6</sup> Heath-ni.gov.uk. Department of Health and Department of Justice. [Online]. [Viewed January 2020]. Available from: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dhssps/stopping-domestic-sexual-violence-ni.pdf>

Northern Ireland based research, to outline the context and extent of domestic and sexual violence and abuse in the lives of children and young people. Such research should have a clear children's rights focus and should focus upon safe and meaningful participation of children and young people in order to give them a voice and enable this voice to be heard. Such research could have a clear focus upon risk associated with current child contact provisions and arrangements and the need to protect children and young people where there has been a history of violence and abuse. The delivery of this research and resulting recommendations has the potential to be instrumental, providing a sound foundation for all elements of service planning, development and delivery. It can also be used to inform policy direction and budget allocation at government level. Research feeds directly into all other themes highlighted in the report and can provide a clear insight and perspective into children and young people's support needs and experiences.

### **Recommendation 5 – Equal legal protection for all victims of domestic violence and abuse**

The Domestic Violence and Abuse Sub-Group wishes to see equality and justice for all victims of domestic violence and abuse. We wish to see children and young people recognised as victims in their own right and their experiences acknowledged and considered in relation to legal protection. In particular we recommend:

- Introduction of coercive control legislation including Child Aggravator.
- Introduction of Domestic Abuse Commissioner (already in place in England and Wales).
- Robust powers to deal with domestic abuse (including domestic abuse protection orders and notices).
- Secure tenancies in cases of domestic violence and abuse.
- Safer family court and child contact system (informed by children and young people's voices and experiences).
- A continued strategic focus on the introduction of Operation Encompass initiative to NI.

Additionally, the current law in NI does not meet the obligations under the Istanbul Convention in relation to stalking and harassment. The Domestic Violence and Abuse Sub-Group recommends the full implementation of robust legal remedies for all victims of domestic violence and abuse. This ultimately includes not only the introduction of the Domestic Abuse Bill to Northern Ireland but also the extension of the same to provide a robust legal process and allow for equal protection for all victims and survivors.

### **Recommendation 6 – Voices of children heard and captured**

The Domestic Violence and Abuse Sub-Group proposes the development of a standardised framework to hear and capture the voices, views and experiences of children and young people who experience domestic violence. The framework will help to inform all areas of service development and delivery, ensuring it is based upon real need and lived experience.

## Recommendation 7 – Alert, skilled and empathetic workforce

The Domestic Violence and Abuse Sub-Group believes there is a need for quality mandatory domestic violence training for all professionals working with families on a regular basis. All professionals that come into contact with children and young people need to understand the context and impact of domestic violence and abuse on children and young people's lives. They need to be able to recognise symptoms, assess risk and to know how to respond, based upon best practice and multi-agency working. Quality professional training can increase awareness of the issue and can build professional capacity to respond to abuse quickly and appropriately. Tailored training will also lead to increased confidence when dealing with safeguarding issues. Such training should ideally be informed by the "experts by experience" i.e. children and young people themselves as they have knowledge and expertise to share with adults about the best way to support children who have experienced domestic violence in an empathetic and non-judgemental way. It will be based upon and informed by research and will promote effective partnership working. This recommendation is further explored in section 3 which outlines recommendations resulting from the Training Needs Analysis process.

# Section 3

# Training Needs Analysis

*There is a need for quality mandatory domestic violence training provision for all professionals working with families on a regular basis to enable them to intervene at the earliest stage to promote children and young people's safety and stability. We also believe there is a need for professionals working with children and young people to have a greater understanding of the importance of developing effective child centred services that focus upon giving children and young people a voice. Only then will we see the delivery of services that are truly child centred and based upon the best interests and voices of children and young people.*

Member, Domestic Violence and Abuse Sub-Group



## 2 Core emerging themes/recommendations from Training Needs Analysis



The primary purpose of the Training Needs Analysis was to capture the following:

- Internal and external training received by staff in member agencies in relation to children and young people affected by domestic violence and abuse.
- Whether or not organisations provide training to staff (internally and externally) who work directly with children and young people affected by domestic violence and abuse.
- Any perceived gaps in training for staff who work directly with children and young people affected by domestic violence and abuse.

A copy of the Training Needs Analysis questionnaire distributed is attached as an appendix (Appendix 2). A total of 8 questionnaires were received in response to the questionnaire. Questionnaires were received from a broad representation of the Domestic Violence and Abuse Sub-Group, including Health and Social Care Trusts, statutory bodies as well as voluntary organisations. Voluntary organisations provided a regional response (e.g. NSPCC and Women's Aid NI).

