



Federation Northern Ireland

A response to

EQIA on the Policing Plan 2015-16

Consultation Report

Northern Ireland Policing Board

28 July 2015

Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland

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Freephone from all landlines and mobiles. Translation service available.

Open to *all women and men* affected by domestic & sexual violence

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1. Women's Aid Information & Statistics

1.0 Introduction

Women's Aid is the lead voluntary organisation in Northern Ireland addressing domestic and sexual violence and providing services for women and children. We recognise 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 our work, promote healthy and non-abusive relationships.

2.0 Core work of Women's Aid

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 run 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 and sexual 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.

Throughout this consultation response, the term "Women's Aid" is used to reflect the overall Women's Aid movement in Northern Ireland, which is made up of our local Women's Aid groups and Women's Aid Federation. All local Women's Aid groups are members of 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.

3.0 Women's Aid statistics (2013-14)

-) 999 women and 747 children sought refuge.
-) 59 women in refuge were supported during their pregnancies and 15 babies were born to women in refuge.
-) 1,084 one to one support sessions were held with children and young people in refuge.
-) 3,558 women with 4,869 children accessed the Floating Support service, and a further 1,662 women accessed other Women's Aid outreach services, enabling women to access support whilst remaining in their own homes and communities.
-) 1,554 women participated in a range of group work and personal development programme including *Journey to Freedom* and *You and Me, Mum*.
-) 375 women accessed support from a Women's Aid Women's Safety Worker while their partners or ex partners were undertaking the IDAP perpetrators programme provided by Probation Board Northern Ireland. An additional 128 children were referred to the Women's Safety Worker in 2013-14.
-) The 24 Hour Domestic & Sexual Violence Helpline, open to all women and men affected by domestic & sexual violence, managed 55,029 calls.
-) 150 teachers were trained to deliver the Helping Hands programme in primary schools.

4.0 Additional Women's Aid statistical data

-) Since 1999, Women's Aid across Northern Ireland gave refuge to 17,424 women and 16,235 children and young people.
-) Between 1995 – 2014, 429,435 calls were managed by the 24 Hour Domestic & Sexual Violence Helpline.

5.0 Statistics: Domestic violence & violence against women

-) Domestic violence is a violation of Article 5 of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights – that “no one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment”.
-) The joint DOJ, DHSSPS Strategy “Tackling Violence at Home” estimates that the cost of domestic violence in Northern Ireland, including the potential loss of economic output, could amount to £180 million each year.
-) UNICEF research released in 2006, showing per capita incidence, indicates that there are up to 32,000 children and young people living with domestic violence in Northern Ireland.

- J Where the gender of the victim was known, 72% of adult victims of domestic crimes recorded by the PSNI in 2012/13 were female.¹
- J Over 30% of all domestic violence starts during pregnancy.²

6.0 Domestic & Sexual Violence: Crime statistics (Source: PSNI Statistics 2013/14)

- J Domestic Violence is a crime. PSNI statistics for 2013/14 indicate that there were more recorded crimes with a domestic motivation (12,720) than the combined total of all the following crimes (12,079) – possession of drugs (3764), shoplifting (6,372) and theft of a motor vehicle (1,943).
- J PSNI Statistics for 13/14 indicate that they responded to a domestic incident every 19 minutes of every day of the year.
- J The total of 12,720 crimes with a domestic motivation in 13/14 represents an average of approximately 1 domestic crime every 41 minutes in Northern Ireland.
- J The number of all recorded offences of murder in Northern Ireland in 13/14 total 17. Those classed as having a domestic motivation total 7. Therefore, 41% of all murders in Northern Ireland in 13/14 had a domestic motivation.
- J There were 550 rapes (including attempted Rapes) in Northern Ireland in the period 2013/14.

(Source: PSNI Statistics 2013/14)

Official sources (NISOSMC) estimate that up to 80% of sex crimes are not reported.

¹Findings from the PSNI Trends in Domestic Abuse Incidents and Crimes Recorded by the Police in Northern Ireland 2004/05 to 2012/13 N.B. "Adult" defined as aged 18 and over

²Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland

2. Consultation Response

Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland welcomes the publication of the *EQIA on the Policing Plan 2015-16 Consultation Report* and the opportunity to comment on it on behalf of our local Women's Aid groups.

3. EQIA consultation report – introduction

Do you agree with the way in which the policy has been scoped and set out in this report?

