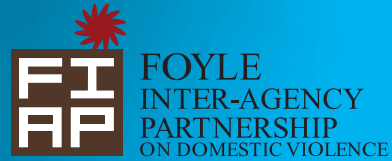




Foyle District Command Unit

Inter-agency Domestic Violence Policy



The Derry District Policing Partnership and the
Derry City Council Community Safety Partnership endorse this Policy.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.

A PARTNERSHIP PROTOCOL

An inter-agency domestic violence policy and protocol to tackle domestic violence in the Derry City Council area.

The Interagency Domestic Violence Protocol was developed in partnership with Foyle Women's Aid, Foyle District Command Unit, (Foyle DCU), and other agencies, due to the high number of domestic violence incidents recorded in 2001 and 2002. Foyle DCU fell in the top 3 DCUs for the highest number of incidents recorded during 2001/02 and 2002/03¹.

The partners researched best practice and consulted both internally and externally in a bid to develop a protocol that would deliver a consistent and standardised approach that in turn would address the high level of incidents reported. This included a fact-finding trip to Boston, Massachusetts.

The main objectives of the protocol are as follows: -

- Reduce repeat victimisation, through the application of the new procedures.
- Increase the intervention level between repeat victims of domestic violence and offenders.
- Extend the partnership approach to victims to improve the quality of service provided.
- Raise community awareness; thereby increase community confidence and safety.
- Improve quality of service to victims.
- Raise police and agency awareness to ensure the most effective response to victims and offenders.

Domestic violence has been set as a local priority in Foyle DCU. The Domestic Violence Officers (DVO'S) provide a monthly update on crimes/ incidents recorded, repeat victims and high-risk offenders; this is briefed out to all operational personnel. The partners provide training for DVO's and other police. This has been beneficial in providing casework training and good working relationships.

The protocol has facilitated a drop in domestic violence offences over the past two years. Indications are that this downward trend will continue, as the total number of offences has reduced by 30% FYTD in comparison with the PFYTD. This is the third highest percentage decrease across the service. Furthermore it is important to be aware that Foyle DCU no longer falls within the top 3 DCUs for domestic violence.

In September 2006, the Northern Ireland Policing Board launched their second report on Human Rights in the Police, which states that the PSNI should consider adopting the Foyle Protocol as a template of good practice for tackling domestic violence and distribute it to all its DCU Command Teams.

The Foyle Interagency Domestic Violence Protocol has now been operational for over three years. It was introduced at just the right time, when we were experiencing the worst recorded domestic violence in Northern Ireland. We were, and remain, committed to partnership work with all interested parties to tackle the issue of domestic violence.
(412 words).

¹ Figures provided by Women's Aid

DESCRIPTION.

1. Background.

1.1 Londonderry is the second largest city in Northern Ireland. In recent years, Foyle District Command Unit was identified as having the highest reported incidence of domestic violence in Northern Ireland. Incidents had increased in the last number of years and this caused us to critically analyse our policies. In the year 2002/2003 we recorded 1394 incidents compared with 1336 incidents in 2001/2002. The Foyle District Command Unit have been key members of the Foyle Interagency Partnership on Domestic Violence (FIAP) since its inception in 1997. Within this Partnership (formerly Forum) PSNI senior managers and personnel were regularly engaged with a range of local partners to tackle the issue of domestic violence. This included training opportunities, meetings when problems arose with specific agencies etc. However around 2000 – 2001 direct meetings with Foyle Women's Aid began to highlight that, whilst both agencies worked very well together when specific problems arose or patterns emerged, the rate of domestic violence in the Foyle area continued to be alarmingly high. Indeed it had increased year on year at this point for a three-year period and a critical review of the issue was deemed urgent by all those involved.

1.2 It was agreed that a more formal and strategic approach would be needed by all agencies involved in responding to the issue of domestic violence to tackle this issue in a coherent and effective manner. It was also agreed that the agency with key responsibility and remit for doing so would be PSNI, in partnership with others and in particular Foyle Women's Aid. As a result of examining best practice and conducting both external and internal consultations, radical changes have been made to the methods our District Command Unit and the PSNI in general currently adopt in tackling domestic violence. These changes, which were first introduced in 2003, were designed to make our approach to tackling domestic violence more effective.

1.3 It was also agreed that whilst there was a high level of localised knowledge regarding domestic violence that, as part of this new approach, international and national research would be useful to guide and inform the work to be carried out.

2. Identification of need for policy and protocol:

2.1 From the research carried out and a review of the projects, protocols and activities internationally and nationally, it was agreed that an Interagency Protocol pertaining to responses in the Foyle District Command Unit would be of benefit. This would clarify and direct responses to domestic violence in line with best practice and also in line with the aims of the project. Commitment was given by the Foyle DCU Commander to resource a specially designed Domestic Violence Unit with increased staffing levels, a dedicated sergeant and administrator and a purpose built unit to house personnel in the grounds of the Strand Road Station, but outside the main building so as to encourage greater victim response to the services on offer.

2.2 A draft protocol was developed with a core team of PSNI and Foyle Women's Aid staff working together. It was sent for consultation to key members of the Foyle Interagency Partnership on Domestic Violence such as Foyle Health & Social Services Trust managers, Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Victim Support and others. Comments and feedback were discussed by the core steering group for the project and integrated into the protocol.

2.3 It was agreed that whilst there were key partners to the project, the door would be left open for other agencies to sign up to the protocol when it was deemed appropriate. This ensured that the document remained a live document that could be reviewed, amended and brought up to date with activities as the project progressed in the Foyle DCU area.

2.4 The issue of high rates of domestic violence was increasingly of concern at the 6 weekly interagency partnership meetings of FIAP and also at internal police meetings and reviews within Foyle DCU. The issue was also highlighted regularly in the local media.

2.5 The key stakeholders concerned with identifying the problem had already established relationships and an excellent day-to-day working relationship within the Derry City Council area. But outside of the larger interagency partnership (FIAP) set up under the remit of FHSST there were no specific practitioner based projects like this identified.

3. Objectives of the Project:

3.1 The protocol's main objectives are to:

- Reduce repeat victimisation through increased intervention levels;
- Extend the partnership approach to improve the quality of service provided to victims;
- Raise community awareness;
- Increase community confidence and safety; and
- Inform and make more effective police and other agency responses to domestic violence incidents;

3.2 The success criteria for the project were the following:

- Initial increase in first time reporting of domestic violence from domestic violence victims.
- Initial increase in reporting of domestic violence incidents, with a projected downturn in subsequent years.
- Decrease in level of recorded domestic violence crimes as a result of implementing a robust, proactive partnership protocol.
- More efficient and effective response to repeat victims.
- Increased feedback from victims about the quality of service they received
- Records of all interagency work and meetings attended in relation to domestic violence to evidence level of partnership working, also records of internal meetings where domestic violence is raised as a key issue for Foyle DCU so as to evidence internal awareness raising opportunities.

4. Definition of the Problem:

4.1 The information highlighting the need for the project came from a number of sources:

- Foyle DCU domestic violence statistics as kept by the Domestic Violence Officers
- Foyle Women's Aid monthly and yearly statistics of women and children seeking support and help from them.

4.2 Advice & Information Research by CMWorks, 2003 on behalf of Foyle Women's Aid indicated that a significant number of victims did not come to either agency in the first instance and this could lead to issues of misdirection, lack of criminal investigation and inappropriate referrals.

4.3 Monthly meetings to review the statistics and trends underlying domestic violence incidents in the Foyle DCU area were initiated with partners. These were named "Intervention Meetings". Issues of concern were identified in these meetings by the practitioners and these were highlighted to senior managers in PSNI, Foyle Women's Aid, court representatives and social services representatives. From this and reviews of the statistics coming to both Foyle

DCU and Foyle Women's Aid, information was brought together to highlight the problems thought to be underlying the issue in this area both in qualitative and quantitative terms.

4.4 From these meetings a series of issues were identified as being problematic, these included:

- Police response to domestic violence differed with a variance in technique, approaches and outcomes depending on the training officers had received.
- Information about the range of support available to victims was not clear. A referral process was not explicit and information given to victims varied from officer to officer
- It was agreed that a more direct, clear set of guidelines needed to be incorporated in a policy and protocol on domestic violence to be specially devised with other partners in the Foyle DCU area.
- It was also highlighted that the role of the Domestic Violence Officers and related staff within PSNI dealing with domestic violence needed to be incorporated in this document also so that all agencies and PSNI personnel were clear about the role.
- It was also highlighted that new policing approaches to dealing with the issue needed to be inserted as practice to be followed within the document and appropriate training to police personnel needed to be given to inform this practice.
- Issues such as court orders and whose responsibility these were at every point of the process needed to be included as these were problems surrounding the issuing and serving of these orders. Clarity regarding the role of the officers serving the orders was needed.

4.5 The process to get to this point of the project was consistent with the development of best practice in that the problem had been identified, the key partners and stakeholders were included in the steering group to tackle the problem and research and review periods had taken place before action or drafts were drawn up for a policy and protocol.

