Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland 2013-2020

Public Consultation Document
December 2013
How to Respond

The consultation runs from **15 January 2014** and the closing date for comments is **11 April 2014**. Responses received after this date will only be considered in extreme circumstances and with prior agreement from the Department.

A response questionnaire is available at Appendix 9 or you can visit the consultation website for more details:

http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/consultations/current_consultations.htm

Please address any queries you may have and responses to:

**By phone:** 028 9052 2512, 028 9082 8565  
**Minicom:** 0800 243 787 (free call)  
**By e-mail:** dsva@dhsspsni.gov.uk  
**In writing:** Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, Integrated Projects Unit, Room D2.17, Castle Buildings, Stormont Estate, Belfast, BT4 3SQ

**Alternative Formats**

This document is available, on request, in alternative formats - braille, audio, large print etc. The Department’s will consider requests to produce this document in other languages.

If you require the document in these or other formats, please contact the Strategy Team on the contact details above.

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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:

**24 HOUR**

Domestic & Sexual Violence Helpline

0808 802 1414

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

Text support to 07797 805 839  24hrsupport@dvhelpline.org

Contact details for other services and helplines can be found at Appendix 8.
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Ministerial Foreword

As the Ministers for Health, Social Services and Public Safety, and Justice we are pleased to publish, for consultation, this draft Strategy for tackling domestic and sexual violence and abuse.

Women, girls, men and boys have a right to be safe from domestic and sexual violence and abuse in Northern Ireland. It is unacceptable that for many, it remains a hidden crime. We know that reporting figures do not reflect the full picture as, all too often, violence and abuse remains unreported, hidden behind closed doors with the victim suffering in silence.

It is a shocking reality that in 2011/12 nearly one in five murders in Northern Ireland was a direct result of Domestic Violence and Abuse and figures indicate there are, on average, five sexual offences being committed every day in Northern Ireland. It affects every aspect of victims' lives and all too often leaves long term consequences for children and adults.

This is a new integrated domestic and sexual violence and abuse strategy which builds on the previous successes of separate strategies Tackling Violence at Home (2005) and Tackling Sexual Violence and Abuse (2008) upon which our respective Departments have led.

This new consultation document has, at its core, a vision of zero tolerance to domestic and sexual violence and abuse in our society. We know that it will take considerable time to achieve this goal, and even if the incidence of violence and abuse falls, robust protections still need to be put in place for those at risk, and victims still need to be supported. Victims and society need to be assured that domestic and sexual violence and abuse are recognised as a crime, and perpetrators will be called to account for their actions.

Following extensive pre-consultation engagement with individuals, organisations that have expertise in this field, and other Government Departments, we believe that the focus on the following areas in this document is the correct one- but we want to hear your views.

The main strands of this document relate to:-

- *Driving change*;
- *Prevention and early intervention*;
- *Delivering change*;
- *Support*; and
- *Protection and Justice*

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. Our thanks to all who have supported the development of this consultation document. We look forward to further engagement and a high consultation response.
Executive Summary

Vision

Domestic and sexual violence and abuse occurs across our society and within every part of our community. It is intolerable that anyone should be a victim of domestic and/or sexual violence and abuse and the people of Northern Ireland should not accept it. The vision of this Strategy is:

That domestic and sexual violence and abuse is not tolerated in our society.

The Importance of this Strategy

The Strategy 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. It is about how the Northern Ireland Executive intends to work across departments, their agencies and in partnership with community and voluntary organisations to reduce the incidence of domestic and sexual violence and abuse, and provide the ongoing services for victims and their families.

While our aim is to stop domestic and sexual violence we accept that this is a long term objective. 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 that perpetrators are called to account.

Most recorded incidents of domestic and sexual violence and abuse happen to women and girls; however, men and boys can also be victims. In 2012/13 there were just over 27,000 domestic abuse incidents reported and just under 2,000 sexual offences recorded in Northern Ireland. But it is known that there is under-reporting and there are also significant delays between when an incident occurs and the reporting of that incident.

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 the life opportunities for individuals. In extreme cases domestic and sexual violence and abuse can lead to murder. There is also an economic cost for society, and a tangible impact on the resources of statutory, community, voluntary and independent sector organisations.

The factors which contribute to the occurrence of domestic and sexual violence and abuse are many and varied, examples include:-

- *issues within society* such as media violence, and abuse within social networking sites, deprivation and discrimination against women, negative attitudes to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender groups;
- *influences in our everyday lives* such as seeking peer approval, family stress, acceptance of stereotypes, rewards and myths of what is acceptable behaviour; and
We must strengthen links across a range of policies and services such as education and early intervention, health and social care, housing, culture and arts, and the justice system. This is not just about Government Departments and their agencies working together, it is also about listening to the views of victims, and working with the community and voluntary sector organisations, which are recognised as having expertise.

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, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional) inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender or sexual orientation) by a current or former intimate partner or family member’

**Sexual Violence and Abuse**

‘any behaviour (physical; verbal, virtual/digital) 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 or sexual orientation) without their informed consent or understanding.’

The Five Strands of the Strategy

The Strategy is constructed around five strands. Each of these strands has an identified “outcome” which is designed to contribute to the overall vision of the Strategy. A number of “priorities” are identified within each strand. These priorities are important as they form the basis for the development of future Action Plans.

**Strand 1 Driving Change** – This strand focuses on collaborative working and promoting a more cohesive approach to tackling domestic and sexual violence and abuse. The strand acknowledges that more can always be done to promote integrated working across all sectors.

*Driving Change Outcome - The Northern Ireland Executive will continue to recognise the adverse impact of domestic and sexual violence and abuse on society, and the need to promote change through leadership and partnership working.*

**Strand 2 Prevention and Early Intervention** – This strand focuses on primary prevention - that is aimed at preventing domestic and sexual violence and abuse from happening. This will be achieved through promoting better knowledge and understanding of violence and abuse, promoting healthy relationships, changing
behaviours and attitudes in our society towards violence, and early intervention for those at risk - such as vulnerable individuals, children and older people.

*Prevention and Early Intervention Outcome – Reduce the incidence of domestic and sexual violence and abuse through, effective preventative educational programmes, a skilled and resourced workforce and promotion of a culture of prevention, and earlier intervention at societal, governmental and local levels.*

**Strand 3 Delivering Change** – This strand focuses on preventing further violence and abuse of those victims and families who are at risk of the violence re-occurring. It is about building more responsive services for those who need them. This is not just about statutory or community services but about everyone knowing their roles and responsibilities – from family members and co-workers, to professionals, community workers and faith leaders being able to recognise signs and symptoms and being able to access information and advice to assist individuals. To achieve this requires a greater focus on training, and expertise, as well as further development of specialist services. Safety planning, following disclosure of violence, is an integral part of this Strand.

*Delivering Change Outcome – Responsive services for individuals and/or groups at risk of, or subject to, domestic and sexual violence and abuse and its reoccurrence.*

**Strand 4 Support** – This strand reflects the provision of additional support for those who have been victims of domestic and/or sexual violence and abuse. It is about the support needed to come to terms with what has happened and to manage the longer term consequences of 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.

*Support Outcome – Provision of appropriate support services that promotes equality of access and positive outcomes for all victims of domestic and sexual violence and abuse.*

**Strand 5 Protection and Justice** – This strand focuses on continually improving the protections and justice available to victims of violence and their families. It covers both civil and criminal justice. It also describes the victim’s journey through the criminal justice system. Part of this strand is the recognition that the harmful and violent behaviour of perpetrators must be addressed.

*Protection and Justice Outcome – Provision of effective, engaged, supportive, responsive and timely protection and justice in relation to domestic and sexual violence and abuse.*

**Our Priorities**

We have identified 28 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 Outcome 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 supported by the development of Action Plans by key stakeholders across the statutory, voluntary and community sectors. Implementation of the priorities will not be an easy task, and will require sustained commitment from all if we are to continue to make a significant difference to the lives of victims of domestic and sexual violence and abuse. Monitoring the progress of the Strategy will be the responsibility of the Regional Strategy Group. This group will provide annual monitoring reports to the Inter Ministerial Group, setting out progress against delivery objectives.
Our Priorities

Driving Change

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. The Inter-Ministerial Group will continue to be chaired by the Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety.

3. Stakeholders will ensure that effective records management systems and information conduits are established and maintained in order to ensure data protection and the sharing of appropriate and necessary information across statutory bodies.

Prevention and Early Intervention

4. Government Departments will work together to consider how best to establish a baseline on societal attitudes to domestic and sexual violence and abuse.

5. An integrated Information Plan will be developed to promote and encourage an understanding and recognition of domestic and sexual violence and abuse among the general public and specific audiences.

6. Government Departments and agencies will work together to highlight the interrelationship between the “toxic three”- domestic and sexual violence and abuse, substance misuse (alcohol/drug abuse), and poor mental health.

7. Teachers will have the necessary skills to teach about sensitive subjects, including child abuse, and domestic and sexual violence and abuse.

8. Teachers will be alert to pupils experiencing distress and trained to respond appropriately.

9. Teachers will have access to a range of age appropriate and evaluated resources to support the teaching of sensitive subjects.

10. Quality assurance arrangements will be established to ensure that the preventative curriculum offered in schools is effective.
11. Government Departments and their agencies will work together to promote preventative safeguarding for adults at risk of harm.

12. 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

13. An integrated pathways approach will be developed to facilitate the four key elements of service provision for those who present with domestic and sexual violence and abuse.
   a) Encourage and recognise disclosure of violence and abuse,
   b) Respond to disclosure,
   c) Identification of harm, and
   d) Coordinated action following disclosure.

14. 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.

15. The provision of information on available services will be reviewed to take account of the development of an integrated pathways approach to tackling domestic and sexual violence and abuse, and the diversity and emerging needs of client groups.

16. Through the Regional Strategy Group (RSG) on Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse, new multi-agency evidence-based standards and/or guidance will be taken into account to inform the commissioning and provision of both regional and local services.

17. The commissioning and provision of services will be informed by the views of those who have been affected by domestic and sexual violence and abuse, or are at significant risk of it.

18. Appropriate partnership networks will be in place to increase multi-agency recognition and responses to domestic and sexual violence and abuse.

19. Further work will be completed to ensure that the delivery of local Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences, MARACs, are maximised, to reduce repeat victimisation or death for victims at high risk of domestic violence and abuse.

20. The services provided by The Rowan Sexual Assault Referral Centre, SARC, will be reviewed in 2015 to incorporate the views
of service users, potential changes in demand and evolving evidence on effectiveness.

21. There will be a renewed emphasis on awareness training, on how to recognise, disclose and seek help for victims of domestic and sexual violence and abuse, in line with recognised standards.

Support

22. Victims of domestic and sexual violence and abuse will be provided with the appropriate outreach and advisory services.

23. Stakeholders will review and evaluate the provision of emergency housing support based on emerging and complex needs.

24. The emotional and psychological needs of individuals who have suffered as a result of violence and abuse will be recognised and addressed in order to improve outcomes.