Once again, while limitations in terms of distribution and response have been highlighted in the previous section of this report (1.4), it must be noted, those who did respond to the Training Needs Analysis provided a comprehensive response and thanks is extended to all for the time and effort invested in this. The process highlighted some important and useful issues regarding training availability and access.

### 3.1 Questions asked

The questionnaire asked 4 key questions as follows:

- 1. In the past 12 months, what training did your staff receive internally or by external providers in relation to children and young people affected by domestic violence and abuse?**
- 2. If relevant, does your organisation/agency provide or deliver training for staff who work directly with children and young people affected by domestic violence and abuse?**
- 3. Please can you identify any gaps in training for staff who work directly with children and young people affected by domestic violence and abuse?**
- 4. Please provide any additional comments relevant to staff training who work directly with children and young people affected by domestic violence and abuse?**

Findings are summarised in the following section.

### 3.2 Training received

Respondents were asked: *In the past 12 months, what training did your staff receive internally or by external providers in relation to children and young people affected by domestic violence and abuse?*

## Findings are as follows:

- Several organisations had received internal training delivered by staff within their organisations.
- One organisation has received no specific training in relation to children and young people affected by domestic violence and abuse.
- Health and Social Care Trusts receive training from internal Learning and Development teams.
- Much of the training referenced was relatively short in duration and could be considered more information and awareness raising rather than comprehensive, in-depth training. E.g. many courses referenced were half days. (There is a difference between quality training provision which seeks to enhance learning and develop skills over a period of time and short sessions which focus upon information provision).
- Some organisations (3) had received training from WAFNI and the two day See, Hear, Act conference in February 2018 was referenced twice.
- One organisation received training provided by local Trusts and Childcare Partnerships.
- BHSCT referenced a range of training courses (including MARAC) delivered by Social Services L&D and Belfast & Lisburn Women's Aid. Training referenced included: Family Nurse Partnership Working with Intimate Partner Violence, Domestic Violence & Abuse, attendance at Belfast Domestic and Sexual Violence Partnership events and additional seminars addressing issues such as stalking and domestic violence in the digital world. Reference was also made to training which focused upon Domestic Violence and BME Communities by the Institute of Conflict and Research. (A pilot programme hosted by the Belfast Partnership). Working with Young People's Violence in Close Relationships (Respect. 5-day course, hosted by SEHCT Area DV&SV Partnership) was also referenced.
- NHSCT referenced training they receive from Onus through a Service Level Agreement including: Domestic Abuse Awareness (½ day). Domestic Abuse – Impact on children (½day). MARAC & DASH awareness (½day). Domestic Abuse in the workplace (½day). Domestic Abuse induction (2 hours). NHSCT also referenced training provided by the Clinical Education Centre, Domestic & Sexual Abuse: Routine Enquiry & MARAC process (1 and 2-day courses) and NDVSP, VOPOS & SOPOS (½ day). Staff had also accessed DVRAC (Domestic Violence Risk Assessment for Children) delivered on behalf of Barnardos. Domestic Abuse –The Impact on Children and Families had been delivered by NHSCT Learning and Development Dept.
- SHSCT provides domestic violence and abuse training in various ways through the Multi-disciplinary/Multi agency programme. This includes: Child Protection Awareness (including domestic violence) (½ day offered 2 times a year) Recognising and Responding to Child Abuse and Neglect (includes domestic violence) is an aspect of this course (2-day course offered 3 times a year). PPANI/MARAC awareness raising sessions (½ day training X 2 times per year). The Impact of Domestic Abuse on Children and Young People (½ day training) The Social Services Training Programme covers: Impact of Domestic Violence (by Martin Calder, 1-day course), Childhood trauma (including domestic violence) (1-day X 2 times a year) DV is also covered in UNOCINI training X 2 times per year.
- Other training referenced included Safeguarding Children, Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults, Digital World Training and ACEs training.
- PSNI had received ACEs training.

**Point to note:** It may have been useful to include a definition of training which distinguishes between comprehensive quality training and information sessions/awareness raising seminars.

