

Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland

A Seven Year Strategy

March 2016



Department of
**Health, Social Services
and Public Safety**

www.dhsspsni.gov.uk



Department of
Justice

www.dojni.gov.uk

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All forms of domestic and sexual violence are serious crimes
Where there is fear of immediate danger call the police on 999

If you have been affected by Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse please contact:



Contact details for other services and helplines can be found at Appendix 6.

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Ministerial Foreword

We are publishing this Strategy with the aim of stopping domestic and sexual violence and abuse in Northern Ireland.

Everyone has a right to be protected from such abuse, and supported if it occurs. It is an unfortunate fact that for many it remains hidden. Reporting figures do not reflect the full picture as abuse remains unreported, happening behind closed doors.

The stark reality is that in 2014/15, six homicides were recorded with a domestic abuse motivation, accounting for 37.5% of all homicides recorded by the police that year. Alongside this, the number of sexual offences for 2014/15 is the highest level recorded. Levels have increased each year since 11/12. These offences can affect every aspect of victims' lives and can have long-term consequences for both children and adults.

In producing this Strategy, our Departments have undertaken extensive consultation and engagement. Through this work we have developed five key strands for this Strategy which focus on leadership, prevention, services, support, and justice. We are grateful to everyone who contributed.

At its core this Strategy takes a zero tolerance approach to domestic and sexual violence. Victims and society need to be assured that the serious nature of this abuse is recognised, and that perpetrators will be held accountable for their actions.

We can only succeed if we all work together towards a common goal. We know that our respective Departments have had tremendous support from community, voluntary and statutory sector organisations so far, and we will work to ensure this continues.

SIMON HAMILTON, MLA
Chair, Inter-Ministerial Group
Domestic and Sexual Violence

Minister for Health, Social
Services and Public Safety

DAVID FORD, MLA
Minister of Justice

1 Executive Summary

Vision

To have a society in Northern Ireland 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 Importance of this Strategy

This is a joint strategy dealing with Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland led by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) and the Department of Justice (DOJ) on behalf of the Northern Ireland Executive. While our aim is to stop domestic and sexual violence we accept that this is a long term vision. As we go forward it is expected that the number of incidents reported will increase in the short term and we will need to continue to ensure that the victims are provided with support and protection, and that perpetrators are called to account.

The human cost of violence and abuse to victims and families can be enormous including physical, emotional and psychological harm, breakdown in relationships and families, and a reduction in life opportunities for individuals. In some cases domestic and sexual violence and abuse can result in serious physical harm or homicide.

In 2014/15 there were over 28,000 domestic abuse incidents reported and over 2,700 sexual offences recorded in Northern Ireland. But it is known that the majority of incidents go unreported and there is often a significant delay between when an incident occurs and when it is reported.

We must strengthen links across a range of policies and services; this is not just about Government Departments and their agencies working together, but about listening to the views of victims, and working with the community and voluntary sector organisations and utilising their expertise. We have sought to do this in the development of this Strategy.

Definitions of Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse

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

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).'

Please note that coercive, exploitative and harmful behaviour includes taking advantage of an individual's incapacity to give informed consent.

The Five Strands of the Strategy

This Strategy is constructed around five strands:

Strand 1 - Driving Change through Co-operation and Leadership – This strand focuses on collaborative working and promoting a more cohesive approach to tackling domestic and sexual violence and abuse.

Strand 2 - Prevention and Early Intervention – This strand focuses on primary prevention - aimed at preventing domestic and sexual violence and abuse from happening. This will be achieved through promoting increased knowledge and understanding of violence and abuse, promoting healthy relationships, changing societal behaviours and attitudes towards violence, and early intervention for those at risk.

Strand 3 - Delivering Change through Responsive Services – This strand focuses on preventing further violence and abuse towards those victims and families who are at risk of re-victimisation through building more responsive services. This is not just about statutory or community services but about everyone knowing their roles and responsibilities. To achieve this greater focus on training and expertise is required, as well as further development of specialist services.

Strand 4 - Support – This strand reflects the importance of providing support for those who have been victims of domestic and/or sexual violence and abuse. Support comes in many forms and can include educational support services, housing support, outreach and advocacy services and improving access to more specialist psychological interventions.

Strand 5 - Protection and Justice – This strand focuses on continually improving the protection and justice available to victims of violence and abuse, and their families. It includes both civil and criminal justice.

Our Priorities

We have identified 20 priority areas for taking the Strategy forward over the coming years. They will underpin the development of Action Plans within the life of this Strategy and are highlighted at the end of this Executive Summary.

Implementation

Our final aspect relates to delivering on the aims of the Strategy. It is to:

Ensure efficient and effective governance and accountability throughout the implementation of the Strategy.

This Strategy will be developed through a series of action plans, beginning with the Year One Action Plan published alongside this Strategy.

Delivering the Strands – The Priorities

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.
2. On behalf of the Northern Ireland Executive, the Departments of Health, Social Services and Public Safety and Justice will provide co-leadership and strategic direction to promote change.

Prevention and Early Intervention

3. Establish a baseline on societal attitudes to domestic and sexual violence and abuse.
4. Teachers will have the necessary skills to teach about sensitive subjects, including child abuse, and domestic and sexual violence and abuse.
5. Teachers will be alert to pupils experiencing distress and trained to respond appropriately.
6. Teachers will have access to a range of age appropriate and evaluated resources to support the teaching of sensitive subjects.
7. Quality assurance arrangements will be established to ensure that the preventative curriculum offered in schools is effective.
8. Relevant Government Departments and their agencies will work together to promote preventative safeguarding for adults at risk of harm.
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.

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.

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.
12. 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.
13. 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.
14. Appropriate partnership networks to increase multi-agency recognition and responses to domestic and sexual violence and abuse.

Support

15. 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.
16. Evaluation of the provision of emergency housing support based on emerging and complex needs.
17. 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.

Protection and Justice

18. Focused protection, support and information will be available for all victims throughout their engagement with the Justice System.
19. 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.
20. Continue to develop and deliver initiatives and interventions, based on best practice, to effectively address harmful, violent and abusive behaviour.

2 Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland

Introduction

- 2.1 Domestic and sexual violence and abuse occurs right across society. It knows no boundaries with regard to age, gender identity, marital status, race, ethnicity or religious group, sexual orientation, social class, disability or geography¹.
- 2.2 It is important to recognise that although domestic and sexual violence and abuse often merit similar, if not identical, preventative and responsive approaches, they are not the same.
- 2.3 This Strategy highlights an overarching strategic vision for addressing domestic and sexual violence and abuse. The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS), and the Department of Justice (DOJ) are the strategic lead departments in taking forward both the domestic violence and abuse and sexual violence and abuse agendas. This will be done through improved effective, collaborative, and cohesive engagement within and across Northern Ireland.
- 2.4 This joint Strategy has been developed through initial consultation with representatives from Northern Ireland Government Departments and Agencies, and key community and voluntary sector organisations. The Strategy was the subject of a full public consultation and will be subject to ongoing review through the development of Action Plans.
- 2.5 There are recognised links between domestic and sexual violence and abuse and specific acts such as stalking; female genital mutilation (FGM); forced marriage; ‘honour’ based crimes; sexual exploitation, trafficking; and historical institutional abuse. While these acts are mentioned in the document much of the work to tackle these issues will be undertaken outside this Strategy.
- 2.6 FGM is a crime in the United Kingdom. It is regulated by the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003. Under the 2003 Act, it is an offence for anyone to perform FGM or to arrange for a girl to be taken abroad for FGM. If convicted, offenders face a large fine and a prison sentence of up to 14 years.
- 2.7 The Serious Crime Act 2015 provides the courts in Northern Ireland with the power to make an FGM protection order to protect girls at risk of FGM or who have suffered FGM. Where a girl has had a protection order or where FGM is discovered the girl should be protected by the processes and procedures of child protection put in place under the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995.

¹ or any other Section 75 group

- 2.8 The majority of FGM is committed on girls between the ages of 5 and 8, but it may also be committed on infants or on women just before marriage or during their first pregnancy. FGM is regarded as child abuse and treated as a child safeguarding issue.
- 2.9 It has been estimated that over 60,000 girls under the age of 15 could be at risk of FGM in the UK each year. While the number of women and girls potentially at risk in Northern Ireland is not thought to be large, health professionals have a duty to be aware of the guidance, alert to indications that a girl may be at risk and to comply with extant child protection policy and procedures.
- 2.10 Also the response to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in Northern Ireland, whilst currently a distinct piece of work, may also dovetail with future actions taken forward under this Strategy. Complementing the actions taken across the Health and Education sectors, in October 2015, the Department published its first progress report on the range of actions taken by the Department and the wider Criminal Justice System in response to the recommendations within the Marshall Report. Moreover, the publication of SBNI's Thematic Review in December 2015 represented a further and significant stage in continuing to develop the overall response to keeping children and young people safe.

Terminology

- 2.11 Throughout this Strategy there are many references to the terms '*violence*' and '*abuse*'. For the purposes of this Strategy these terms are intended to encompass all forms of abusive behaviour relevant to both domestic and sexual violence and abuse. The Strategy will, where appropriate, refer to both domestic and sexual violence and abuse as one. Where this is not applicable and the Strategy refers to one specific area of violence or abuse, either domestic or sexual, this will be highlighted.
- 2.12 The Strategy is victim-focused and throughout the document there are many references to the term '*victim*'. For the purpose of this Strategy a victim is considered to be a person who is, or has been, the subject of domestic and/or sexual violence and abuse. It may also include; a parent or guardian of a victim aged under 18; a close family member (next of kin) or family representative where the crime results in death or very serious harm or injury; or a close friend (e.g. where there is no close family and they are acting as a family representative). The term is used in the document by way of recognising that the individual has been subjected to violent and abusive behaviour and may be a victim of crime as a result.
- 2.13 Many of the terms used in the Strategy are described in more detail in the Glossary and Definitions, Appendix 5.
- 2.14 The year relating to statistical references may vary within this Strategy, however, we have attempted to use the most up to date statistics where

possible, and those used represent the latest available at the time of publication.

Strategic Context

2.15 Domestic and sexual violence and abuse are international problems that are recognised by many leading authorities as a priority on the world stage. As such the United Nations (UN), the European Union (EU), and the World Health Organisation (WHO) all take a keen interest in the elimination of these incidents. Within the UK and Ireland there has been much written and discussed on the issues and all regions have developed strategies to deal with the problem. This section details the strategic context of the Strategy at the time of publication.

Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategies

2.16 This new single Strategy will replace the existing '*Tackling Violence at Home*' and '*Tackling Sexual Violence and Abuse*' strategies. These strategies were the product of wide ranging consultation and collaboration with relevant Government Departments and statutory and voluntary agencies. The strategies were informed by, and included reference to, an extensive research and evidence base. Much of that research and evidence remains valid, and has been utilised within this Strategy.

2.17 In addition this Strategy has been influenced by International, European, National and Regional legislation, strategies, policies, and guidelines regarding and relevant to domestic and sexual violence and abuse.

International Human Rights Standards and Obligations

2.18 Whilst this Strategy has been developed specifically to tackle the issue of domestic and sexual violence and abuse in Northern Ireland, we recognise the importance of the ongoing work of the international community in addressing these issues. There are many relevant human rights principles, treaties, and obligations that address this issue and these have been taken into consideration in the development of this Strategy. The following is not an exhaustive list, and further information can be found in Appendix 1. Whilst much of the work carried out relates specifically to women and girls, this Strategy recognises that domestic and sexual violence affects all members of society:

- **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).** CEDAW was adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly and defines what constitutes discrimination against women, and sets up an agenda for national action to end it.
- **UN Security Council Resolution 1325.** UNSCR 1325 was adopted on 31 October 2000 and reaffirms the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace negotiations, peace-building, peacekeeping, humanitarian response and in post-conflict reconstruction, and stresses the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security.

- **UN Security Council Resolution 1820.** UNSCR 1820 was adopted on 19 June 2008, and reaffirms its resolve expressed in the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls, including by ending impunity and by ensuring the protection of civilians, in particular women and girls, during and after armed conflicts, in accordance with the obligations States have undertaken under international humanitarian law and international human rights law.
- **The Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (The Istanbul Convention).** The Istanbul Convention is based on the understanding that violence against women is a form of gender-based violence that is committed against women because they are women. It is the obligation of the state to fully address it in all its forms and to take measures to prevent violence against women, protect its victims and prosecute the perpetrators.

2.19 We consider much of the work emerging from this Strategy will comply with the international obligations on the State.

Programme for Government

2.20 The backdrop for this Strategy is the Northern Ireland Executive's Programme for Government (PfG) which sets out Government's priorities for 2011-2015. These priorities include:

- tackling crime;
- improving community safety;
- improving access to justice; and
- improving Safeguarding outcomes for children and vulnerable adults.

2.21 The development of a joint Strategy will contribute to the DHSSPS Commitment 61, which highlights the need to introduce a package of measures aimed at improving safeguarding outcomes for children and adults at risk across Northern Ireland. In addition the DOJ has undertaken to tackle and reduce the level of serious crime under Commitment 54. Future work to implement the Strategy will be informed by subsequent Executive priorities and commitments.

2.22 There are significant interrelationships between domestic and sexual violence and abuse and other Executive strategies and policy areas.

Reducing Offending

2.23 The Justice Minister published, on behalf of the Executive, a *Strategic Framework for Reducing Offending* in 2013. The Strategic Framework sets out the overarching coordinated approach across government and the justice system to reducing offending and building a safer society. It aims to both prevent offending and reduce reoffending through a focus on partnership working across justice, government, and with the wider

voluntary, community and private sectors in order to tackle the issues associated with offending behaviour.

Community Safety Strategy

2.24 Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse is a key priority within *'Building Safer, Shared and Confident Communities - A Community Safety Strategy for Northern Ireland 2012-2017'* (CSS), published in July 2012. The CSS focuses on building safer communities, with lower levels of crime, where people feel protected and have confidence in the agencies that serve them. The CSS sets out that Government will adopt a consistent and long-term approach across Government and all partner agencies to prevent domestic and sexual violence and abuse, provide an effective response where it occurs, and encourage greater reporting of crimes, which are under-reported, in order to ensure specific needs of victims are met.

Victims and Witnesses Strategy

2.25 There are also clear links with *'Making a difference to victims and witnesses of crime - Improving access to justice, services and support - a five-year Strategy'* (V&WS). The aims of the V&WS are to provide better quality services which respond to the needs of victims and witnesses and secure a more positive experience for all those who have contact with the criminal justice system. Improving access to justice and the experience of victims and witnesses of domestic and sexual violence and abuse is vital in addressing under-reporting and responding to the needs of those engaging with the criminal justice system.

Committee of Justice Inquiry

2.26 The findings of the Committee for Justice Inquiry² into the criminal justice services available to victims and witnesses of crime in Northern Ireland, published in June 2012, have also been instrumental in informing this Strategy. The wide-ranging research, discussions with victims and their representatives, assessment of views, and consultation have all been vital in identifying the challenges and concerns raised by individuals and families who have come into contact with the criminal justice system.

Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (CJINI)

2.27 Criminal Justice Inspections carried out in 2010 in relation to the handling of domestic³ and sexual violence⁴ and abuse cases by the criminal justice system have also significantly informed and influenced the development of this Strategy. These inspections and their associated Action Plans and reviews will continue to influence the implementation of this Strategy.

² NI Assembly (2012), Available at: <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/Documents/Justice/7890.pdf> (Accessed: 19 February 2016)

³ CJINI, (2010), Available at: <http://www.cjini.org/CJINI/files/1b/1b651b43-657b-471b-b320-101fca7c6930.PDF> (Accessed: 19 February 2016).

⁴ CJINI (2010), Available at: <http://www.cjini.org/CJINI/files/0a/0ad6b7e4-0810-4151-8bb0-e28789591efc.pdf> (Accessed: 19 February 2016)

Our Children and Young People – Our Pledge 2006- 2016

2.28 The overall pledge is to deliver on a shared vision for all children and young people over ten years. The aim is to ensure that children and young people in Northern Ireland will thrive and look forward with confidence to the future. Progress is measured against six high level outcomes, one of which is that children and young people are living in a society which respects their rights. Where children live in such a society they are more likely to achieve in the other five outcome areas which are: being healthy; enjoying learning and achieving; safety and stability; economic and environmental well-being; and contributing positively.

Adult Safeguarding - Prevention and Protection in Partnership 2015

2.29 The aim of this policy is to improve safeguarding arrangements for adults who are at risk of harm from abuse, exploitation or neglect. It sets out how the Northern Ireland Executive intends adult safeguarding to be taken forward across all Government Departments, their agencies and in partnership with voluntary, community, independent and faith organisations. A key objective is to reduce the incidence of harm from abuse, exploitation or neglect of adults who are at risk in Northern Ireland; to provide them with effective support and, where necessary, protective responses and access to justice for victims and their families.

Regional Adult Protection Policy and Procedural Guidance 2006⁵

2.30 Published in September 2006, the purpose of the guidance is to ensure a co-ordinated and standardised approach by all those who work with vulnerable adults and to establish the principles of good practice in this important area of work. The policy and the procedures which flow from it are derived from best practice in Northern Ireland and with reference to developments elsewhere in the UK. The guidance is being reviewed and updated by the NIASP and will take account of the developing Government policy on adult safeguarding.

Protocol for Joint Investigation of Alleged and Suspected Cases of Abuse of Vulnerable Adults 2009

2.31 The Protocol was developed in partnership between the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), DHSSPS, the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA), the 5 Health and Social Care Trusts (HSCTs), and the former Health and Social Services Boards in Northern Ireland (replaced by the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB)). It is based on the recognition of the need for more co-ordinated inter-agency working to ensure that vulnerable adults, who are at risk of abuse, receive protection, support and equitable access to the criminal justice system. It outlines the roles and responsibilities of the respective agencies and provides guidance about joint working arrangements and investigation.

⁵ HSCB NI (2006), Available at: <http://www.hscboard.hscni.net/publications/LegacyBoards/001%20Regional%20Adult%20Protection%20Policy%20and%20Procedural%20Guidance%202006%20-%20PDF%20249KB.pdf> (Accessed: 19 February 2016).

Joint Review by RQIA and CJINI of the Protocol for Joint Investigation of Alleged and Suspected Cases of Abuse of Vulnerable Adults 2012⁶

2.32 The RQIA jointly with CJINI completed a review of the Protocol and published it in February 2012. The recommendations of the review are currently being taken forward by respective agencies.

Guidance on Working Arrangements for the Welfare and Protection of Adult Victims of Human Trafficking October 2012

2.33 Guidance on Working Arrangements for the Welfare and Protection of Adult Victims of Human Trafficking was developed jointly by DOJ and DHSSPS and launched in October 2012. The Guidance is primarily aimed at the PSNI and HSCTs and sets out working arrangements for the welfare and protection of adult victims of human trafficking.

Safeguarding Children and Young People

2.34 DHSSPS is in the process of revising the existing child protection guidance 'Co-operating to Safeguard Children', first produced in 2003. The revision is a Programme for Government commitment. While this is a DHSSPS-led exercise, child safeguarding is a cross-government activity as effective safeguarding requires interdepartmental, multi-agency and multi-disciplinary support. The revised Cooperating to Safeguard Children will address Child Sexual Exploitation as a form of Child Sexual Abuse which should always be responded to as a Child Protection issue. The revised Policy will emphasise that no child can truly consent to her/his own exploitation and that no child should be referred to as a 'prostitute'. The Policy will, however, recognise that children and young people can be sexually exploited and 'prostituted' by others for their own gain. This policy statement and guidance will be supplemented by operational child protection policies and procedures, which will include Child Sexual Exploitation. The ongoing development and review of policies and procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, is a statutory responsibility of the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI).