4.6 Information gaps were identified such as the recording of children within households. Also the recording of which men were on the Men Overcoming Domestic Violence programme and the need for PSNI to be informed of these details regularly. Information regarding male victims was requested from Victim Support. It was also highlighted that same sex domestic violence information needed to be researched, as little was known of this specific victim group. The agency representing this group was contacted and included in consultation. The Science Shop, University of Ulster, commissioned specific research. This project won a top award for the student and provided insightful information for the project team developing the protocol and policy.

4.7 All key stakeholders from the statutory and voluntary sectors in the problem were involved in the identification of the issues and the development of the protocol. This process directly involved users of Foyle Women's Aid services being consulted. As part of a specialised week of training, a half-day consultation with 8 users of Foyle Women's Aid services was attended by senior PSNI staff.

5. Response to the Problem:

5.1 The review and analytical stage of the process was clearly defined and joint decisions made between partners as to how to best progress a response to the problem.

5.2 It was decided that a core document to outline best practice and responses would be the most effective mechanism to effect change and to direct staff in all agencies as to the appropriate and correct organisational response from PSNI regarding domestic violence. It was felt that, whilst some may view policy and protocol as not necessarily effective, the main difference would come from the following:

- Training for all relevant PSNI personnel highlighting the protocol and document
- PSNI personnel to highlight the document whenever possible - especially the domestic violence unit
- Publicity for the launch of the protocol and policy.

5.3 Other development options included a One Stop Shop, however it was felt that the project was in its early stages and that such a development would be pre-emptive until results and outcomes from the implementation of the policy and the training was collated and reviewed, including:

- Evidence presented that the intervention was effective and sustainable.
- The project demonstrating effective partnership working.
- The project being planned implemented and costed with adequate resources allocated.

5.4 Foyle DCU from the outset were mindful of the fact that any change in policy and protocol would need to be supported by training and administration. They identified as mentioned before the need to resource a specially designed Domestic Violence Unit as part of the response to the problem. This included the allocation of a sergeant and four constables supported by full time administrative support to a dedicated Domestic Violence Unit. Foyle DCU was the first DCU to have this level of commitment and resourcing to the issue of domestic violence and notably this is still the case. Financially this commitment was significant, however consideration was given to specific outcomes to offset this; in the long term a reduction in domestic violence incidents and secondly an increase in confidence to use PSNI, thus targeting strategic aims for the Foyle DCU. The special domestic violence suite required significant financial investment in relation to office refurbishment and the provision of suitable furniture and equipment and Domestic Violence Officers within the district who are specially trained to investigate allegations in a way that is sensitive to the needs of the victims and to bringing about a resolution. All our officers are encouraged to recognise the signs of domestic violence and ensure that cases are brought to the attention of the Domestic Violence Officers. Officers at all levels have completed a partnership Domestic Violence Officers' Programme and District Training in domestic violence is ongoing on a regular basis. Domestic Violence Officers are also available one day a week to attend an inter agency surgery for victims, which is held at the Foyle Women's Aid premises at 'Pathways' in Derry.

5.5 Problems encountered included: -

- Lack of enthusiasm from some partner agencies (not the key partners of PSNI Foyle DCU and Foyle Women's Aid).
- The unwillingness of existing Domestic Violence Officers to accept the change to a proactive, investigatory role.
- Difficulty in recruitment of administration support staff
- Delay in the office refurbishment work required for the Domestic Violence Unit and delivery of required furniture/equipment.

All of the above problems could have been foreseen and were indeed identified at an early stage of the decision making process. As a result they were taken into account when the objectives were set.

There was some frustration, however, because some of the problems, such as the office refurbishment work, was out of our control and did cause delay. An implementation plan was drawn up and, through a process of monitoring, changes were made to the tasks to be completed, which arose from circumstances outside our control.

5.6 In the early stages of the project fortnightly meetings were held to keep the work on track. This then moved to monthly meetings between senior personnel, however as the protocol was developed this led to weekly and sometimes daily contact as the document was proofed, printed and sent for consultation.

5.7 From the outset it was envisaged that this would be a long-term commitment from Foyle DCU. The protocol has been reviewed continually in practitioner meetings (Intervention Meetings) but also through the interagency partnership (FIAP). A full review took place Spring/Summer 2006 as feedback was given and amendments made.

5.8 The response to the problem of the high incidence of domestic violence in the Foyle DCU area was creative in that it took the partnership approach and extended this to a written protocol and policy, which had not been carried out before in Northern Ireland. The Protocol was also innovative in that it used and reviewed best practice from the UK mainland and combined this with international research. The quality of this approach was then enhanced by site visits to the US and attending conferences in the UK. This resulted in a more realistic picture of what could be achieved by implementing such a policy and the value to all the partner agencies from improved partnership working to clear guidelines.

5.9 In April 2004, police from Foyle DCU participated in a fact-finding trip to Boston, Massachusetts, (MA), with a representative from Foyle Women's Aid and the Foyle Trust, to consider best practice. Meetings were held with a number of professionals working in the area of domestic violence as follows:

Meetings included:

- The Commissioner of the Boston Police, Kathleen O'Toole, to discuss their domestic violence strategy.
- Boston Public Health Commission to discuss their Domestic Violence Programme (DVP) whose mission is to increase awareness about domestic violence in the City of Boston and to support community efforts to address the problem.
- Boston Police Domestic Violence Unit to discuss the innovative programs implemented by the Boston Police Department.
- Interagency meeting at the Women's Crisis Centre at Newburyport, MA with Salisbury Police Department to discuss their Rapid Response Unit.
- Lowell Police Department, MA, to discuss their task force, which was formed to conduct and analyse a study on domestic assaults, identify opportunities for intervention, and develop strategies for reducing these incidents.
- Meeting at the Holy Family Medical Centre and the Haven Mass General Hospital to discuss such things as the 'Sexual Assault Nurses Programme', and the 'Hospital Emergency Room Protocols'.

As a result of examining this and other best practice and conducting both external and internal consultation, radical changes have been made to the methods our District Command Unit and the PSNI in general currently adopt in tackling domestic violence.

6. Evaluation:

6.1 From the beginning of the process to develop a response to the problem of rising domestic violence incidents, it was clear that the recording of domestic violence and the analysis of this information was crucial to measure the success of the protocol. Whilst we could rely on anecdotal information and feedback from service users for qualitative purposes, to identify successful outcomes in terms of addressing the emerging patterns and measuring change we relied significantly on the quality of recording and the support of our police analysts. The Inspector responsible measured this information monthly for domestic violence, then quarterly and annually to look at seasonal adjustments and other factors, which can influence levels of crime.

6.2 From the information gathered in the analyst report (see appendix) it has been stated that "it is reasonable to infer that the Interagency Domestic Violence Protocol has been highly successful in Foyle DCU and should be continued. Most notably the protocol has facilitated a drop in Domestic Violence Offences over the past two years, early indications are that this downward trend will continue as the total number of Domestic Violence Offences (inclusive of Breach of Orders) has reduced by 30% FYTD in comparison with the PFYTD. This is the third highest percentage decrease across the service and significant as this equates to a reduction of 170 recorded offences. Furthermore it is also important to be aware that Foyle DCU no longer falls within the top 3 DCUs in the Service for Domestic Violence and currently ranks 5th across the service, with 45% less recorded offences FYTD than the DCU with the highest number of recorded offences²."

6.3 Secondly this quantitative data which indicates success on one level is qualified by user testimony of the service that is being delivered to victims of domestic violence in the Foyle DCU area (see appendix Survivor Comments). This is further enhanced by the level of interagency support for the protocol as evidenced by the letters of endorsement from our partner agencies and from key social partners in the Foyle area (see appendix). All of this information indicates that not only did the protocol achieve its initial aims but it is very much an active and working interagency process which is improving with reviews and input from our social partners as we progress. This is enhanced by our interagency meetings, regular press and media work and our on the ground relationships which have benefited from a clearer working process due to this protocol.

6.4 The method of evaluation relied heavily on statistical information gathering regarding the level, extent and range of domestic violence occurring in the Foyle DCU. This was an appropriate method for evaluation as domestic violence as a criminal offence and our response as a police service to this issue was key to tackling the issue. Whilst we recognise there are still significant numbers of victims who may not have come forward yet, the only reliable data is those victims who do call upon our partners and ourselves for support. Qualitative information regarding our response and services also informed the evaluation as we sought user feedback and partner agency feedback as we progressed.

6.5 The evidence of the impact of the interagency protocol has been clearly identified by our analysts report (see appendix) and moreover has been noted in the significant decrease in the number and level of offences being committed in the Foyle DCU area.

6.6 Each of the lead partners, Foyle DCU and Foyle Women's Aid, committed to enhanced information gathering and more regular reviews of data to inform the steering group if the protocol was having an ongoing noticeable impact on the practice of PSNI and also on reporting patterns to both PSNI and Foyle Women's Aid.

6.7 The evaluation of the statistical information has identified patterns, which we had hoped to see as outcomes such as an initial increase, then decrease in reported incidence of domestic violence.