-) We agree that the EQIA process should follow the Equality Commission's recommended 7-stage process.
-) We support the focus on measures relating to vulnerable groups within society.
-) It would be helpful if the measures outlined in the Policing Plan were included alongside the Outcomes and Indicators in this section, instead of attached as an appendix. These measures drill down into the actions to be taken at regional level by police to deliver the plan. These measures outline how the Plan will be delivered, and have potential to affect the Section 75 groups.

4. EQIA consultation report – Assessment of available data and research

Do you agree with the way in which relevant information has been analysed and set out in this report?

-) Using the NI Crime Survey as the primary source of data has a number of limitations. Victims of domestic and sexual violence are much less likely to disclose abuse, or disclose the full details or extent of their abuse, on such a survey. Therefore the data relating to domestic and sexual abuse-related crime from the survey is likely to be unreliable and inaccurate.
-) More useful data could be gleaned from focus groups, or interviews with support workers from expert organisations working with victims of domestic and sexual violence, such as Women's Aid. There are also a number of documents which provide data on domestic and sexual violence with relation to policing, including:

- Criminal Justice Inspection NI: *Sexual Violence and Abuse: A thematic inspection of the handling of sexual violence and abuse cases by the Criminal Justice System in Northern Ireland*, July 2010³
- Criminal Justice Inspection NI: *Sexual Violence and Abuse: A follow up review of inspection recommendations, 2013*⁴
- CJINI, *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 2010⁵
- CJINI, *Domestic Violence and Abuse: a Follow up review of inspection recommendations*, October 2013⁶
- PSNI, *Domestic Abuse Incidents and Crimes Recorded by the Police in Northern Ireland: Quarterly Update (providing final figures for 1st April 2014 – 31st March 2015)*⁷
- PSNI, *Trends in Domestic Abuse Incidents and Crimes Recorded by the Police in Northern Ireland 2004/05 – 2013/14*⁸
- PSNI, *Police Recorded Crime in Northern Ireland and Trends in Police Recorded Crime in Northern Ireland 1998/99 to 2013/14* (see sections on sexual violence crime)⁹
- Women’s Aid Federation Northern Ireland, *Annual Report 2013/14* (see disaggregated data on calls to the 24 Hour Domestic & Sexual Violence Helpline and data on women and children accessing refuge and outreach services)¹⁰

J) It is extremely concerning that sexual violence is not dealt with separately within the document in the data assessment section. It is well-established that sexual violence is overwhelmingly perpetrated against women by men. Sexual violence is also different from other forms of violent crime in a number of ways. It often involves a prior relationship between perpetrator and victim, and has a devastating impact on victims due to the intimate nature of the violence and the traditional culture of shame that can often surround such crimes. Sexual violence is vastly under-reported for a wide range of reasons including fear of not being believed, shame, grooming, and the belief that

³ <http://www.cjini.org/CJINI/files/0a/0ad6b7e4-0810-4151-8bb0-e28789591efc.pdf>

⁴ <http://www.cjini.org/CJINI/files/d1/d1c3dab5-25f3-45a4-9e19-4f7ed8a0c9fc.pdf>

⁵ <http://www.cjini.org/CJINI/files/1b/1b651b43-657b-471b-b320-101fca7c6930.PDF>

⁶ <http://www.cjini.org/CJINI/files/34/34118bcc-00c5-4071-bf2f-5397e6b20332.pdf>

⁷ http://www.psnipolice.uk/quarterly_domestic_abuse_bulletin_period_ending_mar15.pdf See also accompanying statistical spreadsheet:

http://www.psnipolice.uk/index/updates/updates_statistics/updates_domestic_abuse_statistics-2.htm

⁸ http://www.psnipolice.uk/domestic_abuse_incidents_and_crimes_in_northern_ireland_2004-05_to_2013-14.pdf See also accompanying statistical data spreadsheet

http://www.psnipolice.uk/index/updates/updates_statistics/updates_domestic_abuse_statistics-2.htm

⁹ http://www.psnipolice.uk/monthly_crime_bulletin_period_ending_may_15.pdf and

http://www.psnipolice.uk/police_recorded_crime_in_northern_ireland_1998-99_to_2013-14.pdf

¹⁰ <http://www.womensaidni.org/themainevent/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/our-annual-report-for-2013-14-is-now-online/Womens-Aid-Annual-Report-2013-141.pdf>

reportage is unlikely to lead to conviction of the perpetrator. Recent cases and revelations have also shown that perpetrators of sexual violence and abuse have operated in a culture of silence and complicity across the UK and in Northern Ireland – for example, Operation Yewtree, Rotherham, Kincora, allegations of abuse in paramilitary organisations, State institutions and communities in Northern Ireland to name a few. With this in mind, it is vital that the statistical assessment analyses sexual crime separately from other forms of violent crime.