2.35 The aim of the SBNI Strategic Plan (2013-2016) is to fulfil its responsibility to coordinate and ensure the effectiveness of what is done by each person or body represented on the Board for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. The strategic priorities include working with member agencies to develop a coordinated strategic approach to their activities and working model to protect and safeguard children who go missing from home and care and/or are at risk of sexual exploitation. A range of actions is planned by the SBNI to deliver on this strategic priority.

2.36 In addition, one of the key functions of the SBNI is to develop policies and procedures for safeguarding and protection of children. The HSCB

⁶ RQIA and CJI (2012), Available at: <http://www.cjini.org/CJINI/files/a0/a0e2c9cd-74d8-4887-9918-6c59f8fe27e7.pdf> (Accessed: 19 February 2016).

published Regional ‘*Residential Child Care Policies*’ which includes chapters on safeguarding, with a specific section on CSE. In May 2012, the guidance document ‘*Police Involvement in Residential Care Safeguarding of Children Missing from Home and Foster Care*’ was further revised by the HSCB.

- 2.37 The Department of Education also plans to undertake a review of its existing child protection guidance, ‘Circular 1999/10 Pastoral Care in Schools: Child Protection’. Child safeguarding and protection is a cross-government activity and the Department will take account of developing policies to inform this review.

Working Arrangements for the Welfare and Safeguarding of Child Victims of Human Trafficking

- 2.38 In February 2011, DHSSPS and the PSNI jointly issued guidance on the working arrangements for the welfare and safeguarding of children who are, or are suspected of having been, victims of Human Trafficking. The guidance establishes procedures for dealing with trafficked children and takes account of the requirements of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings⁷, the United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), and the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995⁸.

- 2.39 The guidance advises practitioners to consider the legal status of the child and whether he/she requires the protection of the family court, child protection planning, and case management issues. The guidance also gives instruction in respect of the interface and liaison between social workers, the PSNI and legal representatives with the ‘Competent Authority’ and the UK Immigration and Visas in relation to child victims of human trafficking and asylum issues.

Making Life Better: A New Public Health Strategic Framework

- 2.40 A new ten year cross-cutting public health strategic framework ‘*Making Life Better*’ was published in June 2014. This provides direction for policies and actions to improve the health and wellbeing of the people of Northern Ireland and retains a focus on the broad range of social, economic and environmental factors which influence health and wellbeing. The framework adopts a thematic approach and aligns with other strategies and government policies to illustrate inter-relationships and promote collaboration to make the best use of available resources. Through strengthened co-ordination and partnership working in a whole system approach, *Making Life Better* seeks to create the conditions for individuals and communities to take greater control of their own lives and move towards a vision for Northern Ireland where “All people are enabled and supported in achieving their full health and wellbeing potential.” The

⁷ COE (2005), Available at: <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/Commun/QueVoulezVous.asp?NT=197&CM=1&CL=ENG> (Accessed: 19 February 2016).

⁸ NI Government (1995), Available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/1995/755/contents/made> (Accessed: 19 February 2016).

aims are “to achieve better health and wellbeing for everyone and reduce inequalities in health.”

New Strategic Direction (NSD) on Alcohol and Drugs 2011-2016

2.41 This cross-sectoral Strategy aims to reduce the harm related to both alcohol and drug misuse in Northern Ireland. This Strategy is based on the 2006 NSD and has been extended until 2016 which ensures a consistent approach over a ten-year period. Whilst resources continue to be directed at front-line services, programmes, and interventions, the Strategy also focuses on emerging issues. The NSD recognises the need to explore further links between alcohol and drug related issues and domestic and sexual violence and abuse.

Protect Life – A Shared Vision 2012-2014

2.42 Prior to the publication of the *Protect Life* Strategy in late 2006 the Northern Ireland suicide rate had been increasing year on year. Since then the rate has stabilised with an average of around 280 recorded deaths each year since 2007. *Protect Life* was refreshed and issued in June 2012. At the time of publication of this Strategy, a new Suicide Prevention Strategy which will also cover mental health promotion is under development. The Pre-Consultation Engagement Summary Report for the new Strategy is available on the DHSSPS website.

The Bamford Review of Mental Health and Learning Disability (Northern Ireland)

2.43 This wide-ranging and independent review of the law, policy, and provision affecting people with mental health needs or a learning disability in Northern Ireland works towards a set of recommendations which contain best practice, policy, and legislative perspectives. This independent review concluded in 2007 envisaged a 10-15 year programme to implement recommendations. The second *Delivering the Bamford Vision* Action Plan (2012-2015) was published in March 2013.

Sexual Health Promotion - Strategy & Action Plan 2008 – 2013

2.44 This Strategy sets out Government's vision for promoting positive sexual health. It aims to improve, protect and promote the sexual health and well-being of the whole population of Northern Ireland with a focus on prevention, training, education and access to services.

2.45 An associated addendum to the Sexual Health Promotion Strategy and Action Plan has been published.

Improving and Safeguarding Social Wellbeing - A Strategy for Social Work in Northern Ireland 2012 – 2022

2.46 This Strategy for Social Work in Northern Ireland sets out a vision and agenda for action for social work and social workers in improving and safeguarding the social wellbeing of individuals, families and

communities. It provides a framework for social work practice that reflects the role of social work in early intervention and prevention as well as in more targeted and specialist services for those in need of care or protection. It will support practitioners, commissioners, Health and Social Care Trusts and other employers to strengthen and improve social work services for the future.

A Gender Equality Strategy for Northern Ireland 2006-2016

2.47 The Strategy provides an overarching strategic policy framework within which departments, their agencies and other relevant statutory authorities will channel their existing actions and initiate new actions to achieve an agreed vision, guided by a set of principles and objectives aimed at tackling gender inequalities and promoting gender equality across Government's major policy areas for the benefit of both women and men generally. The Strategy has nine strategic objectives including: *'to eliminate gender based violence in society, including the effective application of existing measures to reduce violence against young men within the overall context of efforts to reduce violence in society generally.'*

Resources

2.48 As we consider the context of this Strategy, we acknowledge that budgetary limitations are an important consideration across Government. We must prioritise and optimise the limited resources available, focusing on those areas where significant improvements are required and achievable. It is vital that opportunities for partnership working are fully realised and we are committed to building on the positive achievements which have already been secured to date.

2.49 The Strategy does not have a specific budget attached to it. Within this climate of financial uncertainty we need to examine where we can work differently and more innovatively with the resources that we do have. Partnership co-ordination and communication will be vital to ensuring that all funding opportunities are explored and utilised efficiently.

Further Information

2.50 Throughout this document there are references to other strategies, policies and guidance which have an impact on this domestic and sexual violence and abuse Strategy. A list of some key related Strategies and Legislation is available at Appendix 1. Further information on the International, European and National context is also attached at Appendix 1.

What is Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse?

- 2.51 There are many diverse definitions and terms for domestic and sexual violence and abuse that co-exist in a number of areas, for example, within criminal and civil law, child protection, and the applied and academic research fields. The Government definitions in place in Northern Ireland, up until the publication of this document, are set out within the previous strategies.
- 2.52 During the development of this Strategy, sectors working with those affected by abuse were asked to consider the Northern Ireland definitions. It was agreed that the definitions of domestic and sexual violence and abuse needed to be updated to correspond with current and emerging policy, research and information coming from other jurisdictions, and also to reflect the changing demographics across Northern Ireland.
- 2.53 This Strategy provides separate definitions for domestic violence and abuse, and for sexual violence and abuse to reflect the distinct differences between them. These are not statutory definitions but are used by statutory, voluntary and community sectors for policy development and to assist with the identification of domestic and sexual violence and abuse cases. We would ask that all sectors working in this area, where possible, use these definitions.

Definition of Domestic Violence and Abuse for Northern Ireland

- 2.54 The definition for domestic violence and abuse below, which is based on the previous definition, now includes “controlling coercive behaviour” to reflect, more comprehensively, the full range of acts involved. This revision was informed by extensive stakeholder discussion and consultation and also, in part, by changes made to the Home Office definition of domestic violence, following its consultation in England and Wales in 2011/12⁹.

The definition of Domestic Violence and Abuse is:

‘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’

- 2.55 Domestic violence and abuse is generally recognised as a pattern of behaviour which is characterised by the exercise of coercive control and the misuse of power by one person over another. The behaviour is

⁹ UK Government (2012), Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-definition-of-domestic-violence> (Accessed: 19 February 2016).

usually frequent and persistent and is used to harm, 'punish' or frighten the victim.

2.56 Domestic violence and abuse occurs within an intimate relationship or a family. A *family member* could include but is not limited to; mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister, grandparents, whether directly or indirectly related, including in-laws and step-family. While often associated with being in a marriage or partnership it can include violence and abuse by any other person who has a close or blood relationship with the victim, and may include same-sex or young/teenage relationships.

2.57 Domestic violence and abuse can often involve, but is not limited to:

- **Physical contact** (violence) such as:
 - pushing, punching, kicking, slapping or choking;
 - use of a weapon; and
 - cutting, burning, biting;
- **Emotional, psychological and controlling behaviour** (abuse):
 - undermining of self-confidence;
 - threat or threats to others (including children);
 - humiliation or intimidation;
 - isolation from family, friends or sources of support;
 - deprivation of means to live independently/limiting access to property: e.g. money, personal items, food, transportation, communication and contraception;
 - regulation of everyday behaviour and freedom;
 - destruction of property;
 - stalking (physical and digital);
 - virtual and online abuse; and
 - abuse of pets.

2.58 **Please note – this is not an exhaustive list.** It should not be taken as such, particularly, as people's perceptions, reactions and feelings about their experience of domestic violence and abuse can differ greatly.

2.59 It is acknowledged that domestic violence and abuse can also manifest itself through the actions of immediate and extended family members through the perpetuation of **unlawful and harmful activities and practices**, such as:

- forced marriage;
- 'honour' based violence and crimes; and
- female genital mutilation.

These practices are applicable to both children and adults.

2.60 The adverse effects of living with domestic abuse for children are recognised as a child protection issue. These effects may include poor educational achievement, juvenile crime, substance misuse, mental ill-health, and/or homelessness and can also impact on the child's ability to form attachments and trusting relationships. Research shows that where

young children are exposed to violence in the home it can harm their development.¹⁰

- 2.61 It is also recognised that domestic violence and abuse of an intimate partner/former partner often involves sexual violence and abuse.

Definition of Sexual Violence and Abuse for Northern Ireland

- 2.62 Within this Strategy the term sexual abuse relates to **all** victims of sexual abuse, both adults and children.

- 2.63 The statutory, voluntary and community sectors were consulted during the development of this Strategy about the recognised definition of sexual violence and abuse that was in place. They suggested that to ensure the definition is comprehensive and reflects emerging issues it should include references to controlling, coercive, exploitative and harmful behaviour. The definition now also quantifies, to a degree, the form of this behaviour and acknowledges that **anyone can be a victim**.

*The **definition of Sexual Violence and Abuse** is:*

'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).'

- 2.64 As indicated by the definition, sexual violence and abuse can take many forms and includes contact and non-contact sexual activities. It is important to highlight that coercive, exploitative and harmful behaviour includes taking advantage of an individual's incapacity to give informed consent. Sexual Violence and Abuse can often involve, but is not limited to:

Contact activities (violence) such as:

- penetrative sexual activities (vaginal, anal, oral)¹¹;
- intentional touching, rubbing or groping; and
- being made to perform masturbation on someone.

Non-contact activities (abuse) such as:

- indecent exposure;
- stalking (both physically and digitally);
- grooming (including via the internet)¹²;
- being made to look at/be involved in the production of sexual images and abusive material;

¹⁰ UNICEF (2012), Available at: <http://www.unicef.org/protection/files/BehindClosedDoors.pdf> (Accessed: 25 February 2016).

¹¹ This includes the use of an object

¹² Note: Children, young people and vulnerable adults are often the victims of grooming

- virtual abuse including use of any technological mediums;
- being made to watch sexual activities (including pornography);
- sexually exploiting a child;
- sexually exploiting an adult for personal, commercial or financial gain;
- sexual threats; and
- obscene or threatening messages/telephone calls.

- 2.65 **Please note – this is not an exhaustive list, and these are not statutory definitions** and it should not be taken as such. Any behaviour of a sexual nature that causes distress to a victim is considered, for the purposes of this Strategy, to constitute a form of sexual violence or abuse.
- 2.66 The majority of sexual violence and abuse incidents are committed by someone whom the victim knows or trusts, including within the domestic setting.
- 2.67 It should also be noted, as highlighted by the Children's Commissioner for England¹³, that the majority of children who are sexually exploited are living in their family home. However, it must be recognised that some children and young people are more vulnerable than others, including disabled children and looked after children. We need to work to address underlying vulnerabilities in children and young people, the range of things that render them more open to sexual exploitation.
- 2.68 We also acknowledge that many victims of sexual violence and abuse present to support services and other relevant organisations years, and in some cases decades, after the incident(s) occurred. We recognise that the needs of victims of historical abuse must also be considered within this Strategy, including historical institutional abuse. On 29 September 2011 the Northern Ireland Executive announced its intention to have an investigation and inquiry into historical institutional abuse¹⁴. This Inquiry commenced on 19 January 2013. The findings and results of this inquiry will also be considered when implementing this Strategy.
- 2.69 We will also continue our efforts to provide support and exit services to those involved in prostitution, particularly those vulnerable to sexual violence and abuse. The Trafficking and Human Exploitation (Criminal Justice and Support for Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2015 received Royal Assent in January 2015. In accordance with Section 19 of the Act, a Prostitution Exit Strategy '*Leaving Prostitution*' has been published. DOJ, as part of its 'Reducing Offending Among Women' Strategy, is continuing to take forward actions on prostitution, including awareness raising and working with the Drop-in Service for Commercial Sex Workers, to support those involved in prostitution.

¹³ The Children's Commissioner for England (2012), Available at: http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/content/publications/content_580 (Accessed: 19 February 2016).

¹⁴ The Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry (2013), Available at: www.hiainquiry.org (Accessed 19 February 2016)

Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland – Prevalence, Patterns and Other Research

2.70 Traditionally domestic and sexual violence and abuse have not been discussed openly. This may have contributed to the significant under-reporting of these incidents. We recognise that many victims do not report because of a range of complex reasons, including: fear of repercussions; fear of not being believed; fear of an uncertain future; fear of the criminal justice system, financial concerns; and concerns about their children. This section includes information on the prevalence and patterns associated with domestic and sexual violence and abuse.

Incidence and Prevalence

- 2.71 In 2014/15 the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) recorded:
- 28,287 domestic abuse incidents (the highest level recorded since 2004/05);¹⁵
 - 13,426 domestic abuse crimes (the highest level recorded since 2004/05);¹⁵
 - 6 murders with a domestic motivation (accounting for over 37.5% of all murders recorded in the period)¹⁵;
 - 2,734 sexual offences¹⁵;
 - 449 sexual offences with a domestic motivation (accounting for 16.4% of all sexual offences recorded in the period)¹⁵;
 - 737 offences of rape (the highest level recorded since 1998/99)¹⁶;
 - 176 rape offences having a domestic abuse motivation, (accounting for 23.9% of all rape offences recorded in the period)¹⁵.
- 2.72 The Northern Ireland Crime Survey (NICS) 2010/11 found that 'The police in Northern Ireland were only made aware of around one-third of all 'worst' cases of domestic partner abuse (31.1% in NICS 2010/11), meaning that they were unaware of the experiences of seven-in-ten victims (68.9%).' The Survey findings also estimate that '15.7% of people aged 16-64 have experienced at least one form of domestic violence, by a partner, since age 16, with women (19.3%) displaying a higher prevalence rate than men (11.5%).'
- 2.73 The Survey went on to highlight that 6.2% of people aged 16-64 have experienced at least one form of domestic violence and abuse, by a family member (other than a partner), since age 16, with women (7.7%) displaying a higher prevalence rate than men (4.5%).
- 2.74 The NICS found that 'While most victims did consider their worst incident of partner abuse to be a criminal offence (56.2% in NICS 2010/11), over two-fifths did not, with around a quarter (28.8%) believing it was 'wrong,

¹⁵[https://www.psni.police.uk/globalassets/inside-the-psni/our-statistics/domestic-abuse-statistics/domestic abuse incidents and crimes in northern ireland 2004-05 to 2014-15.pdf](https://www.psni.police.uk/globalassets/inside-the-psni/our-statistics/domestic-abuse-statistics/domestic%20abuse%20incidents%20and%20crimes%20in%20northern%20ireland%202004-05%20to%202014-15.pdf) (Accessed 15 March 2016).

¹⁶[https://www.psni.police.uk/globalassets/inside-the-psni/our-statistics/police-recorded-crime-statistics/documents/police recorded crime in northern ireland 1998-99 to 2014-15.pdf](https://www.psni.police.uk/globalassets/inside-the-psni/our-statistics/police-recorded-crime-statistics/documents/police%20recorded%20crime%20in%20northern%20ireland%201998-99%20to%202014-15.pdf) (Accessed 15 March 2016).

but not a crime' and a further one-in-seven accepting it as 'just something that happens' (12.6%).'

2.75 In 2014/15 the Northern Ireland 24 Hour Domestic and Sexual Violence Helpline¹⁷ reported that a 'total number of 34,420 calls were managed during the year'.

- The majority of callers were women (56.8%);
- 623 callers were male;
- 35 callers were from the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGB&T) community; and
- 262 calls were from foreign nationals and black and minority ethnic women.

2.76 In 2014/15 884¹⁸ households presented as homeless to the Housing Executive stating domestic violence as the reason for homelessness. Additionally, 72 household presented as homeless stating sexual violence and abuse as the reason for presenting as homeless.

2.77 The 2014/15 Women's Aid Annual Report¹⁷ cited that 932 women and 689 children stayed in Women's Aid refuges. 439 women were unable to access refuge services in their area. The publication also noted that 'on average, approximately 4 women and children come to stay in refuge every day because they are not safe in their own homes. During the year 71 women in refuge were supported during their pregnancies.'

Patterns

2.78 Research and analysis has recognised patterns and factors that are of particular note in relation to domestic and sexual violence and abuse, for example:

- most victims of domestic and sexual violence and abuse are women;
- domestic abuse often starts or escalates during pregnancy¹⁹;
- victims of domestic violence and abuse are at greatest risk of homicide at the point of separation or after leaving a violent partner²⁰; and
- PSNI trends continue to note a significant delay in the reporting of cases of sexual violence and abuse. In 2014/15 22% of offences reported had occurred at least eleven years previously. In 2014/15 there were 9 per cent of offences reported between one and five years after the offence occurred. The focus on cases of historic sexual abuse in the media and the Inquiry into Historical Institutional Abuse in Northern Ireland between 1922 and 1995 may have had an impact on increasing the number of historic sexual offences recorded, particularly during 2013/14 (In 2013/14

¹⁷Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland (2015) *Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland - Annual Report 2014-2015*, Available at <http://www.womensaidni.org/assets/uploads/2015/12/Womens-Aid-Annual-Report-2014-15.pdf> (Accessed: 15 March 2016)

¹⁸ This will include households with children

¹⁹ Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (2013), Available at: <http://www.rcog.org.uk> (Accessed: 19 February 2016).

²⁰ Lees, S (2000), '*Marital rape and marital murder*'.

27% of offences reported had occurred at least eleven years earlier)²¹.