Secondly that actual crimes committed has decreased suggesting the level of violence has decreased by perpetrators. Interesting is the fact that there is an increase in repeat victims. This was not a pattern we would have predicted at the outset, but now fits clearly into the other statistics in that women in particular continue to have confidence in contacting PSNI regarding all levels of domestic violence incidents and therefore we would see this as indicative of increased confidence in both the PSNI attending the scene and the services on offer from the Domestic Violence Unit.

6.8 As demonstrated in the statistical analysis of reporting trends in relation to domestic violence in the Foyle DCU area, this is clearly one of the most striking impacts the protocol has had. Furthermore other agencies within the Foyle Interagency Partnership on Domestic Violence (FIAP) have identified the need for local protocols and writing up of guidelines for

² Official figures taken from Saturn on 17th January 2007, subject to change.

practice such as between NSPCC & Foyle Women's Aid to support interagency work and consolidate the relationship between the agencies.

6.9 It is our belief that this interagency partnership and protocol is having an extremely positive effect. The message is finally getting out that victims no longer have to endure violence, but that there is support for them and a means through the law to resolve the intolerable situation they find themselves in.

7. Conclusions:

7.1 The policy has been designed to challenge attitudes and to change procedures previously adopted to tackle domestic violence. Senior management in Foyle DCU has made the issue of tackling domestic violence a priority in our crime reduction strategy. At the heart of the policy is the desire to take 'positive action' in relation to domestic violence. Our research has shown that a robust police response to domestic violence has had a beneficial effect on the subsequent behaviour of the alleged offender. The 'Domestic Violence Repeat Victimization Model' identified by the Policing and Reducing Crime Unit, Home Office Research as best practice, has been adopted by a number of UK police forces and has demonstrated a significant reduction in the incidence of domestic violence when applied. This model has been incorporated into the Foyle crime reduction strategy.

7.2 In September 2006, the Northern Ireland Policing Board launched their second report on Human Rights in the Police Service of Northern Ireland. In chapter 10, 'Victims', the report refers to the Foyle DCU inter-agency domestic violence policy as a template of good practice. Recommendation 35 states that the PSNI should consider adopting the Foyle Protocol as a template of good practice for tackling domestic violence and distribute it to all its DCU Command Teams. This has subsequently been circulated by e-mail to all District Commanders asking them to adapt and implement the Foyle Protocol in their respective areas.

7.3 We expected to see an increase in reported incidents in the first year or two as public confidence to report these incidents increased. This proved to be correct, and we recorded 1491 incidents in 2003/2004 and 1921 in 2004/2005. On a positive note, the number of incidents involving disclosed offences fell from 685 in 2003/2004 to 651 in 2004/2005.

7.4 The District is pleased to say that this trend has continued. In the financial year to the end of March 2006, 572 incidents involving disclosed offences were reported. This is a 12% drop on the previous year's figure of 651. Of these incidents, 79% were cleared, an increase from the previous clearance rate of 67%.

7.5 The reduction in domestic violence incidents is very much an outcome of inter-agency partnership working to support victims. The Foyle Interagency Partnership on Domestic Violence and the Police Protocol have now been operational for over three years. They were introduced at just the right time, when we were experiencing the worst recorded domestic violence in Northern Ireland. We were committed to work with all interested parties to end the misguided belief that domestic violence in the family home is acceptable, and to encourage individuals to report these incidents, rather than suffering in silence.

(3998 words).

INTRODUCTION

Foyle District Command Unit has been identified as having the highest reported incidence of domestic violence in Northern Ireland. The number of reported domestic violence incidents has increased during the past 3 years causing us to critically analyse our current policies. In the year 2003/04 we recorded 1,491 incidents of domestic violence compared with 1,921 incidents in the year 2004/05. This shows an increase in reporting of 28%. On a positive note, the number of incidents involving disclosed offences fell from 685 in 2003/04 to 651 in 2004/05. As a result of examining best practice, both external and internal consultation, radical changes have been made to the methods our District Command Unit and the PSNI in general currently adopt in tackling domestic violence. These changes were designed to make our approach to tackling domestic violence more effective.

Current policy challenges attitudes and procedures previously adopted to tackle domestic violence. Senior management has made and continues to make the issue of tackling domestic violence a priority in our crime reduction strategy. With the formation of the District Policing Partnership Boards and the Foyle Inter-Agency Partnership on Domestic Violence we will be held to account and scrutinised very closely in how we are addressing this major public issue.

A major challenge to previous practices was the implementation of the Code of Ethics, which also places a responsibility on our approach to the way we investigate crime and how we treat victims of crime. Upon external consultation two themes emerged which gave rise to serious concern. Firstly, the apparent failure of police officers to keep victims of crime up to date with the current state of investigations. Secondly, the police attitude in failing to respond quickly to reported incidents and a perception that the police were not interested. More recently, the high number of repeat perpetrators and inadequate deterrents and sanctions placed on such offenders has given rise to concern.

Research has been carried out UK-wide by government agencies to address the problem of low conviction rates for the perpetrators of domestic violence. One theme emerging as a result of this research is the lack of confidence by victims of the criminal justice process as a whole, fear of the court process and the perception that they will not be protected through the court process and beyond. The Home Office reports, "It has long been recognised that many persons who are the victims of or witnesses to crimes experience the ensuing process of investigation and justice as stressful and fear inducing, to such an extent that the interests of justice in preventing and detecting crime and the needs of witnesses are not adequately met". *Home Office Guidelines on Achieving Best Evidence in Criminal Proceedings, 2003.*

The new protocol, as outlined in this document, is designed to complement the recent policy directive published by Community Safety Branch, PSNI Headquarters (Police Response to Domestic Incidents PD2/2004).

Implementation of procedures will necessitate training of District Command Unit personnel. Training in domestic violence issues has been delivered by our District Trainers in conjunction with Women's Aid staff. All future refresher training for DCU personnel will be delivered by District Training. Domestic Violence Unit staff will receive specialist investigative and other related training when in post. In addition, probationers will attend the Domestic Violence Unit for a specialist training session during their tutorship.

At the heart of this protocol is the desire to take 'positive action' in relation to domestic violence. Research has shown that a robust police response to domestic violence has had a beneficial

effect on the subsequent behaviour of the alleged offender. The 'domestic violence repeat victimisation model' identified by the Policing and Reducing Crime Unit, Home Office Research as best practice, has been adopted by a number of UK police forces. It has been proven that when this model is applied, there is a significant reduction in the incidence of domestic violence. We have incorporated the model into our crime reduction strategy.

The British Crime Survey provides us with the following facts, which serve to illustrate the issue:

- Two women die each week as a direct result of domestic violence.
- On average, a victim is abused on 35 occasions before they contact police.
- Domestic violence is likely to become more serious and more frequent the longer it is allowed to continue unchecked.
- Domestic violence accounts for one third of all reported violent crime.

To put domestic violence into the Northern Ireland context, it accounts for one third of all recordable violent crime. One woman is seriously assaulted (AOABH; GBH; attempted murder) by her male partner every day in Northern Ireland. On average, 6 murders occur each year as a result of domestic situations in Northern Ireland.

Intentions of Protocol

- Reduce repeat victimisation, through the application of the new procedures.
- Increase the time incidence between police attendance to repeat victims and offenders.
- Extend the partnership approach to victims to improve the quality of service provided.
- Raise community awareness thereby increasing community confidence and safety.
- Improve quality of service to victims.
- Raise police and agency awareness to ensure the most effective response to victims and offenders.

We will also work with the Foyle Inter-Agency Partnership on Domestic Violence to achieve the following agreed key aims:

- Challenge the presence of domestic violence in our community, which is manifested in individual attitudes and organisational culture.
- Work to secure quality services that are fully engaged with local communities and the needs of those affected by domestic violence.
- Place such work within the strategic themes of Protection, Prevention and Provision.
- Build the capacity of all social partners to respond to the needs of those excluded and disadvantaged because of domestic violence.

- Continue to develop sustainable collaborative partnerships for future working with the interest of mainstreaming inter-agency approaches and practice on domestic violence.
- Be informed by models of best practice and underpin work within the community development ethos and in practice.

Definitions (PSNI)

Domestic Violence (short definition)

'Any incident of quarrel, altercation, threatening behaviour, violence, or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial, or emotional) by one family member against another or adults who are or have been intimate partners, regardless of gender'.

- 'Incident' means an incident anywhere and not confined to the home of one of the partners/family members.
- 'An adult' is defined as any person 17 years or over.
- 'Family members' include mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister, grandparents, in-laws and stepfamily regardless of age.
- Intimate partners' means there must have been a relationship with a degree of continuity and stability. The relationship must also have had (or reasonably supposed to have had) a sexual aspect, such as in the relationship between husband and wife or between others generally recognised as a couple including same sex couples.

Domestic Violence (fuller explanation)

Domestic violence and abuse is best described as the use of physical and/or emotional abuse or violence (including undermining of self-confidence; sexual violence; or the threat of violence) by a person who is, or who has been, in a close relationship. It will occur regardless of the victim's religion, ethnicity, age, marital status, sexual orientation or gender, political opinion, disability, with or without dependants. In other words, **anyone can be a victim of domestic violence**.