Protection and Justice

25. Focused protection, support and information will be available for all victims throughout the Justice System process.

26. Ongoing assessment of the capacity of the Justice System to respond to current, new and emerging issues will be undertaken in relation to the protection of victims.

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

28. Ongoing assessment of the capacity of the justice system to respond to current, new and emerging issues will be undertaken in relation to responding to harmful and violent behaviour.
2 Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland

Introduction

2.1 Domestic and sexual violence and abuse share the stark reality of being hidden crimes that are significantly unreported. This violence and abuse has a major and long-lasting impact on victims, witnesses, their families and the wider community. It violates the basic human rights of men, women and children to be treated with respect and dignity, to have control over their bodies and property and to be able to live their lives free from fear.

2.2 Domestic and sexual violence and abuse occurs right across society. It knows no boundaries as regards age, gender identity, marital status, race, ethnicity or religious group, sexual orientation, social class, disability or geography. Most victims of domestic and sexual violence and abuse are women but men, children, families and older people can also be victims. We acknowledge that people are at greater risk of being a victim if they identify with a number of these groups, for example: a female from an ethnic minority who is a child; a same-sex attracted male who may have concerns that his sexual orientation will become public knowledge; or a female with a disability. There is more potential for women to be victims of domestic or sexual violence by virtue of their gender.

2.3 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.

2.4 This Strategy highlights an overarching strategic vision for addressing domestic and sexual violence and abuse. The Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) 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.

2.5 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 who work with, and are aware of the complex issues involved. The Strategy will be subject to ongoing review through the development of outcome based Action Plans.

2.6 There are a number of issues that are related to domestic and sexual violence and abuse such as stalking; female genital mutilation; forced marriage; ‘honour’ based crimes; sexual exploitation, including child sexual exploitation; sexting; trafficking; and historical institutional abuse. These issues are complex and while we recognise that they are often linked to domestic and sexual violence and abuse and may be mentioned within the

1 or any other Section 75 group
text of this Strategy, there will be other mechanisms for dealing with these issues. However where there are concerns specific to domestic and/or sexual violence and abuse they may be included in future Action Plans.

2.7 This Strategy refers to Child Sexual Exploitation, (CSE). CSE is a form of sexual abuse/violence in which a child or young person is exploited, coerced and/or manipulated into engaging in some form of sexual activity in return for something they need or desire and/or for the gain of a third person. Two major reviews are being taken forward in Northern Ireland to respond to this and the outcome of these will influence how the important area of CSE will be addressed.

2.8 Terminology

2.8.1 Throughout this Strategy there are many references to the terms ‘violence’ and ‘abuse’. For the purposes of this Strategy these terms are interchangeable and are intended to encompass all forms of offending behaviour relevant to both domestic and sexual violence and abuse. The Strategy will where possible 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, either domestic or sexual, this will be highlighted.

2.8.2 The Strategy is very much 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).

2.8.3 Many of the terms used in the Strategy are described in more detail in the Glossary, Appendix 4.

2.9 The year relating to statistical references may vary within this Strategy, however, we have attempted to use the most up to date statistics, and those used represent the latest available.
Strategic Context

2.10 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, the World Health Organisation, and the European Union (EU) all take a keen interest in the elimination of these crimes. Within the United Kingdom (UK) and Ireland there has been much written and discussed on the issues and all regions have developed strategies to deal with the problem.

2.11 While much of the work carried out by these institutions relates only to women and girls, this Strategy recognises that domestic and sexual violence also affects men and boys.

Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategies

2.12 This new single Strategy for 2013-2020 will replace the existing ‘Tackling Violence at Home’ and ‘Tackling Sexual Violence and Abuse’ strategies and associated Action Plans. These strategies were the products of wide ranging consultation and collaboration processes involving all the relevant Government Departments and statutory and voluntary agencies. The strategies were informed by, and include reference to, an extensive research and evidence base. Much of that research and evidence is still valid.

2.13 In addition this Strategy has been informed and influenced by International, European, National and Regional legislation, strategies, policies and guidelines regarding, and relevant to, domestic and sexual violence and abuse. A number of the key influences in the development of this Strategy are highlighted within this section.

Programme for Government

2.14 The backdrop for this Strategy is 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.

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 vulnerable adults across Northern Ireland. In addition under Commitment 54 the DOJ will tackle and reduce the level of serious crime.

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2.15 The following paragraphs highlight the strategic interrelationships between domestic and sexual violence and abuse and other policy drivers.

Reducing Offending

2.16 The Justice Minister published, on behalf of the Executive, a Strategic Framework for Reducing Offending. 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, to tackle the issues associated with offending behaviour.

Community Safety Strategy

2.17 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 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 the prevention of 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

2.18 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 will be vital in addressing under-reporting and responding to the needs of those engaging with the criminal justice system.

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Committee of Justice Inquiry

2.19 The findings of the Committee for Justice Inquiry\(^8\) 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)

2.20 Criminal Justice Inspections carried out in 2010 in relation to the handling of domestic\(^9\) and sexual violence\(^10\) 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.

Our Children and Young People – Our Pledge 2006-2016\(^11\)

2.21 Our overall pledge is to deliver on a shared vision for all our 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.

Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults

2.22 It is acknowledged that domestic and sexual violence and abuse present serious safeguarding issues for adults and children. The Northern Ireland Adult Safeguarding Partnership (NIASP) is currently developing a strategic plan to provide a commitment from all the organisations working with the NIASP and Local Adult Safeguarding Partnerships (LASPs) to work together to continually improve services to adults at risk in Northern Ireland. The DHSSPS is currently developing an Adult Safeguarding Policy Framework which is due for publication in 2014.

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\(^10\) CJINI (2010) , Available at: [http://www.cjini.org/CJNI/files/0a/0ad6b7e4-0810-4151-8bb0-e28789591efc.pdf](http://www.cjini.org/CJNI/files/0a/0ad6b7e4-0810-4151-8bb0-e28789591efc.pdf) (Accessed: 8 November 2013)

Regional Adult Protection Policy and Procedural Guidance 2006

2.23 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

2.24 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.

Joint Review by RQIA and CJINI of the Protocol for Joint Investigation of Alleged and Suspected Cases of Abuse of Vulnerable Adults 2012

2.25 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.


2.26 Guidance on Working Arrangements for the Welfare and Protection of Adult Victims of Human Trafficking was developed jointly by DOJ and DHSSPS and launched on 9 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

2.27 The 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. This guidance will be supplemented by operational child
protection policies and procedures, which will also deal with CSE. This is a
statutory responsibility of the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland
(SBNI).

2.28 The SBNI Strategic Plan\textsuperscript{16} indicates that the SBNI will work with member
agencies to develop a coordinated strategy 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

2.29 The SBNI has a strategic priority to protect and safeguard children who go
missing from home and care and/or at risk of sexual exploitation. In addition,
operational child protection policies and procedures, which will also deal with
CSE, will be developed by the SBNI. The HSCB 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’\textsuperscript{17} was further revised by the HSCB.

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

2.30 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.\textsuperscript{18} 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 Beings\textsuperscript{19}, the United Nation Convention
on the Rights of the Child, UNCRC, and the Children (Northern Ireland)
Order 1995\textsuperscript{20}.

2.31 Specifically, 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.

\textsuperscript{16} SBNI 2013 Available at:
%201.0.pdf (Accessed: 8 November 2013)
\textsuperscript{17}HSC PSNI (May 2012) Available at:
(Accessed: 8 November 2013)
\textsuperscript{18}DOJ N I, (2012), Available at http://www.dojni.gov.uk/index/publications/publication-categories/pubs-policing-community-
November 2013).
\textsuperscript{19} COE (2005), Available at: http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/Commun/QueVoulezVous.asp?NT=197&CM=1&CL=ENG
2013).
A new Public Health Strategic Framework for Northern Ireland

2.32 A review of the 10 year public health strategy for Northern Ireland “Investing for Health” concluded that much of its approach remains relevant today, but that lessons needed to be drawn from the current, more developed evidence base; and the changed socio-economic context needed to be reflected in an updated public health strategy. Building on “Investing for Health”, the aims and vision of the new public health framework are to: “Achieve better health and wellbeing for all our people and reduce inequalities in health”. The framework will seek to improve the health and wellbeing of the population and reduce health inequalities by adopting a thematic approach and aligning with other strategies and Government policies to make the best use of available resources. The 10 year strategic framework is currently under development and work is continuing to finalise the framework for Ministerial and Executive approval.

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

2.33 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

2.34 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 and covers the period until March 2014.

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

2.35 This major, 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 and envisaged a 10-15 year programme to implement recommendations. The second Delivering the Bamford Vision Action Plan (2012-2015) was published in March 2013.

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2.36 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.

2.37 The associated Action Plan promotes equality of opportunity by ensuring that sexual health information and services, education initiatives, public information campaigns are developed to take account of the needs of all the population and help to reduce negative attitudes and discrimination.


2.38 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.


2.39 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.

Resources

2.40 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.

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Further Information

2.41 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.

2.42 In addition, there is a list of some key related Strategies and Legislation at Appendix 1. Further information on the International, European and National context is attached at Appendix 5.
What is Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse?

2.43 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 to 2013 are set out within the previous strategies.\(^{28}\)

2.44 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 demographic across Northern Ireland.

2.45 This Strategy provides separate definitions for domestic violence and abuse, and for sexual violence and abuse to reflect the distinct differences between both forms of abuse. 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.

Definition of Domestic Violence and Abuse for Northern Ireland

2.46 The definition for domestic violence and abuse now includes “controlling coercive behaviour” to reflect, more comprehensively, the full range of acts involved. This revision was informed by changes made to the Home Office definition of domestic violence, following its consultation in England and Wales in 2011/12.\(^{29}\)

The definition of Domestic Violence and Abuse is:

‘threatening, controlling, coercive behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional) inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender or sexual orientation) by a current or former intimate partner or family member’

2.47 Domestic violence and abuse can be a single incident but is generally determined by a pattern of behaviour which is characterised by the exercise of control and the misuse of power by one person over another. The behaviour is usually frequent and persistent and is used to harm, ‘punish’ or frighten the victim.


2.48 Domestic violence and abuse occurs within an intimate relationship or a family. While often associated with being in a marriage or partnership it can include violence and abuse by a son, daughter or any other person who has a close or blood relationship with the victim.

2.49 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;
  - threats 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), and
  - abuse of pets.

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

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

2.51 It is also recognised that domestic violence and abuse of an intimate partner/former partner often involves sexual violence and abuse. While statistics show that perpetrators are more likely to be men it is also important that we acknowledge that women also commit these acts.

2.52 **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.

2.53 Witnessing domestic violence and abuse is extremely traumatic and has a far reaching impact on the lives of witnesses whether they are children or adults. 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 young children exposed to violence in the home can experience so much stress that it harms their development and growth.\(^{30}\)

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Definition of Sexual Violence and Abuse for Northern Ireland

2.54 The term ‘sexual abuse’ has become widely associated with the sexual assault of children. Within this Strategy however the term sexual abuse relates to all victims of sexual abuse, adults and children.