Research by non-government organisations

- 2.79 A number of stakeholder organisations have conducted their own research in the area of Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse. A summary of some of their results and findings are highlighted below. This does not reflect all research available on the topic of Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse.
- 2.80 In 2010 a publication by Men's Advisory Project²² exploring local evidence of the attitudes and needs of male victims of domestic violence and abuse noted that 'men can experience a wide range of domestic violence and abuse as can women. It also noted that this abuse has a wide ranging negative effect on their lives, just as it has with women.' The document cited that 'the nature of abuse experienced by male victims in this study was primarily emotional and psychological abuse, which is of concern given the research which shows the long term negative consequences of these forms of abuse' 'However reports of physical violence were also very common and the use of weapons and other serious physical incidents mirror the experiences reported in other pieces of research on male victims'. The study also highlighted that men showed a reluctance to report domestic abuse for a number of reasons, including protecting children, fear of disbelief and a lack of awareness of services.
- 2.81 Research²³ amongst the LGB&T community within Northern Ireland noted that 'Lesbian/gay/bisexual females are more likely to be victim of incidents involving other LGB females, partners, friends and/or co-workers. This follows a trend in society where females are statistically more likely to be victim of domestic abuse and workplace harassment.' 'Males are more likely to be victims of incidents involving family members. Homophobic incidents within the home can range from physical to psychological. Males appear more likely to be victim of homophobic domestic abuse from family members and females more likely to be victim of domestic abuse from partners.' 'Females are substantially more likely to suffer from unwanted sexual contact, most commonly from heterosexual males who feel that they can 'turn' LGB females heterosexual.' 11% of all LGB female respondents experienced unwanted sexual contact. 29% of females who were victim of a homophobic incident in the last three years suffered unwanted sexual contact.'

²¹ Police Service of Northern Ireland (03 July 2014) 'Trends in Police Recorded Crime in Northern Ireland 1998/99 to 2013/14', Available at https://www.psni.police.uk/globalassets/inside-the-psni/our-statistics/police-recorded-crime-statistics/documents/police_recorded_crime_in_northern_ireland_1998-99_to_2014-15.pdf (Accessed: 15 March 2015).

²² MAP Belfast (2010) *Towards Gender Equality: Exploring the evidence of the attitudes towards and the needs of male victims of domestic violence and abuse in Northern Ireland with recommendations for change*, Available at: <http://www.mapni.co.uk/ucontrol/resources/researchreport-1.pdf> (Accessed 25 February 2016).

²³ John O'Doherty (June 2009) *Through Our Eyes - Perceptions and Experiences of Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual People towards Homophobic Hate Crime and Policing in Northern Ireland*, The Rainbow Project, Available at: http://www.rainbow-project.org/assets/publications/through_our_eyes.pdf (Accessed: 25 February 2016).

- 2.82 An analysis into Black and Minority Ethnic Women's experiences²⁴ in Northern Ireland considered there are structural failings leading to financial dependence on abusive partners and no recourse to public funds, citing the following barriers:
- Dependence of some BME women on male partners for their immigration status and/or official leave to remain in the UK;
 - Lack of knowledge of their own legal entitlements in the UK;
 - Reluctance to involve Social Services due to fear of children being removed;
 - Reluctance to seek help from public authorities or 'outside' support agencies due to lack of culturally sensitive services;
 - Community pressure to remain in the family home and the stigma and shame attached to leaving the partner;
 - Internalising religion and cultural beliefs that view domestic violence as permissible rather than criminal; and
 - a legacy of poor police response from previous experience in their home country, and on occasion, in Northern Ireland.
- 2.83 With regard to children and young people in the wider UK context, a 2011 National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) study found that nearly a quarter of young adults (24.1%) had experienced sexual abuse (contact and non-contact), by an adult or by a peer during childhood. Around 11% of young adults said that they had experienced contact sexual abuse during their childhood. A sizeable proportion of contact sexual abuse reported by under-18s was carried out by other under-18s. The prevalence study of child abuse and neglect also found that 7.8% of 11-17-year-olds had been abused at some point during childhood by an adult who did not live with them. It highlighted that male and female parents or carers are equally responsible for child physical abuse.
- 2.84 Further information on the incidence of domestic and sexual violence and abuse nationally and internationally is attached at Appendix 2.

²⁴ Monica McWilliams and Priyamvada Yarnell (June 2013) The Protection and Rights of Black and Minority Ethnic Women Experiencing Domestic Violence in Northern Ireland, NICEM, Available at: <http://nicem.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/PRBMEWEDVNI-1.pdf> (Accessed: 25 February 2016).

The Cost of Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland

- 2.85 In addition to the physical and mental impact upon a victim or witness of violence and abuse, each year in Northern Ireland millions of pounds are spent across a range of services in dealing with violence and abuse and its consequences. Significant resources are committed annually through:
- The criminal justice system (police, prosecution service, courts and probation service) in relation to victims and perpetrators;
 - The civil courts in dealing with family proceedings;
 - The provision of legal aid;
 - The various health and social care services (both in hospitals and in the community) providing services for victims and their families;
 - The housing services in providing housing, refuge accommodation and out-reach services; and
 - The funding of voluntary organisations to provide support services to those affected by violence and abuse.
- 2.86 This section highlights the direct, indirect and human costs associated with violence and abuse using incidence and cost data specifically for Northern Ireland where it is available.

Cost of Domestic Violence and Abuse

- 2.87 The cost of social services support to children and families as a result of domestic violence against children in Northern Ireland for 2011/12 is estimated to be £18.6m²⁵. This figure does not include the medium to long-term impact on children of domestic violence on their emotional and psychological development. These costs are likely to be significant and enduring. No estimate of the intangible human costs for pain and suffering endured by children are included in this figure as it is not possible to estimate these costs.
- 2.88 It is estimated that the economic costs of domestic violence (including children) in Northern Ireland for 2011/12 was approximately £674m²⁵, with the majority of the costs falling on victims and their families. Significant costs also fall on the health, social care and criminal justice services.

²⁵ Source: Economic Branch, Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety.

Table 1: Estimated costs of domestic violence and abuse in Northern Ireland for 2010/11 to 2011/12: £m ²⁶

	Adult Females		Adult Males		Children		Totals	
	10/11	11/12	10/11	11/12	10/11	11/12	10/11	11/12
Health and Social Care Services	21.9	23.7	7.3	7.9	17.5	18.6	46.7	50.2
Criminal Justice Services	59.8	61.6	19.9	20.5	-	-	79.5	82.1
Housing Support Services	4.1	4.1	-	-	-	-	4.1	4.1
Lost Economic Output	51.9	57.5	17.3	19.2	-	-	69.2	76.7
Intangible Human Costs	307.5	345.9	102.4	115.3	-	-	409.9	461.2
Total economic costs	445	492.8	146.9	162.9	17.5	18.6	609.4	674.3

Notes:

- Female/Male cost split is based on a 75%:25% ratio in line with PSNI crime statistics (average of the numbers of domestic violence incidents, by gender, over the 2007/08-2010/11 period). However it has not been possible to produce a reliable allocation of the costs by gender for Northern Ireland
- The costs also cover the cost impact of sexual violence between intimates

Cost of Sexual Violence and Abuse²⁷

2.89 The costs for sexual violence occurring outside of the partner setting for Northern Ireland were estimated at approximately £257m for 2011/12.

2.90 This cost estimate excludes costs for child victims of rape and sexual assault, which it has not been possible to calculate. In this respect the cost estimate is considered to be an under-estimate.

²⁶ Source: Economic Branch, Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety – this analysis has largely adopted the methodology used by Professor Walby

²⁷ The costs associated with sexual violence between intimates are included in the costs estimate presented for domestic violence

Table 2: Estimated costs of sexual violence and abuse in Northern Ireland for 2010/11 to 2011/12: £m ²⁸

	Females		Males		Totals	
	10/11	11/12	10/11	11/12	10/11	11/12
Health and Social Care Services	4.3	4.0	0.7	0.7	5.0	4.7
Criminal Justice Services	26.2	27.1	4.6	4.8	30.8	31.9
Lost Economic Output	31.2	28.4	5.5	5.0	36.7	33.4
Intangible Human Costs	173.2	159.2	30.6	28.1	203.8	187.3
Total economic costs	234.9	218.7	41.4	38.6	276.3	257.3

Notes:

- Female/Male cost split is based on an 85%:15% ratio, in line with PSNI crime statistics (average of the numbers of sexual offences, by gender, over the 2007/08-2010/11 period);
- Costs exclude costs for sexual violence between intimates

2.91 The costs in respect of both domestic and sexual violence and abuse greatly impact on the resources of statutory, voluntary and community sector organisations and employers and reflect the enormous burden on victims and wider society.

²⁸Source: DHSSPS – Economics Branch. The costs have been derived using a similar methodology to that used for the domestic violence costs, more detail on the methodology is provided at Appendix 3 and is available from Economics Branch on request.

The Response to Date in Tackling Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse

2.92 This Strategy builds on the work initiated by the two previous strategies. *'Tackling Violence at Home: a strategy for addressing Domestic Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland'*, and *'Tackling Sexual Violence and Abuse: a Regional Strategy'*. Commitments in these two strategies are being progressed through the current joint *'Tackling Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Action Plan'*. It is important to acknowledge the significant work that has been done by organisations within the voluntary, community and statutory sectors across Northern Ireland to eliminate violence and abuse. This section outlines some examples of the progress made and shows what can be achieved through collaboration and partnership working.

Helpline Services

2.93 The 24 Hour Domestic Violence Freephone Helpline expanded in 2014 to offer support services to victims of sexual violence. The re-launched 24 Hour Domestic and Sexual Violence Helpline is available to all women and men affected by domestic and sexual violence.

Other Helpline services include:

- Childline - a free, private and confidential service for children and young people up to the age of 19, which is open 24 hours a day and seven days a week;
- NSPCC operates a helpline that offers confidential advice for people who are worried about cases of possible child abuse. They can provide contact details for local social services teams; and
- Lifeline is the Northern Ireland crisis response helpline service for people who are experiencing distress or despair.

The Rowan Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC)

2.94 The Rowan is the regional Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) for Northern Ireland. It delivers a range of support and services 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to children, young people, women and men who have been sexually abused, assaulted or raped, whether this happened in the past or more recently. The Rowan is located on the Antrim Hospital site and is managed by the Northern Trust. It provides a centralised service for victims whether or not they wish to involve the police and replaces the need for forensic medical evidence to be gathered in police premises. It also includes storage facilities allowing victims time to consider pursuing a judicial outcome at a later time.

Routine Enquiry on Domestic Violence

2.95 Routine Enquiry on Domestic Violence for all pregnant women was introduced across Northern Ireland. Patients are asked on three occasions during their pregnancy – at booking in, postnatal and prior to discharge – whether or not they have experienced, or are currently experiencing, domestic violence. This policy was put in place to address the increase in incidents of domestic violence which commences during

pregnancy. Following the introduction of the scheme there was an increase in the number of victims seeking information advice and support from the 24Hour Domestic Violence Helpline.

Preventative Education

2.96 Preventative Education work was undertaken in some primary schools using the Helping Hands Programme and in some secondary schools using the No Fear – Heading for Healthy Relationships Programme. Teachers were trained as Social Guardians to deliver the Helping Hands Programme in schools.

Domestic Violence Media Campaigns

2.97 Domestic Violence Media Campaigns were delivered, targeting all victims of domestic violence and encouraging them to seek help and support. These have taken the form of televised public awareness campaigns, press advertisements and the use of social media. Resulting in an increase in calls to the then 24 Hour Domestic Violence Helpline and victims seeking information, advice and support. In addition, perpetrators of domestic violence were targeted with campaigns aimed at enforcing the message that domestic violence is wrong, and illegal.

Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme (IDAP)

2.98 The PBNI developed and introduced an Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme (IDAP) for court-mandated statutory supervision. The aim of the IDAP programme is to stop domestic abuse and violence by teaching alternatives to coercive, dominating and violent behaviour. A recently completed evaluation of 2009-14 highlights that 67 % of participants completed the programme. Benefits include systematic and extensive co-operation between the statutory agencies involved to increase protection and actively address abusive behaviour. These have yielded referral of hundreds of children/ young people for protection. Separately, the contact with partners has provided victim protection and onward referral to outreach services where required.

Local Domestic Violence Partnerships (LDVPs)

2.99 LDVPs were introduced in the five Health and Social Care Trusts. This initiative aimed to ensure implementation of the *Tackling Violence at Home* Strategy on a local basis. The LDVP are multi-agency partnerships that develop and implement action plans based on the needs of victims in the area taking into account gaps in local services, the needs of minority groups of victims and addressing community issues related to domestic violence.

Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)

2.100 MARACs were introduced into each of the eight PSNI districts across Northern Ireland from January 2010. MARACs provide a forum for the discussion of high risk domestic violence and abuse cases and put in

place appropriate actions and resources to ensure the safety of victims and their children.

Increased Legal Powers

2.101 Services for victims within the Public Prosecution Service were enhanced and the courts were given greater powers to impose a restraining order and to allow victims greater access to the courts. In addition access to legal aid has been changed to allow victims greater access to the courts.

Public Protection Branch (PPB)

2.102 PPB operates throughout Northern Ireland. It comprises of a Rape Crime Unit and five area offices which are co terminus with the health trusts. Each comprise of a Child Abuse Investigation Unit; Domestic Abuse Unit; Offender Management Unit; and Vulnerable Person's Unit. The public protection arrangements aim to provide a multi-agency, co-ordinated system of risk assessment and risk management that will be effective in reducing the immediate and long term risk of sexual or violent re-offending.

PSNI Domestic Abuse Officers

2.103 Domestic Abuse officers investigate all high risk domestic abuse cases and a Central Referral Unit has responsibility for the assessing of risk assessments. Domestic Abuse Officers play an integral part in the MARAC process and continually liaise with a range of Criminal Justice partners fulfilling their statutory duties with other agencies.

Public Protection Arrangements for Northern Ireland (PPANI)

2.104 The Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 2008 introduced a statutory duty for relevant agencies, with public protection responsibilities both in the justice sector and beyond, to cooperate in the assessment and risk management of certain sexual and violent offenders within a structure commonly known as the public protection arrangements in Northern Ireland. PPANI enables the sharing of relevant information in a coordinated way which contributes to the effective risk management of offenders.

Police and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs)

2.105 PCSPs are statutory bodies, set up to help make communities safer. They ensure that the voices of local people are heard on policing and community safety issues including domestic and sexual violence and abuse. Each council area in Northern Ireland has a PCSP other than Belfast which has one PCSP and four District PCSPs covering North, South, East and West Belfast.

Regional Risk Assessment Tool for Children

2.106 Barnardos developed a Risk Assessment Tool for children to assist practitioners when assessing the risks presented by domestic violence for children and make decisions about the types of interventions needed.

Domestic Violence Refuges

2.107 There are a number of refuges for women suffering domestic abuse in Northern Ireland. The majority of these refuges are managed by the local Women's Aid groups across Northern Ireland. The Women's Aid refuges provide women and children with specialist refuge accommodation and support which is tailored to the needs of victims of domestic violence.

2.108 One refuge is run by Cithrah Foundation²⁹. This is a Christian organisation in Carrickfergus, which provides services to individuals in need of support through family breakdown and domestic abuse.

2.109 Where access to refuge accommodation is not available the NI Housing Executive (NIHE) may be able to provide temporary accommodation as it is responsible for providing accommodation for people who are homeless.

Sexual Violence and Abuse Advertising Campaign (WRONG)

2.110 The "Wrong" campaign, delivered in 09/10, was aimed at raising awareness and understanding of sexual violence and abuse with the general public, and directing them to support services.

Anti-Rape Campaign

2.111 Following on from the WRONG campaign, an Anti-Rape information campaign was developed and delivered to the student population across Northern Ireland. Some of the aims of the campaign were to raise their awareness of the implications of sex without informed consent, to promote changes in behaviour and social attitudes among young people towards sexual violence and abuse and to promote personal safety for those most at risk.

Towards Gender Equality

2.112 Research carried out by Men's Advisory Project provided exploratory evidence of the attitudes towards, and the needs of, male victims of domestic violence and abuse in Northern Ireland.³⁰

²⁹ Cithrah Foundation (2015), Available at <http://www.cithrah.org/>. (Accessed 25 February 2016)

³⁰ MAP Belfast (2010) *Towards Gender Equality: Exploring the evidence of the attitudes towards and the needs of male victims of domestic violence and abuse in Northern Ireland with recommendations for change*, Available at: <http://www.mapni.co.uk/ucontrol/resources/researchreport-1.pdf> (Accessed 25 February 2016)

Outreach Services

2.113 Outreach services across Northern Ireland are provided by Women's Aid local groups in the form of Floating Support, funded by Supporting People through NIHE.

Regional Directory of Services for Victims of Sexual Violence and Abuse

2.114 A regional directory of services for victims of sexual abuse was provided in two formats; one aimed at victims and the wider general public and the other, a more comprehensive version, for use by a range of professionals such as General Practitioners (GPs), Social Workers, counsellors and Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) was commissioned from Nexus NI in 2010. This was updated and reissued in May 2013.

Domestic Abuse Recovery Service (DARS) Toolkit

2.115 DARS was developed by NSPCC and launched in September 2014. It is designed for children and women who have experienced domestic abuse. One of the main aims of the Toolkit is to enhance the mother/child relationship where attachment has been adversely affected as a direct result of domestic abuse.

2.116 Further information on a range of organisations that provide support for victims of domestic and sexual violence and abuse can be found in Appendix 6.

3 The Vision for the Strategy

Strategic Vision

To have a society in Northern Ireland 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.

3.1 The overall vision for this Strategy is to have a community in Northern Ireland that does not tolerate domestic or sexual violence and abuse. Prevention and early intervention are fundamental parts of raising awareness and reducing the incidence of domestic and/or sexual violence and abuse. Whilst zero tolerance is the ultimate aim, this will take time to achieve, and even if, in the future this is achieved, there will still be a need to have adequate service provision and support for victims and their families. Protections still need to be put in place for the most vulnerable in society and perpetrators will need to be held to account.

Five Strands to Underpin the Delivery of the Strategy

3.2 Extensive consultation and engagement with key statutory, voluntary and community sector organisations and individuals have informed the five key strands that underpin the overall vision for the Strategy. These form the basis for the development of recommendations and actions over the lifetime of the Strategy. These are:-

- **Driving Change through Co-operation and Leadership** - focusing on collaborative working and ensuring a more cohesive approach to tackling violence and abuse;
- **Prevention and Early Intervention** - the clear need to raise awareness and promote zero tolerance to violence at a societal level, healthy relationships between individuals, and address harmful behaviour, at the earliest opportunity;
- **Delivering Change through Responsive Services** – through integrated working, promote equality of access to effective services to meet the needs of victims and families; a key element of this is building capacity and expertise across all service sectors;
- **Support** - focusing on the need to support victims and families affected by violence and abuse, through the provision of appropriate housing, welfare and educational support, effective workplace policies, and health and social care services; and
- **Protection and Justice** - reflecting the need to protect the most vulnerable in society from violence and abuse, to protect and seek justice for victims, address harmful behaviour, hold perpetrators to account and support victims and witnesses through their engagement with the justice system.

4 The Five Strands of the Strategy

Strand 1 – Driving Change through Co-operation and Leadership

Aim

To ensure that the Northern Ireland Executive remains focused on Domestic and Sexual Violence, develops policies and delivers actions which reduce its incidence and its occurrence.

Introduction

- 4.1 The Northern Ireland Executive recognises the harm caused by domestic and sexual violence and abuse as well as its legal and moral responsibilities to reduce the number of incidents, and to hold to account those responsible for inflicting violence and abuse on others. The Executive is determined to end violence and abuse and is committed to tackling domestic and sexual violence and abuse in all its forms. Each member of society has a part to play. Driving change can only be achieved through ongoing governmental commitment, leadership, and effective partnership working.
- 4.2 A cross departmental Ministerial group has been in existence since December 2007. This Group is chaired by the Minister for Health, with membership comprising all other relevant Government Departments. The group was established to ensure that domestic and sexual violence and abuse issues are integrated into the policy initiatives of all relevant government Departments.
- 4.3 The Northern Ireland Executive reaffirms its respective commitment to providing leadership in the promotion and delivery of change, working in partnership across the Executive, the statutory, and voluntary and community sectors.
- 4.4 In order to ensure effective integrated working to support and protect victims and witnesses and brings perpetrators to account, it is essential that bodies share relevant information.