Domestic violence can go beyond actual physical violence. It can also involve emotional abuse, the destruction of a spouse's or partner's property, their isolation from friends, family or other potential sources of support, threats to others including children, control over access to money, personal items, food, transportation, the telephone, and stalking.

It can also include violence perpetrated by a son, daughter or any other person who has a close or blood relationship with the victim and violence inflicted on, or witnessed by children. The impact of domestic violence extends beyond the immediate victim, perpetrator and their children, to include consequences for their extended families and the wider community. Apart from the immediate visible physical injuries suffered, ongoing abuse can have devastating psychological effects on the victim, including low self-esteem, poor body image, depression, self-harming and addiction to alcohol and prescription medication. All these problems can, in turn, make the victim even more vulnerable to abuse, and less likely to report or pursue prosecutions in respect of the abuse suffered. The wide adverse effects of living with domestic violence for children must be

recognised as a child protection issue. They link to poor educational achievement, social exclusion and to juvenile crime, substance abuse, mental health problems and homelessness from running away.

Domestic violence can affect fundamental human rights, such as the right to life (Article 2 of the European Convention of Human Rights), the prohibition of inhuman and degrading treatment (Article 3 of the ECHR) and the right to respect for family and private life (Article 8 of the ECHR).

Domestic violence is not a 'one-off' occurrence, but is frequent and persistent, aimed at instilling fear into, and compliance from, the victim.

Common assault is the most recorded offence of domestic violence incidents, where victims are 'pushed, held or pinned down, or slapped'. Police are to be aware that whilst some of these assaults are relatively minor, they signify an escalation of abuse from merely psychological to physical. Today's common assault may be tomorrow's murder. Another frequently reported form of abuse is social deprivation where victims are stopped from seeing relatives or friends. This abuse can be seen as more sinister, deliberate, and pre-meditated than minor physical assaults.

Whilst the majority of domestic violence incidents reported to police are by male perpetrators on female victims, it is recognised that domestic incidents can also occur within same gender relationships and with male victims and female perpetrators.

Whilst domestic incidents account for one-third of all reported violent crime, many more incidents go unreported. Victims who contact police but fail to make or pursue a formal complaint do so for very valid reasons, including the fear of further attack, embarrassment, loss of partner, children, home, financial stability or employment, fear of the court process itself, or lack of knowledge about the legal and civil recourse open to them.

For same gender couples, there may also be a fear of being 'outed' in the community, and having to discuss their sexuality in public, (eg during court proceedings). A gay victim may not have a strong support network in terms of family due to issues surrounding their sexuality. Gay victims may also have misconceptions about what domestic violence is, or the legal and civil recourse available to them.

Repeat Victim

A repeat victim of domestic violence is a person about whom an incident of domestic violence has been reported to police within the previous 12 months.

Police in Foyle District Command Unit deal on average with 50 repeat victims of domestic violence per month.

Calls Received via '999' System

When a telephone call is received via the '999' system and the caller states or the circumstances indicate that it may be domestic violence related, police should be dispatched to the incident immediately.

Where possible, the police officer should continue to talk to the victim to reassure them that police are on the way. It is important to obtain information about any aggravating factors (eg alcohol

consumption, mental illness, weapons) and whether any children or other vulnerable occupants are present. Police should further establish from the victim and from their own records, whether there is a Non-Molestation Order or Occupation Order in force. It will be imperative, as part of the risk assessment carried out by supervisory officers/communications staff, to establish if the named participants have access to any legally held firearms. A check of the Firearms and Explosives Branch database, ICIS, warrants and court orders will enable responding officers to stay safe and make decisions based on the best information available. All '999' calls are recorded and this information may be useful or evidential in any subsequent court proceedings.

Where re-contact is made by the victim, or on police calling (in the event of a silent call) and the victim and/or named other participant state all is well, police should not assume that the victim is not in immediate danger, as they may be intimidated by the offender to say all is well, or may be forced to curtail contact. In this event, police should still attend and speak to the victim, in person, on their own, to be satisfied that the situation has calmed and the victim is not in danger. Police should also, on every occasion, check on the children (if any) present in the domicile, to ascertain they are safe and well, and should record accurate details of the children (and their general demeanour - for reporting purposes to social services).

Reports by Telephone

Where a report is received by telephone, other than via the '999' system, and the victim is not in imminent danger and an immediate response is not required, a police officer should be sent to the scene at the earliest possible opportunity to investigate the incident.

If the victim does not wish to make a formal complaint or police to attend their home, full details of the caller/incident must be recorded and an Incident Report Form (IRF) completed and submitted to the Domestic Violence Unit by the end of the turn of duty. The victim must be informed that although no police action will be taken, the details will be recorded (and may be passed to other agencies (ie Social Services, with regard to children involved)).

Police should endeavour to record a statement of withdrawal from the victim, giving their reasons for not pursuing a complaint against the perpetrator. Police must be satisfied that the victim was not intimidated into withdrawing their complaint by the perpetrator or other persons acting on the perpetrator's behalf. If the victim, due to their emotional distress/trauma/condition does not know if they wish to pursue a complaint, police should ensure the victim is aware of their options and given time to consider these options. Police are not to persuade the victim in any way to withdraw their complaint. In fact, victims are to be encouraged to pursue legal redress for offences committed against them. Where serious offences are detected, regardless of the victim's wishes, a thorough investigation should still take place, such as gathering forensic, medical, photographic, and eyewitness evidence to support a proactive prosecution.

The victim should be advised of support services available from statutory and voluntary agencies who can provide emotional, psychological or practical support, such as Victim Support and Women's Aid. The police officer should establish if the victim consents to referral to these agencies. Such consent is to be recorded on the command and control log for the incident. They should also be advised of the services of the Domestic Violence Unit. Accurate contact telephone numbers must be obtained, including the most appropriate times to make contact. If the victim has left the family home and is residing elsewhere, accurate details of their current location should be recorded.

Reports by Letter/Email

Domestic reports submitted to police by letter/electronically should be forwarded to the Domestic Violence Unit for consideration and necessary action.

Reports in Person

A victim of domestic violence who attends at a police station in person should be afforded privacy. A private interview should be arranged with an officer of the same sex, if preferred, as soon as possible. If the incident is a serious or repeat offence the Domestic Violence Unit should be contacted.

Initial Action

It will be the responsibility of the Duty Sergeant to evaluate a domestic incident and determine the course of action and appropriate investigator.

When responding to or dealing with incidents of this nature, officers must be aware of the dangers of such situations. It is advisable that officers obtain as much information as possible and request further assistance when considered necessary.

The first duty of a police officer when attending a domestic incident is to hold the offender accountable and to protect the victim and any children from further risk. Where a power of arrest exists, the alleged offender should be arrested. Where an arrest is not made, the attending officer should fully record his/her reasons for this decision.

All police officers are reminded of Section 32(1) of the Police (NI) Act 2000, which states:

It shall be the general duty of police officers –

- (a) to protect life and property
- (b) to preserve order
- (c) to prevent the commission of offences
- (d) where an offence has been committed, to take measures to bring the offender to justice.

A policy geared towards arrest and prosecution of offenders will be adopted rather than one which smoothes over the dispute and seeks reconciliation between parties.

Officers should ensure that they speak to the victim in a place where the alleged perpetrator cannot overhear, as the victim may not feel able to talk freely, if at all. On no account should the attending police be satisfied that all is well solely on the word of the alleged perpetrator. Police should also ascertain if children are present in the domicile and physically check on their welfare.

In pursuing an investigation, officers must look at the entire incident, not just the oral or written evidence of the victim. Research has shown that enhanced evidence gathering increases the likelihood of successful prosecutions, especially in cases where victims would be unlikely to give evidence. Victims have a right to protection from domestic violence and police officers have a responsibility to investigate and obtain sufficient evidence to prosecute an offender. Failure to do so without good reason may result in a breach of a victim's human rights.

Harassment

In respect of the first incident of harassment, when an alleged perpetrator has been warned under the Protection from Harassment (NI) Order 1997, the investigating officer must ensure that details of the offence and the warning are fully recorded, in the Protection from Harassment Register, which is held with the Non-Molestation/Occupation Orders in the Communications Room, Strand Road. All details of the offence and action taken are to be recorded on Command and Control. Positive action is to be taken and the offender is to be arrested if a further offence under the Order is committed (General Order 74/97, file box C(c) refers). **The victim must be updated on every occasion of the actions taken.**

Breaches of Non-Molestation/Occupation Orders

To be read in conjunction with Foyle DCU Procedures for the Administration and Service of Non-Molestation Orders and Occupation Orders (attached at Appendix A).

If a Non-Molestation or Occupation Order (Family Homes and Domestic Violence (NI) Order) has been breached, police will arrest the offender on every occasion. Evidence will be obtained from the victim or police officers regarding the breach. If the offender is not present when police attend, other witnesses should be sought, (eg children in the home, neighbours). On no account are police to record witness statements of children in respect of breaches of the Order. Police should also look for evidence of damage to the home, (eg forced entry, ransacking, displaced or damaged furniture and fixings), which may indicate a disturbance has taken place. If damage has been observed, consideration should be given to photographing the scene and or seizing items for forensic and/or fingerprint examination.