### 3.3 Training provision

Respondents were asked: *If relevant, does your organisation /agency provide or deliver training for staff who work directly with children and young people affected by domestic violence and abuse? If so, please provide details.*

#### Findings are as follows:

- Women's Aid across NI provides a range of training programmes and options to wide range of professionals including local Trusts, other statutory bodies, sporting associations and community/voluntary groups. The Social Guardian Training programme is offered to teachers of key stage 2 children across NI. This two-day programme is ILM accredited and builds teachers capacity to respond to risk and to deliver the Helping Hands programme to pupils. This training is delivered by Women's Aid staff. To date, 1, 445 teachers from 582 primary schools across NI have been trained.
- Barnardos provides the DVRAM (Domestic Violence Risk Assessment for Children) training model, delivered local and nationally.
- Some organisations referred to training which was general in nature and not specific to children and domestic violence.
- HSCTs provide training through their Learning and Development Teams, this is largely internal.

**Point to note:** It may have been useful if this question had differentiated between internal training to staff and external training to other organisations as many of the responses (e.g. from HSCT Trusts) focused upon internal training provision to staff.

#### Comments included:

*The BHSCT is a large and complex organisation, there is no centralised funding for learning and development. Each profession has different mechanisms to access funding. The Social Services Learning and Development Team deliver training to social services staff. They are funded to do so via the HSCB. When possible, the Team will endeavour to accommodate other professions. Nursing will access L&D via SLA from the Centre of Clinical Education. (BHSCT)*

*Barnardos have developed a DVRAM manual, training has been provided on this at both local and national level. (Barnardos)*

*Training delivered as part of child protection and safeguarding training to designated teachers, Principals and school governors in schools, it is general information awareness training and is not specific to working with children. (EA)*

*Practice based learning sessions delivered by Safeguarding Children Nurse Specialists. (NHSCT)*

*Yes - we provide social guardian training to approx. 160 teachers on an annual basis. We will also provide a range of training options focusing upon the context, extent and dynamics of domestic violence (including the impact on children and young people) to any agency that requests it. (Women's Aid)*

### 3.4 Gaps in training available

Respondents were asked: *Please can you identify any gaps in training for staff who work directly with children and young people affected by domestic violence and abuse?*

Difficulties with context and interpretation of this question was raised by BHSCT:

*The BHSCT note that the context of this response is training for staff who work directly with children and young people affected by Domestic Violence and Abuse. This definition could be open to interpretation. Is the focus on staff who have a primary/significant safeguarding role with children? Does this definition extend to those who work with parents? BHSCT employ in excess of 22,000 staff and it is difficult to capture the training needs of a large cohort of staff.*

### **Findings are as follows:**

While several training courses and programmes were referenced in previous questions, most respondents felt there are significant gaps in training provision. Gaps highlighted can be summarised as follows and are presented in no particular order:

- Need for updated training materials (with more recent research etc.)
- Training that focuses on impact of coercive control.
- Training for hard to reach groups e.g. LGBT, transgender and ethnic groups.
- Training in relation to working with perpetrators.
- Domestic Abuse as a Public Health Issue.
- Simple tools for assessing risk and safety planning.
- Training for whole schools and youth workers.
- Training on working therapeutically with children and young people affected by domestic violence and abuse.
- Greater awareness of systems in place to protect children and adults from domestic violence and abuse.
- Specialist training in domestic violence risk assessment, particularly with male perpetrators.
- Honour based violence.
- Training for children with special needs (Autism)
- Training in listening to the voice of the child.

Gaps were highlighted in relation to tools to support intervention and assessment. As one respondent stated:

*MARAC and DASH provide a framework however; there is a gap in tools to support the assessment and intervention when there are safeguarding concerns. (BHSCT)*

Reference was made to previous pilots of training programmes which have not yet been fully implemented in NI including, Barnardo's Domestic Violence Risk Identification Matrix – Assessing the risks to children from male to female domestic violence and Barnardo's NI Domestic Violence Risk Assessment for Children. One respondent stated:

*The following two tools (Barnardo's Domestic Violence Risk Identification Matrix – Assessing the risks to children from male to female domestic violence and Barnardo's NI Domestic Violence Risk Assessment for Children) were piloted in NI but never implemented. Both are used extensively in England and are endorsed by other Safeguarding Boards...The above models have much to offer staff and can supplement other approaches such as Signs of Safety. The above must include the impact of domestic violence when addressing and agreeing contact. (BHSCT)*

Other comments included:

*Staff consulted stated they would welcome further training on working therapeutically with children and young people affected by domestic violence and abuse (Barnardos).*