Priorities

- 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.**
- 2. On behalf of the Northern Ireland Executive, the Departments of Health, Social Services and Public Safety and Justice will provide co-leadership and strategic direction to promote change.**

Strand 2 – Prevention and Early Intervention

Aim

Reduce the incidence of domestic and sexual violence and abuse through effective preventative educational programmes, national training standards, promotion of a culture of prevention, and earlier intervention at societal, governmental and local levels.

Introduction

4.5 This section aims to highlight the key elements that need to be addressed to raise awareness of these issues, reduce the incidence of violence, and to promote better recognition and support. It adopts a public health approach of:-

- Primary prevention – i.e. preventing domestic and sexual violence and abuse before it happens;
- Secondary prevention – i.e. preventing further domestic and sexual violence and abuse for those at risk of it reoccurring;
- Third level prevention – i.e. managing the consequence of domestic and sexual violence and abuse which could be physical, environmental, psychological and/or social.

4.6 The main focus in this section is on primary prevention which encompasses tackling the wider determinant of violence, raising awareness in society and communities, and early intervention for both adults and children at risk. It requires partnership working, for example with local Councils, schools, education colleagues, employers, health and social care services.

Changing Attitudes on Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse

4.7 Much has been written at national and international levels on the attitudes to, and awareness of, violence and its consequences for individuals and society. There is also a considerable evidence base on the attitudes to, and awareness of, the different types of violence amongst front line staff, for example in the NHS³¹. While most systematic reviews have been written about violence to women and children, there is a growing recognition that men can also be victims of domestic and sexual violence and abuse.

4.8 We want to get a more comprehensive picture of how our changing society views domestic and sexual violence and abuse. This up to date information will help shape our ongoing work.

4.9 The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) commission quality of life surveys which provide a range of information

³¹ NHS (2010), Available at:
http://www.health.org.uk/sites/default/files/RespondingtoViolenceAgainstWomenAndChildrenTheRoleofTheNHS_guide.pdf(Accessed: 25 February 2016)

about current life and times in Northern Ireland. In addition, the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) lead on major topics such as gender equality and social inclusion.

- 4.10 Understanding societal attitudes will assist in developing and targeting clear messages on the issues specific to domestic and sexual violence and abuse in society.

Raising Awareness of Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse

- 4.11 The general public, leaders in society and the media all have a role in shaping and influencing social norms in respect of domestic and sexual violence and abuse. This Strategy aims to promote the message that regardless of cultural setting, age or sexual orientation, domestic and sexual violence and abuse are always wrong.

- 4.12 In order to promote a greater understanding of domestic and sexual violence and abuse an integrated Information Plan should be developed. This will provide both general and targeted information. It should challenge myths and stereotypes, promote discussion and provide information and advice on available services.

- 4.13 Key elements of this integrated public “Information Plan” will be:
- engagement with the general media to promote a continued message that domestic and sexual violence and abuse is always wrong;
 - further exploration of best practice in the use of different formats and media interfaces to increase understanding and recognition of domestic and sexual violence and abuse within different settings and age groups;
 - targeting of specific media, audiences and community leaders to disseminate information on domestic and sexual violence and abuse in order to challenge myths, and further identify those at greatest risk by reason of their gender, environment, culture or “accepted” social norms; and
 - issue guidance on practical steps to increase personal safety for those at risk of domestic and sexual violence and abuse.

The Right to be Safe – a Life Course Approach

- 4.14 Everyone in our society has a right to be safe from domestic and sexual violence and abuse. A life course approach to primary prevention and early intervention for those at risk is important when one considers:
- *children and adolescents*, their knowledge, attitudes and behaviours;
 - *adult women and men*, including those in unhealthy relationships and the associated adverse impact on themselves and their children; and
 - *adults at risk of harm* – particularly in relation to growing older, and those with a disability.

This requires greater integrated working across Government Departments and its agencies to deliver on primary prevention and early intervention.

- 4.15 Improving maternal mental health is particularly important; so too is the development of positive parenting, especially for those at risk. In addition to the established universal and more specific services for children, young parents and families, the Public Health Agency (PHA) has lead on the delivery of two specific health and wellbeing programmes. i.e. Family Nurse Partnership³² programme and Roots of Empathy³³. The *Delivering Social Change* framework also includes a range of Parenting Support Programmes led by the Public Health Agency. These are included by way of example of on-going cross governmental work. They include:
- *Incredible Years*- aimed at parents or teachers of children 0-12;
 - *Infant Mental Health Training* – early intervention in vulnerable families;
 - *Strengthening Family Support* – reducing risk factors for children with a history of parental drug or alcohol abuse; and
 - *Parenting UR Teen* –improving parenting and teen relationships.

Education

- 4.16 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.
- 4.17 Schools are in a unique position to promote and safeguard the welfare of all children and for this reason robust arrangements are in place to support this. Safeguarding in schools has three main elements:
- ensuring only suitable persons work with children;
 - responding appropriately to safeguarding concerns about a child; and
 - using the statutory curriculum to encourage pupils to develop strategies and skills to keep themselves safe.
- 4.18 The statutory curriculum provides the opportunity for specific attention to be given to a pupil's emotional wellbeing, health and safety, relationships and the development of a moral thinking and value system. It also offers a vehicle for exploring with children and young people sensitive issues such as domestic violence and sexual abuse in an age appropriate way and appropriate protective behaviours.

³² Information on this programme can be found at Public Health Agency (2013), Available at <http://www.publichealth.hscni.net/directorate-public-health/health-and-social-wellbeing-improvement/family-nurse-partnership>, (Accessed: 19 February 2016)

³³ Information on this programme can be found at Public Health Agency (2013), Available at <http://www.publichealth.hscni.net/directorate-public-health/health-and-social-wellbeing-improvement/roots-empathy>, (Accessed: 19 February 2016)

- 4.19 Evidence provided to the Department of Education (DE), from the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI), Education Authority staff and a number of voluntary organisations who work in schools indicated that teachers, while recognising the need to equip pupils to deal with challenging situations in personal relationships, were uncomfortable covering the issues or avoided the topic completely.
- 4.20 The report of the research *‘Keeping Safe: the development of an effective preventative curriculum in primary schools’*³⁴ confirmed that for the majority of children, physical safety and accident prevention was core to their understanding of ‘keeping safe’, while bullying, child abuse and domestic violence were not generally part of this understanding. Significant gaps were identified in children’s knowledge, understanding and self-efficacy to keep safe.
- 4.21 In January 2011 the *‘Report of an Evaluation of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) in Post-Primary Schools’*³⁵ was published by the ETI. A recommendation of this Report confirmed the need to develop a capacity building programme for teachers across all sectors which has a focus on a very particular skills set around the teaching of sensitive topics.
- 4.22 The access which children and young people have to new technologies is also creating new challenges for schools. Examples of these include pupils engaging in cyber bullying, acting out inappropriate sexualised behaviour seen online and using social networking sites in ways which leave them vulnerable to exploitation. Teachers now face the prospect of being confronted by a pupil experiencing personal distress due to the incidence of domestic violence, child neglect, mental ill-health, self-harming or suicide. As our society becomes more culturally diverse, the statutory curriculum is a vehicle for promoting an understanding of issues such as forced marriage, female genital mutilation and human trafficking.
- 4.23 The ‘Every School a Good School’ agenda recognises that promoting pupils’ emotional health and wellbeing is an integral part of any action to improve educational outcomes. The general approach of early identification and assessment of pupils’ needs, with teachers appropriately skilled to meet these needs, underpins a range of policies, including those Literacy and Numeracy, Newcomers and Special Educational Needs and the ‘iMatter’ Programme.
- 4.24 The focus, therefore, for policy and service development in the schools over the period of this Strategy will be on ensuring that all children and young people have access to an effective preventative curriculum.
- 4.25 The framework for an effective preventative curriculum is in place in the pre-school and youth sectors. In the early years sector one of the key

³⁴ NSPCC (2011), Available at: <http://www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/research-reports/keeping-safe-preventative-education-northern-ireland-implications.pdf> (Accessed: 19 February 2016).

³⁵ Education and Training Inspectorate (2011), Available at: <http://www.etini.gov.uk/index/surveys-evaluations/surveys-evaluations-post-primary/surveys-evaluations-post-primary-2011/report-of-an-evaluation-of-relationships-and-sexuality-education-in-post-primary-schools-2.pdf> (Accessed: 19 February 2016).

policy objectives of *Learning to Learn – A Framework for Early Years Education and Learning* is to identify and help address barriers to learning, and reduce the risk and impact of social exclusion and the need for later interventions. There is curriculum guidance for use in early years settings that includes relationships and an appropriate emphasis on social development. A similar position applies in the youth sector, with the youth work curriculum “Youth Work: a Model for Effective Practice” setting high level values relating to personal and social development and being underpinned by core principles around participation, values and beliefs and acceptance and understanding of others. The curriculum offered by individual youth groups will be shaped by factors such as the particular needs of the young people attending. DE intends that the learning from the developments in the statutory sector will be shared and applied across all education settings.

Adult Safeguarding

4.26 The term safeguarding encompasses both prevention and protection activity. In partnership, DHSSPS and DOJ have developed ‘*Adult Safeguarding – Prevention and Protection in Partnership 2015*’ which stipulates a number of policy objectives. The aim of this policy is to improve safeguarding arrangements for adults who are at risk of harm from abuse, exploitation or neglect. It sets out how the Northern Ireland Executive intends adult safeguarding to be taken forward across all Government Departments, their agencies and in partnership with voluntary, community, independent and faith organisations. A key objective is to reduce the incidence of harm from abuse, exploitation or neglect of adults who are at risk in Northern Ireland; to provide them with effective support and, where necessary, protective responses and access to justice for victims and their families.

Safeguarding Children and Young People

4.27 Safeguarding children is the process of preventing impairment of children’s health and development, and of ensuring they grow up safely and securely and are provided with effective care. The overall aim is to facilitate children and young people to maximise their potential. Safeguarding also extends to protecting children from abuse and neglect when it occurs.

4.28 The legislative base for safeguarding children and young people - *The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995* - passed into law in Northern Ireland and was enabled in 1996. It sets out the responsibilities of the authorities to provide services to children in need and their families, to provide for and support looked-after children, to investigate children at risk and take appropriate action.

4.29 The DHSSPS is revising the Executive’s safeguarding policy guidance – *Co-operating to Safeguard Children (2003)*. It is intended that the revised document will provide the overarching policy framework for all relevant Departments, their agencies and other stakeholders in respect of working together to safeguard children in Northern Ireland. Such an

approach provides further opportunities to work across agencies to promote the prevention and early intervention on domestic and sexual violence and abuse in children and families, especially with regard to those most at risk.

- 4.30 A Regional Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI) was established in 2012. The SBNI is the key statutory mechanism for agreeing how the member agencies will co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, and for ensuring the effectiveness of what they do. The Strategic Plan of the SBNI outlines the functions of the SBNI and highlights its priorities for the coming years. It highlights the cumulative and interactive impact of risk factors such as alcohol, substance misuse and domestic violence on the emotional and psychological health of children. The protection and safeguarding of children, including those at risk of CSE is one of the strategic priorities for the SBNI.

Priorities

- 3. Government Departments and the voluntary and community sectors will work together to consider how best to establish a baseline on societal attitudes to domestic and sexual violence and abuse.**
- 4. Teachers will have the necessary skills to teach about sensitive subjects, including child abuse and domestic and sexual violence and abuse.**
- 5. Teachers will be alert to pupils experiencing distress and trained to respond appropriately.**
- 6. Teachers will have access to a range of age appropriate and evaluated resources to support the teaching of sensitive subjects.**
- 7. Quality assurance arrangements will be established to ensure that the preventative curriculum offered in schools is effective.**
- 8. Government departments and their agencies will work together to promote preventative safeguarding for adults at risk of harm.**
- 9. 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.**

Strand 3 - Delivering Change through Responsive Services

Aim

Well defined, effective and responsive services are available to enable those affected by domestic and sexual violence and abuse to access suitable services in a timely manner.

Introduction

- 4.31 This Strand focuses on secondary prevention in order to commission and provide responsive services for victims and families, and to reduce the risk of reoccurrence of that violence and abuse – regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity, socioeconomic circumstances or disability of the individual(s).
- 4.32 Delivering change is about everyone knowing their role and responsibilities to help individuals/families/communities access the right service, at the right time and in the right place. Examples of those who could be involved in the presentation, management of, and response to, domestic and/or sexual violence and abuse include:
- *members of the public* – e.g. family, friends, neighbours, co-workers through recognition of symptoms and signs of violence and abuse in others and knowing how to access help;
 - *non-emergency environments/presentations* - e.g. pre-school nurseries, schools, further education colleges, youth workers, community workers, GP practices, health and school visiting services, antenatal clinics, social care services, benefits offices, homeless services, routine police enquiries on crime, solicitors, victim support services, care workers, voluntary, community and faith leaders; and
 - *emergency services* - e.g. police, paramedics, A&E staff, welfare officers, GP out-of-hours services, emergency social work service, safeguarding teams, crisis response teams (mental health), community addiction teams and helpline staff. (This is not an exhaustive listing.)
- 4.33 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. However, it is acknowledged that “right time, right place, right service” has to be underpinned by the assessed need of individuals and local populations, and commissioned and delivered by staff with the appropriate training/skills and expertise, working to recognised standards. For example, providing advice or information which might enhance the chances of an individual disclosing ongoing violence is a very different level of expertise to that of the specialist skills and expertise required to work with children or adults who have been

adversely affected or traumatised as victims of sexual violence and abuse.

4.34 Delivering change is also about involving those who are victims of domestic and sexual violence and abuse in service improvement approaches to the commissioning and delivery of services.

Delivering Change through Integrated Pathways for Service Delivery

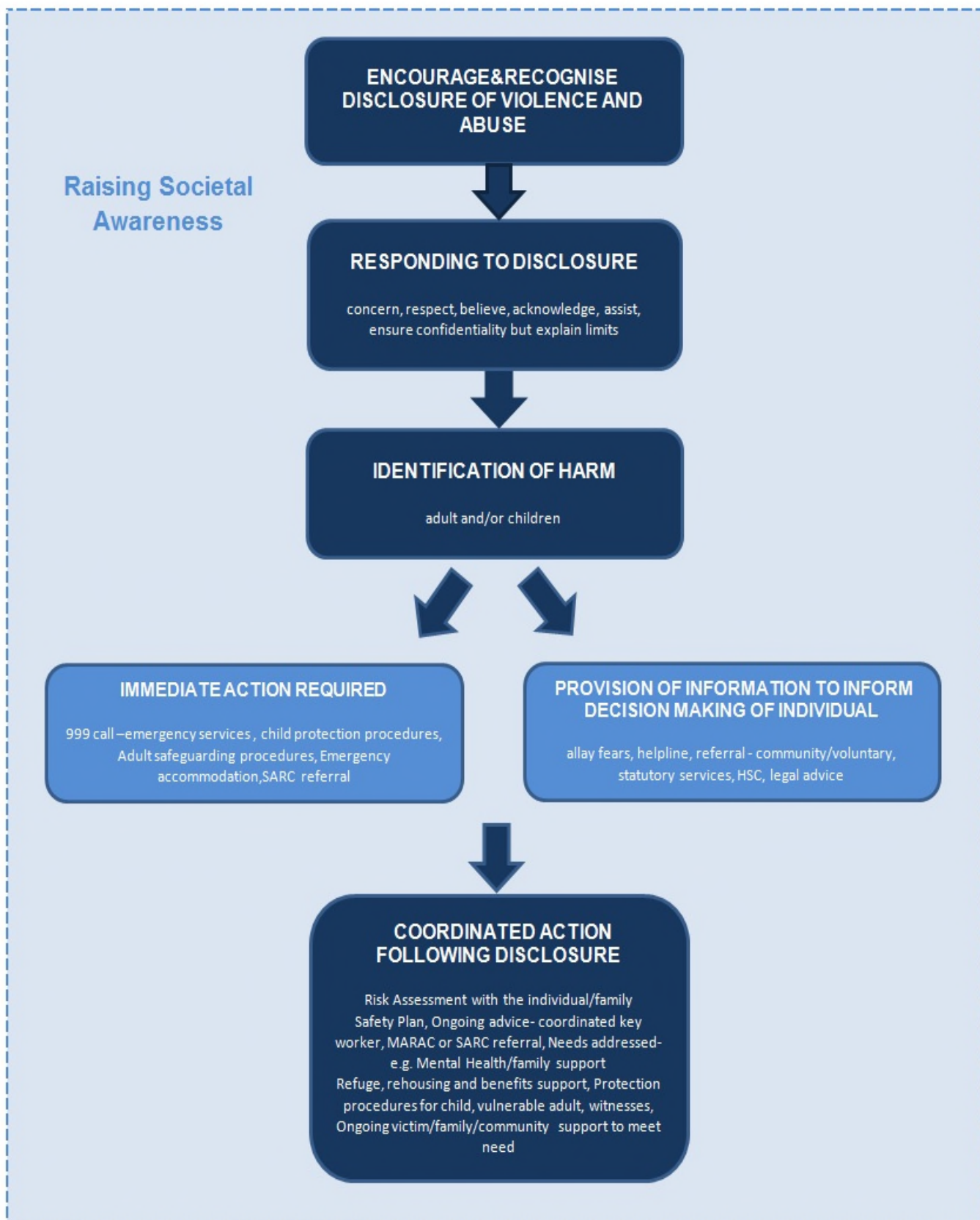
4.35 There are four elements in the pathways approach to the commissioning and provision of services; the level of response will depend on which environment the individual presents. Regardless of this, there is a need to create the right environment to facilitate individuals, partners, families and communities to disclose domestic and sexual violence and abuse, and provide an appropriate response to help them. The main elements are:

- the recognition of the signs of violence and abuse and encouragement to disclosure³⁶;
- appropriate response to disclosure of violence abuse;
- identification of the harm caused to the victim and the action required i.e. whether that is immediate or the provision of information to enable the victim to make decisions; and
- coordination of ongoing support and protection through statutory and voluntary services.

These are depicted in Figure 1.

³⁶ Professionals may be obligated to disclose in some instances

Figure 1 Integrated Pathway



4.36 Further work will need to be done to develop a pathways approach to service provision on domestic and sexual violence and abuse. This will require detailed work to take account of the different needs and links into

existing service provision for children and adults, and in particular, for at-risk groups. However, it should be possible to develop a pathways approach with appropriate standards and/or guidance at major points of the pathway, as identified above. While every victim may not readily identify with every element of this model, the integrated pathways approach should be core to future service provision.

Safety plans

4.37 Safety planning for someone involved in an abusive relationship is a necessary and important step. A domestic violence safety plan is not only about moving out of a relationship, but can in some cases allow victims to remain in their own homes. Safety plans put in place a series of options which support victims to protect themselves and their children. High risk victims of domestic violence and abuse who are referred to MARACs should be involved in producing an individual coordinated safety plan.

Provision of Information on Available Services

4.38 The provision of information on available services is a key element of encouraging disclosure. If individuals do not know how to access help and what services are available to them, then disclosure will be made more difficult. Provision of information can take many formats e.g. helplines, one to one and group sessions, posters, leaflets, and through digital technologies. Information should be available in appropriate settings to meet the needs of children, young people and adults and those with learning or communication difficulties. It should also recognise the diversity of the groups affected by domestic and sexual violence and abuse.