If the alleged perpetrator makes, at any stage, any unsolicited comments, a note should be made of the comments and offered to him/her for signature (eg notebook, custody record). On no account should the offender be interviewed or asked any questions in respect of the alleged offences after arrest and en route to the police station.

All cases where offence detected

In the first instance, police are to establish if the victim or other persons are injured. If applicable, medical assistance is to be sought.

A statement of complaint should be fully recorded from the victim, by an officer of preferred gender, if practicable, and should include:

- Family composition.
- History of the relationship.
- Any previous incidents.
- Actual incident.
- Perceived motivation for any assault.
- Victim's injuries (physical and emotional impact).

- Whether a weapon was used.
- Whether any threats have been made since the attack.
- If any children were present and the effect on them.
- Victim's view of the future relationship.
- Their wishes concerning prosecution of the offender.
- Their consent for police investigators to access medical records.

In addition, the following should be considered:

- Obtaining a copy of any 999 tape.
- Establishing if any CCTV evidence available (if incident occurred in public place).
- Speaking to neighbours with the victim's consent.
- Speaking with any other potential witnesses and recording statements, even if no criminal complaint is being made.
- Welfare interests of any child and ensure that they have not been harmed.
- Police evidence in respect of the condition of the home and any comments made by the alleged offender or the victim.
- Provide the victim with a Domestic Violence Advice Card, advise about support agencies, protective orders (ie Non-Molestation Order) and ask if they consent to referral to these agencies. If the victim wishes to self-refer, ascertain if they require assistance to make contact with a support agency or some other person.
- Establish if this is a repeat incident. Investigating officers are to liaise with the Domestic Violence Unit who may be able to provide details of previous incidents and profiles of repeat/high risk offenders. **This information will be vital to successful interview of the perpetrator and to ensure Custody Officers and Duty Inspectors are adequately briefed prior to decisions regarding charging and detention after charge of offenders.**
- Make a notebook entry to include any relevant direct speech, regardless of the eventual outcome in the event of any subsequent criminal/civil proceedings or Social Services case conference.
- Consider obtaining photographic evidence - of injuries to the victim and of any damage to property, especially if this is extensive.
- Consider seizure of items relevant to the investigation. For example, any weapons or articles used in the assault, items for fingerprint examination (especially necessary, to place offender at scene at time in question if not present upon police arrival, and later denies the offence).
- Secure the immediate and future safety of the victim and their family. **Where possible, the offender should be removed from the home, not the victim and children. If necessary, however, they should be taken to a place of safety, (eg relatives' home, Women's Refuge).**

On occasions it may be necessary to accompany the victim (or the perpetrator) to the domicile in order to collect personal belongings. The officer's role in this respect is to provide reassurance to the victim and to prevent any further offences from being committed. It should be noted that research suggests that it is when victims seek help and support, or try to leave, that the victim is at most risk from being subjected to further violence.

An Incident Report Form (IRF) must be **fully** completed and forwarded to the Domestic Violence Unit (and Crime Controller, if offence reported/detected) via e-mail, prior to the termination of duty.

Role of Domestic Violence Unit

Domestic Violence Officers will:

- Undertake the appropriate level of training for the post.
- Investigate all crimes of physical assault (AOABH and above) and upon discretion of the Domestic Violence Sergeant, repeat incidents of domestic violence and breaches of protective court orders. To this end, the Domestic Violence Unit will operate a flexible response as well as maintaining office hours, 9am - 5pm, Monday to Friday.
- Investigate all incidents of domestic violence reported between same gender partners or ex-partners.
- Assist the Foyle Criminal Investigation Department in investigations of domestic related murders/attempted murders.
- When appropriately trained, will assist in all investigations of serious crime within the DCU by video-interview of vulnerable adult witnesses.
- Provide advice to operational officers investigating domestic incidents and if appropriate, assist or undertake the investigation. Where conflict arises, the Crime Manager should be consulted.
- Receive completed Form IRF and assess the information from officers attending initial incidents of domestic violence.
- Conduct follow-up with all victims of domestic violence.
- With consent of victim, will refer via telephone/e-mail to statutory and voluntary support agencies such as Victim Support and Women's Aid, and will assist victims to access these services.
- Refer all children involved (as participants, victims, or observers) in domestic violence to the appropriate social services department.
- Where cases of child cruelty are detected (within domestic violence incidents), will refer to the CARE Unit at Maydown PSNI.
- Develop good working relationships with statutory and voluntary domestic violence support agencies, including those concerned with child protection, within Foyle District Command Unit, and ensure that details of such support agencies are readily available to all police officers within the DCU.

- Maintain statistics relating to domestic violence.
- Deal with requests for disclosure of information from solicitors who act on behalf of Social Services or victims of domestic violence.
- Attend multi-agency case conferences in respect of children at risk (where domestic violence is an issue) and provide accurate and relevant information.
- Maintain and make available a register of court orders in respect of the Family Homes and Domestic Violence (NI) Order 1998 and administrate the procedures in place for the efficient service of such orders.
- Carry out checks in relation to firearms applications/renewals.
- Carry out checks in relation to fostering/adoption applications.
- Carry out checks in relation to persons seeking employment working with children.
- Attend local Domestic Violence Forums, Community Safety Partnerships in order to establish good working practices and innovative initiatives in handling domestic violence issues.
- Promote domestic violence issues through the media and by presentations as appropriate.
- Ensure the ICIS computer system is updated with the details of victims and perpetrators of domestic violence. Use of 'Flagging' system, on Command and Control, for high risk victims/perpetrators to ensure prompt/decisive action is taken.

The above-mentioned tasks to be read in conjunction with the Service Level Agreement drawn up between the Domestic Violence Unit and Foyle DCU; and the Service Standard - Domestic Violence Unit (attached at Appendices B and C respectively).

Role of Domestic Violence Sergeant

It is the Domestic Violence Sergeant's responsibility to supervise the Domestic Violence Unit. They will be responsible to the Crime Manager and Domestic Violence Priority Manager, Foyle DCU.

The role of the Domestic Violence Sergeant is as follows:

- Consult, design and deliver inter-agency training programmes with North-West Inter-agency Partnership on Domestic Violence.
- Review, revise and develop the Foyle DCU protocol on domestic violence.
- Review, revise and develop the Foyle DCU protocol for the management of NMOs and Occupation Orders.
- Supervision of domestic violence caseloads.
- Assist in investigations undertaken by the Domestic Violence Unit and uniformed personnel (where appropriate) - including the interview of victims and suspects.

- Offer guidance and directions to the Domestic Violence Unit and uniformed personnel in their investigations.
- Decide the involvement of the Domestic Violence Unit in investigations.
- Quality Assurance of all domestic related investigations conducted by uniform personnel and direction on investigation files (CPO or PPS) for the DCU Commander.
- Compile and maintain a list of repeat offenders and circulate to all appropriate personnel.
- Arrange appropriate training for both DVOs and uniform personnel as required.
- Supervise seconded personnel to the Domestic Violence Unit.
- Ensure training for all new probationers in the Domestic Violence Unit.
- PSNI representative on inter-agency sub-groups (particularly in relation to child issues).
- Taking the lead in promoting domestic violence issues in the media/press.
- Take the lead in tackling the issue of repeat offenders.
- Supervision of office/statistics/analysis.
- Liaison with the DCU Crime Analysts in respect of domestic violence.
- Involvement in accredited training in Pathways re 'Support of Victims of Crime Group'.

In addition the Domestic Violence Sergeant is a member of, and contributes to the following groups:

- Pre-TCG (monthly).
- TCG (monthly).
- District Commander Meetings.
- Monthly PSNI/Women's Aid Meeting.
- Member of North-West Inter-agency Partnership on Domestic Violence (monthly).
- Member of North-West Inter-agency Partnership on Homophobic Incidents and Hate Crime.
- Member of the Western Area Child Protection Committee.
- Member of the Western Area Sub-Committee for Children and Young People who are victims of Domestic Violence.

The Sergeant's role is the key to success of this protocol.

Role of Sector Police

From the information supplied by the Domestic Violence Unit:

- Sector police will conduct long-term follow-up to victims, as identified by the Domestic Violence Sergeant, within their respective area. They will provide support, advice and information to victims.
- In the case of incidents of domestic violence, sector police will, in consultation with the Domestic Violence Sergeant, pay passing attention at identified risk times to the domicile where the victim and perpetrator live, if they live together. This action is outlined in the repeat victimisation model.
- Keep relevant records around response and any warnings delivered to repeat offenders.

Custody Officers

Custody officers must be mindful that domestic violence is not a 'one-off' offence and is likely to be a sustained pattern of abuse with a potential for serious harm to victims.

Custody officers must ensure that they have been provided with the full circumstances of the incident/arrest, together with other relevant information, before making any decision as to the disposal of the offender.