*The Trust wish to take this opportunity to highlight that the DoH, DoJ and Dept. of Education have not collaborated to develop and fund a learning framework to enable workforce to respond to domestic violence. (BHSCT)*

*The NICE Guidelines state "All health and social care practitioners involved in assessing, caring for and supporting people experiencing or perpetrating domestic violence and abuse should have sufficient and appropriate training and competencies to deliver the actions and interventions described in the (NICE) quality standard." (BHSCT)*

*Honour Based Violence: This is an area that in-house Learning and Development Staff would have limited expertise. This issue may not need a detailed training strategy. An Information Strategy that included posters, leaflets, podcast and/or briefing papers could provide sufficient information for staff (BHSCT).*

*Domestic Violence and BME Communities. This pilot provided by Institute of Conflict and Research was funded by the Dept. of Communities. As NI is changing to a multi-cultural society it will be important that staff are aware of the needs of other cultures. It would be interesting to explore the outcome and any further plan for this area of work. (BHSCT)*

*Working with Young People's Violence in Close Relationships. The pilot in the SEHSCT is an interesting shift to working with young people. This is particularly important given the prevalence of domestic violence in young people. (BHSCT)*

*Domestic Violence in the LGBT Community. (BHSCT)*

*Nurses and midwives currently use Barnardos DVRIM as one of the risk assessment tools. Would benefit from any new information on updated risk assessment matrix. (NHSCT)*

*Specific training to whole school staff and youth workers re impact of living with DVSV and abuse. (EA)*

*A gap in this area is Assessing and managing the perpetrator within the domestic abuse scenario. (SHSCT)*

### **3.5 Additional relevant information**

Respondents were asked: *Please provide any additional comments relevant to staff training who work directly with children and young people affected by Domestic Violence and Abuse?*

#### **Findings are as follows:**

- There is a need for a more joined up training strategy and approach linked to the government strategy *Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in NI (2016)*.
- There is a need to develop/deliver training to address the gaps identified in this process.
- There is potential to explore opportunities such as eLearning packages.
- There is potential to co-produce training programmes and materials with those who have experienced domestic violence.

#### **Comments included:**

*The human cost of domestic violence and abuse to victims, families and children are enormous It is unfortunate that DoH/DoJ (2016), *Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in NI-A Seven Year Strategy* was introduced with limited if no funding. (BHSCT)*

*Staff have stated that they would benefit from further information to help them understand the systems in place to protect children and adults from domestic abuse. Staff have also requested specialist training in DV risk assessment particularly with male perpetrators to support their understanding the needs of children and appropriate safeguards. (Barnardos)*

*Needs to be regional “joined up” tiered training strategy to include, Barnardos DVRAC, NSPCC DARS Toolkit, Local training, Family Nurse Partnership and Intimate Partner violence. Linked to DHSS Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse (2016)*

*Consider e-learning packages for basic awareness/refresher training. Next tier training should be face to face.*

*Co-production with those who have experienced domestic abuse.*

*Agreement of use of tools e.g. NSPCC (DARS) toolkit/ NSPCC DVRAC etc. (NHSCT)*

*A number of courses which we offer include joint training with medical professionals which is effective and is reflective of good partnership working (SHSCT).*

*We believe there is a need for quality mandatory domestic violence training provision for all professionals working with families on a regular basis to enable them to intervene at the earliest stage to promote children and young people’s safety and stability. We also believe there is a need for professionals working with children and young people to have a greater understanding of the importance of developing effective child centred services that focus upon giving children and young people a voice. Only then will we see the delivery of services that are truly child centred and based upon the best interests and voices of children and young people. (Women’s Aid)*

While there are certainly limitations with this training needs analysis exercise (previously outlined in section 1.4) it has highlighted some key issues and important points regarding availability and access to training that is specific to children, young people and their experiences of domestic violence and abuse and abuse.

The process has been particularly useful for identifying gaps in current training provision and provides a good foundation for future planning and implementation of training programmes across NI. Above all, it has highlighted the importance of a joined-up approach, to ensure consistency and quality of training provision.

The Domestic Violence and Abuse Sub-Group has agreed to share this report of findings with the Stakeholder Assurance Group of the *Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy*. This can be used to inform all future strategic and action planning in relation to training including allocation of budgets.

### **3.6 Summary and strategic recommendations**

The Training Needs Analysis was useful to identify training which is available and has been accessed as well as training providers. It also highlighted gaps in training provision. It has been useful to discuss the findings of the process at the Domestic Violence and Abuse Sub-Group on 15 January 2020.