4.39 Whilst there have been a number of local successes in the provision of information, an integrated approach to domestic and sexual violence and abuse, as highlighted by this Strategy, necessitates a review of how the system as a whole provides information on service provision. For example, if domestic violence can sometimes involve sexual violence, is it right that there are separate information systems on how to access services? In addition, is the system sure that it has addressed the information needs in terms of ethnic diversity, age, sexual orientation, faith, and disability?

4.40 Whilst there will always be a need to have information on specialist services and how to access them, it is time to consider how an integrated approach to the provision of service information could be developed to match an integrated pathways approach to domestic and sexual violence and abuse, recognising the needs of different client groups.

Building Service Provision

4.41 There is a clear need to map the four key elements as identified in Figure 1, against current service provision and potential local requirements. This will not only involve statutory sector organisations but also

community and voluntary sector organisations who play a major role in service provision. Such an approach is likely to identify gaps in service provision but may also present opportunities, for example, in terms of coordination of action in and across schools, further education colleges, workplaces, financial advice, emergency services, safeguarding and support.

- 4.42 High level standards have been developed by key organisations in respect of the delivery of domestic and sexual violence and abuse services. In particular, there are standards and guidance for various aspects of service delivery - such as for MARACs and The Rowan SARC. It is also of note that the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence and the Social Care Institute for Excellence published guidance for good practice for responding to domestic violence for public health in 2014³⁷. This guidance provides recommendations on a broad spectrum of domestic violence and abuse, including violence perpetrated on men, on those in same-sex relationships and on young people.
- 4.43 The guidance is aimed not just at health and social care services, but also education services (primary, secondary and third level education services), housing departments and associations, local authorities, police, and the wider public, private, voluntary and community sectors. It aims to promote a whole systems approach to domestic and sexual violence and abuse services.
- 4.44 While a robust evidence base is essential for service development, it has to be complemented by the views of those who have been affected by domestic and/or sexual violence and abuse or are at significant risk of it. This is necessary if services are to be commissioned and delivered sensitively, promptly and appropriately to meet need.
- 4.45 Whole systems approaches which promote integrated working and effective links are needed to manage demand and to meet the needs of individuals, especially those with complex needs. The following paragraphs highlight the necessity to promote links in order to deliver effective services, with particular reference to safeguarding children, safeguarding communities, and service delivery for those with complex needs.

Promoting Links – Promoting multi-agency responses

Specialist Services for Victims of Domestic and Sexual Abuse

- 4.46 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. This is particularly so for those at greatest risk of serious injury or death. For example, MARACs offer an approach to develop safety plans and links into other services such as crisis intervention services, health and social care, and substance misuse

³⁷ NICE (2014), <http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ph50> (Accessed : 25 February 2016).

services for those at high risk of domestic violence and abuse. More information on MARACS is available in Appendix 6.

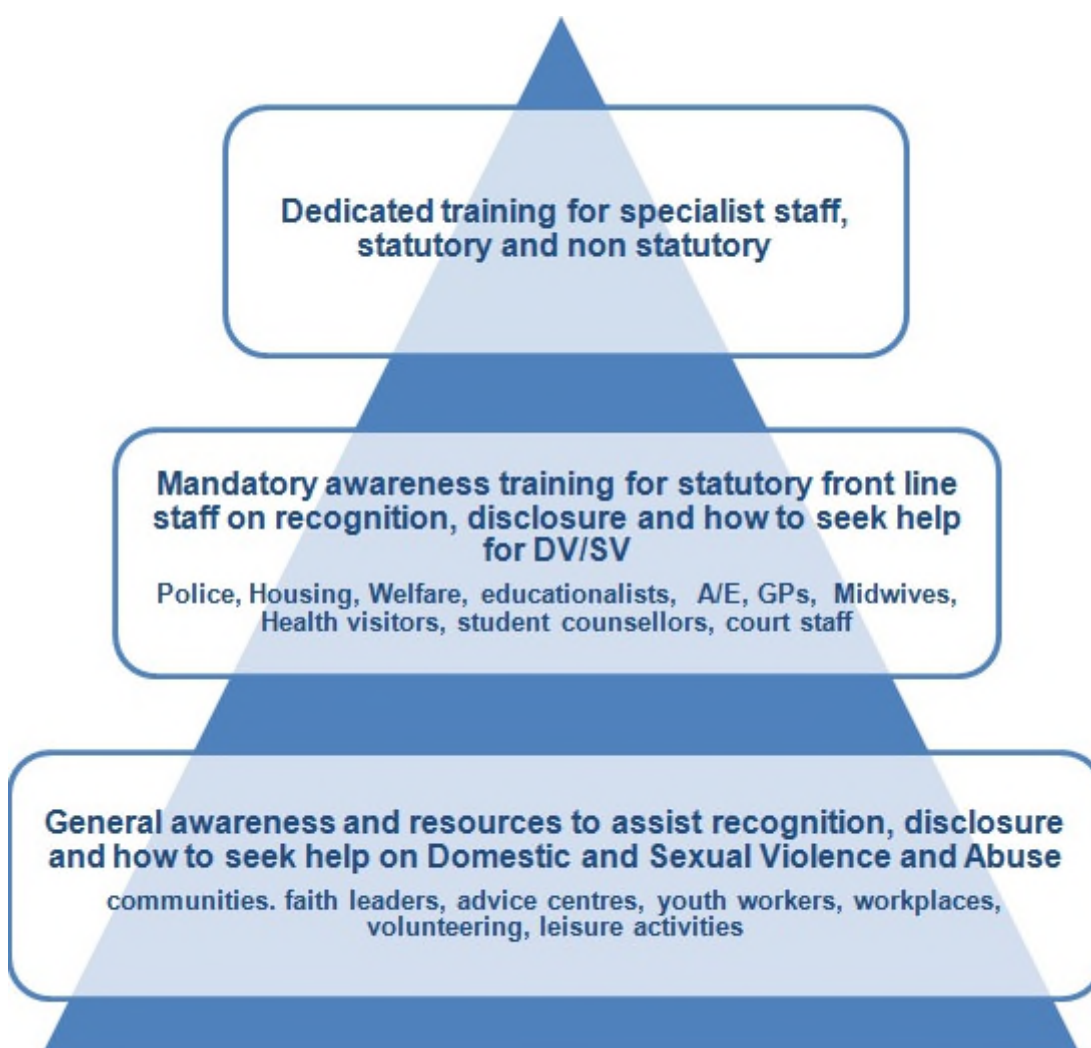
- 4.47 Further information and recommendations in relation to specialist services provided to victims, witnesses and perpetrators of violence and abuse are identified in Strand 5 (Protection and Justice).

A Tiered Approach to Awareness Training and Development of Skills and Expertise

- 4.48 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. This will also be influenced by whether the victim is a child, young adult, adult or older person and the setting in which they present. This may, for example, be within current statutory service provision – such as education (primary, secondary, or third level), police, welfare services, probation, court, and health and social care services. Disclosure may also be made through the voluntary and community sector organisations as well as faith based communities, work environments, and through private organisations.

- 4.49 In addition, it is recognised that some of the specialist services that are commissioned by the statutory sector are provided by voluntary/community sector organisations. This can also include a range of more specialist services provided to children, parents, older people, ethnic minority groups, and gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender communities.

Figure 2 Tiered Model of Awareness Training and Expertise



- 4.50 In this model the base of the triangle represents the largest provision of training where the more generic elements of awareness training are needed to promote earlier recognition of domestic and sexual violence and abuse in communities, the principles of disclosure, and how to seek help. Such an approach has significant links to other policies and programmes such as Delivering Social Change, gender equality and social inclusion which are primarily led by OFMDFM.
- 4.51 The middle of the triangle relates to front line awareness training among statutory organisations to promote earlier recognition, disclosure, and how to seek help. This will require a range of Government Departments and their agencies to come together to promote coordinated action. The apex of the triangle relates to specialist training, which is largely within the remit of health and social care, education, justice and court services. These specialist services can be delivered by the statutory sector or community and voluntary sector organisations.

Standardisation of training

4.52 We recognise that for training to be cohesive and effective, standardisation is fundamental. It is key in the development of specialist roles, general staff training, and awareness training. An example of the format and content of a recognised training standard is reflected through the National Occupational Standards (NOS)³⁸.

4.53 In 2009, NOS for professionals working in Preventing and Tackling Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse were initiated. This suite of standards is designed to reflect the knowledge and skills that are required to carry out this work. The NOS are relevant for any practitioner whose work brings them into contact with victims and/or perpetrators of violence and abuse. NOS describe what an individual needs to do, know and understand in order to carry out a particular job role or function. They can be used to:

- describe good practice in particular areas of work;
- set out a statement of competence which bring together the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to do the work;
- provide managers with a tool for a wide variety of workforce management and quality control;
- offer a framework for training and development; and
- form the basis of a range of vocational qualifications.

These NOS and other recognised professional standards should be central to the development and implementation of any future training packages for service delivery staff.

Priorities

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:

- a) Encourage disclosure and recognise signs of violence and abuse;
- b) Respond to disclosure;
- c) Identification of harm; and
- d) Coordinated action following disclosure.

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.

12. 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.

³⁸ NOS (2012) , Available at: <http://nos.ukces.org.uk/Pages/index.aspx> (Accessed: 19 February 2016).

- 13. 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.**
- 14. Appropriate partnership networks to increase multi-agency recognition and responses to domestic and sexual violence and abuse.**

Strand 4 – Support

Aim

Provision of appropriate high quality support services that promote equality of access and positive outcomes for all victims of domestic and sexual violence and abuse, in order to allow them to make positive choices, and create a safer future.

Introduction

- 4.54 This Strand is about the provision of support to help people to come to terms with domestic and sexual violence and abuse and to deal with the consequences.
- 4.55 Support for individuals affected by domestic and sexual violence and abuse comes from many sources and is provided in different settings. It can often be part of the provision of other services such as education, children’s services, and mental health service provision. We also recognise the voluntary and community sector plays a major role in the provision of support services and a list of these organisations is available in Appendix 6. Where the victim has been in a relationship with the perpetrator, support will vary depending on whether they want to remain in the relationship, are endeavouring to leave the relationship, or are rebuilding their lives after the end of a relationship. Support for victims and witnesses as they go through the Justice process is addressed in the next strand.
- 4.56 The following paragraphs drill down more into specific aspects of support through:-
- support in educational settings;
 - outreach support and advocacy services;
 - welfare and housing support; and
 - coping and psychological strategies.

Support in Educational Settings

- 4.57 As highlighted in Strand 2 on Prevention and Early Intervention, the first step in the provision of support for children and young people is through the earlier recognition of distress in a child or young person and providing appropriate intervention to meet the specific needs of the individual. Staff and pastoral care programmes in education settings should be sensitive to issues relating to domestic and sexual violence and abuse, and provide age appropriate advice and support. This is not only about immediate support, but is also about the continuum of care which may be needed to support the young person through the longer term impact of violence and abuse on their behaviours, relationships and educational attainment.

4.58 The Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) encourages Further and Higher Education Institutions and Training Providers to provide pastoral care arrangements for students/participants affected by domestic and sexual violence and abuse. Awareness-raising, support and sign-posting facilities are made available within the organisations and via specialist bodies such as the Public Health Agency (PHA).

Outreach Support and Advocacy Services

4.59 A range of outreach support and advocacy services are available for victims of domestic and sexual violence and abuse and their families. Services should be fully inclusive and configured to meet the needs of different groups of people, regardless of their age, gender or sexual orientation. A list of current support service organisations is provided at Appendix 6.

4.60 Many of the organisations that provide services for victims of domestic and sexual violence and abuse advocate on their behalf and assist individuals in making decisions for themselves regarding their future wellbeing. In some areas of the UK, advocacy services are provided by Independent Domestic Violence Advisors and Independent Sexual Violence Advisors. As part of future actions plans associated with this strategy it is our intention to consider how best to provide advocacy support to all victims of domestic and sexual violence and abuse.

Welfare and Housing Support

4.61 Victims of domestic and sexual violence and abuse are often faced with numerous barriers to leaving an abusive relationship and seeking support; these have been referred to in the section on Prevalence and Patterns. Included in these barriers are financial reliance on a perpetrator as well as financial control and concerns for future financial hardship.

4.62 Victims of domestic and sexual violence and abuse and their children often need to leave their homes because of the dangers of further or repeated abuse. While some may find accommodation with friends and relatives, these solutions are often unsustainable for more than a brief period of time. Refuges and other forms of temporary accommodation can provide a safe and supportive environment for victims and their children. Some victims may want to remain in their homes or wish to return to the family home after a short period of time, despite the risks, as they miss the support of family and friends and may also wish to maintain regular routines such as school attendance for their children.

4.63 One option available in these circumstances is the Sanctuary Scheme which offers victims a choice of remaining in their own homes. The Sanctuary Scheme is a multi-agency victim centred scheme aimed at enabling victims to remain as safe as possible in their own homes through the provision of support and enhanced protection. Sanctuary Schemes should also provide victims with a wider package of protection and support services.

- 4.64 For some victims, this scheme will not be appropriate, and it will be safer for them to move into temporary accommodation for example refuges and appropriate safe accommodation.
- 4.65 The NIHE is undertaking a Review of Refuge provision as a recommendation within the Homelessness Strategy 2012/17. Regional Homeless Forums have been set up to review the needs of all key client groups, including victims of domestic violence, and commissioning plans will be developed to reflect those needs. Work is also ongoing with a number of individual refuges to reconfigure current models of accommodation. Where access to refuge accommodation is not available the NIHE may be able to provide temporary accommodation. The NIHE supports the Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy and is responsible for providing accommodation for people who are homeless. NIHE has access to a range of temporary accommodation including, Housing Executive Hostels, voluntary sector hostels and private single let properties³⁹. The length of time spent in these is dependent on the access to permanent housing. NIHE has also:
- introduced a tenancy support scheme for victims of domestic violence and abuse; and
 - where necessary, has retrained staff on dealing with victims of domestic violence and abuse.

Coping Strategies and Psychological Support

- 4.66 Living with, and overcoming, domestic and sexual violence and abuse requires a great deal of courage, strength and resilience. It can deplete a victim's energy levels greatly, as their whole life is controlled by the need to ensure their own safety and that of their family. To visualise themselves out of this situation may take additional energy that they cannot summon up without consistent, co-ordinated and unconditional support over an often unspecified and prolonged period of time.
- 4.67 Many victims will try to manage or minimise the violence and abuse inflicted upon them by developing individual coping strategies. These coping strategies are not always healthy, for example, victims may try to comply with the perpetrators' requests in an attempt to pacify them or misuse alcohol and drugs in an attempt to temporarily escape the situation. These coping strategies and associated behaviours may bring victims to the attention of the health and social care service.
- 4.68 The need for psychological support may not manifest itself immediately, it may be many months after incidents of domestic and sexual violence and abuse before victims feel the need to seek help. Victims may have a number of issues to overcome including, learning to trust again, post-traumatic stress, flashbacks, nightmares, or feelings of constantly living in fear. It is very common that the victim may experience long-term stress or anxiety issues. Depending on the nature and severity of the domestic

³⁹ DSD, NIHE (2012), Available at: http://www.nihe.gov.uk/homelessness_strategy_for_northern_ireland_2012-2017.pdf (Accessed: 19 February 2016).

and sexual violence and abuse the victim may also need to recover from physical injuries. Counselling is an important service that can help victims to overcome the trauma, recover and rebuild their life. It provides a safe environment where the victim can work through their issues, helping to get their life back on track and be able to move on.

- 4.69 There are a number of ways to access a range of formal/informal counselling services in Northern Ireland, many of these are commissioned by statutory agencies (a list of support agencies providing counselling services is included in Appendix 6). In addition, individuals and families may access health and social care services, e.g. family support, community mental health teams, psychological therapies, GPs and social workers.
- 4.70 People with more complex psychological and emotional needs will require access to specialist resources to address their specific requirements. This may include **cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) or psychotherapy where appropriate. Similar therapies are outlined in the Psychological Therapies Strategy.**

Priorities:

- 15. All 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.**
- 16. Evaluation of the provision of emergency housing support based on emerging and complex needs.**
- 17. 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.**

Strand 5 - Protection and Justice

Aim

Victims of domestic and sexual violence and abuse will have more confidence in engaging with the justice system as a direct result of more effective, supportive, responsive and timely protection. Perpetrators will be challenged and held accountable for their behaviour.

Introduction

- 4.71 Everyone has the right to feel safe and to be protected from harm. All criminal justice agencies and their partners have a role to play in this. Our engagement and consultation with stakeholders and, in particular, with victims have reinforced the fact that each victim's experience is different and one size does not fit all with regard to the provision of protection, accessing justice and responding to harmful behaviour.
- 4.72 This point is recognised by the Committee on the Prevention and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (CAHVIO)⁴⁰ who state that *a distinction should be made between forms of violent behaviour that require a criminal law response and those that require a different type of response.*
- 4.73 This Strand has been developed to reflect this approach where possible and focuses on how multi agency working and the justice system strives to:
- Protect Victims;
 - Respond to harmful and abusive behaviour; and
 - Hold perpetrators to account.
- 4.74 In 2010 Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (CJINI), carried out two inspections relating to domestic⁴¹ and sexual⁴² violence and abuse. Each report made a number of recommendations which has influenced the protection and justice response to domestic and sexual violence and abuse to date. CJINI published follow-up reviews of their inspection recommendations in relation to Domestic Violence and Abuse⁴³ and Sexual Violence and Abuse⁴⁴ in October 2013. The reviews acknowledged that progress had been made but that more was required, for example, to continue to focus on the reasons why cases drop out of the criminal justice process and to ensure that vulnerable victims are

⁴⁰CAHVIO (2009), Available at: <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1453317&Site=CM> (Accessed: 25 February 2016).

⁴¹ CJINI (2010), Available at: <http://www.cjini.org/CJINI/files/1b/1b651b43-657b-471b-b320-101fca7c6930.PDF>, (Accessed: 19 February 2016).

⁴² CJINI (2010), Available at: <http://www.cjini.org/CJINI/files/0a/0ad6b7e4-0810-4151-8bb0-e28789591efc.pdf>, (Accessed: 19 February 2016).

⁴³ CJINI (2013), Available at: <http://www.cjini.org/CJINI/files/34/34118bcc-00c5-4071-bf2f-5397e6b20332.pdf> (Accessed :19 February 2016)

⁴⁴ CJINI (2013), Available at: <http://www.cjini.org/CJINI/files/d1/d1c3dab5-25f3-45a4-9e19-4f7ed8a0c9fc.pdf> (Accessed: 19 February 2016).

supported both in the initial days after the abuse is reported and over the longer term.

Protecting Victims

- 4.75 Whilst we would encourage all victims of domestic and sexual violence and abuse to report to relevant authorities, we acknowledge that there are some who feel unable to do so. Sometimes they do not wish to, or are not ready to engage with the Justice system; others are prevented from accessing the system through the use of intimidation, manipulation, violence and abuse.
- 4.76 There has been progress in recent years in seeking to improve the general public's understanding and knowledge of the criminal justice system. Information leaflets providing advice and contact numbers for support services are available in a variety of languages. Information is available for victims and witnesses online⁴⁵ which provides a step-by-step guide on the operation of the criminal justice system, and criminal justice agencies also have their own websites containing useful information. Further work is planned to develop and update criminal justice information leaflets and guides.
- 4.77 The Justice Minister published a Victim Charter in January 2015 which was placed on a statutory footing under the Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 2015. This also gives effect to the transposition of the EU Victims Directive. The Charter sets out the standards of service and entitlements that a victim of crime can expect to receive from a range of service providers. Victims have the right to expect high quality services, tailored to their individual needs, in any interaction with criminal justice service providers. This includes being proactively provided with information about how a case is progressing and getting help and support as they move through the criminal justice system. The Charter also makes clear who they can contact if they have a query, need more information or if they are not happy about how they have been treated or the service they have received.⁴⁶
- 4.78 A Victims of Crime Fund was launched in 2012, funded through an offender levy⁴⁷. The fund pays for projects that support victims and witnesses during their contact with the justice process which will include victims of domestic and sexual violence.
- 4.79 We are committed to monitoring and evaluating the MARACs across Northern Ireland to ensure they are operating effectively and in line with best practice in relation to protecting high risk victims of domestic abuse. We will harness the lessons learned from the evaluation and use these findings to inform and improve our practices and responses to all cases of domestic and sexual violence and abuse.