The protection of the victim and any children is paramount; the police have a positive obligation to protect life. Custody officer must consider, in consultation with the investigating officer and the duty inspector, the charging of an offender in certain circumstances (eg repeat offender for breach of Non-Molestation Orders/Occupation Orders, or repeat/high risk offenders re assaults on the victim). Similar considerations should be given to detention after charge. In this way the offender can be expeditiously brought before the court and the investigating officer can seek appropriate bail conditions or a remand in custody. Foyle DCU charging policy will apply - however, each case should be dealt with on its own merit, with the overriding principle of protecting the safety of the victim.

Where a person is arrested to prevent a breach of the peace, consideration should be given to the likelihood of them returning to the scene to reoffend.

Particular note should be taken of the condition of the offender when brought into custody (eg is he/she intoxicated, or are they complaining of injuries)? These observations will be relevant in any court proceedings - especially if the offender makes counter-allegations of assault against the victim, or claims provocation.

Where an offender has been bailed/released from police custody, the custody officer should ensure that the victim is informed of this fact prior to the offender's release.

Children

Research has shown that children who are either present at or hear incidents of domestic violence can be deeply affected (this could include behavioural, physical and psychological effects). In 90% of incidents occurring within families, children are in the same or next room, which can cause distress and confusion. Some children may not display any visible reaction, but one should not assume they are unaffected.

Where there is evidence of domestic violence in a family, the likelihood of child abuse is greatly increased.

There is also a correlation between pregnancy and domestic violence, though this may be because young women, as a group, are at higher than average risk of domestic violence, and pregnant women fall disproportionately into this group. They are at high risk due to their vulnerability.

Officers should record whether any children were present in the home at the time of the incident and, if so, whether they saw it taking place. If a child is present or the victim is present, the duty social worker should be informed if there are immediate child protection issues. If any of the parties (particularly the primary care-giver) are intoxicated, police should consider enlisting a suitable appropriate adult to take charge of the children. If this cannot be arranged, Social Services should be immediately informed so that procedures can be put into place to protect the children in the immediate term. Details of any children present should **always** be recorded on the Incident Report Form. Police officers attending should **always** check on the children in the household, to ensure their well-being, even if the victim and/or perpetrator states they are asleep in bed. (Remember police powers under Article 19 PACE provides power of entry to save life or limb.)

If police have reasonable cause to believe the child to be at risk of significant harm, Article 65 of the Children (NI) Order 1995 gives police power to take children into police protection. Significant harm relates to the health or development of the child when compared to the health or development reasonably expected of a similar child.

This legislation allows police officers to remove the child to a place of safety (ie Social Services accommodation, hospital, or police station in absolute emergencies) and lasts for 72 hours.

It will be an offence for any person to remove the child from a place of safety. Police should consider using article 27 PACE (to protect a child) if challenged by the perpetrator.

Prior to taking these steps, the attending police officer should, in the first instance, consult with their duty Sergeant and Inspector for advice. They should consider the wishes and feelings of the child concerned - taking into account their age and level of understanding.

Remember, **the welfare of the child is paramount**. In every circumstance, consideration should be given to the removal of the abuser from the domicile, rather than the child.

In dealings with children, police officers should remember that young people have their own ways of expressing stress. Children are to be reminded that they do not have to keep such issues to themselves; there are individuals and agencies available to provide support. Police are to avoid questioning the child or young person with direct questions. Accurate records are to be kept of anything that is said.

Police should avoid criticism of either parent in the presence of the child. Remember, that in many cases the young person will still love both parents. Interviewing young people is a specialist area which needs to be dealt with in line with the Joint Protocol for Child Investigation.

In the absence of any immediate risk, details should be passed to the relevant Social Services office as soon as possible. A list of local Social Services Offices is attached (Appendix D). The Domestic Violence Unit normally carries out such referrals. It is therefore imperative that the Unit receives the completed Incident Report Form as soon as possible to ensure the relevant details are passed to Social Services.

Minority Ethnic Groups

Victims often have a lack of awareness of the support systems available. There may be pressures within the family not to report such incidents to police.

A lack of understanding of the cultural and religious pressures within communities often leads police officers, with all good intent, to seek to use members of the community to mediate and/or act as interpreters in situations of domestic violence. This should be avoided as it may inhibit the victim.

It is important that these cases are dealt with in a professional manner and the Ethnic Minority Liaison Officer may be able to assist. (Currently the Community Involvement Sergeant holds this responsibility.) In consultation with the relevant agency, an interpreter will be appointed and a suitable time for interview of the victim arranged. Officers should consult with the Domestic Violence Unit for assistance in such investigations. The offer of support services should take place in close proximity to this interview, in order to reduce the trauma experienced by the victim.

Vulnerable Persons

The most important issue with regard to domestic violence for vulnerable people is raising awareness. Domestic violence is by its very nature a secretive crime. Vulnerable people are more likely to be unable to escape this crime due to disabilities, practical difficulties of rehousing, inaccessible transport and inadequate income. Domestic violence can become an issue as a consequence of an acquired disability. A victim may be cared for by his or her abuser, and therefore be unable to function in a physical way without that abuser. These are added complications to the other issues that face all victims of domestic violence and must be addressed and understood by the agencies designed to give them support. Examples of vulnerable groups are disabled, elderly and people with learning difficulties.

Same Gender Relationships

When dealing with domestic incidents involving people in same gender relationships, it is important that the police investigate the allegation without making any stereotypical assumptions regarding the relationship.

Police should recognise that domestic incidents involving same gender relationships are largely unreported. Reasons for gay persons' reluctance to report abuse to police may be their perceptions of police attitudes towards them and the gay community in general; a fear of being 'outed', that their complaint will not be taken seriously; misconceptions about domestic violence,

or a lack of knowledge about the civil and legal recourse available to them. It is therefore vitally important that the police response to such victims is a positive one that will encourage the victim and others within the gay community to proceed with complaints. The police officer making initial enquiries should (as with all victims of domestic violence) treat the victim with sensitivity, empathy and confidentiality. They should listen to what the victim has to say and should be informative regarding the options available to the victim. As soon as is practicable, the incident should be referred to the Domestic Violence Unit, for follow-up investigation.

Withdrawal of Victim's Complaint

There are numerous reasons why victims seek to withdraw their complaint of domestic violence. They may be threatened by their abuser (or their family/friends); too frightened; persuaded by other family members; reconciled with their abuser; choosing to proceed through the civil court or do not wish to give evidence in court. A full withdrawal statement should be obtained in writing from the victim on each occasion, and should, where possible, include:

- Details of the alleged crime.
- The reasons for wishing to withdraw.
- Whether the victim is saying the offence did not occur or does not wish the investigation or prosecution to continue.
- Whether any pressure, directly or otherwise, has been placed on the victim.
- Who they have discussed the case with.
- Whether any civil proceedings have been instigated (ie Non-Molestation Order or other civil injunction).
- The impact on the victim's life and that of any children.

This information should enable the prosecutor (or directing officer) to make an informed judgement as to whether the case could still proceed and the victim be compelled to give evidence. No judgement should be made of the victim as these cases are complex, traumatic and often involve pressure.

Domestic Violence Involving Police Employees

There are occasions when police employees are involved in incidents of domestic violence either as perpetrators or victims.

The duty Inspector should be notified where a police officer or member of the support staff is a party to a domestic incident and ensure that all factors involved in the initial investigation are considered.

Due consideration should be given as to which police station an arrested person should be taken to in order to avoid unnecessary embarrassment to the employee and colleagues (and also to ensure impartiality of the ensuing police investigation).

Investigating officers should ensure that the victim is provided with details of agencies that can provide support and advice. Welfare Services can provide counselling and advice to the victim, if requested.

Where a police officer is the alleged perpetrator of domestic violence or is a party to a domestic incident, the Domestic Violence Unit should forward a copy of the Incident Report Form as well as any relevant Command and Control logs in a sealed envelope via their supervisor to the DCU Commander. The DCU Commander will then notify the police officer's DCU Commander or equivalent of the allegation. Such a report should then be dealt with in accordance with the PSNI disciplinary regulations. Any firearms belonging to the perpetrator are to be automatically seized and procedures implemented in accordance with General Order No. 6/2000 A(d) (Seizure of Firearms from PSNI Personnel).

Police officers who commit domestic violence related offences should not be seen or treated as distinct from any other perpetrator and should be investigated and held accountable through the Criminal Justice System in the same way as any other person.

Where a member of support staff is the alleged perpetrator of domestic violence or is a party to a domestic incident, the Domestic Violence Unit should forward a report outlining details of the incident in a sealed envelope via their supervisor to the DCU Commander. The DCU Commander will then notify Discipline Section, Employee Relations, Lisnasharragh. The Code of Ethics must be considered and fully complied with.

Firearms

The use of a legally held firearm in a domestic violence incident is disturbing and has in the past resulted in serious injuries and fatalities. Therefore, serious consideration must be given to whether the continued possession of a firearm by the holder is likely to endanger the safety of some person. The firearm need not have been used during the incident, but mere access may present a danger or raise concerns regarding the perpetrator's suitability to retain firearms.