- J It should be pointed out that when looking at data on those families with dependents, the overwhelming majority of single parent families are single mother families. Therefore women are over-represented in this demographic and would be disproportionately impacted by any measure that impacted single parent households.
- J In the assessment of data on organised crime, the EQIA should include the impact on BME and migrant people as these are the people most likely to be affected by human trafficking. Women are also much more likely to be victims of sex trafficking. We would also query the utility of including only data on perceptions of organised crime, and not data on the actual extent of organised crime and who it affects.
- J In terms of analysis of the impact of the Plan on children and young people, we strongly recommend the inclusion of analysis on the link between domestic violence in the home and anti-social behaviour in young people. Most young people in the criminal justice system have come from homes where they either witnessed or were direct victims of domestic violence. Therefore how police engage with young people must bear this in mind. We recommend that Women’s Aid Federation Northern Ireland’s strategy on children and young people, *Our Place – Safe Space*, is included in the data assessment.¹¹

5. EQIA consultation report – Assessment of impacts

Do you agree with the way the adverse impacts have been analysed and set out in the report?

- J At 3.4, we would point out that particular forms of trafficking (ie sex trafficking) disproportionately affect women.
- J We welcome that the analysis of domestic and sexual violence at 3.8/9 acknowledges the particular impact on women. We are also encouraged that the Policing Plan does not aim

¹¹ <http://www.womensaidni.org/themainevent/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/our-place-safe-space-strategy-for-children-young-people-2012-2017.pdf>

for a reduction in the number of domestic and sexual crimes reported to police as an indicator. Given that domestic and sexual violence crimes are under-reported, it would be detrimental to women for such a target to be imposed. We would however query the unmitigated benefit of the target to “increase the outcome rate for rape crime and domestic crimes”. The definition of “outcomes” in police statistics includes a number of scenarios that are not positive for victims: a case being dropped when the victim withdraws support due to intimidation from her perpetrator; decisions not to prosecute for evidential or public interest reasons; or acquittal due to insufficient evidence or one person’s word against another’s.¹² None of these scenarios instil victims of rape and domestic violence with confidence in the police or the justice system, or would qualify as an improvement in the criminal justice response to domestic and sexual violence. A true assessment of the positive impact of the Policing Plan for victims, and for women, would be increases in conviction for domestic violence and rape crime. Another positive outcome would be the reduction in the number of repeat cases referred to MARAC, which would indicate that the issue of serial perpetrators is starting to be dealt with.

) We would contest the report’s assertion that “there is potential for a subsequent adverse impact on victims of crime who do not fall within these (vulnerable) groups should scarce resources be diverted disproportionately”. In our experience, the opposite is usually the case. Vulnerable groups struggle because insufficient resources are dedicated to protecting and supporting them and any complex needs they may have. Women’s Aid regards the focus on vulnerable groups in the Policing Plan to be a very positive step in the right direction. We would also point out that vulnerability often makes people more susceptible to crime and more at risk of harm, and therefore more resources must be dedicated and more effort made to protect vulnerable groups sufficiently and equally.

6. EQIA consultation report – Consideration of alternative policies and measures to mitigate adverse impacts

Do you agree with the way in which the measures to mitigate and preliminary recommendations have been drawn up and set out in this report?

) We recommend that additional outcomes are added when assessing the need of victims of domestic and sexual violence. These would include gender disaggregated data which includes a breakdown of gender and relationship between perpetrator and victim, and gender disaggregated data on domestic homicides.

¹² Based on Outcomes framework to be introduced to PSNI as of April 2015
http://www.psni.police.uk/user_guide.pdf

) We also urge that further details on BME victims of all forms of violence against women, including FGM, forced marriage, honour-based violence, trafficking and other forms of domestic and sexual violence are included in the assessment.

7. Contact Details

For further information about this response please contact:

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