2.55 The statutory, voluntary and community sectors consulted during the development of this Strategy suggested that to ensure the definition of sexual violence and abuse is comprehensive and reflects emerging issues it should include references to controlling, coercive, exploitative and harmful behaviour. The definition 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; verbal, virtual/digital) 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 or sexual orientation) without their consent or understanding.’

2.56 As indicated by the definition sexual violence and abuse can take many forms and includes contact and non-contact sexual activities. This can often involve, but is not limited to:

Contact activities (violence) such as:
- penetrative sexual activities (vaginal, anal, oral)\(^{31}\);
- 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)\(^ {32}\);
- being made to look at/be involved in the production of sexual images and abusive material;
- being made to watch sexual activities (including pornography);
- sexually exploiting a person (adult or child), without informed consent, for personal, commercial or financial gain;
- sexual threats; and
- obscene or threatening messages/telephone calls.

2.57 Please note – this is not an exhaustive list. 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.

\(^{31}\) This includes the use of an object

\(^{32}\) Note: Children, young people and vulnerable adults are often the victims of grooming
2.58 The majority of sexual violence and abuse incidents are committed by someone whom the victim knows or trusts, including within the domestic setting. Although women and girls are often victims, a growing number of men and boys are coming forward to disclose cases of domestic and sexual violence and assault. While perpetrators are more likely to be men it is also important that we acknowledge that both men and women commit these acts, and that both boys and girls can demonstrate sexually harmful behaviour.

2.59 It should also be noted, as highlighted by the Children's Commissioner for England\textsuperscript{33}, that the majority of children who are sexually exploited are living in their family home. However the report also notes that a disproportionate number of victims live in care homes. We therefore need to acknowledge and address the fact that children and young people are particularly vulnerable and are often targeted by perpetrators.

2.60 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 met and considered within this Strategy. This includes historical institutional abuse. On 29 September 2011 the Northern Ireland Executive announced its intention to have an investigation and inquiry into historical institutional abuse\textsuperscript{34}. This Inquiry commenced on 19 January 2013. The findings and results of this inquiry will also be considered when implementing this Strategy.

2.61 We will also continue our efforts to provide support services to those involved in prostitution, particularly those vulnerable to sexual violence and abuse. Research clearly demonstrates that, in many cases, individuals become involved in prostitution as a result of childhood sexual abuse or exploitation. Those working in prostitution are often subject to sexual exploitation by a ‘pimp’ (who is often a partner) or organised crime gang and/or sexual violence from clients. DOJ, as part of its 'Reducing Offending Among Women’ Strategy\textsuperscript{35}, 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.


\textsuperscript{34} The Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry (2013), Available at: www.hiainquiry.org (Accessed 8 November 2013).

Patterns, Facts and Figures - Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse

2.62 Traditionally domestic and sexual violence and abuse, have been taboo subjects, not discussed openly and often dismissed as a private or ‘family matter’. There is no doubt this culture and the perceived stigma attached has 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; financial concerns; concerns about their children and often live in the hope that things will get better. Therefore the incidence of domestic and sexual violence and abuse highlighted within this Strategy will not reflect the exact levels but rather highlight what is known and the information available about this much underreported issue.

Pattern

2.63 There are recognised patterns and factors that are of particular note in relation to domestic and sexual violence and abuse, for example:

• domestic abuse often starts or escalates during pregnancy36;
• victims of domestic violence and abuse are at greatest risk of homicide at the point of separation or after leaving a violent partner37; and
• as well as under-reporting, there remain significant delays in cases of sexual violence and abuse being reported. In a third of cases victims did not report the incident for over a year. In a fifth of cases the gap between the incident and the reporting was more than 7 years38.

Incidence and Prevalence

2.64 In 2012/13 the incidence of domestic and sexual violence and abuse was significant across Northern Ireland39, this included:

• 27,190 reported domestic abuse incidents, the highest level recorded, this is on average 74 incidents a day 39,
• 5 murders as a direct result of domestic violence39;
• 404 sexual offences with a domestic motivation39;
• 1,948 sexual offences40 and
• 533 offences of rape41.

2.65 Furthermore in 2011/12 there were 697 victims and their children recorded as being homeless as a result of domestic violence and abuse41.

2.66 It is important to acknowledge that increases in prevalence can be affected by changes to existing legislation, the introduction of new legislation, clarifications/changes to collating methodology and awareness raising to improve reporting levels. Further information on the incidence of domestic and sexual violence and abuse is attached at Appendix 2.
The cost of Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland

2.67 Domestic and sexual violence and abuse has devastating consequences. There are consequences both for the individual victim and wider community. Victims, their families, as well as witnesses and bystanders, can suffer incalculable pain and loss. Some costs are tangible such as the loss of a home or wages, but other costs such as pain and suffering and a reduced quality of life have no value in the market place but may be the heaviest costs to bear. Victims suffer on many levels and may live in the shadow of fear, or may lose the freedom to carry on their lives as they would choose.

2.68 Research shows that these human costs and consequences can be devastating in terms of the mental health and well-being of victims, families and the wider community. The human and emotional cost of violence and abuse is extensive. Victims often suffer from depression, anxiety, flashbacks, post-traumatic stress disorder, psychosis, substance misuse, eating disorders, sexual disorders, self-harm and have attempted or committed suicide. As a result of abuse victims often have a diminished or misguided sense of self-esteem, inadequate self-image and harbor feelings of insecurity and inferiority. A common result of being subjected to violence and abuse is the inability to form healthy relationships, or choosing unhealthy relationships that involve further violence and abuse.

2.69 Furthermore, the children of victims may lose contact with a parent, be moved away from the support of family and friends, and be placed in a new school. They may suffer as a result of seeing the effect of violence and abuse within their families or they can be the victim themselves. Many children who witness violence and abuse may be traumatised by the experience and are also at much greater risk of being abused themselves.

2.70 The cost and consequences of violence and abuse on child victims can affect and inform the rest of their lives as many child victims fail to thrive and are unable to form and maintain healthy relationships in later life. As human behaviour is informed significantly by upbringing and environment, abused children may in such circumstances grow up to accept, mimic or repeat the harmful behaviours demonstrated by their abuser.

2.71 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 the consequences of violence and abuse. Significant resources are committed annually through:

- the criminal justice system (the police, the prosecution service, the courts and the 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 services (both 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 who provide support services to those affected by violence and abuse.

The cost of domestic violence and abuse

2.72 It is estimated that the economic costs of domestic violence and abuse in Northern Ireland for 2010/11 was approximately £610m, with the majority of the costs falling on victims and their families. Sizeable costs also fall on the health, social care and criminal justice services.

2.73 The cost of domestic violence and abuse on children in Northern Ireland for 2010/11 is £17.5m, arising through social services input to children and families. This figure does not include the medium to long-term impact on the emotional and psychological development of children affected by domestic violence and abuse. These costs are likely to be significant and enduring.

Table 1: Estimated costs of domestic violence and abuse in Northern Ireland for 2009/10 to 2010/11: £m

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Adult Females</th>
<th>Adult Males</th>
<th>Children</th>
<th>Totals</th>
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<td></td>
<td>09/10 10/11</td>
<td>09/10 10/11</td>
<td>09/10 10/11</td>
<td>09/10 10/11</td>
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<td>Health and Social Care Services</td>
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<td>7.1 7.3</td>
<td>17.0 17.5</td>
<td>45.3 46.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Criminal Justice Services</td>
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<td>19.4 19.9</td>
<td>- -</td>
<td>77.5 79.5</td>
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<td>- -</td>
<td>- -</td>
<td>4.1 4.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lost Economic Output</td>
<td>52.4 51.9</td>
<td>17.4 17.3</td>
<td>- -</td>
<td>69.8 69.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intangible Human Costs</td>
<td>315.5 307.5</td>
<td>105.2 102.4</td>
<td>- -</td>
<td>420.7 409.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total economic costs</td>
<td>451.3 445.0</td>
<td>149.1 146.9</td>
<td>17.0 17.5</td>
<td>617.4 609.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

The cost of sexual violence and abuse

42 Source: Economic Branch, Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety – this analysis has largely adopted the methodology used by Professor Walby
43 The costs associated with sexual violence between intimates are included in the costs estimate presented for domestic violence
2.74 The costs of sexual violence and abuse, occurring outside of the domestic setting, for Northern Ireland was approximately £276m for 2010/11.

2.75 These cost estimates exclude costs for child victims of rape and sexual assault, therefore the costs estimate is considered to be an under-estimate.

Table 2: Estimated costs of sexual violence and abuse in Northern Ireland for 2009/10 to 2010/11: £m

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Females 09/10</th>
<th>Females 10/11</th>
<th>Males 09/10</th>
<th>Males 10/11</th>
<th>Totals 09/10</th>
<th>Totals 10/11</th>
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<td>5.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Criminal Justice Services</td>
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<td>26.2</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>30.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lost Economic Output</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>31.2</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>32.6</td>
<td>36.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intangible Human Costs</td>
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<td>173.2</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>30.6</td>
<td>179.8</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total economic costs</td>
<td>209.8</td>
<td>234.9</td>
<td>37.1</td>
<td>41.4</td>
<td>246.9</td>
<td>276.3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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

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

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44Source: 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 7 and is available from Economics Branch on request.
The response to date in tackling Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse

2.77 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 currently being progressed through the joint ‘Tackling Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Action Plan: April 2012 to September 2013’ which has been extended until this Strategy is in place in order to maintain focus in this key area. 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 cooperation and partnership working.

2.78 There have been promising advances in supporting victims, these include:

- in 2012/13 the 24 Hour Domestic Violence Helpline answered 44,664 calls;
- since September 2013 the 24 Hour Helpline has been extended to a domestic and sexual violence helpline;
- since 2010 Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs), which seek to protect high risk victims of domestic violence, have discussed 5224 cases involving 7095 children;
- routine questions are now asked as part of antenatal care to ascertain if pregnant women have been/are victims of violence or abuse;
- new powers are available to impose restraining orders on abusers charged with any offence;
- a handbook of information, help and support has been published for adult victims of rape and sexual assault;
- a Regional Directory of Services for victims and Survivors of Sexual Violence has been published;
- ‘The Rowan’, Northern Ireland’s first Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) at Antrim Area Hospital opened its doors to PSNI referrals in May 2013 and self referrals/third party referrals in September 2013;
- legal aid has been changed to allow victims greater access to the courts;
- dedicated PSNI Domestic Abuse Officers are now in place;
- special measures in court services to protect victims have been introduced;
- increases in support services; and

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48 The helpline provides help, support and advise to anyone affected by domestic violence and abuse – see Useful Contact Information, Appendix 8.
49 MARAC discusses high risk domestic violence and abuse cases and puts in place appropriate actions and resources to ensure the safety of victims and their children.
50 The Rowan provides a sensitive, comprehensive and coordinated response to all victims of sexual assault and rape – see Useful Contact Information, Appendix 8.
• in 2008 the introduction of Public Protection Arrangements for Northern Ireland (PPANI).

2.79 We have continued to **increase the profile of domestic and sexual violence and abuse** and educate children, young people and the wider general public on issues relating to violence and abuse. We have supported teachers to deliver education programmes for children and young people about healthy relationships based on mutual respect in over 330 schools\(^51\). A similar programme has been developed for post primary schools.