When dealing with incidents where enquiries indicate that the perpetrator has access to any firearm, police have two fundamental aims:

1. the protection of victims and of the public generally; and
2. firm control of the use and possession of legally held firearms and ammunition.

In each case, the firearms legislation must be rigorously enforced with action to seize firearms and revoke certificates as a matter of public safety, irrespective of any offences which may have been committed. This applies to any firearm and ammunition in Northern Ireland, whether held on a Firearms Certificate or not and includes those owned, used or possessed by the public services, the police, the armed services (and other reserve forces).

Actions at Scene

Investigating officers at an early stage in the investigation, and especially prior to the attendance at any incident, should ascertain if the perpetrator has access to firearms.

Communications staff will check via the Shogun system with regard to the respondent, or their address, for details of legally held firearms. This also applies to every NMO and or Occupation Order issued by the court.

The senior duty officer will instigate seizure of any weapons listed and will forward a report to Firearms Branch regarding revocation of the Firearms Certificate involved. The Domestic Violence Unit will assist with completion of this report where necessary.

A Firearms Certificate is granted on the basis that the Chief Constable is satisfied that the applicant is not prohibited by the Firearms Order from possessing a firearm, of intemperate habits or unsound mind and for any other reason unfitted to be entrusted with a firearm and can possess the firearm without danger to the public safety or the peace. If violence or the threat of violence is used in any domestic incident any firearm which the perpetrator has access to should be removed for safe keeping and a report forwarded without delay to the Head of Firearms and Explosives Branch, Lisnasharragh. Where a firearms holder is removed from premises named in their Firearms Certificate, the firearm should be removed into police safe keeping pending report. The power of seizure is by virtue of Article 51 of the Firearms (NI) Order 1981 which states that a Constable may seize and detain any firearm or ammunition in the possession of a person whom they believe to be in possession of same in contravention of any of the provisions of the Order.

Where the firearm is actually used in the domestic incident, the main criminal offences to be considered are Article 17 of the Order (Possession of Firearm with Intent to Injure) and 17A (Possession of Firearm with Intent to Cause Fear of Violence).

The power of seizure also extends to a breach of the provisions governing the issue and revocation of Firearm Certificates (where there is danger to the public safety or to the peace).

General Order 6/2000 A(d) refers to the seizure of firearms from police personnel.
General Order 20/2002 A(d) refers to the seizure of firearms from prohibited persons.

Police Powers

A summary of the main provisions of legislation is attached at Appendix E.

Training

The protocol requires a measured training commitment to all police staff within the District Command Unit.

- DCU training will deliver training to all DCU police staff, with consultation and input from the Training Officer, Women's Aid, the Rainbow Project and the Domestic Violence Sergeant.
- All Sergeants and Inspectors have received training from the Training Officer, Women's Aid and any other agency deemed necessary. Refresher training will be delivered by District Training as and when necessary.
- An aide-mémoire will be provided to all operational officers outlining their responsibilities, procedures and police powers.
- Domestic Violence Officers will undergo ICIS training.
- Domestic Violence Officers will undergo PEACE interview training and a specialised Domestic Violence Course designed by Community Safety Branch.

- The Domestic Violence staff will undergo vulnerable adult video training.
- Probationers will undergo a training session with the Domestic Violence Unit as part of their tutorship.

General

The Police Service has significantly improved its response to domestic violence over recent years. There will be increasing reports of such offences as victims become more confident in how they are treated by the police. It is imperative that the police deal effectively with domestic violence from the beginning.

Domestic violence is not acceptable and should not be tolerated. Police officers must ensure that positive action is taken at domestic violence incidents to prevent crime, ensure public safety and to protect the rights and freedoms of all parties including the victim, in accordance with the Human Rights Act 1998.

The Domestic Violence Repeat Victimisation Model

The model builds on Service domestic violence policy - to arrest wherever possible, to gather evidence as with any other crime, and to ensure the safety of the victim. It involves grading responses to domestic violence incidents according to the number of times the police have attended the offender in the past year. The main premise is that an increase in incidents prompts an increase in activity by the police and other agencies. The activity is directed at both victims and offenders and takes account of whether the offence is common law or criminal law and whether the victim is living with the perpetrator.

Warning letters will be signed by the Community Safety Co-ordinator (Inspector), or in their absence, the Domestic Violence Sergeant.

Police Watch

Police watch is about police patrols, regularly patrolling by the house where the victim and the perpetrator live, if they are living together. It's a visible presence, which says, 'We are interested, we know there's something going on here and we're continuing to monitor this'.

Target Hardening Property

This involves the delivery of crime prevention advice to the victim, the implementation of physical measures to increase the victim's confidence and warn police at an early stage.

All repeat victims of domestic violence will be offered a personalised security package, free of charge. This will include a portable personal attack alarm, a door viewer, and a safety bar. Various home alarm systems are being researched, like those supplied to vulnerable elderly people by Age Concern.

The Domestic Violence Unit will have a facility to supply mobile phones to vulnerable persons; this aims to provide an additional facility to contact police in case of emergency.

Intervention Level	Victim All Offences	Perpetrator Criminal Offences (Statutory and Common Law)
Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather information (DVO and uniformed personnel) • Information letter • Police watch 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Magistrate - conditional bail checks • Police watch
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information letter • DVO follow-up • Sector police visit • Target harden property 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Magistrate - bail opposed/checks • Police watch increased • CJU file and DV history
Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information letter • DVO follow-up and visit • Agency meeting • Home panic alarm/mobile phone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Magistrate - bail opposed/checks • Police watch increased • PPS file and DV history

Police Service of Northern Ireland
Foyle District Command Unit

Subject: Procedures for the Administration and Service of Non-Molestation and Occupation Orders within Foyle District Command Unit.

All Personnel
Foyle District Command Unit

This report deals with the procedure to be adopted by all personnel attached to Foyle District Command Unit when dealing with Non-Molestation/Occupation Orders. It should be read in conjunction with General Order 37/99 C(c) - The Family Homes and Domestic Violence (NI) Order 1998.

Police Commitment

It should be remembered that police have a duty to the applicant of such an Order, and that a commitment has been given by the District Commander, that once a court has granted a Non-Molestation Order and/or Occupation Order police will endeavour to serve such Orders as soon as possible.

This is also in keeping with current Human Rights Legislation.

Part 'A' - Non-Molestation/Occupation Orders

Non-Molestation Orders and Occupation Orders are granted by a Resident Magistrate, usually at the Domestic Proceedings Court.

However, it is not unusual for such Orders to be granted at a normal Petty Sessions Court or a special sitting of a Petty Sessions Court if a serious domestic offence is thought to have occurred.

It is very important to remember that an Order is not deemed to be 'in force' until it has been served on the respondent. All Interim Orders must be served **personally** on the respondent (respondent being the person whom the Order is made against).

There are two types of Orders, **Full** and **Interim** (previously called Emergency).

Part 'B' - Full Orders

A Full Order will usually remain in force for one year. If the respondent agrees with the court, the Order may be served on them by post direct from the court. Few Orders are served in this manner.

Part 'C' - Interim Orders

Interim Orders, when made, are usually only granted and remain in force for any time between one week and one month. To this end, service of this type of Order should be perfected as soon as possible and returned to the Clerk of Petty Sessions within the time limit indicated on the Order or given by the Clerk of Petty Sessions. If the time limit is one month, it has been agreed with the court that the DCU will return unserved Orders after three weeks to give the court sufficient notice prior to the court hearing. To this end, service of this type of Order should be perfected as soon as possible and returned to the Clerk of Petty Sessions (via the Domestic Violence Unit) within the time limit indicated by the Clerk of Petty Sessions.

Interim Orders will be treated as per the procedure for Full Orders, except as follows:

- a. Interim Orders will be marked '**Interim Order**' in red by the Clerk of Petty Session's staff before being collected by police.
- b. The responsibility for collection of the Orders and returning of served or unserved Orders will, on weekdays, reside with the Domestic Violence Unit. In emergency cases on weekends, for example, local uniform police will effect collection of the Order.
- c. Police will strictly adhere to the date given for service to be perfected by the Clerk of Petty Sessions of an Interim Order.
- d. If police are unable to perfect service of an Interim Order by the date given by the Clerk of Petty Sessions, the Interim Order will be returned to the Domestic Violence Unit together with an explanation as to the reason for non-service penned on the Action Sheet.
- e. If, after 72 hours, clear attempts to serve the Order have been unsuccessful, communications staff will inform the Domestic Violence Unit, who will carry out further enquiries to locate the respondent with the applicant and court service. If these enquiries are unsuccessful Domestic Violence Unit staff will attempt to locate the respondent by sending out a 'locate and trace' via email and/or the DCU briefing pages. Further information and enquiries to locate the respondent should be accurately recorded on the Command and Control log dedicated to the Order. It will be the responsibility of the duty Sergeant to ensure attempts are being made to serve the Order during his/her turn of duty and that all information regarding these attempts or enquiries are accurately recorded by uniformed police. The responsibility for cancelling the 'locate and trace' once the Order is served will rest with the Domestic Violence Unit.