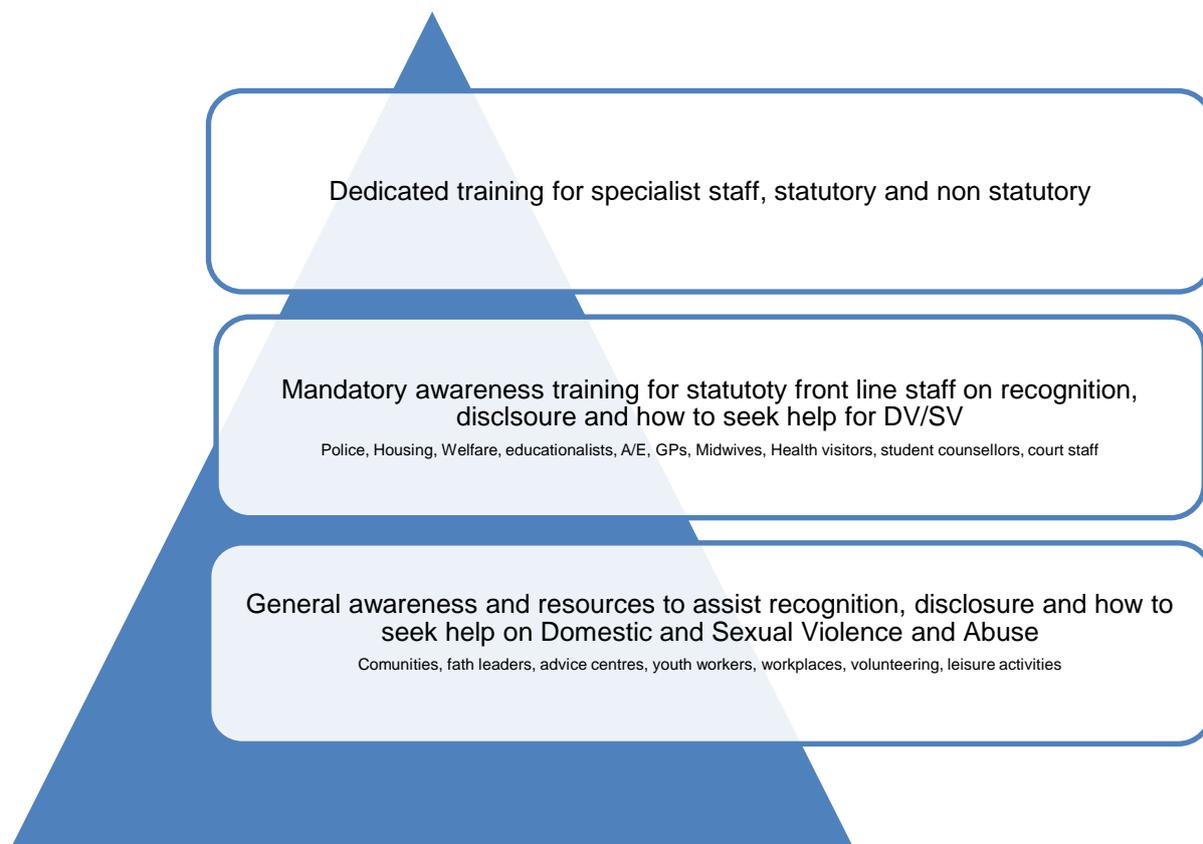
There is a clear need for all organisations that come into contact with adults, children and young people that may be experiencing domestic and sexual violence, to understand the issues, recognise symptoms and to know how to respond based upon best practice and multi-

agency working. The *Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland Strategy* highlights the importance of training for staff in the area of domestic violence:

***Encouraging disclosure, recognising the symptoms and signs of domestic and sexual violence and abuse, dealing with disclosure, and coordinating action thereafter, require different levels of awareness, training and expertise in a variety of contexts.***

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This strategy goes on to present a 3-tiered model of Awareness Training and Expertise below:



The Domestic Violence and Abuse Sub-Group endorses the need for a tiered approach to training. However, there is a need for clarification on the following areas:

- What does mandatory training mean in practice?
- Who will provide training at each level?
- What standards are in place to ensure quality and consistency?

