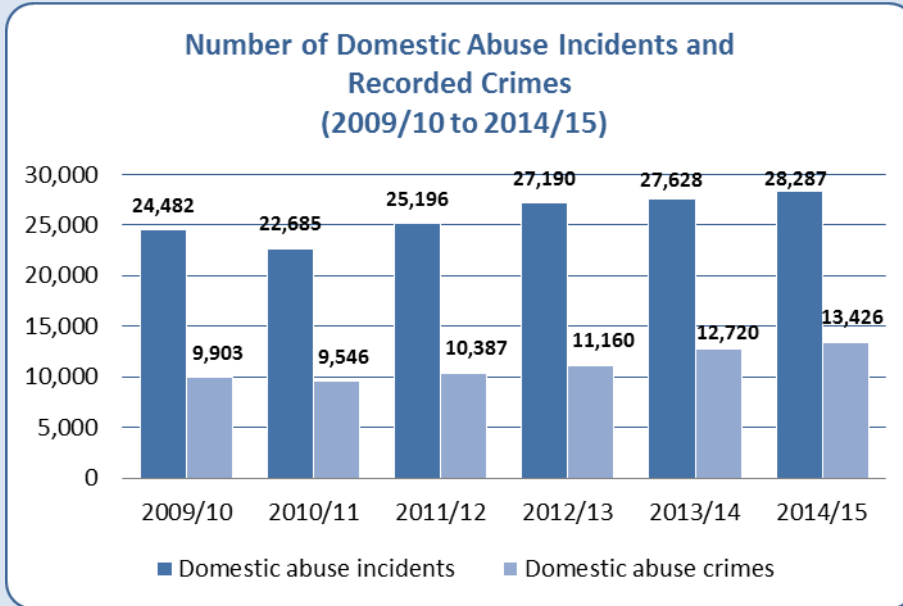


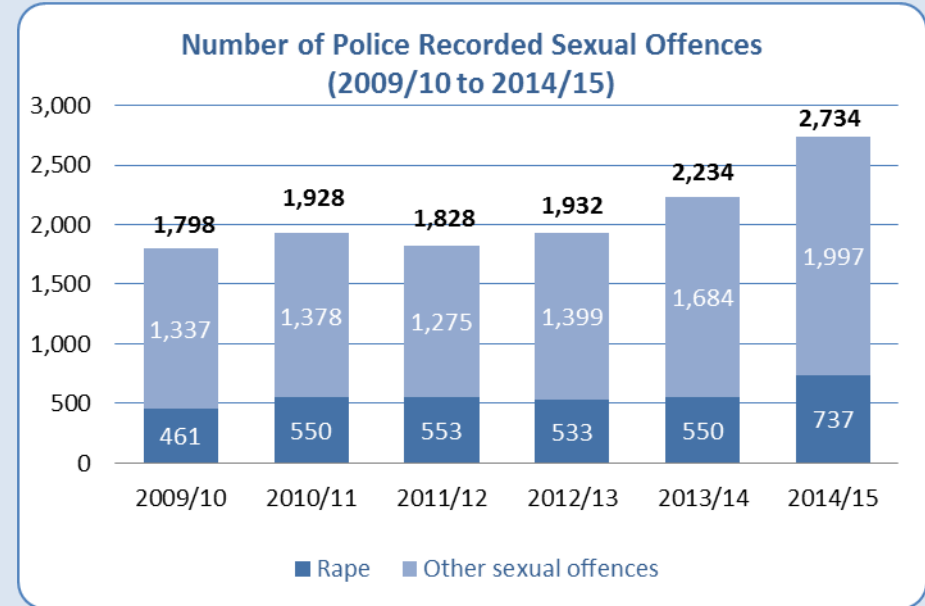
DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND ABUSE

BETTER PROTECTION AND JUSTICE FOR VICTIMS AND THEIR CHILDREN

Performance Indicators



Source: PSNI Statistics Branch



Source: PSNI Statistics Branch

Story behind the figures/context:

It is important to note that domestic and sexual violence and abuse are underreported. A central aspect of the current domestic and sexual violence and abuse strategies is to increase reporting by supporting victims, raising awareness of domestic and sexual violence and abuse, promoting services available and increasing confidence in relevant authorities and agencies.