2.80 We have also delivered a number of media and information campaigns across Northern Ireland:
- to generate awareness among the general public and reinforce the fact that domestic and sexual violence is a crime and is unacceptable;
- to highlight the greater police powers of arrest in respect of domestic violence and abuse; and
- to show the implications of sex without consent (this campaign focused on the student population).

2.81 To tackle domestic and sexual violence and abuse effectively and reduce offending and repeat victimisation, we have worked across statutory, voluntary and community sectors to **challenge and respond to abusive and harmful behaviour through**:  
- the Home Office Accredited Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme (IDAP)\(^52\) to reduce re-offending by convicted adult male domestic violence offenders.\(^53\)
- the ongoing development of a similar programme for alleged male perpetrators of domestic violence and abuse; and
- the completion of a wide-ranging programme of legislative reforms to clarify the law on sexual offences.

2.82 Key initiatives of the previous strategies on domestic and sexual violence and abuse were the introduction of the MARAC and the opening of The Rowan SARC in Northern Ireland. The main aim of the MARAC is to reduce the risk of serious harm or homicide for victims assessed as being at high risk of domestic violence while the Rowan SARC provides support for those who have suffered sexual violence. Central to the success of these are the Independent Advisory and Support Services for the victim, generally known as and referred to as an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) and Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA). The provision of these services will be a key to future development of this Strategy and the Action Plan falling out of it.

\(^{51}\) through WAFNI training ‘Social Guardians/Helping Hands’ Programme funded by DE


\(^{53}\) delivered by the Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNI);
2.83 Further information regarding the ongoing response can be accessed through the ‘**Tackling Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Action Plan: April 2012 to September 2013**’.

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3 The Aims of the Strategy

3.1 The overall aim of 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 sexual violence and abuse. Zero tolerance has to become the norm. But this may take some 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 all 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 Pre-consultation and engagement with key statutory, voluntary and community sector organisations and individuals have informed the five key strands that underpin the overall aim of the Strategy. These form the basis for the development of recommendations and future actions over the coming years (2013 – 2020). These are:

- **Driving Change** - 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 societal level, healthy relationships between individuals, and address harmful behaviour, at the earliest opportunity;
- **Delivering Change** – 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, hold perpetrators to account and address harmful behaviour, and support victims and witnesses through their engagement with the justice system.
4 The Five Strands of the Strategy

Strand 1 – Driving Change

**Outcome**

The Northern Ireland Executive will continue to recognise the adverse impact of domestic and sexual violence and abuse on society, and the need to promote change through leadership and partnership working.

**Introduction**

4.1 No one organisation or Government Department can reduce the incidence of domestic or sexual violence, or provide all services to meet the needs of those affected by domestic and sexual violence. For some victims and their families, it is also a matter of justice, equality and human rights.

4.2 The Northern Ireland Executive recognises the harm caused by domestic and sexual violence and abuse and its legal and moral responsibilities to reduce the number of incidents and where this continues, hold to account those responsible for inflicting violence and abuse on others. The Executive is determined to end violence and leads the way in tackling these crimes. If change is to occur, Government, statutory, community and voluntary organisations and private sector employers must recognise their responsibilities. So too must each member of society. Everyone has a part to play. Driving change can only be achieved through ongoing governmental commitment, leadership and effective partnership working.

4.3 A cross departmental Ministerial group has been in existence for some time to consider the issues of domestic and sexual violence and abuse. This Group is chaired by the Minister for Health, with membership comprising all other relevant Government Departments.

4.4 More can always be done to promote integrated working across all sectors. Leadership and engagement are key elements in the promotion of change. On behalf of the Northern Ireland Executive, the DHSSPS, the DOJ, and the Regional Strategy Group (RSG) reaffirm their respective commitment to providing leadership in the promotion and delivery of change, working in partnership with other Government Departments, and the many other organisations which have vast expertise on how to tackle domestic and sexual violence in society.

4.5 Effective integrated working to support and protect victims and witnesses and bring perpetrators to account is also dependent on efficient records management systems and the sharing of appropriate and necessary information across statutory bodies. Existing systems should be reviewed and where necessary enhanced.

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55 for further information on the Governance structure see Section 5, Delivering on the Aims
Priority 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.

Priority 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. The Inter-Ministerial Group will continue to be chaired by the Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety.

Priority 3

Stakeholders will ensure that effective records management systems and information conduits are established and maintained in order to ensure data protection and the sharing of appropriate and necessary information across statutory bodies.

Factors that Contribute to Violence and Policy Implications.

4.6 There are a number of models on the inter-relationship between factors that contribute to violence against women and children. The Hagemann White model is one of these. It describes:

- the overall structures in the social order;
- social norms and practices that regulate daily life;
- day to day interactions in the immediate environment; and
- individual life history.

4.7 Whilst this model is developed in the context of violence against women and children, it does set out key factors at societal level, such as media violence, poverty and deprivation, girls’ rights, failed sanctions and discrimination. In addition, it looks at day to day interactions which also have impact, such as peer approval, stereotypes, myths, rewards and family stress. It also covers other individual factors such as stimulus abuse - alcohol, drugs, abusive images, and the impact of early trauma.

(Accessed: 8 November 2013)
4.8 Within each section of the model there are policy implications which are relevant to this Strategy and other government departments. This is presented in Appendix 6. The principles of this high level model can be adapted to use not just as a template for action planning for women and children but also for violence and abuse against men. RSG will consider the approach to be adopted to take forward the Strategy through Action Plans.
Strand 2 – Prevention and Early Intervention

**Outcome**

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

**Introduction**

4.9 Whilst there are clear distinctions between domestic and sexual violence and abuse, there are also parallels which invite identical preventative measures, earlier recognition and intervention. However, prevention and earlier intervention are often made more complex by the hidden nature of domestic and sexual violence and abuse. Society is becoming more diverse, and “harder to reach groups and marginalised groups” are at higher risk of being victims of domestic and sexual violence and abuse.

4.10 In addition, the interrelationship between alcohol, substance misuse, high risk sexual behaviours, poor mental health, and domestic and sexual violence and abuse is well known. Changes within society have both changed and challenged the social norm. This has led to blurring of what is considered acceptable, for example, digital technology being utilised for access to and distribution of abusive images.

4.11 A life course approach needs to be adopted as prevention and early intervention messages may be different at various stages throughout that life course. Also, it is known that abuse in childhood can cause lifelong health inequalities through increased high risk behaviour\(^5\).\(^7\)

4.12 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:

   a) **Primary prevention** – i.e. preventing domestic and sexual violence and abuse before it happens;

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

   c) **Tertiary prevention** – i.e. managing the consequence of domestic and sexual violence and abuse which could be physical, environmental, psychological and or social consequences.

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**

4.14 Much has been written at national and international levels on the attitudes to and awareness of violence and its consequences for individuals and in 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 NHS\(^{58}\). 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.

4.15 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.

4.16 The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) commission quality of life surveys which provide a range of information 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. There is a real opportunity to work together to try to understand better societal attitudes and norms to domestic and sexual violence and abuse.

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

**Priority 4**

**Government Departments will work together to consider how best to establish a baseline on societal attitudes to domestic and sexual violence and abuse.**

**Raising Awareness of Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse**

4.18 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 is always wrong.

4.19 In order to promote a greater understanding of domestic and sexual violence and abuse amongst Northern Ireland’s changing and diverse society an integrated Information Plan should be developed. This will provide both general information and targeted information. It should

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challenge myths and stereotypes, promote discussion and provide information and advice on available services.

4.20 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.

Priority 5

An integrated Information Plan will be developed to promote and encourage an understanding and recognition of domestic and sexual violence and abuse among the general public and specific audiences.

The Right to be Safe – a Life Course Approach

4.21 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
- *vulnerable people* – particularly in relation to growing older, and those with a disability.

4.22 To adopt a life course approach to domestic and sexual violence and abuse requires greater integrated working across Government Departments and its agencies to deliver on primary prevention and early intervention.

4.23 Evidence highlights interrelationships between domestic and sexual violence and abuse, the mental health of the victim or family members, and alcohol and substance misuse. These are often referred to in child protection as the “toxic three”. However, we recognise that there can be other contributory factors.
4.24 Prevention strategies need to take account of these factors not only when raising awareness on domestic or sexual violence and abuse, but also in the early identification of those in need of advice, and early intervention. The Healthy Child, Healthy Future Programme\textsuperscript{59} is provided to all children and young people. The programme is a universal service which requires a number of contacts with each family to identify health needs, through a holistic assessment which includes screening for domestic violence. Additional support is offered to all families where domestic and sexual violence and abuse, substance misuse and mental ill health are identified.

4.25 More can always be done to highlight that where one of the toxic three exists, so may another element.

**Priority 6**

Government Departments and agencies will work together to highlight the interrelationship between the “toxic three”- domestic and sexual violence and abuse, substance misuse (alcohol/drug abuse), and poor mental health.

4.26 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 Partnership\textsuperscript{60} programme and Roots of Empathy\textsuperscript{61}. The *Delivering Social*.....
Change also includes a range of Parenting Support Programmes - led by the Public Health Agency. These are included by way of example of ongoing 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;
- Parenting UR Teen – of improving parenting and teen relationships, and
- Solihull programme.

Education

4.27 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 are provided with information and 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.

4.28 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.

4.29 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.

4.30 Evidence provided to the Department of Education, DE, from the Education and Training Inspectorate, ETI, Education and Library Boards’ 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.

4.31 The report of the research ‘Keeping Safe: the development of an effective preventative curriculum in primary schools’ 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.

4.32 In January 2011 the ‘Report of an Evaluation of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) in Post-Primary Schools’ 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.

4.33 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 on internet sites and using social networking sites in ways which leave them vulnerable to exploitation. All 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 the vehicle for promoting an understanding of issues such as forced marriages, female genital mutilation and human trafficking.

4.34 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.

4.35 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.

4.36 The framework for an effective preventative curriculum is in place in the preschool and youth sectors. In the early years sector one of the key 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

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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. The Department of Education, DE, intends that the learning from the developments in the statutory sector will be shared and applied across all education settings.

**Priority 7**

Teachers will have the necessary skills to teach about sensitive subjects, including child abuse and domestic and sexual violence and abuse.

**Priority 8**

Teachers will be alert to pupils experiencing distress and trained to respond appropriately.

**Priority 9**

Teachers will have access to a range of age appropriate and evaluated resources to support the teaching of sensitive subjects.

**Priority 10**

Quality assurance arrangements will be established to ensure that the preventative curriculum offered in schools is effective.