The SBNI has also produced a Learning and Development Strategy and Framework which *“builds upon existing good safeguarding training, sets minimum training standards and provides a graduated framework, on four levels for agencies to use when planning and delivering safeguarding training in Northern Ireland”*<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> SBNI. (2015). Child Safeguarding Learning and Development Strategy and Framework. Available: <https://www.safeguardingni.org/sbni-learning-and-development-strategy>. Last accessed 12 February 2020

The Domestic Violence and Abuse Sub-Group recommends the development of a more strategic approach to education and training. This will help to ensure a standardised approach and to promote consistency in understanding and sharing best practice. It will be important to build upon and develop some of the key successes already developed in this area and which have been highlighted in this Training Needs Analysis process. The Sub-Group would like to propose the following 2 key recommendations:

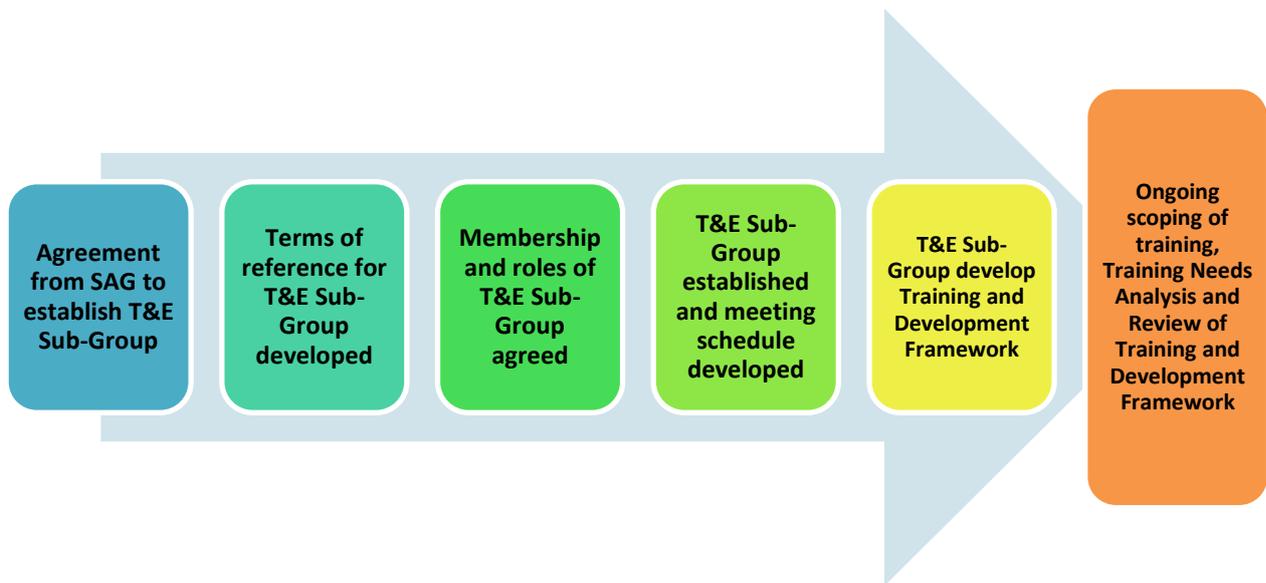
### **Recommendation 1 – Establish a Training and Education Sub-Group (attached to the Stakeholders Assurance Group) with a specific focus on children and young people**

While the *Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland* strategy provides a comprehensive focus on the importance of training and development, however, to date there has been a lack of structures and mechanisms to take this forward to implementation. The establishment of a Sub-Group with a specific remit for training and development focused on children and young people's experiences and needs in relation to domestic violence and abuse will provide a clear strategic focus in this area.

This Training and Education Sub-Group would consist of "Training Champions" i.e. representatives from relevant organisations, statutory and voluntary who have expertise in training and who may be providers and commissioners for training. The focus of the Sub-Group will be to ensure training and development in relation to domestic violence and abuse remains high on the agenda and specifically it will present opportunities to:

- Share knowledge of training available currently and how to access it.
- Provide feedback on training implementation and progress.
- Consider new developments and approaches to training such as eLearning and co-production.
- Keep up to date in terms of what is happening in other areas and learning to be gained for NI.