PSNI reported in their publication 'Domestic Abuse Incidents and Crimes in Northern Ireland 2004/05 to 2014/15', that during 2014/15:

- 28,287 domestic abuse incidents recorded (the highest level recorded since recording began in 2004/05), this is on average 77 incidents a day
- 6 murders with a domestic motivation, accounting for over 37.5% of all murders recorded by the police
- 2,734 sexual offences
- 449 sexual offences with a domestic motivation
- 737 offences of rape¹

The Northern Ireland Crime Survey 2010/11 estimates that:

- 15.7% of people aged 16-64 have experienced at least one form of domestic violence, by a partner, since age 16.
- At 19.3% in 2010/11, women were much more likely than men (11.5%) to have reported experiencing some form of partner violence or abuse since age 16.
- When partner and family abuse are combined, 19.0% had experienced some form of domestic violence and abuse since the age of 16, a proportion that drops to 7.0% within the last 3 years.
- Police are unaware of almost three-quarters of all lifetime victims of partner abuse identified through the NICS, with only 27.1% of NICS 2010/11 victims reporting that the police came to know about their experience(s).
- Results suggest that women were more likely than men to report their domestic victimisation, with the police being made aware of a third (34.6%) of female victims, compared with around one-tenth (11.9%) of male victims.

Key actions within the current action plan, highlighted below, seek to improve protection and improve the experience of victims and in particular their engagement with the justice system. It is anticipated this work will continue through a new single *Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy*. We had aimed to publish the Strategy and associated documentation by 31 March 2015, however this has been delayed. We anticipate the final Strategy will soon be published following the necessary endorsement process. The table below also includes a number of local initiatives delivered through PCSPs who are currently represented within the delivery structure for the Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Action Plan.

In addition to the work on domestic and sexual violence, the recommendations arising from the Marshall Report into Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in Northern Ireland have been taken forward. A working group has been established and members have agreed an Action Plan to address the recommendation relevant to DOJ. The Department is also part of the Senior Officials Group which has been established by DHSSPS to take forward cross departmental recommendations.

¹ The increase in the number of rape offences recorded during 2014/15 may in part be due to clarification received from the Home Office in relation to the issue of consent. This is an area that has been the subject of considerable debate from a crime recording perspective. Crown Prosecution Service guidance on the subject was issued to police forces which assisted with the application of the rules for recording rape offences set out by the Home Office.

What we agreed to achieve in 2015-2017	What we did in 2015/16
<p>Adopt a consistent and long-term approach across Government and all partner agencies to the prevention of domestic and sexual violence, and provide an effective response where it occurs</p>	<p>Pilot Programme for alleged perpetrators of Domestic Violence and Abuse</p> <p>From January to September 2015 a pilot behavioural change programme was funded for delivery to DHSSPS Trust clients who were identified as at risk of committing acts of domestic violence and abuse but had not been through the CJ System. The pilot programme, which finished in September 2015 is currently undergoing an evaluation and this will inform how the initiative will be taken forward, subject to resources being available.</p> <p>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) visit June 2015</p> <p>In June 2015 OECD undertook a case study which assessed problem solving justice in Northern Ireland. This case study is one of five being carried out under the terms of reference of the OECD Public Governance Review (PGR) of Northern Ireland (NI). It aims to provide a review of the Domestic Violence Listing Arrangement (DVLA) in the Londonderry Magistrates' Court and an analysis of the establishment of a Family Justice Centre in Londonderry, as per the case study's own terms of reference. The case-study findings will be integrated into the final PGR report and inform the PGR's overall recommendations to the NI Executive on its public-governance reform agenda. Whilst we understand that the final OECD report will be published in April 2016, work is ongoing to assess how best to build upon the existing specialist listing arrangements.</p> <p>Female Genital Mutilation Protection Orders</p> <p>In August 2015 the Committee received a written briefing confirming that Female Genital Mutilation</p>

Protection Orders (FGMPOs) commenced in Northern Ireland on 17 July 2015. Officials agreed to implement these civil orders, in line with the Home Office, at the beginning of the school summer holidays. Section 73 of the Serious Crime Act 2015 allows the courts to make FGMPOs for the purposes of protecting a girl against the commission of a genital mutilation offence, or protecting a girl against whom such an offence has been committed. Provisions under section 73 relating to this civil order also create the offence of breaching an order which, on conviction, can result in imprisonment for a term not exceeding five years, or a fine, or both.

Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence And Abuse Strategy

The draft *Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy* was presented to the Justice Committee on 24 September 2015. On 9 February the Minister of Health wrote to the Inter-Ministerial Group on Domestic and Sexual Violence seeking their agreement to proceed to seek Executive approval to publish. It is anticipated that this will be achieved before the end of the current Mandate. Consideration continues to be given as to how the aims of this Strategy may be progressed in the current difficult financial environment.

Given the delay there has been in the publication of the Strategy, Minister Ford instructed his officials to take forward the implementation of the Justice priorities within the Strategy. These include:

Public Consultation on a Domestic Abuse offence and Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme

A 12 week public consultation commenced on 5 February 2016 on a specific offence that captures patterns of coercive and controlling behaviour in intimate relationships, in line with the proposed new Northern Ireland Government's definition of domestic abuse. The consultation also seeks views on the

introduction of a Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme in Northern Ireland.

Justice Act Northern Ireland 2015

The Justice Act Northern Ireland 2015 introduced two new measures aimed at tackling domestic violence and abuse. These were provisions for (1) Domestic Violence Protection Notices/Orders (DVPNs/DVPOs) and (2) for the offence of causing or allowing serious physical harm to a child or vulnerable adult in circumstances whereby the injuries must have been sustained at the hands of one of a limited number of members of the household, but there is insufficient evidence to point to the particular person responsible.

1. Domestic Violence Protection Notices/Orders

Schedule 7 of the Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 2015 was developed which provides the police with the power to issue a Domestic Violence Protection Notice and to apply to the courts for a Domestic Violence Protection Order for the purposes of protecting a victim of domestic violence where it has been assessed that they may be at risk of immediate harm and danger.

It also provides for the courts to grant a Domestic Violence Protection Order for a maximum period of 28 days which will provide immediate emergency protection for the victim allowing them protected space to explore the options available to them and make informed decisions regarding their safety.

Officials are currently engaging with relevant agencies regarding the development of suitable and robust guidance to allow for a pilot project to be implemented in Northern Ireland. In light of the scope of work required, it is unlikely that the Department will be in a position to commence a pilot scheme until late 2016.

2. Causing or allowing serious physical harm to a child or vulnerable adult

Section 96 of the Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 2015 extends the scope of the current offence of causing or allowing the death of a child or vulnerable adult under section 5 of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 to also include cases of “causing or allowing a child or vulnerable adult to suffer serious physical harm.” This new legislation allows for prosecution for causing serious injury to a child or vulnerable adult in cases where it is difficult to prove which member of the household is responsible and will provide further safeguards for children and vulnerable adults. Section 96 of the Act commenced on 29 January 2016.

Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs)

The Minister has committed to developing an appropriate model to identify lessons learned and improve the response to cases of domestic homicide in Northern Ireland and, as a consequence, this initiative will feature as a priority in the action plan under the new draft Strategy. Officials are liaising with colleagues in England and Wales and will engage further with key stakeholders to scope the current serious case review processes in Northern Ireland and to assess how best DHRs can be taken forward.

Initiatives being delivered across the PCSP network include:

- **Lisburn and Castlereagh PCSP**- An interagency post- Domestic Violence Liaison Worker- was developed in response to female victims of domestic violence who were using Belfast and Lisburn Women`s Aid services. Local police were also keen to improve their response to domestic incidents after the thematic inspection of the handling of domestic violence and abuse cases. The project is now embedded in the fabric of the work of police officers investigating domestic violence and has added a professional role to both the practical and emotional support to investigation officers. The

post is jointly funded by the PCSP, the NIHE and SEHSCT.

- **Mid & East Antrim PCSP**- A Criminal Justice worker based in PSNI Public Protection Unit supports those who have experienced domestic violence through the Court process with a view to increasing the number of successful prosecutions.
- **Mid Ulster PCSP** - In partnership with Crimestoppers undertook a DV awareness campaign targeted and male and females.
- **Newry and Mourne & Down PCSP** – Women’s Aid Newry & Armagh successfully tendered to deliver a number of domestic /sexual violence therapeutic intervention and prevention 30 week programmes for survivors of domestic and sexual violence.