⁴⁵ NI Government - Available at: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/crime-justice-and-law> (Accessed: 15 March 2016)

⁴⁶ DOJNI (2014), Available at: <https://www.dojni.gov.uk/publications/victim-charter> (Accessed: 15 March 2016)

⁴⁷ Further information, Available at: <http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/offender-levy> (Accessed: 19 February 2016)

4.80 It is crucial that we learn lessons from the most serious cases of domestic and sexual violence and abuse. We will, as previously committed to, give consideration to the implementation of Domestic Homicide Reviews in Northern Ireland. The purpose of these reviews would be to help ensure that all relevant organisations, e.g. PSNI, Health and Social Services and relevant voluntary organisations are best placed to learn critical lessons, improve service provision and work together to seek to prevent and protect future victims from harm.

4.81 We also aim to improve our approach through seeking out policies and best practice developed and implemented in other jurisdictions⁴⁸, to ensure that comprehensive measures are in place to enable victims to benefit from support, advice and services, according to their needs⁴⁹. Within this strand this relates to support through the Justice System. We will also, where applicable, transfer the learning gained across both domestic and sexual violence and abuse. We are committed to the provision of protective measures through multi-agency working and providing services to ensure the safety and security of victims of violence and individuals who are at risk of violence.⁵⁰

Civil Justice

4.82 Many victims seek protection through the civil justice system and the remedies which are available on the civil side are vitally important, namely;

- Non-molestation orders can prohibit a person from molesting an associated person or relevant child and the courts have a broad power to prohibit specific acts or molestation generally.
- Occupation orders can regulate the occupation of a dwelling house and provide for the peaceful use and enjoyment of the house.
- Non-harassment injunctions can restrain a person from pursuing a course of conduct which alarms or distresses another person. In this instance conduct also includes the use of speech.

4.83 In addition, courts must, when considering whether to make a residence or contact order⁵¹ in favour of a prohibited person, consider whether the relevant child has suffered or is at risk of suffering any harm through seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another person by the prohibited person. It is right that civil courts should have a range of orders at their disposal, but we must also ensure that those orders are appropriately targeted and available when needed. We will, at all times, seek to progress civil proceedings in an effective and efficient manner and will do all that we can to help the most vulnerable to navigate their way through the civil courts. One way in which we can do that is by providing support

⁴⁸ CJINI (2010), Available at: <http://www.cjini.org/CJINI/files/1b/1b651b43-657b-471b-b320-101fca7c6930.PDF> (Accessed: 19 February 2016).- identified improvement could be made to bring the approach in Northern Ireland in line with other jurisdictions and to provide greater support for victims.

⁴⁹ Council of Europe (2011), Available at: <http://www.conventions.coe.int/Treaty/Commun/QueVoulezVous.asp?CL=ENG&NT=210> (Accessed: 19 February 2016).

⁵⁰ United Nations (1979), Available at: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/> (Accessed: 19 February 2016).

⁵¹ In simple terms, these are orders a court may make in respect of a child when parents are separating, for example, one parent with whom the child is to live would get a residence order and the other parent whom the child is to see on a regular basis would get a contact order specifying the contact.

and assistance, so that victims know what to expect when they come to court and are not exposed to further abuse or intimidation in the court.

Support at court for witnesses and victims in civil proceedings

4.84 Victims of domestic violence attending court should have access to protection at the court which will help to reduce anxiety and support them to participate fully. Such protection includes:

Separation from the Respondent or from any Potential Source of Threat

4.85 Insofar as is practicably possible, victims and vulnerable witnesses should be kept separate from any potential source of threat. This includes:

- Arranging, where necessary, for victims and witnesses to enter the court building through a different entrance or at different times from those who may be a potential source of threat;
- Separate waiting areas. These can be managed by the witness support services or domestic violence court support workers to try to ensure that opportunities for contact between the parties while waiting at court are reduced;
- Separate waiting facilities that are safe; and private rooms being made available for children, where possible;
- Protection from intimidation. It is a criminal offence for a person to intimidate or threaten to intimidate another person where he/she knows or believes that other person is, or may be, a witness in any relevant proceedings, with the intention of perverting, obstructing or interfering with the course of justice. The Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (NICTS) takes any reported incidents of intimidation on court or tribunal premises extremely seriously and will report all incidents of intimidation on NICTS premises to the police. In addition court security officers will offer assistance and advice to any court user who feels intimidated or at risk.

Waiting time at Court

4.86 Delay in court proceedings and the amount of time a victim or vulnerable witness spends at court can have a negative impact on the victim or witness and can increase the risk of secondary victimisation. We need to ensure that a victim or vulnerable witness spends the minimum time necessary at court and does not attend court unnecessarily.

Provision of Information and Communication

4.87 Victims have a right to be heard and to participate in proceedings. NICTS provides information on facilities and services available at court in the main languages in all court venues.

Criminal Justice

4.88 We must ensure that the justice system is in a position to respond to the changing face of violence and abuse in a modern, diverse and multicultural society. We have worked to ensure compliance with new

European and International legislation⁵², state obligations, policies and best practice and we will continue to do so. We will monitor the impact on the criminal justice system of newly emerging issues, or harmful practices such as female genital mutilation, forced marriage and ‘honour’-based violence. We will learn from criminal cases and seek out judicial and legal best practice delivered locally, nationally and internationally, to enable us to develop appropriate responses.

- 4.89 As mentioned previously, victims of violence and abuse are often reluctant to engage with the criminal justice system. The challenges faced by victims, highlighted in the *Making a difference to victims and witnesses of Crime Strategy* and in the earlier “barriers to disclosure” section, can discourage them from progressing their case to criminal court. Each victim’s engagement with the justice system will be different; however, there are various sources of support that victims can avail of in order to guide them through the process. Key support available is detailed in Appendix 6.
- 4.90 We want to make sure that people engaging with the criminal justice system are supported in giving the best evidence that they can. A range of ‘special measures’ and additional support are in place to help vulnerable and intimidated witnesses and victims give evidence in court. For example: screening the victim/witness in the court room; giving evidence in private or via ‘live-link’ from outside the court room; video-recorded evidence sessions and use of communication aids. We remain committed to ensuring there are special measures in place to ensure victims feel as comfortable as they can be when presenting and giving evidence.
- 4.91 We acknowledge that victims should be safe and secure when assisting with a criminal case. We are committed to exploring the potential provision of an advocacy service to victims of domestic and sexual abuse. Alongside this, the collection of best evidence through *The Rowan* will help in supporting victims of sexual violence and abuse through the judicial process. We have committed to evaluate and assess the feasibility of the implementation of Domestic Violence Specialist Courts across Northern Ireland. The Specialist support services highlighted previously in this strand, and the Victim and Witness Care Units, will improve service delivery for all those who engage with the Criminal Justice System, including victims of domestic and sexual violence and abuse.
- 4.92 We will also consider emerging policies and legislation in other jurisdictions in relation to violence and abuse. An example of this is the implementation of an extension of the ‘Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004’ in Northern Ireland⁵³. The Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004⁵⁴ allows for the joint conviction of parents or carers

⁵² Listed at Annex 1

⁵³ MOJ UK (March 2012), Available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2012/4/contents>, (Accessed: 19 February 2016)

⁵⁴ Home Office UK (November 2004), Available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/28/contents> (Accessed: 19 February 2016)

where a child or vulnerable adult has been killed; both blame each other; and as a result neither could be convicted individually. England and Wales, under the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims (Amendment) Act 2012, have now extended the appropriate offences to include those where a child or vulnerable adult was seriously or physically injured and in circumstances where parents or carers blamed each other. In Northern Ireland Section 96 of the Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 2015 now provides that in addition to causing or allowing death it will be an offence to cause or allow a child or vulnerable adult to suffer serious physical harm.

- 4.93 Additionally in line with legislation in England and Wales, Schedule 7 of the Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 2015 now contains provisions enabling the police with the power to issue a Domestic Violence Protection Notice (DVPN) and apply to the courts for a Domestic Violence Protection Order (DVPO) for the purposes of protecting a victim of domestic violence where it has been assessed they may be at risk of immediate harm and danger.
- 4.94 At the time of publication the DOJ is currently undertaking a consultation on protecting victims further by creating a specific creating a specific offence to capture patterns of coercive and controlling behaviour in intimate relationships; and, whether the arrangements in place could be enhanced by the establishment of a Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme in Northern Ireland. This scheme, sometimes known as Clare's Law, would be based on processes that would enable new partners of previously violent individuals to find out about their partner's history of violence and abuse.

Responding to harmful and violent behaviour

- 4.95 A key element of Protection and Justice is the need to address harmful behaviour and we acknowledge that special attention should be paid to the process of repeat victimisation⁵⁵. We recognise the need to address potentially harmful behaviour and put procedures in place to prevent escalation and re-victimisation. We will monitor developments in other jurisdictions, with a view to identifying relevant policies, legislation and best practice in relation to responding to harmful, violent and abusive behaviour. We also recognise the need for victims to seek reparation. It may be possible to submit a claim for compensation through the Northern Ireland Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme.
- 4.96 Whilst there is no data in Northern Ireland estimates for England and Wales (2010) suggest that **children and young people** who display harmful behaviour could account for just over one-tenth of all sexual

⁵⁵ Council of Europe (2012) , Available at: <http://www.conventions.coe.int/Treaty/EN/Reports/Html/210.htm> (Accessed: 19 February 2016).

offending⁵⁶. Research has found that domestic violence and abuse is increasing in teenage relationships.⁵⁷

- 4.97 It is also important to acknowledge that this behaviour can be extremely damaging and often involves victims who are themselves children and young people. Vulnerable individuals who display harmful behaviour - including children and young people - have a wide range of complex needs. Enabling these individuals to address and change their behaviour requires a holistic, multi-agency approach. Research has found that the most promising interventions are based on an individual/child-focused practice where vulnerable individuals are considered people/children first. We recognise this and are committed to assisting vulnerable individuals in managing and changing their behaviour.
- 4.98 We will develop and use a variety of models, including restorative approaches with vulnerable individuals, including children and young people, who display harmful behaviour. We will work together in addressing the holistic needs of those vulnerable individuals who exhibit such behaviour. We will also assess the effectiveness of these models and approaches in terms of positive behavioural changes.
- 4.99 It is important to note that **adults** who demonstrate violent and abusive behaviour may wish to change their behaviour. We remain committed to working with key stakeholders and alleged perpetrators of domestic and sexual violence and abuse to assist them in changing their behaviour and thus reduce the likelihood of offending and re-offending.
- 4.100 We will monitor the effectiveness of the existing *Respect* phone line service which offers advice, information and support to individuals who consider their behaviour to be harmful, violent and who are seeking help to change.
- 4.101 We recognise the importance of effective risk management plans, including the deployment of rehabilitation programmes, in addressing perpetrators' harmful behaviours and, where required, the enforcement of appropriate and robust licencing conditions.
- 4.102 Individuals who are assessed as posing a risk of serious harm to the public are risk managed under the public protection arrangements in Northern Ireland (PPANI). PPANI is not a statutory body in itself but a structure that enables police, probation, health trusts, social services and other professionals to share relevant information and fulfil their statutory functions in a coordinated way, to contribute to effective risk management of the individual. Those managed under the PPANI arrangements are individuals who have been convicted for: sexual offences; violent offences against a child or vulnerable adult or in

⁵⁶ UK Government (2013) , Available at: <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130128112038/http://www.justice.gov.uk/news/press-releases/hmi-probation/children-and-young-people-who-sexually-offend-missing-opportunities-to-prevent-reoffending-report> (Accessed: 25 February 2016).

⁵⁷ NSPCC (2009) , Available at: http://www.nspcc.org.uk/inform/research/findings/partner_exploitation_and_violence_summary_wdf68093.pdf (Accessed: 19 February 2016).

domestic or family circumstances or where aggravated by association with a hate crime. These arrangements also extend to individuals with previous convictions of this nature about whom agencies have current significant concerns regarding the risk of serious harm which they may pose to the public. The Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2015 introduces Child Protection Disclosures to Northern Ireland to allow for the consideration of disclosure of conviction information in relation to any offender who falls within the public protection arrangements for Northern Ireland.

4.103 The Justice Act also makes provision for the introduction of a new civil preventative measure, a Violent Offences Prevention Order (VOPO), to help mitigate the risk of violent re-offending from certain offenders. The VOPO will allow the court to place relevant conditions on the behaviour of a violent offender, and those subject to the order would also be made automatically subject to notification requirements. A VOPO can be made by the court in two ways: on conviction; or following application made by the police at a subsequent stage.

4.104 Under the Act with regard to Sexual offences against children, an amendment is made to the existing child grooming offence in the Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008 to reduce the number of times an adult has to have met, or communicated with, a child before meeting them, or travelling to meet them, from two to one. A new offence of 'sexual communication with a child' is also created, which will criminalise an adult who intentionally communicates with a child, where the content of the communication is sexual, or is intended to cause or incite a child to communicate sexually.

4.105 We recognise the need to maintain the effectiveness of the criminal law and the importance of ensuring a comprehensive and coordinated legal approach.

Holding perpetrators to account

4.106 We are committed to ensuring that individuals who demonstrate violent and abusive behaviour are held to account for their actions through the criminal justice system.

4.107 Where individuals in custody be they children/young people or adults, disclose that they have been a victim of domestic and/or sexual violence and abuse, support is available through counselling and referrals to appropriate agencies. The Youth Justice Agency(YJA) will seek a range of supports for children/young people detained within the Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre who disclose that they have been a victim of violence or abuse. The Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) is working closely with Voluntary and Community Sector partners to identify how best to enhance support available to victims in custody.

4.108 We will develop and introduce programmes and interventions aimed at changing the behaviour of offenders who are convicted of violence and abuse and monitor their effectiveness. A key element of this work will be

to adapt and develop programmes and interventions for perpetrators, to reflect best practice and current thinking/standards in respect of challenging and addressing harmful, violent or abusive behaviour, whilst taking account of due processes for perpetrators.

4.109 We must ensure that the criminal justice system is in a position to respond to the new and emerging trends in harmful and violent behaviour, some of which have been mentioned previously.

Priorities

18. Focused protection, support and information will be available for all victims throughout their engagement with the Justice System.

19. 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 in responding to harmful and violent behaviour.

20. Continue to develop and deliver practices and interventions, based on best practice, to effectively address harmful, violent and abusive behaviour.

5 Delivering on the Aims

Aim

Robust Governance and Accountability driving the implementation and evaluation of this Strategy.

Implementation

- 5.1 This Strategy will be supported by the development of Action Plans informed by the advice of key stakeholders across the statutory, voluntary and community sectors.
- 5.2 The Action Plans will be designed to deliver on the high level vision in each strand and associated priorities outlined within this Strategy.
- 5.3 To assist in the implementation of the Strategy and Action Plans, comprehensive, efficient and effective arrangements are required to ensure appropriate accountability and governance.

Delivery and Governance

- 5.4 An interim governance structure was put in place to implement the joint *Tackling Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Action Plan: April 2012 to September 2013* and to assist in the development of the new Strategy.
- 5.5 The interim Regional Strategy Group (RSG), on Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse has benefited from representation from a diverse range of stakeholders across Government, statutory, voluntary and community organisations.
- 5.6 During engagement with stakeholders it was noted that structures could be improved and streamlined. These revised structures require ongoing stakeholder support to fully champion this Strategy, drive through change, and importantly, make certain that victim outcomes are delivered.
- 5.7 The Inter-Ministerial Group (IMG) on Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse, and its current membership, will remain unchanged. The IMG will continue to ensure that violence and abuse issues are integrated into the policy initiatives across relevant Government Departments. IMG will be supported by a senior level Delivery Board, focused on achieving the aims of the strategy and overseeing the completion of specified outputs from the actions plans. Rather than standing project groups, we propose a series of ad-hoc delivery groups established on a “task and finish” basis, for a defined purpose and time. Alongside this, we will establish a stakeholder group to challenge and quality assure this work and to provide advice to the senior level group.

Ministerial level group sets direction, gives authority for delivery of Strategy, prioritises actions, gives Executive level leadership and visibility

Inter-Ministerial Group
(IMG)

Senior official level group, 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. Responsible for communications for Strategy as a whole

Strategy Delivery Board
(SDB)

Ad-hoc project groups will be established for limited duration on a task and finish basis to deliver defined outputs from Action Plans. They will report progress to SDB and will lead communication work for specific tasks. A permanent stakeholder assurance group will provide advice and challenge to SDB through a cross-sectoral frontline perspective.