This Sub-Group will oversee the development and implementation of the Training and Development Framework (highlighted as 2<sup>nd</sup> recommendation). The Sub-Group could review the framework every three-five years to ensure it reflects emerging developments, is consistent with current policy and legislation and remains fit for purpose. Steps involved in establishing the Sub-Group are presented in the following diagram:



**Recommendation 2 –  
Develop a standardised framework for training and development that recognises different levels of training required at varying points of support intervention**

The Domestic Violence and Abuse Sub-Group recommends the development of a training and development framework which will contribute to a more alert, skilled and empathetic workforce. The framework would have the following overall aim:

Present a suite of suitable quality assured tailored training opportunities (and providers) for staff and volunteers working with families (and their children) who are or may be at risk of experiencing domestic violence and abuse. Training will be commensurate with level and nature of contact with families.

The training and development framework will:

- seek to increase knowledge/understanding and improve skills and competence of staff and volunteers.
- build upon best practice training available which quality is assured.
- set out minimum learning outcomes which should be achieved by staff and volunteers who access training.
- provide a sound and robust baseline for training providers and commissioners, ensuring quality assurance and standardisation of training provision.
- be based upon the premise that everyone can do something to prevent and address domestic violence and abuse.
- be based upon a continuum of levels which differentiates between skills and knowledge required in different remits and contexts. This will graduate from general

awareness raising for all staff and volunteers to more specialised and dedicated training for specialist staff.

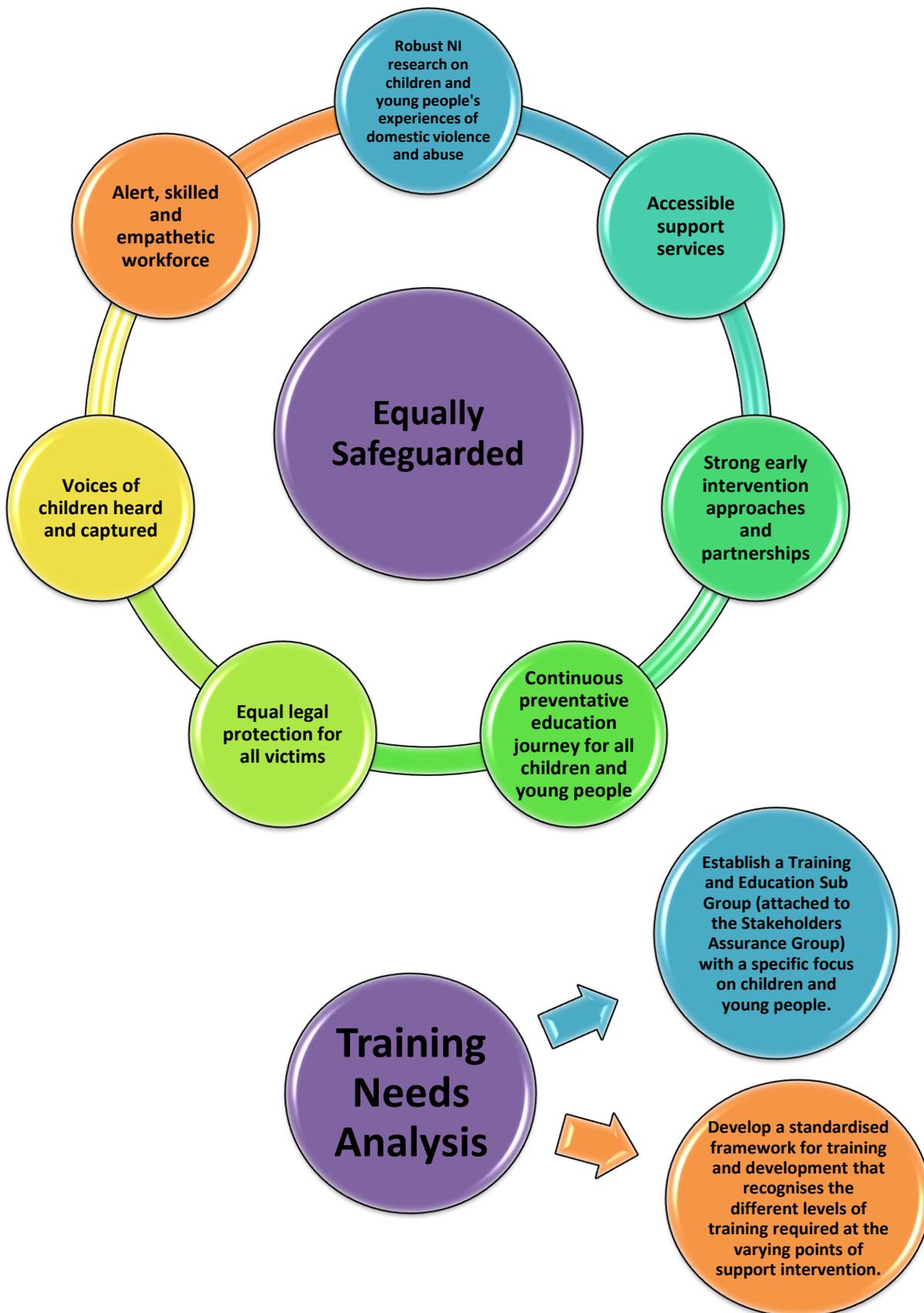
- be informed and influenced by relevant strategic drivers such as the legal and policy context, recommendations from case management reviews, new and emerging trends and needs and ongoing Training Needs Analysis. Above all it will be informed by the voices of experience i.e. victims and survivors of domestic violence and abuse.
- build upon training currently available but will also address gaps identified in Training Needs Analysis activities. The gaps identified in this Training Needs Analysis process (outlined in section 3.4) will provide a starting point.