**Adult Safeguarding**

4.37 The term safeguarding is intended to be used to encompass both prevention and protection activity. In partnership, DHSSPS and DOJ are taking forward the development of an Adult Safeguarding Policy Framework. The framework will stipulate a number of policy objectives ranging from the prevention of adult abuse (a shared responsibility with individuals, agencies and wider society) by way of implementation of good safeguarding arrangements, through to effective protective responses from lead protection agencies (principally the police and social services) when adult abuse occurs or is suspected. Our aim is to begin to shift the balance of emphasis towards prevention which is keeping adults safe and helping them to keep themselves safe, without exposing any vulnerable adult to unnecessary risk. Our intention is to jointly issue a draft policy framework for public consultation by December 2013.
Adult Safeguarding Infrastructure and Partnership Arrangements

4.38 A new regional body, the Northern Ireland Adult Safeguarding Partnership (NIASP) and five local bodies, the Local Adult Safeguarding Partnerships (LASPs) have been put in place. The NIASP is led by the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) which is responsible for setting the strategic direction of adult safeguarding/protection in Northern Ireland in response to developing government policy. The LASPs are centred on the five Health and Social Care Trusts (HSCTs) and they are the delivery arm of the NIASP and will respond through local action-planning to the strategic direction set by the NIASP. The six bodies are inter-sectoral, inter-agency and multi-disciplinary in make-up. All of the partnerships were established by January 2011. Much of the work of NIASP and local partnerships is underpinned by the Integrated Pathway model, Figure 268, and the four key service provision elements:

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

Priority 11

Government departments and their agencies will work together to promote preventative safeguarding for adults at risk of harm.

Safeguarding Children and Young People

4.39 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.

4.40 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.

4.41 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

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68 Under Delivering Change Strand
prevention and early intervention on domestic and sexual violence and abuse in children and families, especially with regard to those most at risk.

4.42 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.

4.43 SBNI now hold responsibility 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. The joint Queens University Belfast (QUB), National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), DHSSPS report "Translating Learning Into Action"\(^\text{71}\) sets out how feedback from CMR’s can identify what is working and what needs to be improved. While the 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.

4.44 In the context of several high profile cases, the issue of Child Sexual Exploitation, CSE, has become a strategic priority for all Local Safeguarding Children’s Boards including SBNI.

4.45 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\(^\text{72}\). 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.

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Priority 12

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.
Introduction

4.46 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).

4.47 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 includes:

- **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.

4.48 A key issue which arose in the pre-consultation events was in relation to 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.
4.49 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

4.50 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:

a) the recognition of the signs of violence and abuse and encouragement to disclosure;73
b) appropriate response to disclosure of violence abuse;
c) 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
d) coordination of ongoing support and protection through statutory and voluntary services.

These are depicted in Figure 2.

73 Professionals may be obligated to disclose in some instances
Figure 2 Integrated Pathway

4.51 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.

**Priority 13**

An integrated pathways approach will be developed to facilitate the four key elements of service provision for those who present with domestic and sexual violence and abuse.

a) Encourage and recognise disclosure of violence and abuse,

b) Respond to disclosure,

c) Identification of harm, and

d) Coordinated action following disclosure.

**Safety plans**

4.52 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 allows 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.

**Priority 14**

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.

**Provision of Information on Available Services**

4.53 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.

4.54 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 that it has addressed the information needs in terms of ethnic diversity, age, sexual orientation, faith, and disability?

4.55 Whilst there will always be a need to have information on specialist services such as The Rowan SARC 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.

Priority 15

The provision of information on available services will be reviewed to take account of the development of an integrated pathways approach to tackling domestic and sexual violence and abuse, and the diversity and emerging needs of client groups.

Building Service Provision

4.56 There is a clear need to map the four key elements as identified in Figure 2, 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.

4.57 High level standards have been developed by key organisations74 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 are producing guidance which will be published in 201475. This guidance will provide recommendations for good practice based on the best available evidence of effectiveness and cost-effectiveness and is part of their public health programme. There will be published guidance on:-

• interventions to identify, prevent, reduce and respond to domestic violence and abuse between family members or between people who are intimate partners; and
• certain aspects of domestic and sexual violence and abuse, including female genital mutilation, and how to recognise and support workplace colleagues who are victims of domestic violence and abuse.

4.58 The guidance will be aimed not just at health and social care services, but also education services (primary, secondary and tertiary 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.

**Priority 16**

*Through the Regional Strategy Group (RSG) on Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse, new multi-agency evidence-based standards and/or guidance will be taken in to account to inform the commissioning and provision of both regional and local services.*

4.59 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.

**Priority 17**

*The commissioning and provision of services will be informed by the views of those who have been affected by domestic and sexual violence and abuse, or are at significant risk of it.*

4.60 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**

**Domestic Violence Partnerships**

4.61 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 (PBN) and other local agencies and organisations. They meet regularly to take forward particular themes or relevant issues such as domestic violence workplace policies, supporting teachers in their role as social guardians, and monitoring changes to legislation.
Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs)

4.62 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.

Priority 18

Appropriate partnership networks will be in place to increase multi-agency recognition and responses to domestic and sexual violence and abuse.

Specialist Services for Victims of Domestic and Sexual Abuse

4.63 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 services for those at high risk of domestic violence and abuse.

4.64 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.76

4.65 Further development may be required to ensure that the most appropriate models are in place.

Priority 19

Further work will be completed to ensure that the delivery of local Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences are maximised, to reduce repeat victimisation or death for victims at high risk of domestic violence and abuse.

4.66 The newly built Sexual Assault Referral Centre, known as The Rowan SARC went live on the 7 May 2013 to police referrals and was fully operational for members of the public and third party referrals from 2 September 2013. Based within the grounds of Antrim Area Hospital it is a state of the art

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regional facility for support and forensic examination of all victims of rape and sexual assault.

4.67 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.

Priority 20

The services provided by The Rowan SARC will be reviewed in 2015 to incorporate the views of service users, potential changes in demand and evolving evidence on effectiveness.

4.68 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

4.69 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. 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.

4.70 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 for example, refuge centres, substance misuse services, and counselling and support services. 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.
4.71 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.

4.72 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

4.73 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)\textsuperscript{77}.

4.74 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.

Priority 21

There will be a renewed emphasis on awareness training, on how to recognise, disclose and seek help for victims of domestic and sexual violence and abuse, in line with recognised standards.

\textsuperscript{77} NOS (2012) . Available at: \url{http://www.ukstandards.co.uk/nos-search/Pages/SearchResults.aspx?k=victim&r=suite%3D%22Preventing%20and%20tackling%20domestic%20and%20sexual%20violence%22} (Accessed: 8 November 2013).
Strand 4 – Support

Outcome

Provision of appropriate support services that promotes equality of access and positive outcomes for all victims of domestic and sexual violence and abuse.

Introduction

4.75 This Strand is about tertiary prevention through the provision of support to help people to come to terms with the domestic and sexual violence and abuse and to deal with the consequences.

4.76 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. It will also vary depending on the life course of the individual and whether they remain in a relationship with the perpetrator or are endeavouring to leave a relationship, or rebuilding their lives when they have left a relationship. Support for victims and witnesses as they go through the Criminal Justice process is addressed in the next strand.

4.77 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

4.78 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 need 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.

4.79 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

4.80 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, including women; children and young people and men; regardless of sexual orientation. Examples are:

- the 24 Hour Domestic and Sexual Violence Helpline;
- The Rowan SARC;
- MARAC;
- Women’s Aid Federation Northern Ireland;
- Broken Rainbow Helpline;
- The Rainbow Project;
- Health and Social Care;
- NSPCC;
- Family Data Support Web;
- Nexus NI;
- Barnardo’s; and
- Men’s Action Network.

Many of these organisations advocate on behalf of victims and their families and assist individuals in making decisions for themselves regarding their future wellbeing.

4.81 Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs), when in place, will be part of the support system provided to address the safety of victims at high risk of harm from domestic violence and abuse. Serving as a victim’s primary point of contact, an IDVA will work with the victim to discuss the range of suitable options to develop and implement safety plans. The IDVA will support and work over the short - to medium - term to put victims on the path to long term safety. The IDVAs will be part of the MARAC process and will represent victims at MARACs where the information they have on an individual’s situation and concerns will be taken into consideration. IDVAs will be fully trained to meet national standards in line with the training proposed by the Home Office.

4.82 Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVAs) are specially trained support workers who will provide assistance and advice to victims of sexual violence and abuse. Northern Ireland ISVAs, when in place, will work closely with The Rowan SARC. ISVAs will provide essential non-therapeutic support to victims of sexual violence and abuse who have been referred to them, giving immediate information and support, providing other types of practical help and advice, working with partner agencies to ensure coordinated service planning on behalf of individual victims, and promoting engagement with the Criminal Justice System. Where victims of sexual violence and abuse are also victims of domestic violence the ISVAs will work closely with IDVAs.

4.83 The 24 Hour Domestic and Sexual Violence Helpline, provides confidential telephone, email and texting service to anyone 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.

4.84 The NSPCC also offer a 24/7 helpline and online advice and support for adults who are concerned about a child or children who are at risk. Help and support to and for Children and Young People is available through Childline.

4.85 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. Barnardos’ 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.

4.86 Women’s Aid groups offer domestic violence outreach and floating support services to provide practical and emotional help to women who are not staying in a refuge. Outreach is provided in local communities, in rural areas and to women from minority ethnic communities. Floating Support is a specific outreach service for women who wish to remain in their own home, it is provided to women who do not wish to or need to use refuges, as well as to women in temporary accommodation such as B&Bs or hostels where no support or help on domestic violence is available. Support for children as well as for women is also provided by Women’s Aid under its ‘Our Place- Safe Space Strategy’.78

4.87 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.

**Priority 22**

Victims of domestic and sexual violence and abuse will be provided with the appropriate outreach and advisory services.

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Welfare and Housing Support

4.88 Victims of domestic 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.

4.89 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.

4.90 For some victims, this scheme will not be appropriate, and it will be safer for them to move into temporary accommodation or refuges. Women’s Aid provide women and children with specialist refuge accommodation and support which is tailored to the needs of victims of domestic violence. They have the added advantage of providing the opportunity for women to connect to other people with similar difficulties and are able to access emotional and practical support that many victims require. However, there is a pressure on the provision of refuges which is stretched at peak times of the year. There is a general consensus that current service provision does not meet the needs of all victims. We recognise that further work is required to ensure equality of access in relation to refuge provision.

4.91 The NIHE is undertaking a Review of Refuge provision as a recommendation within the Homelessness Strategy 2012/17. Refuge capacity and usage will be further reviewed in 2014/15 in association with all stakeholders. 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 properties. 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.

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Priority 23

Stakeholders will review and evaluate the provision of emergency housing support based on emerging and complex needs.

Coping Strategies and Psychological Support

4.92 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.

4.93 Many victims will try to manage or minimise their pain and suffering 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 them to the attention of the health and social care service.

4.94 The need for psychological support may not manifest itself immediately, it may be many months after incidents of domestic and sexual violence and abuse that 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 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.

4.95 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 including:

- **Nexus Ni** – provides counselling services to anyone over the age of 16 who has been a victim of sexual violence and abuse;
- **Lifeline** - Lifeline provide 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’;
- **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;
- **24 Hour Domestic and Sexual Violence Helpline** - Trained staff and volunteers provide a confidential telephone, email and text service,
that can provide victims with a listening ear or offer information and options on how to remain safe;

- **Women’s Aid** - provides services for women, children and young people who have experienced domestic violence. This includes support services to enable women who are leaving a violent situation to rebuild their lives and the lives of their children;

- **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** offer counselling and support services for men experiencing difficulties as a result of family break up or child contact difficulties;

- **Victim Support** provides emotional support, information and practical help to victims, witnesses and others affected by crime; and

- **Independent Counselling Services for Schools (ICSS)** provides access to school based counselling which is independent of the school to all post primary age.