Stakeholder Assurance
Group
(SAG)

Ad-Hoc Project Groups
(PG)

6 Evaluation and Review

- 6.1. It is important to know whether the interventions flowing from this Strategy work. We want to be assured that the actions we're taking across government are delivering positive change, reducing the incidence of abuse and protecting people. It will therefore be critical to measure and evaluate the impact of the Strategy. As we have already said, part of this will be developing a baseline against which to judge progress. Understanding the effect of the Strategy is important both in terms of properly assessing the success of our current programme of work and guiding and refining any future actions. In the presently very challenging financial environment it is vital that we are able to demonstrate the value of activities paid for from the public purse and to give the public confidence that their resources are being used to best effect.
- 6.2. We will take an outcomes based approach to this. For each action we will set out what we hope will be achieved and why and then we will measure to see whether we have achieved our objectives. This is a complex field and we continue to refine our understanding, it will therefore be challenging to achieve this for every action. However, it should be possible to identify some outcome associated with every action. For example, as we raise awareness of domestic and sexual violence and abuse and promote the use of the justice system we anticipate the number of reported incidents will increase as more people come forward to report abuse. Increased reporting should lead to more enforcement and, eventually, the reduction in incidence of abuse and victimisation. This is one way we think we can achieve the long-term objective of a real and sustained reduction in domestic and sexual violence and abuse.
- 6.3. The delivery of the Strategy will be through a series of Action Plans, against each action will be an associated outcome. The Action plans and the Strategy will be evaluated through the ongoing review of the achievement of these outcomes.
- 6.4. More generally, a comprehensive review of the Strategy will be carried out mid-way through the duration of the Strategy. The purpose of the review will be to assess the progress made against the recommendations and the outcomes and to inform the work required in the second half of the Strategy.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Related Strategies and Legislation⁵⁸

Strategies

- 2010 Council Conclusions on the Eradication of Violence against Women in the European Union
http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/lsa/113226.pdf
- Bamford Review Of Mental Health And Learning Disability (Northern Ireland) - A Vision of a Comprehensive Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
- Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (UN Commission on Status of Women CSW) 1995
<http://www.unwomen.org/en/csw>
- Building Safer, Shared and Confident Communities - A Community Safety Strategy for Northern Ireland 2012-2017
- Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/cedaw.htm>
- Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989
<http://www.unicef.org/crc/>
- Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings 2005
<http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/Html/197.htm>
- Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings
Council of Europe Disability Action Plan 2006-2015
<http://www.coe.int/t/dg3/disability/>
- Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse 2007
<http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/EN/treaties/Html/201.htm>
- CJINI thematic inspection - The use of special measures in the criminal justice system in Northern Ireland - April 2012
<http://www.cjini.org/CJINI/files/e6/e684b2e9-231e-4c06-b496-5b744e10c0cb.pdf>
- Domestic Violence and Abuse: A thematic inspection of the handling of domestic violence and abuse cases by the criminal justice system in Northern Ireland - December 2010
<http://www.cjini.org/CJINI/files/1b/1b651b43-657b-471b-b320-101fca7c6930.PDF>
- European Commission's Strategy for equality between women and men 2010-2015
http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/employment_and_social_policy/equality_between_men_and_women/em0037_en.htm
- European Commission Women's Charter
http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/employment_and_social_policy/equality_between_men_and_women/em0033_en.htm
- European Pact for Equality, 2010-2020
http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/lsa/119628.pdf
- European Union Charter of Fundamental Human Rights 2007
<http://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2007:303:0001:0016:en:PDF>

⁵⁸(Accessed at 19 February 2016)

- EU Plan on Best Practices, Standards and Procedures for Combating and Preventing Trafficking in Human Beings 2005
<http://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2005:311:0001:0012:EN:PDF>
- Families Matter: Supporting Families in Northern Ireland - Regional Family and Parenting Strategy March 2009
- Gender Equality Strategy for Northern Ireland 2006-2016
- Guide to Northern Ireland's criminal justice system for bereaved families and friends following murder or manslaughter
- Guide to Northern Ireland's criminal justice system for victims and witnesses of crime
- Guidelines on Violence against Women and Girls 2008
<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/16173cor.en08.pdf>
- Healthier future: a Twenty Year Vision for Health and Wellbeing in Northern Ireland 2005 – 2025
- Homelessness Strategy for Northern Ireland, 2012-2017
http://www.nihe.gov.uk/homelessness_strategy_for_northern_ireland_2012-2017.pdf
- Improving And Safeguarding Social Wellbeing A Strategy For Social Work In Northern Ireland - 2012 – 2022
- Making A Difference: Improving Access To Justice For Victims And Witnesses Of Crime - A Five-Year Strategy
- New Strategic Direction (NSD) on Alcohol and Drugs 2011-2016
- Northern Ireland Suicide Prevention Strategy 2012 - March 2014
- Policing Plan 2015-16;
http://www.nipolicingboard.org.uk/final_pdf_policing_plan_2015-16_web_version.pdf
- Policing with the Community 2020 Strategy
http://www.psnipolice.uk/pwc_-_2020_v2.pdf
- Programme for Government (PfG) for 2011-2015
<http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/pfg-2011-2015-final-report.pdf>
- Sexual Health Promotion - Strategy & Action Plan 2008 – 2013 and Addendum to December 2015
- Strategic Framework for Reducing Offending - Towards a Safer Society 2013
- Strategy to improve the lives of disabled people – 2012 – 2015
- Tackling Violence at Home - A Strategy for addressing Domestic Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland – 2005
- Tackling Sexual Violence and Abuse: A Regional Strategy 2008 – 2013
- United Nations Millennium Declaration 2000
<http://www.un.org/millennium/declaration/ares552e.htm>
- UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2006
<http://www.un.org/disabilities/convention/conventionfull.shtml>
- Reducing Offending Among Women Strategy Victim Charter
- Working arrangement for the welfare and Safeguarding of Child/Suspected Victims of Human trafficking (2011)

Legislation

- Child Abduction (Northern Ireland) Order 1995
- Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995
- The Children Act 1989
- Children and Young Persons Act (Northern Ireland) 1968
- The Communications Act 2003
- Coroners and Justice Act 2009
- Criminal Attempts and Conspiracy (Northern Ireland) Order 1983
- Criminal Injuries Compensation (Northern Ireland) Order 1977
- Criminal Evidence (NI) Order 1999
- Criminal Justice Act 1988
- Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 1996
- Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004.
- Family Homes and Domestic Violence (Northern Ireland) Order 1998
- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003
- Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act 2007
- Health and Social Care Act 2012
- Historical Institutional Abuse Act (NI) 2013
- Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 2015
- Law Reform (Misc Prov) Order 2005
- Malicious Communications (Northern Ireland) Order 1988
- Mental Health Order (NI) 1986
- New Mental Capacity Bill
- Offences against the Person Act 1861
- Protection from Harassment (Northern Ireland) Order 1997
- Protection of Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1978
- Public Order (Northern Ireland) Order 1987
- *Sexual Offences Act 2003*
- Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008 and
- Theft Act (Northern Ireland) 1969

All the above legislation, Available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/>

Evidence Base used to inform this Strategy

Strategic Context

The United Nations, European Union and Council of Europe actively encourage progress in relation to addressing domestic and sexual violence through the exchange of experience, comparative analysis, the promotion of best practice and agreement on common standards.

United Nations

The United Nations (UN) enacted early human rights law, through the International Bill of Human Rights⁵⁹, relevant to violence and abuse perpetrated against individuals.

The UN has also imposed further duties on Member States, to address the rights of children, women and persons with a disability (further information on UN duties is provided throughout this Appendix). While these duties do not explicitly address domestic and sexual violence, they articulate a state's duty to protect fundamental human rights that are commonly breached in the instances of violence and abuse cases. These include the right to life, the right to physical and mental integrity, the right to equal protection of the laws and the right to be free from discrimination.

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

The CEDAW⁶⁰, adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly, is often described as an international bill of rights for women. The convention defines what constitutes discrimination against women and sets up an agenda for national action to end such discrimination. It is the only human rights treaty which affirms the reproductive rights of women and targets culture and tradition as influential forces shaping gender roles and family relations. It affirms women's rights to acquire, change or retain their nationality and the nationality of their children. By accepting the Convention, States commit themselves to undertake a series of measures to end discrimination against women in all forms. States parties also agree to take appropriate measures against all forms of traffic in women and exploitation of women.

In 1989 the Committee requested information on the incidence of violence against women. In 1992 it adopted general recommendation 19, requiring national reports statistical data on the incidence of violence against women, information on the provision of services for victims, and legislative and other measures taken to protect women against violence in their everyday lives, such as harassment at the workplace, abuse in the family and sexual violence.

European Union

Gender equality is a fundamental principle of the European Union (EU), enshrined in the Treaty of the European Community. Since 1995, the European Council have requested that Member States provide an annual review of the implementation of the

⁵⁹ The Bill consists of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, , adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948, and it's implementing covenants, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), , which entered into force in 1976.]

⁶⁰ CEDAW 2007 available at: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/> (Accessed: 19 January 2015).

Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) which is 'an agenda for the empowerment of women'. This principle is endorsed by further Council initiatives to address, what is considered by many member states to be, gender-based violence.

Since 2009 the **European Parliament** has urged Member States to recognise acts of sexual violence against women, including those committed within marriage and intimate informal relationships or where committed by male relatives, as a crime and prompted the use of automatic prosecution.

The **European Commission** considers 'an end to gender-based violence' as a key priority and action and have expressed, through the **Women's Charter**, that "Europe does not tolerate gender-based violence".⁶¹

Council of Europe

In 2002, the Council of Europe (CoE) recognised sexual violence as a violation of the person's physical, psychological and/or sexual integrity and encouraged European countries to take appropriate measures to penalise all types of acts, no matter what the relationship with the perpetrator. In 2011 the **CoE** opened for signature the **Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (CAHVIO)**. The Convention, which also stresses the criminalisation of sexual violence and the need to support victims, is the first legally binding instrument in this area at European level. The CoE have also developed strategic European standards to further reinforce human rights and address violence and abuse.

Republic of Ireland

Our closest neighbour within Europe, the Republic of Ireland, published its National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence⁶² on 9th February 2010. This 2010-2014 strategy sets out the general vision, objectives and actions to tackle these crimes. The overall aim of this work is to reduce the prevalence of the crimes and to ensure that the system of prevention and response functions effectively in a co-ordinated manner increasing the understanding of the general public and professional services, supporting victims and ensuring the accountability of offenders.

Domestic

Within the United Kingdom it is important to recognise that there are existing links across policy areas in tackling domestic and sexual violence and abuse. This Northern Ireland strategy should be seen to enhance those existing domestic strategies and through a common strategic foundation deliver strengthened outcomes for all victims.

⁶¹ European Parliament (2013) , Available at: http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/employment_and_social_policy/equality_between_men_and_women/em0037_en.htm (Accessed: 29 August 2013).

⁶² COSC (2013) , Available at: <http://www.cosc.ie/en/COSC/Pages/WP08000151> (Accessed: 19 January 2015).

England

The Violence Against Women and Girls Action Plan⁶³ published by the Home Office in March 2011 builds on the experience of the women's sector and specialist organisations that are dedicated to delivering services to women and girls, and know all too well the reality of abuse. The Home Office and the Ministry of Justice have pledged to provide direct, ring fenced funding to these specialist services.

Whilst the focus of this document is on supporting women and girls it also establishes a need to address the needs of men and boys who may be affected by domestic and sexual violence and abuse.

The Home Office also has responsibility for three main policy areas relating to sexual violence:

- Policy development on improving prosecution and investigation of sexual offences (together with the Ministry of Justice, Crown Prosecution Service, the Association of Chief Police Officers, and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary);
- Providing input into policy on support to victims of sexual violence within the criminal justice system, (together with the Ministry of Justice, Government Equalities Office, Crown Prosecution Service and the Department of Health); and
- Leading on work to prevent sexual violence, including tackling pervading myths and attitudes about rape.

Many local authorities have also produced policies and strategies regarding domestic and sexual violence and abuse for example;

- Sefton Domestic and Sexual Violence Prevention Strategy 2007-2010, and
- Devon Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy⁶⁴.

Scotland

The National Scottish Strategy on Preventing Domestic Abuse states, "The ultimate goal ... is clearly to take all practicable measures towards the elimination of domestic abuse..."⁶⁵ The strategy accepts that success will depend on achieving changes in individual attitudes and behaviour and in social culture.

It also recognises that such fundamental changes are achieved only gradually and there are problems which must be tackled here and now. The Strategy emphasises that effective action to protect and provide for women, children and young people experiencing violence can, in itself, affect culture and attitude and thus contribute towards the longer-term process of changing behaviour.

Wales

The Welsh Assembly has a vision to transform Wales into a self-confident, prosperous, healthy nation and society, which is fair to all. The "Right to be Safe

⁶³Home Office (2011), Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/97903/vawg-action-plan.pdf (Accessed: 19 January 2015).

⁶⁴ Devon County Council <http://www.devonhealthandwellbeing.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/DSVA-Strategy-FINAL-2012-06-19.pdf> (Accessed 30 January 2015)

⁶⁵ Scottish Executive <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/47176/0025563.pdf> (Accessed 30 January 2015)

Strategy”⁶⁶ has a vision where communities are resilient, safe places, which provide an equal opportunity for everyone to contribute. This Strategy also commits Welsh Assembly to tackling the causes, rather than just the symptoms, of problematic behaviours and to protecting individuals or groups from suffering harm or discrimination.

⁶⁶ Welsh Assembly <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dsjlg/publications/commsafety/100325besafefinalenv1.pdf> (Accessed 30 January 2015)

Appendix 2: Prevalence, the 'bigger picture' United Kingdom (UK) and Ireland

In a study minority ethnic women were identified as at increased risk of domestic abuse but less likely to report to the police.

Traveller women were identified as being 3 times more likely to suffer but still less likely to report.

Translating Pain into Action Women's Health Council, February 2009

Almost three quarters of incidents of domestic violence (73%) involve repeat offending, with over one in four victims (27%) attacked three or more times.

Third Special Report: Domestic Violence, Forced Marriage and "Honour"-Based Violence, House of Commons Home Affairs Committee, 31st October 2008.

Most survivors of same sex domestic abuse do not report to public agencies. This is partly because they see their experience as their own problem, and partly because they do not believe they will receive a sympathetic response.

Comparing Domestic Abuse in Same Sex and Heterosexual Relationships, Catherine Donovan, Marianne Hester et al. November 2006

Only 13% of victims of serious sexual assault who replied to the England and Wales Crimes Survey said they had reported the incident to the police. This further verifies the belief that domestic and sexual crimes are massively underreported.

Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) 2011/12

Men tended not to report partner abuse to the police because they considered the incident "too trivial or not worth reporting"(ibid.:67)

Who Does What to Whom? Gender and Domestic Violence Perpetrators - Professor Marianne Hester, June 2009



The national prevalence of *reported* cases of Forced Marriage is estimated to be between 5,000 and 8,000.

Research report, The National Centre for Social Research, July 2009

As Domestic Violence and Abuse is often a pattern of behaviour, repeat victimisation is common. No other crime has a repeat rate as high.

22% of men and 33% of women had experienced abuse from a partner since the age of 16.

British Crime Survey data on partner abuse - Povey et al. 2008

A third of teenage girls in a relationship suffer an unwanted sexual act.

Partner exploitation and violence in teenage intimate relationships – Barter et al. 2009

Worldwide



- About 140 million girls and women worldwide are currently living with the consequences of FGM. FGM is mostly carried out on young girls sometime between infancy and age 15⁶⁷.
- Sexual violence against men and boys is a significant problem. Studies conducted mostly in developed countries indicate that 5-10% of men report a history of childhood sexual abuse. In a few population-based studies conducted with adolescents in developing countries, the percentage of males reporting ever having been the victim of a sexual assault ranges from 3.6% in Namibia and 13.4% in the United Republic of Tanzania to 20% in Peru. Most experts believe that official statistics vastly under-represent the number of male rape victims. As is the case with female victims of sexual assault, research suggests that male victims are likely to suffer from a range of psychological consequences, both in the immediate period after the assault and over the longer term. These include guilt, anger, anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, sexual dysfunction, somatic complaints, sleep disturbances, withdrawal from relationships and attempted suicide. In addition to these reactions, studies of adolescent males have also found an association between suffering rape and substance misuse, violent behaviour, stealing and absenteeism from school.⁶⁸
- Studies of intimate partner violence routinely identify recent consumption of alcohol by perpetrators. Estimates vary between countries. In the United States of America, and in England and Wales, victims believed their partners to have been drinking prior to a physical assault in 55% and 32% of cases respectively.⁶⁹
- International research which conducted interviews with 207 trafficked women revealed severe levels of violence, 95% of women had been subjected to physical or sexual violence with 75% physically hurt and 90% reporting sexual assault.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ WHO (2001) *Female Genital Mutilation Fact Sheet 241*, Available at: <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs241/en/> (Accessed: 19 February 2016).

⁶⁸ WHO (2002) *World Health Report on Violence*, Available at: http://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&frm=1&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CDIQFIAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.who.int%2Fviolence_injury_prevention%2Fviolence%2Fworld_report%2F&ei=muBoUt6uMKrO0wWen4GQAq&usq=AFQjCNGI-YHsKxrsV8_ShKfwlxNn2DtA7g&sig2=KmZzY7uYheUs9qMKvCvQDQ&bvm=bv.55123115.d.Yms (Accessed: 30 January 2015).

⁶⁹ WHO () *Violence and Alcohol Factsheet*, Available at: http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/world_report/factsheets/ft_intimate.pdf (Accessed: 19 February 2016).

⁷⁰ Zimmer et al (2006) *Stolen Smiles*, Available at: <http://genderviolence.lshm.ac.uk/files/Stolen-Smiles-Trafficking-and-Health-2006.pdf> (Accessed: 19 February 2016).

- Child sexual abuse affects boys and girls. International studies reveal that approximately 20% of women and 5–10% of men report being victims of sexual violence as children.⁷¹
- Population-based studies of relationship violence among young people (or dating violence) suggest that this affects a substantial proportion of the youth population. For instance, in South Africa a study of people aged 13–23 years found that 42% of females and 38% of males reported being a victim of physical dating violence.⁷²
- Overall children with disabilities are 2.9 times more likely to be victims of sexual violence. Children with mental or intellectual impairments appear to be among the most vulnerable, with 4.6 times the risk of sexual violence than their non-disabled peers.⁷³
- In a recent study minority ethnic women were identified as at increased risk of domestic abuse but less likely to report to the police. Traveller women were identified as being 3 times more likely to suffer but still less likely to report.⁷⁴
- Almost three quarters of incidents of domestic violence (73%) involve repeat offending, with over one in four victims (27%) attacked three or more times.⁷⁵

⁷¹ WHO (2012) *WHO Factsheet 239*, Available at: <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs239/en/> (Accessed: 19 February 2016).

⁷² WHO (2012) *WHO Factsheet 239*, Available at: <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs239/en/> (Accessed 19 February 2016).

⁷³ WHO (2012) *Violence against women and children with disabilities*, Available at: <http://who.int/disabilities/violence/en/index.html> (Accessed: 19 February 2016).

⁷⁴ WHC (2009) *Translating Pain into Action*, Available at: http://www.womensaid.ie/download/pdf/whc_gender_based_violence.pdf (Accessed: 25 February 2016).

⁷⁵ House of Commons (2008) *Domestic Violence, Forced Marriage and Honour-Based Violence*, Available at: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmselect/cmhaff/263/263ii.pdf> (Accessed: 25 February 2016).

Appendix 3 – Background on Costings

- Research by Professor Sylvia Walby (University of Leeds) published in 2004 estimated the costs of domestic violence to society in England and Wales at £23bn for the 2001 year alone. The methodology used was based on the Home Office's framework for costing crime. This estimate was later updated by Professor Walby for 2008 to a figure of £16bn. The overall cost of domestic violence reduced over the period as the recorded rate of domestic violence had fallen significantly in these jurisdictions.
- Recorded domestic violence levels in Northern Ireland in recent years have been increasing. In 2009/10 there were 24,482 incidents, in 2014/15 there were 28,287 incidents. Domestic violence costs analysis has been completed most recently in DHSSPS for the year 2011/12. This work has largely adopted the methodology used by Professor Walby. Incidence and cost data specifically for Northern Ireland have been used where available.
- Information on direct costs is based mainly on local service expenditure figures, in some cases using England and Wales assumptions, where local activity data were not available. The indirect costs (lost economic output) and intangible costs (human costs of pain, suffering and lost quality of life) are not based on hard data but on recent values published by Department of Transport (GB) for the prevention of fatal, serious and slight accidents, and are widely used in this type of economic costing analysis. These GB values have been reduced by 20% to reflect Northern Ireland's relatively lower economic output per head.
- Most of the costs estimated for Northern Ireland in Table 1 on page 28, detailing the costs of domestic violence and abuse, apply to females and males combined. These costs also cover the cost impact of sexual violence between partners. The majority of the costs fall on female victims of domestic violence. It has not been possible to produce a reliable allocation of the costs by gender for Northern Ireland. There are a number of instances where it has not been possible to estimate the costs specifically for males, for example, in relation to the direct costs of treating victims for depression and the direct service costs associated with suicide and self-harm as a result of domestic violence. Re-housing and support costs for male victims of domestic violence are also not known. In this respect the estimated total cost of domestic violence in Northern Ireland, as presented in the table, is an under-estimate.
- It is understood from PSNI domestic violence data, that approximately three quarters of all domestic violence in Northern Ireland is visited on females. Therefore, it is reasonable that the costs of domestic violence in NI can be

attributed to females and males on a 75%:25% basis. The cost of domestic violence on children in Northern Ireland for 2011/12 is approximately £18.6m, arising through social services input to children and families. Significant numbers of children in Northern Ireland are also encountered through the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference process, not all of which are known to social services. It should be noted that the £18.6m cost figure does not cover the medium to long-term impact on children of domestic violence on their emotional and psychological development. These costs are likely to be significant and enduring. No intangible human costs for the pain and suffering endured by children are included in this analysis.

