



Federation Northern Ireland

A response to

Proposal for secondary legislation under the

Human trafficking and exploitation

(Criminal Justice and Support for Victims)

Act (Northern Ireland) 2015 and the

Modern Slavery Act 2015

Department of Justice

22 October 2015

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24 Hour Domestic & Sexual Violence Helpline

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Text **support** to 07797 805 839

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 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

- J 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”.
- J 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.
- J 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

- J Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland welcomes the publication of *Proposal for secondary legislation under the Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Criminal Justice and Support for Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2015 and the Modern Slavery Act 2015* and the opportunity to comment on it on behalf of our local Women's Aid groups.
- J Women's Aid supports the Department's proposal at 2.5 ~ 2.9 to ensure that STPOs may be made in Northern Ireland in respect of offenders who have been convicted of human trafficking and slavery offences in other parts of the United Kingdom, and to enforce protection orders which have been made in other parts of the UK.
- J We would ask whether a similar mechanism could be extended to those who have been convicted of human trafficking or slavery related offences in other jurisdictions, in particular the Republic of Ireland. While we recognise that the Republic of Ireland is a different jurisdiction, and it may not be simply the case of extending the law to cover those offences in the manner employed here to other parts of the UK, it is important to have some means of providing protection against traffickers operating on both sides of the open border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.
- J We support the enhanced notification requirements outlined in Statutory Rule 2 at 2.13, as necessary tools to ensure the protection of victims of human trafficking and slavery and the prevention of further trafficking-related offences by convicted traffickers.
- J With regard to the power to make applications to the court for STPOs (at 2.16~2.17), we accept that the PSNI should have this power. However, it may be useful for prosecutors to also have power to do so in the course of court proceedings. This would avoid any delay in issuing a STPO as prosecutors would be able to apply for an Order directly in court, as opposed to merely suggesting its merit and awaiting a PSNI application and future court decision on the matter.
- J In relation to the power to make regulations about the release or transfer of offenders who are subject to a STPO (at 2.18~2.19), Women's Aid urges that further regulations or guidance are issued to ensure that victims are informed immediately of any such changes. Women's Aid has previously highlighted to the Department the gaps and failures in reporting changes, transfers or release of perpetrators of domestic violence to victims. We have similar concerns relating to victims of human trafficking, who need to know and be reassured that they have all the information at hand to ensure their safety and that of their family (whether their family resides in this jurisdiction or in another). Clear procedures for immediate contact and information sharing with victims of trafficking and their advocates is particularly important, given the extreme levels of fear, intimidation and violence that many victims may have experienced, and the dangers associated with perpetrators of human trafficking and slavery-related offences being released.

J In respect of the duty to cooperate with the Commissioner (at section 3), Women's Aid believes that all statutory authorities working in the area of human trafficking or with offenders prosecuted under trafficking legislation should have a duty to cooperate with the Commissioner, in the interests of the effective dispensation of his/her duties and an improved response to human trafficking in Northern Ireland. This would include the Department of Justice, prison service, probation service, NICTS, PPS, and the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety.

3. Contact Details

For further information about this response please contact:

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