# Section 4

# Conclusion



## Emerging themes and recommendations (Scoping Study and Training Needs Analysis)



The Scoping Study and Training Needs Analysis have both proved to be useful exercises in outlining what is currently available, in relation to both training and support services, highlighting existing need and assessing gaps. The two processes have informed the development of key strategic recommendations (9 in total) which have been included under each section. The Scoping Study and Training Needs Analysis have drawn on the perspectives of members of the Domestic Violence and Abuse Sub-Group and have highlighted areas which can be further developed to ensure:

- services are available and accessible to meet the safety and support needs of children and young people experiencing (or at risk of experiencing) domestic violence and abuse
- quality tailored training exists and is accessible, to enhance the skills and develop learning of staff and volunteers working with individuals who are experiencing (or may be at risk of experiencing) domestic violence and abuse.

The members of the Domestic Violence and Abuse Sub-Group have agreed to share this report of findings with the Stakeholder Assurance Group of the *Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland Strategy*. This can be used to inform all future strategic and action planning including allocation of budgets.



# Domestic Violence and Abuse Sub-Group Scoping Exercise November 2018

## Guidance for completion of attached template

- Please only provide information in respect of the services currently delivered by your organisation directly to children and young people affected by Domestic Violence and Abuse.
- If you are providing a regional response in respect of your organisation/agency please be specific with regards to the geographical location of the service and where it is delivered.

**Please complete and return via email to [Roisin.Toner@hscni.net](mailto:Roisin.Toner@hscni.net)**

**By 12.00pm on Friday 21 December 2018**

**Q1. Name of Organisation/Agency responding. Please specify if you are providing a regional response, if so, be explicit with regards to the geographical area in which the services are delivered.**

**Q2. What Services does your organisation/agency deliver directly to children and young people affected by Domestic Violence and Abuse?**

**Q3. Please outline any services your organisation/agency are planning to develop for children and young people affected by Domestic Violence and Abuse over the next 12 months?**

**Q4. Do you have a public website that provides details of services for children and young people affected by Domestic Violence and Abuse? If so, please provide details.**

**Q5. Does your Organisation or Agency deliver any school based programmes on Domestic Violence and Abuse? If so, describe briefly.**

**Q6. Can you identify any gaps in services for children or young people affected by Domestic Violence and Abuse? If so, please provide details.**

**Q7. Please provide any additional relevant information in relation to services for children or young people provided by your organisation/agency.**



## Domestic Violence and Abuse Sub-Group Training Needs Template, November 2018

### Guidance for completion of attached template

- Please only provide information in respect of the training currently delivered by your organisation to staff working directly with children and young people affected by Domestic Violence and Abuse.

**Please complete and return via email to [Roisin.Toner@hscni.net](mailto:Roisin.Toner@hscni.net)**

**By 12.00pm on Friday 21 December 2018**

<b>In the past 12 months what training did your staff receive internally or by external providers in relation to children and young people affected by Domestic Violence and Abuse?</b>	<b>If relevant, does your organisation /agency provide or deliver training for staff who work directly with children and young people affected by Domestic Violence and Abuse? If so, please provide details.</b>	<b>Please can you identify any gaps in training for staff who work directly with children and young people affected by Domestic Violence and Abuse?</b>	<b>Please provide any additional comments relevant to staff training who work directly with children and young people affected by Domestic Violence and Abuse?</b>