- DHSSPS estimates the economic costs of domestic violence in Northern Ireland for 2011/12 at approximately £675m. The costs estimate is very sensitive to the assumptions used for indirect costs and intangible human costs. Sensitivity analysis performed on the figures reveals a lower cost estimate of £602m and a higher cost estimate of £827m

The Costs of Sexual Violence and Abuse

- The costs associated with sexual violence between partners are covered in the costs estimate presented for domestic violence. The costs for sexual violence occurring outside of the partner setting have also been calculated for Northern Ireland and are presented separately in Table 2 on page 29. These costs estimates exclude costs for child victims of rape and sexual assault, which it has not been possible to calculate. In this respect the costs estimate can be viewed as an under-estimate.
- The cost estimate has been derived using a similar methodology to that used for the domestic violence costs above. As with the domestic violence costs, the cost burden falls heavily on females and there are very significant human costs related to the pain and suffering endured by victims. Total sexual violence costs for Northern Ireland, occurring outside of the partner setting are estimated at approximately £257m for 2011/12.

Appendix 4: Equality Issues

Section 75 (S75) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 places the following statutory requirement:

“(1) A public authority shall in carrying out its function relating to Northern Ireland have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity—

- (a) between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
- (b) between men and women generally;
- (c) between persons with a disability and persons without; and
- (d) between persons with dependants and persons without.

(2) Without prejudice to its obligations under subsection (1), a public authority shall in carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group”.

Policy Aim and Groups Affected

The proposals in this Strategy are intended to improve the services, support and recourse available to all those affected by Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse, by reducing levels of violence and abuse and challenging and addressing offending behaviour in Northern Ireland. As part of its consultation exercise, the Departments conducted an Equality Screening Assessment to gauge whether the proposals would have a significant differential impact on any of the section 75 categories.

Through a public consultation information and evidence was sought on the potential impact the proposals within the Strategy might have on all Section 75 groups. Following analysis of the information available and responses received the Departments conducted a second equality screening assessment.

Following that assessment we consider the proposals do not have a significant differential impact. On that basis we do not consider that a full Equality Impact Assessment is required.

Appendix 5: Glossary and Definitions

Abuse: within the Strategy, this term relates to both Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse

Attrition: for the purposes of this Strategy this relates to avoidable attrition; where the victim or witness withdraws or retracts evidence

CBT: cognitive behavioural therapy

CAHVIO: Ad Hoc Committee on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence

CEDAW: UN Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women

Child: for the purposes of this Strategy, **is anyone who has not yet reached their 14th birthday.** Please note this term relates to the Strategy only and does not replace current agreed definitions across relevant fields and practices, for example, the defined term recognised within medicine, safeguarding, applied and academic research, as well as criminal and civil law.

CJINI: Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland.

CMR: Case Management Reviews

CoE: Council of Europe

Consent: where a person agrees by choice, and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice. (*The Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008*).

Where a person indicates their informed approval, by words or overt actions, a freely given agreement to sexual activity. The age of consent is 16 and it should be noted that there is no defence with regard to mistaken belief about the age of a child.

Child Sexual Exploitation: is a form of sexual abuse in which a person(s) exploits, coerces and/or manipulates a child or young person into engaging in some form of sexual activity in return for something the child needs or desires and/or for the gain of the person(s) perpetrating or facilitating the abuse. (SBNI, October 2014)

CSE: Child Sexual Exploitation

CSS: Community Safety Strategy

CYPSP: Children's and Young People's Strategic Partnership

DARS: Domestic Abuse Recovery Service

DE: Department of Education

DEL: Department for Employment and Learning

DHSSPS: Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

DOJ: Department of Justice

Domestic violence and abuse, definition within this Strategy: 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.

ETI: Education and Training Inspectorate

EU: European Union

Female Genital Mutilation: ‘All procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons’ (*World Health Organisation, 2012*).

Forced Marriage: ‘A marriage in which one or both spouses do not consent to the marriage and duress is involved. Duress can be physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure’ (*Crown Prosecution Service, 2000*).

‘Honour’- Based Violence: ‘So-called honour based violence is a crime of incident, which has or may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community’ (*Association of Chief Police Officer of England, Wales and Northern Ireland, 2008*).

HSCB: Health and Social Care Board

HSCT: Health and Social Care Trust

ICSS: Independent Counselling Services for Schools

IDAP: Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme

Incidence: the rate at which new cases of Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse, occur in a population during a specified period.

IMG: Inter-Ministerial group on Domestic and Sexual Violence

LASP: Local Adult Safeguarding Partnership

LDVP: Local Domestic Violence Partnership

LGB&T: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender

MAP: Men’s Advisory Project

MARAC: Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference

NIASP: Northern Ireland Adult Safeguarding Partnership

NICS: Northern Ireland Crime Survey

NICTS: Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service

NIHE: Northern Ireland Housing Executive

NIPS Northern Ireland Prison Service

NISRA: Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency

NOS: National Occupational Standards

NSD: New Strategic Direction

NSPCC: National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children

Offender: a person who displays behaviour which falls within the definition of domestic or sexual violence and abuse and has been convicted of an offence associated with this behaviour.

OFMDFM: Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister

PCSP: Policing and Community Safety Partnership

Perpetrator: a person who displays behaviour which falls within the definition of domestic or sexual violence and abuse, but who has not yet been convicted of an offence.

PfG: Programme for Government

PHA: Public Health Agency

PPANI: Public Protection Arrangements for Northern Ireland

PPU: Public Protection Units

Prevention: Primary prevention – i.e. preventing domestic and sexual violence and abuse before it happens;

Secondary prevention- i.e. preventing further domestic and sexual violence and abuse for those at risk of it reoccurring;

Tertiary prevention – managing the long-term consequence of domestic and sexual violence and abuse which could be physical, environmental, psychological and social consequences

Prevalence: the total number of reported cases of Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in a given population at a specific time.

PSNI: Police Service of Northern Ireland

RQIA: Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority

RSE: Relationships and Sexuality Education

RSG: Regional Strategy Group on Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse

Safeguarding: the term is used to encompass both prevention and protection activity. Safeguarding activity covers many different types of help, care, support and interventions to enable people to manage their own health and wellbeing, to protect themselves and live fulfilled, safe lives. Safeguarding activity must ensure that people are treated with dignity and respect and are safe from abuse, neglect and exploitation. Everybody has a responsibility to play their part in making this happen.'

SARC: Sexual Assault Referral Centre

SBNI: Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland

S75: Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998

Section 75 Groups: In *'the Agreement'* reached between Governments and political parties in April 1998, the section dealing with Rights, Safeguards and Equality of Opportunity included a commitment to a statutory obligation on public authorities. This was then implemented through the *Northern Ireland Act 1998*. Under Section 75 of this Act, public authorities are required to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity:

- between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
- between men and women generally;
- between persons with a disability and persons without; and
- between persons with dependants and persons without.

These are often referred to as the 'Section 75 groups'. Under the Act Public authorities are also required to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

Sexual Violence and Abuse, definition within this Strategy: 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).

(Please note coercive, exploitative and harmful behaviour includes taking advantage of an individual's incapacity to give informed consent).

Sexual exploitation: involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where someone receives 'something' (e.g. food, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection,

protection) as a result of them performing, and/or others performing on them, sexual activities. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the person's limited ability of choice resulting from their social, economic and/or emotional vulnerability.

Sexual harassment: unwanted verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. It can take place anywhere, including the workplace, schools, streets, public transport and social situations. It includes flashing, obscene and threatening calls and online harassment.

Stalking: repeated (i.e. on at least two occasions) harassment causing fear, alarm or distress. It can include threatening phone calls, texts, emails or letters; damaging property; spying on and following the victim

The Rowan: is the Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) for Northern Ireland based at Antrim Area Hospital.

UK: United Kingdom

UN: United Nations

UNCRC: United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child

Victim(s): For the purpose of this Strategy, a victim is considered to be a person who is directly the subject of a crime. It could also include:

- the parent or guardian of a victim aged under 18
- close family (which in most cases will be the next of kin) or family representative where the crime results in the death of that person or very serious harm or injury meaning that they are unable to communicate. This would include cases where the victim dies as a result of the crime or before the case concludes.
- a close friend (for example, where there is no close family and they are acting as a family representative).

In legislative terms it is likely that the victim will be the person directly impacted by the crime, with the potential for their entitlements to extend to other persons as set out above. It should be noted that a victim is also likely to be a witness to a crime, being both a victim of, and witness to, a crime. (Making a difference to victims and witnesses of crime. Improving access to justice, services and support - A five-year strategy, June 2013, DOJ)

V&WS: Victims and Witnesses Strategy

Violence: within the Strategy this term relates to both Domestic and Sexual Violence and abuse

WHO: World Health Organisation

Witness: A witness is considered to be a person who witnesses a crime taking place, or can provide information material to the case, and whose evidence may help

in apprehending a suspect or in the progression of court proceeding. (Making a difference to victims and witnesses of crime.) Improving access to justice, services and support - A five-year strategy, June 2013, DOJ)

Young Person: someone aged 14 or over but under 18

Appendix 6: Summary of key support services and Useful Contact Information

24 Hour Domestic and Sexual Violence Helpline

The 24 Hour Domestic and Sexual Violence Helpline provides confidential telephone, email and texting service to all women and men affected by domestic and sexual violence and abuse now or in the past, regardless of gender, age, disability, ethnicity and sexual orientation. The Helpline provides information, emotional support and the opportunity to discuss concerns and, where applicable, signpost and refer to other agencies. The helpline works closely with other voluntary and statutory agencies. The helpline is managed by Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland

Barnardo's

Barnardo's work with children includes counselling, fostering and respite care. The organisation works with young carers, children of prisoners, young people vulnerable to sexual exploitation, ethnic minority families, families where there is domestic violence and abuse, addiction or mental health issues, and children who have been bereaved. They also champion children's rights bringing vital issues to the attention of the public and the Northern Ireland Executive. Barnardo's are working with front-line agencies to promote a child-focused domestic violence multi-agency risk identification tool and safety planning with children (6yrs +) and young people who are living with domestic violence and abuse in their families.

The Children's and Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP)

The Children's and Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP) is a cross agency partnership which is underpinned by the commitments of OFMDFM to improve outcomes for children. This is recorded through the *Children and Young People's Action Plan*⁷⁶. There are a number of sub-groups which have a significant interface with services/actions on domestic and sexual violence; for example, the Regional sub-group on Children and Young People with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties, the sub-group on Black and Ethnic Children and Young People and the Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transsexual (LGB&T) subgroup.

ChildLine

ChildLine provides a 24 hour confidential service for children and young people up to the age of nineteen. Trained Counsellors are available to discuss any problems and can be contacted by phone, a 1-2-1 chat online or email

Domestic Violence Partnerships

Domestic Violence Partnerships (DVPs) bring together agencies, organisations, groups and individuals who share a common interest and purpose in improving services and support for all victims of domestic violence and abuse. The DVPs includes representation from the PSNI, Women's Aid, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE), NSPCC, the Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNI) and other local agencies and organisations. They meet regularly to take forward particular themes or relevant issues such as domestic violence workplace policies,

⁷⁶ CYPSP (2011) , Available at: http://www.cypsp.org/download/Publications/Action%20Plan/cypsp_action_plan_2011-2014.pdf (Accessed: 25 February 2016).

supporting teachers in their role as social guardians, and monitoring changes to legislation.

Independent Counselling Services for Schools (ICSS)

ICSS provides access to school based counselling which is independent of the school to all post primary age.

Lifeline

Lifeline provides confidential crisis response helpline service for people who are experiencing distress or despair. Lifeline counsellors are experienced in working with trauma, suicide, self-harm, abuse, depression and anxiety'

MARACS

MARACs are relatively new in Northern Ireland. They are local meetings where information about victims at high risk of domestic violence is shared between local agencies. By bringing all agencies together at a MARAC a risk focused, co-ordinated safety plan can be drawn up to support the victim. There are currently fourteen MARACs operating across Northern Ireland, with 1667 cases discussed in 2012. Services such as MARACs have resulted in significant reductions in repeat victimisation elsewhere in the UK.⁷⁷

Men's Advisory Project

Men's Advisory Project (MAP) provides counselling services for male victims of domestic violence and abuse and those who have left a violent or abusive relationship and who are still experiencing the effects;

Men's Action Network

Men's Action Network offer counselling and support services for men experiencing difficulties as a result of family break up or child contact difficulties. They also provide professional counselling service to men who are victims of domestic and/or sexual violence and abuse;

Nexus

Nexus NI work across Northern Ireland to respond to the needs of adults who have been a victim of sexual abuse, violence or rape by providing counselling and support services and increasing awareness of the issues. They also offer services to young people aged 16 and over who have been the victims of sexual violence. Although Nexus NI provide an adult service, many of their clients have been abused as children. Nexus NI also helps them to deal with the pain of the past and look forward to a healthy future. The five HSCTs currently commission counselling from Nexus NI for victims of sexual violence and abuse.

The Northern Ireland Housing Executive

The Northern Ireland Housing Executive is responsible for providing accommodation for people who are homeless. NIHE has access to a range of temporary accommodation including, Housing Executive Hostels, voluntary sector hostels and

⁷⁷ Standing Together Available at: <http://www.standingtogether.org.uk/standingtogetherlocal/standingtogethermarac/> (Accessed: 19 February 2016).

private single let properties⁷⁸. The length of time spent in these is dependent on the access to permanent housing. NIHE has also:

- introduced a tenancy support scheme for victims of domestic violence and abuse; and
- where necessary, has retrained staff on dealing with victims of domestic violence and abuse.

NSPCC Northern Ireland

NSPCC deliver a range of evidence based therapeutic and protection services directly to children/young people and their families who have experienced sexual abuse; and to people with mental ill health or experiences of domestic abuse. Our services include the 24/7 NSPCC Helpline for anyone concerned about the welfare of a child and we provide support for all children and young people through ChildLine via telephone; e-mail or online, 24 hours a day/365days a year. NSPCC also provide advocacy and support for vulnerable victims and witnesses who are required to give evidence in criminal trials.

Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs)

PCSPs aim to make communities safer by focussing on the policing and community safety issues that matter most in Local Council areas. Local priorities are informed by the Community Safety Strategy, and the Regional and local Policing Plans. Each PCSP is encouraged to consider delivery outcomes which take account of available information on domestic and sexual violence and abuse, including PSNI statistics, public and other consultations and wider community engagement.

Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland

The Regional Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI) was established in 2012. The SBNI is the key statutory mechanism for agreeing how the member agencies will co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, and for ensuring the effectiveness of what they do. The Strategic Plan of the SBNI outlines the functions of the SBNI and highlights its priorities for the coming years. It highlights the cumulative and interactive impact of risk factors such as alcohol, substance misuse and domestic violence on the emotional and psychological health of children.

SBNI are responsible for convening Case Management Reviews (CMRs) both in relation to positive learning experiences and in situations which have resulted in tragic consequences for families. Multiple adversities and their devastating consequences can sometimes only manifest themselves when lessons from these Case Management Review are shared. While SBNI contributes to all the high level outcomes for children and young people, its particular focus is on keeping children and young people safe from maltreatment, neglect, violence and sexual exploitation, and it is seeking to do this through promoting high standards of safeguarding work and by fostering a culture of continuous improvement

⁷⁸ DSD, NIHE (2012), Available at: http://www.nihe.gov.uk/homelessness_strategy_for_northern_ireland_2012-2017.pdf (Accessed: 19 February 2016).

Safeguarding Partnerships

The adult safeguarding infrastructure in Northern Ireland consists of The Northern Ireland Adult Safeguarding Partnership (NIASP) and five Local Adult Safeguarding Partnerships (LASPs). The NIASP is the regional body, led by the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB). It is responsible for setting the strategic direction of adult safeguarding in Northern Ireland in response to developing government policy. The LASPs are centred on the five Health and Social Care Trusts (HSCTs). They are the local delivery arm of the NIASP and will respond through local action-planning to the strategic direction NIASP sets. The six bodies are inter-sectoral, inter-agency and multi-disciplinary in make-up. Much of the work of NIASP and local partnerships will be under pinned by the Integrated Pathway model, Figure 2 , and the four key service provision elements:-

- Encourage and recognise disclosure of violence and abuse;
- Respond to disclosure;
- Identification of harm; and
- Coordinated action following disclosure.

Rainbow Project

The Rainbow Project facilitates the only gay/bisexual-male-specific counseling service currently available in Northern Ireland; services include counseling for couples wanting to explore relationship issues; one to one counselling; couple/relationship counselling; counselling for young LGB&T people, and Personal Development Groups and Family support.

The Rowan Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC)

The Rowan SARC offers a range of services to the victims of sexual crime including a comprehensive assessment of their needs and depending upon those assessed needs, various support/ agreed care pathways are followed. It works with the statutory and voluntary sector service providers through developed protocols and pathways, referring victims to relevant support services when required and with the victim's consent. As this integrated service becomes better known, it is likely that staffing levels and service provision will need to be reviewed.

Victim Support

Victim Support NI is the lead victims' charity in Northern Ireland providing support to victims and witnesses of all types of crime, whether or not it has been reported to the police. The organisation undertakes needs assessments with all service users and provides emotional support, information, practical help and referral on to other services as appropriate. Support is also provided to victims who are eligible to apply for criminal injury compensation. The organisation works closely with the Rowan Centre and refers clients to the MARAC process where required.

Women's Aid

Women's Aid is the lead voluntary organisation in Northern Ireland addressing domestic and sexual violence and providing services for women and children. The organisation recognises domestic and sexual violence as forms of violence against women. Women's Aid seeks to challenge attitudes and beliefs that perpetuate domestic and sexual violence and, through their work, promote healthy and non-abusive relationships.

The core work of Women's Aid in Northern Ireland, including Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland and local Women's Aid groups is:

- To provide refuge accommodation to women and their children suffering mental, physical or sexual abuse within the home.
- To manage the 24 Hour Domestic & Sexual Violence Helpline.
- To provide a range of support services to enable women who are affected by domestic and/or sexual violence to rebuild their lives and the lives of their children.
- To provide a range of support services to children and young people who have experienced domestic or sexual violence.
- To run preventative education programmes in schools and other settings.
- To educate and inform the public, media, police, courts, social services and other agencies of the impact and effects of domestic and sexual violence.
- To advise and support all relevant agencies in the development of domestic violence policies, protocols and service delivery.
- To work in partnership with all relevant agencies to ensure a joined up response to domestic and sexual violence.

The overall Women's Aid movement in Northern Ireland is made up of local Women's Aid groups and the Women's Aid Federation. All local Women's Aid groups are members of the Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland. Each Women's Aid group offers a range of specialist services to women, children and young people who have experienced domestic violence.

Useful Contact Information

Help Available

About them

Contact details

ChildLine Free 24 hour helpline

24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days per year.

Free, confidential helpline dedicated to children and young people.

0800 1111

www.ChildLine.org.uk

24 Hour Domestic and Sexual Violence Helpline

Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days per year.

The Helpline, managed by the Women's Aid Federation NI, is funded by DOJ, DHSSPS and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive through the Department of Social Development.

Free helpline from landlines and mobiles.

Call backs for mobiles and support available by e-mail and text - open to all women and men affected by domestic and sexual violence and abuse.

0808 802 1414

Email: 24hrsupport@dvhelpline.org

Text: Support to 07797805839

Lifeline Suicide prevention

Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days per year.

Free, confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress.

0808 808 8000

www.lifelinehelpline.info

Nexus NI

Professional counselling services to survivors of childhood sexual abuse, victims of sexual violence including those who have experienced rape and sexual assault.

028 9032 6803

www.nexusni.org

The Rowan
Sexual Assault Referral
Centre for NI

**0800 3894424 (free from
landlines)**
Antrim Area Hospital Site
45 Bush Road
Antrim
BT41 2RL

**Child Sexual
Exploitation Helpline**

There is a dedicated helpline to specifically support the investigation into child sexual exploitation in NI. It provides advice and information. Callers to the helpline remain anonymous.

0800 3891701