4.96 In addition individuals and families may access health and social care services, e.g. family support, community mental health teams, physiological therapies, GPs and social workers.

4.97 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.

4.98 People with more complex psychological and emotional needs will require access to specialist resources to address their specific requirements. This may include talking therapies such as cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) or psychotherapy where appropriate. Similar therapies are outlined in the Psychological Therapies Strategy.80

**Priority 24**

The emotional and psychological needs of individuals who have suffered as a result of violence and abuse will be recognised and addressed in order to improve outcomes.

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Strand 5 - Protection and Justice

Outcome

Provision of effective, engaged, supportive, responsive and timely protection and justice in relation to domestic and sexual violence and abuse.

Introduction

4.99 Everyone has the right to feel safe and to be protected from harm and The NI Executive remains committed to sending a clear and unequivocal message that, as the law clearly states, violence is a crime. Protection and Justice in respect of domestic and sexual violence and abuse spans a range of issues, which include, but are not limited to:

- the investigation of violent and abusive incidents;
- the provision of appropriate protection arrangements for victims and their families;
- the provision and consideration of both criminal and civil law remedies;
- the prosecution, conviction, sentencing and rehabilitation of perpetrators;
- responding appropriately to harmful behaviour demonstrated by individuals; and
- supporting victims and witnesses through the criminal justice system.

4.100 This Strand seeks to ensure a comprehensive approach to the full spectrum of issues involved in protection and justice. In addition to stakeholder engagement this Strand has also been informed by strategic and legal developments within civil and criminal justice since the publication of the last Strategies81.

4.101 These developments include the work of the Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (CJINI); an independent statutory inspectorate with responsibility for inspecting all aspects of the criminal justice system in Northern Ireland apart from the judiciary. In 2010 the Inspectorate carried out two inspections relating to domestic82 and sexual violence83 and abuse. Each report made a number of recommendations which has influenced the work of the Protection and Justice Strand to date. CJINI published follow-up reviews of their inspection recommendations in relation to Domestic Violence and Abuse84 and Sexual Violence and Abuse85 in October 2013.

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81 Further information is available under Section 2, and Appendix 5.
4.102 During stakeholder engagement it was identified that, to clearly reflect the issues and dimensions peculiar to Protection and Justice, including Civil and Criminal Law, they should, where required, be considered separately within this Strand. This is also highlighted in the Committee on the Prevention and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (CAHVIO)\textsuperscript{86}, which states that: \textit{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}. This strand has been developed to reflect this approach.

4.103 It is important to note that this Strand does not fully encompass all aspects of Safeguarding; this crucial area of work, in relation to protection, is reflected and considered throughout all five Strands of this Strategy.

4.104 This strand focuses on how multi agency working and the justice systems works to:
- Protect Victims; and
- Respond to harmful and violent behaviour

\textbf{Protecting Victims}

4.105 The NI Executive is committed to providing victims and their families with the protection they need through effective joint working with key stakeholders. We want to ensure, and improve, the safety of all individuals, including those who are most vulnerable, such as children and young people, who live with domestic and sexual violence and abuse.

4.106 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, violence and abuse. These victims are protected through the services provided by recognised voluntary and community organisations as well as relevant authorities.

4.107 There has been progress in recent years to improve the general public’s understanding and knowledge of the criminal justice system. Information leaflets providing advice and contact numbers for support services, such as those offered by Victim Support Northern Ireland and the NSPCC are available in a variety of languages. Information is available for victims and witnesses online\textsuperscript{87} 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. A new Victim Charter, which will set out the services that victims can expect to receive as they progress through the criminal justice system, will also be developed and promoted.

\textsuperscript{86}CAHVIO, Available at: \url{http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/convention-violence/default_en.asp} (Accessed: 8 November 2013)

\textsuperscript{87}NI Government (2013)\textsuperscript{87} Available at: \url{http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/index/information-and-services/crime-justice-and-the-law.htm}, (Accessed on 8 November 2013)
4.108 A key element of providing protection and justice to victims is ensuring that perpetrators are challenged and held to account for their actions and that those who demonstrate harmful behaviour are provided with the help and support needed to develop and maintain healthy relationships based on mutual respect. By doing so we seek to reduce instances of repeat victimisation.

4.109 A Victims of Crime Fund was launched in 2012, funded through an offender levy. The fund will pay for projects that support victims and witnesses during their contact with the justice process and we will consider how it can be utilised to protect victims of domestic and sexual violence and abuse.

Through multi-agency working

4.110 As highlighted previously, we are committed to monitoring and evaluating the MARAC initiative across Northern Ireland to ensure they are operating effectively and in line with best practice in relation to protecting victims. We will harness the lessons learned from the review and use these findings to inform and improve our practices and response to all cases of domestic and sexual violence and abuse.

4.111 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, develop guidance and establish Domestic Homicide Reviews in Northern Ireland. These reviews will help to 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 coming to harm.

4.112 We aim to improve our approach through seeking out policies and best practice developed and implemented in other jurisdictions, by ensuring that comprehensive measures are in place to enable victims to benefit from support, advice and services, according to their needs. We will also 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, providing services to ensure the safety and security of victims of violence or individuals who are at risk of violence.

90CJINI (2010), Available at: http://www.cjin.org.uk/CJNI/files/1b/1b651b43-657b-471b-b320-101fca7c893c.PDF (Accessed: 8 November 2013) - identified improvement could be made to bring the approach in Northern Ireland in line with other jurisdictions and to provide greater support for victims.
Through the Justice Systems

Civil Justice

4.113 Many victims seek protection through the civil justice system (e.g. applying for a non-molestation order, non-harassment injunction etc). It is important that victims and their families can access appropriate protection, support, information and assistance on the civil side. One way in which this can be done is by securing the provision of efficient and effective civil proceedings. We are committed to ensuring that the most vulnerable, seeking protection can do so through the continued provision of legal aid. This assistance is vital to those victims who, often due to the violence and abuse suffered, are unable to access funds.

4.114 It may be possible to secure reparation through the civil justice system. We acknowledge that reparation will not undo the hurt and damage caused however it may give victims an opportunity to improve their circumstances and their well-being.

Criminal Justice

4.115 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 legislation, policies and best practice and we will continue to do so.

4.116 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, can discourage them from progressing their case to criminal court. The table below, from the strategy shows the process of progressing a victim’s case to criminal court.

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4.117 Please note, in respect of the ‘victim’s journey’, if a case is dealt with through the Crown Court and the defendant pleads not guilty, a jury will decide whether the defendant is guilty or not guilty.
4.118 Attrition, in particular avoidable attrition within the criminal justice system is a concern for the NI Executive. Avoidable attrition is where the victim or witness withdraws or retracts evidence. We remain committed to developing recommendations to address the barriers faced by victims in taking forward a domestic and/or sexual violence incident within the criminal justice system94.

4.119 We want to make sure that people engaging with the criminal justice system, are supported in giving the best evidence that they possibly can. Without this, there is a risk that some in society would otherwise be unable to take part actively in securing justice where violence and abuse has taken place. 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. We will continue to provide special measures in relation to domestic violence and serious sexual violence cases.

4.120 We acknowledge that victims should be safe and secure when assisting with a criminal case in relation to violence and abuse. We anticipate that the provision of an advocacy service to victims and the collection of best evidence through The Rowan SARC will help in supporting victims through the judicial process. We will also, as stated in the Joint Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Action Plan (2012-2013), evaluate and assess the feasibility for the implementation of Domestic Violence Specialist Courts across Northern Ireland. The Specialist support services highlighted in the Victim’s journey through the criminal justice system (see above Figure 4) and the forthcoming Victim and Witness Care Unit will improve service delivery for all those who engage with the Criminal Justice System, including victims of domestic and sexual violence and abuse.

4.121 We must also ensure that the criminal justice system and criminal law provisions are in a position to respond to the changing face of violence and abuse in a modern multicultural society. We will monitor the impact on the criminal justice system of harmful practices and newly emerging issues e.g. 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.

4.122 We will also consider emerging policies and legislation in other jurisdictions in relation to violence and abuse, e.g. consideration of the implementation of ‘Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims (Amendment) Act 2012’ in Northern Ireland95. The Domestic Violence Crime and Victims Act 200496 allows for the joint conviction of parents or carers where a child or vulnerable person

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has been killed; both blame each other; and as a result neither could be convicted individually. The amendment, provided for England and Wales, now extends the appropriate offences to include those where a child or vulnerable person was seriously or physically injured and in circumstances where parents or carers blamed each other.

4.123 We will develop and implement clear laws and policies, in line with best practice, to ensure effective and appropriate enforcement.

**Priority 25**

Focused protection, support and information will be available for all victims throughout the Justice System process.

4.124 In empowering victims, by providing support and information and delivering focused and timely measures of protection, we aim to improve a victim’s engagement with the justice systems and ensure the safety and personal well being of those subjected to violence and abuse.

**Priority 26**

Ongoing assessment of the capacity of the Justice System to respond to current, new and emerging issues will be undertaken in relation to the protection of victims.

4.125 It is only through ongoing assessment and exchanges of good practice that we will be able to identify and address the gaps that exist within our justice systems and ensure our law is robust and in harmony with other jurisdictions.

**Responding to harmful and violent behaviour**

4.126 As noted in the introduction to this Strand, a key element of Protection and Justice is the need to address harmful behaviour. We recognise the importance of developing and implementing good practice and interventions such as rehabilitation programmes for perpetrators to address harmful behaviour.97

4.127 We recognise the need to maintain the effectiveness of the criminal law and the importance of bringing it into line to ensure a comprehensive and coordinated legal approach98. We also acknowledge that special attention should be paid to the process of repeat victimisation99. 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 (e.g. the potential development and implementation of a Domestic Violence Disclosure scheme, also referred to informally as Clare’s Law100; and, the possibility of implementing Domestic

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Violence Protection Notices and Orders.) 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.\(^{101}\)

Through multi-agency working

Vulnerable individuals

4.128 Firstly we acknowledge that, although there is no data available for Northern Ireland, it is considered that children and young people who display harmful behaviour account for a minority of all offending. Estimates for England and Wales in 2010 suggest that their behaviour could account for just over one-tenth of all sexual offending.\(^{102}\) Research has found that domestic violence and abuse is increasing in teenage relationships, a quarter of girls aged 13 to 17 have experienced physical violence from a boyfriend.\(^{103}\)

4.129 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, including children and young people who display harmful behaviour, have a wide range of complex needs therefore enabling these individuals to address and change their behaviour requires a multi-agency, holistic approach. Research has also found that the most promising interventions are based on an individual/child-focused practice and consider that these vulnerable individuals are people/children first. We recognise this and are committed to assisting these vulnerable individuals in managing and changing their behaviour.

4.130 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 harmful behaviour. We will also assess the effectiveness these models and approaches have in terms of positive behavioural changes.

Adults

4.131 It is important to note that adults who demonstrate violent and abusive behaviour can wish to change their behaviour. The NI Executive is committed to working with key stakeholders and alleged perpetrators to assist them in making these positive changes and thus reduce the likelihood of offending and re-offending.

4.132 We will monitor the effectiveness of the existing 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.

\(^{101}\) The Northern Ireland Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme, Available at: http://www.dojni.gov.uk/index/compensation-agency.htm, (Accessed 8 November 2013)


\(^{103}\) NSPCC (2009), Available at: http://www.nspcc.org.uk/inform/research/findings/partner_exploitation_and_violence_summary_wdf68093.pdf (Accessed: 8 November 2013)
4.133 The NI Executive is committed to the introduction of programmes aimed at changing the behaviour of alleged perpetrators of violence and abuse and monitor their effectiveness. The programme for alleged perpetrators of domestic violence (based on Respect standards\textsuperscript{104}) will operate on a rolling basis which will run in each HSCT area but which will be managed centrally. These Programmes will have built in support systems for victims, family members and significant others.

4.134 We will consider the introduction of programmes for alleged perpetrators of sexual violence, to deliver real benefits for those currently living in these circumstances.

Through the Justice System

4.135 In addition to working in partnership with those in the statutory, voluntary and community sectors to make positive changes and reduce the likelihood of offending and re-offending, we are equally committed to ensuring that adults who demonstrate violent and abusive behaviour are held to account for their heinous actions through the criminal justice system.

4.136 For those in custody, it will not always be apparent that someone has been a victim and disclosure is always going to be challenging. For those who do disclose some support is available through counselling and referrals to appropriate agencies, and Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) is working closely with DOJ and Voluntary and Community Sector partners to identify how best to enhance support available to victims in custody.

Reducing Offending Among Women

4.137 Through the Reducing Offending Strategic Framework\textsuperscript{105} we will continue to work together in addressing the needs of adult offenders convicted of crimes related to their violent and abusive behaviour. Within the context of the Strategic Framework, the Justice Minister has a specific strategy focused on reducing offending among women, which is being refreshed for 2013-2016. The ‘Reducing Offending Among Women’\textsuperscript{106} strategy recognises and aims to address the complex issues underlying offending behaviour among women, which often include relationship difficulties or being the victim of domestic or sexual violence and abuse. Improving support and protection for victims of domestic or sexual violence and abuse should therefore reduce the risk of the woman, and her family, suffering the further negative impacts. The Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy is therefore highlighted within Reducing Offending Among Women 2013-2016 and is an important part of the Justice Minister’s overall reducing offending agenda.

Priority 27

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

4.138 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 to reflect best practice and current thinking/standards in respect of challenging and addressing harmful, violent or abusive behaviour.

Priority 28

Ongoing assessment of the capacity of the justice system to respond to current, new and emerging issues will be undertaken in relation to responding to harmful and violent behaviour.

4.139 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.
5 Delivering on the Aims

**Outcome**

Ensure efficient and effective Governance and Accountability throughout the implementation and evaluation of this Strategy.

**Implementation**

5.1 This Strategy will be supported by the development of Action Plans by key stakeholders across the statutory, voluntary and community sectors.

5.2 The Action Plans will be designed to deliver on the high level outcomes 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.

**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*.

5.5 The majority of these governance arrangements will remain in place to deliver against this Strategy. However, during engagement with stakeholders it was noted that structures could be improved and streamlined. These revised structures require ongoing stakeholder support and resources necessary to fully champion this Strategy, drive through change and importantly make certain that victim outcomes are delivered.

5.6 It is recommended that the top tiers of the governance structure, set out in figure 3, should remain unchanged. The Northern Ireland Executive will consider all major changes in policy and strategic vision and direction. The Northern Ireland Executive will receive updates through the Inter-Ministerial Group (IMG) on Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse.

5.7 The IMG, 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.

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5.8 The interim Regional Strategy Group (RSG), on Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse will continue to have representation from a diverse range of stakeholders across Government, statutory, voluntary and community organisations. To ensure and oversee the successful implementation and governance of this Strategy, it is proposed that this group be refocused.

5.9 Membership of the Group should be at an appropriate level to ensure the autonomy of the Group without referral. This will enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the decision making process.

5.10 The revised RSG will act as an enabler for change.

5.11 Sub-groups will be developed to deliver key priorities and ensure the victim’s voice is heard. The sub-groups will inform the Regional Strategy Group.
6 Evaluation and Review

6.1. We have identified the main outcomes that we want to achieve and developed priorities on how we will seek to deliver them. Implementation of the priorities will not be an easy task, and will require sustained commitment from all if we are to continue to make a significant difference to the lives of victims of domestic and sexual violence and abuse.

6.2. 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 find the courage to come forward and report incidents. Increased reporting, more arrests, and a reduction in repeat victimisation should collectively lead, in time, to achieving the long-term objective of a real and sustained reduction in domestic and sexual violence and abuse.

6.3. We need to develop a stronger picture of the outcomes, of how our actions are making a real difference to the victims of domestic and sexual violence and abuse. This will in turn help to inform a targeted approach to moving forward. Details of how this engagement with victims will take place will be developed in the Action Plans to deliver this Strategy.

6.4. Monitoring the progress of the Strategy will be the responsibility of the Regional Strategy Group, RSG. This group will provide annual monitoring reports to the Inter Ministerial Group, setting out progress against Action Plans.

6.5. A key number of performance indicators will be developed in the first year of the Strategy to enhance the evaluation.

6.6. The Strategy will be evaluated through the ongoing review of the Action Plans. A comprehensive review of the Strategy will be carried out mid way through the 7 year 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. A similar review will be undertaken in 2020 to take full account of the achievements of this Strategy and inform the way forward.
Appendices
1 Related Strategies and Legislation

Strategies
- 2010 Council Conclusions on the Eradication of Violence against Women in the European Union
- Bamford Review Of Mental Health And Learning Disability (Northern Ireland) - A Vision of a Comprehensive Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
  http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/bamford
- Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (UN Commission on Status of Women CSW) 1995
  http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/
- Building Safer, Shared and Confident Communities - A Community Safety Strategy for Northern Ireland 2012-2017
- Code of Practice for Victims of Crime
- Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
- 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
- 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/Commun/QueVoulezVous.asp?NT=201&CL=ENG
- CJIIN thematic inspection - The use of special measures in the criminal justice system in Northern Ireland - April 2012
  http://www.cjini.org/CJNI/files/e6/e684b2e9-231e-4c06-b496-5b744e10c0cb.pdf
- Daphne Programme
- 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/CJNI/files/1b/1b651b43-657b-471b-b320-10fca7c6930.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  

• European Pact for Equality, 2010-2020  

• European Union Charter of Fundamental Human Rights 2007  

• EU Plan on Best Practices, Standards and Procedures for Combating and Preventing Trafficking in Human Beings 2005  

• 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  
  http://www.dojni.gov.uk/index/publications/publication-categories/pubs-criminal-justice/a_guide_to_the_northern_ireland_criminal_justice_system_for_bereaved_families_and_friends.pdf

• Guide to Northern Ireland’s criminal justice system for victims and witnesses of crime  

• Guidelines on Violence against Women and Girls 2008  

• Healthier future: a Twenty Year Vision for Health and Wellbeing in Northern Ireland 2005 – 2025  

• Homelessness Strategy for Northern Ireland, 2012-2017  

• Improving And Safeguarding Social Wellbeing A Strategy For Social Work In Northern Ireland - 2012 – 2022  
  http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/swstrategy.pdf

• 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 Policing Plan (2011-2014);  

• Northern Ireland Suicide Prevention Strategy 2012 - March 2014  
• Policing with the Community 2020 Strategy
  http://www.psni.police.uk/pwc_-_2020_v2.pdf
• Programme for Government (PfG) for 2011-2015
• Sexual Health Promotion - Strategy & Action Plan 2008 - 2013
• Strategic Framework for Reducing Offending - Towards a Safer Society 2013
  http://www.dojni.gov.uk/index/publications/publication-categories/pubs-policing-
  community-safety/doj-strategic-framework.pdf
• Strategy to improve the lives of disabled people – 2012 – 2015
  http://www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/final_disability_strategy_consultation_doc_with_a
  mended_foreward_as_agreed_~_2.04.12_.to_go_before_executive_on_5.04.1
  2.pdf
• 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
  http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/tackling sexual violence and abuse strategy .pd
  f
• United Nations Millennium Declaration 2000
  http://www.un.org/millennium/declaration/ares552e.h
  tm
• UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2006
• Women’s offending behaviour in Northern Ireland: a strategy to manage women offenders and those vulnerable to offending behaviour 2010-2013
  http://www.dojni.gov.uk/index/publications/publication-categories/pubs-policing-
  community-safety/final_draft_for_print-
  _a_strategy_to_manage_women_offenders_and_those_vulnerable_to_offendi
  ng_behaviour.pdf
• Working arrangement for the welfare and Safeguarding of Child/Suspected Victims of Human trafficking (2011)
  www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/oss_ working_arrangements_for_the_welfare _safegua

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
• 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
• 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/](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/)
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 of more times.


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*
• 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 15\textsuperscript{108}.

• 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\textsuperscript{109}.

• 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\textsuperscript{110}.

• 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\textsuperscript{111}.


• 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.  

• 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.  

• 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.  

• 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.  

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

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3 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 Department conducted an Equality Screening Assessment to gauge whether the proposals would have a significant differential impact on any of the section 75 categories.

At present we consider the proposals do no have a significant differential impact. On that basis we do not consider that a full Equality Impact Assessment is required. We will however conduct another Equality Screening following analysis of the feedback received during this public consultation.
4 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/violence in which a child or young person is exploited, coerced and/or manipulated into engaging in some form of sexual activity in return for something they need or desire and/or for the gain of a third person. The ‘something’ received by the child or young person can include both tangible items such as food, somewhere to stay, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes or money and more intangible ‘rewards’ such as perceived affection, protection, or a sense of belonging. Fear of what might happen if they do not comply can also be a significant influencing factor. Common to all these scenarios is an imbalance of power in favour of the abuser and some degree of coercion, intimidation, exploitation, violence and/or enticement of the child or young person.

**CSS:** Community Safety Strategy

**DCAL:** Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

**DE:** Department of Education
DHSSPS: Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

DOJ: Department of Justice

**Domestic violence and abuse, definition within this Strategy:** is threatening, controlling, coercive behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional) inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender or sexual orientation) by a current or former intimate partner or family member.

**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 of 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

IDVA: Independent Domestic Violence Advisor

**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

ISVA: Independent Sexual Violence Advisor

LASP: Local Adult Safeguarding Partnership

**MARAC:** Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference

NIASP: Northern Ireland Adult Safeguarding Partnership

NIHE: Northern Ireland Housing Executive

NIPS Northern Ireland Prison Service

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

**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

**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

**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; verbal, virtual/digital) perceived to be of a sexual nature which is controlling, coercive, exploitative, harmful, or unwanted inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender or sexual orientation) without consent or understanding.

**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.

**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
5 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 Rights*, 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 at Appendix 1). 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 CEDAW\textsuperscript{117}, 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 Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) which is ‘an agenda for

\textsuperscript{117} CEDAW 2007 available at: http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/ accessed on 30 September 2013
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 (further information on EU initiatives is provided at Appendix 1).

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”.  

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 (further information on the CoE standards is provided at Appendix 1).

Republic of Ireland
Our closest neighbour within Europe, the Republic of Ireland, published its National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence 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.

England

* 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.


The Violence Against Women and Girls Action Plan\textsuperscript{120} 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\textsuperscript{121}, and
- Devon Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy\textsuperscript{122}

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...”\textsuperscript{123} 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
Strategy 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.

### Figure 6: Factors contributing to violence against women and girls

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>LEVEL</strong> Overall structures in the social order <strong>(Macro)</strong></th>
<th><strong>LEVEL</strong> Social norms and practices that regulate daily life <strong>(Meso)</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FACTORS</strong></td>
<td><strong>FACTORS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Devaluing women</td>
<td>Media violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Gender inequality, unequal power relations between women and men and the subordination of women</td>
<td>– Glorification of violence and sexualisation of women and girls</td>
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<tr>
<td>Masculinity</td>
<td>Impunity</td>
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<tr>
<td>– Normative heterosexual masculinity</td>
<td>– Weak or limited laws against violence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Children’s status</td>
<td>Children’s status</td>
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<tr>
<td>– Lack of respect for children’s and especially girl’s rights</td>
<td>– Lack of respect for children’s and especially girl’s rights</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>POLICY IMPLICATIONS</strong></th>
<th><strong>POLICY IMPLICATIONS</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interventions needed at a structural level to:</td>
<td>Interventions at a societal level needed to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Achieve formal and substantive gender equality</td>
<td>- Challenge the idea of male entitlement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Promote alternative models of masculinity</td>
<td>- Improve implementation of laws and increase conviction rates of /sanctions on perpetrators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Regulate violence in the media</td>
<td>- Eliminate discrimination against women and girls</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Regulate the sexualisation of women and girls in the media</td>
<td>- Challenge codes of ‘honour’ and shame</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Strengthen laws against violence</td>
<td>- Improve access to resources for socially excluded and disadvantaged communities</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Promote children's/girl's rights</td>
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As stated previously, within each section of the model there are policy implications which are relevant to this Strategy and other Government Departments. The principles of this high level model can be adapted to use not just as a template for action planning for women and children but also for violence and abuse against men.
7 The cost of Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse

The cost of Domestic Violence and Abuse

- Research by Professor Sylvia Walby (University of Leeds) published in September 2004 estimated the costs of domestic violence to society in England and Wales at £23 billion 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 £16 billion. 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 (however the level has fallen 7% in 2010/11 to 22,685 incidents). Domestic violence costs analysis has been completed in DHSSPS, for the year 2010/11. 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 and intangible costs 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 the table detailing the cost of domestic violence and abuse apply to males and females combined. These costs also cover the cost impact of sexual violence between intimates. 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 NI. 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 below, is an under-estimate.

- It is understood from PSNI domestic violence data, that approximately three quarters of all domestic violence in NI is visited on females. Therefore it is likely 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 2010/11 is £17.5m, arising through social services input to children and families. Significant numbers of children in Northern Ireland are encountered through the MARAC process, not all of which are known to social services. It should be noted that the £17.5m 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 2010/11 at approximately £610m. 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 £545m and a higher cost estimate of £744m.

The Cost of Sexual Violence and Abuse
• The costs associated with sexual violence between intimates 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 NI and are presented below separately. These cost 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 costs have 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 NI, occurring outside of the partner setting, are approximately £276m for 2010/11.126

126 A detailed methodology behind the costs calculation for Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse is available from DHSSPS Economics Branch on request.
## 8 Useful Contact Information

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<th>Help Available</th>
<th>About them</th>
<th>Contact details</th>
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| ChildLine Free 24 hour helpline | Free, confidential helpline dedicated to children and young people. | 0800 1111  
www.ChildLine.org.uk |
| 24 Hour Domestic and Sexual Violence Helpline | Free helpline from landlines, 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. | 0800 917 1414  
Email:24hrsupport@dvhelpline.org  
Text: Support to 07797805839 |
| Lifeline Suicide prevention | 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

028 94424340
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
9 Consultation Response Questionnaire

Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy (2013 – 2020)

Consultation Questionnaire

RESPONDING TO THE CONSULTATION

The Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety, DHSSPS, and the Department of Justice, DoJ, are seeking your views on the draft joint Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy. Please use this questionnaire to tell us your views on the draft document.

Please send your response, no later than 11 April 2014, to:

DHSSPS
Integrated Projects Unit
Room D3
Castle Buildings
Stormont Estate
BELFAST BT4 3SQ

Tel: 028 90522512 028 90828565
Minicom:0800 243 787 (free call)
E-mail: DSVA@dhsspsni.gov.uk

Please note that all responses will be treated as public and may be published on the DHSSPS and DoJ websites. If you do not want your response to be used in this way, or if you would prefer for it to be used anonymously, please indicate this when responding (See Statement of Confidentiality and Access to Information Legislation below).
Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be published or disclosed in accordance with access to information legislation: these are chiefly the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA) and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR).

If you want the information that you provide to be treated as confidential, please be aware that, under the FOIA, there is a statutory Code of Practice (section 45) with which public authorities must comply and which deals, amongst other things, with obligations of confidence. In view of this, it would be helpful if you could explain to us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential. If we receive a request for disclosure of the information, we will take full account of your explanation, but we cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the DHSSPS/DoJ.

For further information about confidentiality of responses please contact the Information Commissioner’s Office

**Northern Ireland Information Commissioner’s Office**

3rd Floor
14 Cromac Place
Belfast
BT7 2JB

Tel: 028 9027 8757
or 0303 123 1114
Email: ni@ico.org.uk

Website: [http://www.ico.org.uk/](http://www.ico.org.uk/)

Please tick the box below if you want your response to be treated as anonymous.
(Response details may still be shared under any future Freedom Of Information requests.)

[ ] I want my response to be treated as anonymous.

Thank you for completing this questionnaire and providing input to this consultation.
**SECTION 1: ABOUT YOU**

**Consultee Details**

**Question 1(a):**
I am responding as... *(Please tick one option only)*

[ ] A member of the Public

[ ] On behalf of an organisation

[ ] Other.........................................................*(Please specify)*

**Question 1(b):**
Please enter your details below:

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SECTION 2: DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this draft 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, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional) inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender or sexual orientation) by a current or former intimate partner or family member’

(Page 23)

Sexual Violence and Abuse

‘any behaviour (physical; verbal, virtual/digital) 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 or sexual orientation) without their informed consent or understanding.’

(Page 25)

Question 2 (a):

Do you agree with the definition of Domestic Violence and Abuse as outlined in the Strategy?

(Please tick one option only)

[ ] Yes
[ ] No

If no, please explain and submit alternative.
Question 2 (b):

Do you agree with the definition of Sexual Violence and Abuse as outlined in the Strategy? *(Please tick one option only)*

[ ] Yes

[ ] No

If no, please explain and submit alternative.
### SECTION 3: STRATEGIC VISION

The Strategic Vision is set out as

*The People of Northern Ireland will not tolerate domestic and sexual violence and abuse in their community; effective services and support will be provided to all victims and perpetrators will be held to account.*

**Question 3:**

Is the Strategy Vision reflective of what we want to achieve? *(Please tick one option only).*

[ ] Yes

[ ] No

If no, please explain and submit alternative.
SECTION 4: KEY DELIVERY STRANDS

The Key Delivery Strands within this strategy have been developed in line with the current strategies in domestic and sexual violence and abuse. They are:

- Driving Change
- Prevention and Early Intervention
- Delivering Change
- Support, and
- Protection and Justice

Question 4:

Do you agree that the Strategy should be considered under these key strands? (Please tick one option only).

[ ] Yes  
[ ] No

If no, please explain and submit alternatives.
SECTION 5: STRATEGIC OUTCOMES/PRIORITIES

DHSSPS and DoJ are aiming to implement the Strategy over a *seven-year period* (2013 – 2020).

They will deliver the key outcomes and priorities as outlined in each of the Key Strands.

**Question 5(a):**

Do you agree with the strategic outcome and priorities on Driving Change for this Strategy? (Page 36)

*(Please tick one option only)*

[ ] Yes
[ ] No

If no, please explain and submit alternatives.
Question 5(b):

Do you agree with the strategic outcome and priorities on Prevention and Early Intervention for this Strategy? (Page 39)

(Please tick one option only)

[ ] Yes
[ ] No

If no, please explain and submit alternatives.

Question 5(c):

Do you agree with the strategic outcome and priorities on Delivering Change for this Strategy? (page 49)

(Please tick one option only)

[ ] Yes
[ ] No

If no, please explain and submit alternatives.
Question 5(d):
Do you agree with the strategic outcome and priorities on Support for this Strategy? (Page 59)
(Please tick one option only)
[ ] Yes
[ ] No
If no, please explain and submit alternatives.

Question 5(e):
Do you agree with the strategic outcome and priorities on Protection and Justice for this Strategy? (Page 65)
(Please tick one option only)
[ ] Yes
[ ] No
If no, please explain and submit alternatives.
| Question 5(f): | Are there any other outcomes/priorities that should have been considered? |
| | |
| Question 5(g): | Are there any aspects of the strategy that you consider could be made clearer or easier to understand? |
| | |
SECTION 6: GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The proposed Governance and Accountably outcome is to;

Ensure efficient and effective Governance and Accountability throughout the implementation and evaluation of this Strategy.

Question 6:

Are there clear levels of governance and accountability set out within the proposed structure? (Page 75)

(Please tick one option only)

[ ] Yes
[ ] No

If no, please explain and submit alternatives.
### SECTION 7: EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires Departments 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. Departments are also required to “have regard” to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of a different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

### Question 7 (a):

Are the proposals set out in this consultation document likely to have an adverse impact on any of the nine equality groups identified under Section 75 of the NI Act 1998? *(Please tick one option only)*

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

If yes, please state the group or groups and provide comment on how these adverse impacts could be reduced or alleviated in the proposals.
Question 7 (b):

Are you aware of any indication or evidence – qualitative or quantitative - that the proposals set out in this consultation document may have an adverse impact on equality of opportunity and access?  
(Please tick one option only)

[ ] Yes  
[ ] No

If yes, please give details and comment on what you think should be added or removed to alleviate the adverse impact.

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Question 7 (c):

Is there an opportunity to better promote equality of opportunity or good relations?  
(Please tick one option only)

[ ] Yes  
[ ] No

If yes, please give details as to how..
Question 7 (d):

Are there any aspects of this Strategy where potential human rights violations may occur? *(Please tick one option only)*

[ ] Yes
[ ] No

If yes, please give details.
Please use the space below to provide any additional comments you may have.

It would be helpful if you reference which part of the document you are commenting on. If you refer to any other documents, please provide the title, author and if possible approximate date of publication.