Part 'D' - Notification of Orders

When an Order(s) is made at a court to be served within Foyle DCU, the Clerk of Petty Sessions, Londonderry, will contact the Domestic Violence Unit, informing them that an order(s) is ready for collection.

Domestic Violence Unit staff will **immediately** take whatever steps are necessary to have the Order(s) collected. The officer collecting the Orders will check them for accuracy. Communications

staff will further carry out a check with Firearms Licensing in respect of the respondent. If the respondent is in possession of a Firearms Certificate, the Communications staff will clearly mark this fact on the action sheet penned to the Order. They will also advise Communications staff on seizure of the detailed weapons on police attendance at the home, and will prepare a report to Firearms Licensing in order to effect the revocation of the Firearms Certificate concerned. Once these checks have been carried out, the Order will be forwarded directly to Communications staff who will instruct the duty observer, uniformed response, to collect the Order. Communications staff will append written instructions, and an action sheet to the Order, for compliance by the officer receiving the said Order for service.

All Orders for service must be placed in the appropriate folder, and must **not** be removed unless immediately prior to serving/attempting to serve.

On no account will an Order(s) be left uncollected at the courthouse.

Upon receipt of the Order(s), Communications room staff will carry out the following procedures:

- a. Log the Order(s) on to the Command and Control system; including the name of the relevant duty Section Sergeant on duty at the time the Order is received.
- b. Communications staff will update the Command and Control log on a daily basis to include attempts to serve the Order and any information in respect of reasons why Order was unserved, location of respondent, etc.
- c. If, after 72 hours, an Order remains unserved, inform the Domestic Violence Unit, for any necessary action to be carried out.
- d. Complete and attach report for the attention of the relevant duty Section Sergeant regarding service of the Order.
- e. Attach Action Sheet.
- f. Attach pro forma Statement of Evidence.
- g. Complete the register held in the Communications room, listing the Orders received to date.
- h. Note on the Command and Control serial that a firearms check via Shogun system has been carried out and the result of same.
- i. Communications staff will then hand the Order(s), with the relevant appendices attached, to the duty **Section Sergeant**.
- j. After service has been perfected of an Order(s) the Communications officer will file: (a) a photocopy of the served Order, with penned endorsement on the rear by the serving officer; (b) photocopy of the pro forma Statement of Evidence by the serving officer, by the surname of the applicant in the appropriate folder in Communications. The Communications officer will also inform the Domestic Violence Unit of service of the Order so that they may collect the original endorsed documents for return to the court and cancel the email if appropriate.
- k. Communications officers will update Command and Control regarding the service of the Order and will update the register held in Communications.

Part 'F' - Duties of Section Duty Sergeant

1. Upon receipt of an Order from Communications, accountability and responsibility for service of the Order(s) lies with the duty Section Sergeant.
2. Upon receipt of an Order(s) the duty Section Sergeant will check to see if the Order is a Full Order or an Interim Order.
3. The duty Section Sergeant will endeavour to have the Order(s) served during his/her turn of duty.
4. The duty Section Sergeant will ensure that the Order folder has been passed from the section performing the previous turn of duty, and that no orders are missing.
5. He/she will, at the end of their turn of duty, ensure that all records are accurately completed in respect of service or attempts to serve the Orders and that the complete folder is passed to the next section.
6. When the Order(s) is served the duty Sergeant will ensure the procedure laid down in **Part 'I' - After Service** will be strictly adhered to.
7. If, after 14 days from the date the Order(s) was made it remains unserved, the Order(s) will be returned to the Domestic Violence Unit. The unserved Orders will then be passed to Sector Police for service.

Accountability and responsibility for service will then shift to the Sector Sergeants.

8. See also **Part 'C' - Interim Orders**.

Part 'G' - Duties of Sector Sergeants

1. Where an Order has not been served the Sector Sergeant will receive notification from the Domestic Violence Unit that an Order(s) exists for service upon a resident in his/her sector and that the Order is held in the custody suite at Strand Road.
2. Every effort should then be made by the Sector Sergeant to locate persons wanted in connection with the service of such Order(s). The Sector Sergeant will ensure that where a 'locate and trace' has been activated, they will make the relevant enquiries to secure an address for the respondent. The Sector Sergeant will liaise with the Domestic Violence Unit in respect of progress in the matter for the purpose of updating the Clerk of Petty Sessions and may be provided with further information from the DVU through, (eg enquiries with the applicant and Women's Aid etc).
3. A 7-day call-up accounting for action regarding attempts to locate and serve the Order(s) will apply.
4. When the Order(s) is served, the procedure laid down in **Part 'I' - After Service** will be strictly adhered to.
5. All unserved Order(s) will be kept in the cupboard provided in the custody suite, Strand Road, whenever Sector Police are not on duty, in case the opportunity should arise wherein service could be effected.

6. All unserved Order(s) not served within 3 weeks of the date of the Order, will be returned to the Domestic Violence Unit, for return to the court.
7. See also **Part 'C' - Interim Orders**.

Part 'H' - Duties of Domestic Violence Unit

1. The Domestic Violence Unit will liaise with the Communications room on a daily basis and update their register accounting for all served and unserved Order(s).
2. The Domestic Violence Unit will, if the Order has not been served within 14 days, inform the Sector Sergeant in whose area the respondent resides, that an Order(s) exists and also the whereabouts of such Order(s).
3. The Domestic Violence Unit will, if the Order remains unserved after 21 days from the date the Order was made, inform the Clerk of Petty Sessions, in writing, that an Order remains unserved, explaining the difficulties encountered. The unserved Order will be attached and returned to the court that issued it.
4. When an Order has been served, the Domestic Violence Unit will ensure records have been perfected by the Communications staff, and have the endorsed Order returned to the Clerk of Petty Sessions with the least possible delay.
5. The Domestic Violence Unit will liaise regularly with the Sector Sergeants for the purpose of updating the progress on all unserved Orders.
6. The Domestic Violence Unit will keep in regular contact with the relevant member of staff in the Clerk of Petty Session's office in order to keep apprised of any new regulations or legislation regarding Domestic Proceedings procedure within the Court Service for Foyle DCU area.

Part 'I' - After Service

After an Order has been served, the following procedure will be strictly adhered to by the officer serving the Order.

1. Endorse the back of the Order (ie 'Served the within Order personally on (name of respondent) at (time) on (date) at (location)'). Signed: (name, rank and number).
2. Complete the pro forma Statement of Evidence.
3. Photocopy (a) the Order, (b) the pro forma Statement of Evidence and (c) the endorsement on the back of the Order.
4. Hand the **photocopied** set of documents to the Communications operator, for insertion into the relevant folder held in Communications.
5. Place the **original** documents in the Domestic Violence Unit pigeonhole in the Communications room.

Part 'K' - Summary

1. Clerk of Petty Sessions, Londonderry, contact the Domestic Violence Unit when an Order is granted (unless where the Order has been granted in emergency proceedings over the weekend, when Communications will be informed by court staff).
2. Domestic Violence Unit staff will have the Order collected (unless Order granted over the weekend, when it will be the responsibility of uniformed personnel to collect and serve the Order).
3. Communications staff will forward the Order to the duty Sergeant on duty at the time the Order was received.
4. The Order will be placed securely in the NMO folder and allocated, by the duty Sergeant, to the uniformed observer for that turn of duty, who will endeavour to have the Order served.
5. Communications staff will keep an accurate and up to date log of all attempts made to serve the Order, or difficulties encountered in service attempts.
6. After 72 hours of non-service (providing adequate attempts have been made to serve), Communications staff will inform the Domestic Violence Unit, who will make further enquiries into the whereabouts of the respondent. Domestic Violence Unit staff will also send an email and or update DCU briefing pages to have the respondent alerted. All information regarding the current location of the respondent to be forwarded to Communications staff, who will update the Command and Control log and inform uniformed officers regarding further attempts to serve the Order.
7. After 14 days of non-service, the Order is returned to the Domestic Violence Unit.
8. The Domestic Violence Unit Sergeant forwards a report to the Sector Sergeant.
9. After 21 days of non-service, the Order is returned to the court, with an explanation for non-service.
10. When the Order is served, it is (a) endorsed, (b) marked an item of evidence by the serving officer, (c) statement of evidence from serving officer attached, (d) photocopied, (e) original documents to Domestic Violence Unit, (f) photocopied documents to Communications for filing.

Part 'L' - Service of Occupation Orders

Article 18 of the Family Homes and Domestic Violence (NI) Order 1998 gives courts power to specify certain conditions in respect of a dwelling house, including who may occupy that house. In essence an Occupation Order may order the respondent to leave the matrimonial or family home.

The procedures for service and administration of such Orders are the same as for service of Non-Molestation Orders, with the exception that the respondent may be living in the same dwelling as the applicant at the time of service. In such circumstances it is important that police communicate to the respondent of such an Order that they are to leave the home within a limited period of time.

The officer serving the Order should ensure that the respondent has left as instructed within the time period allotted, and should be on hand to assist the applicant during this process and protect against assault or damage to property. The fact that the respondent has left the dwelling should be recorded on the Command and Control log for the Order concerned.

Part 'M' - Police Response to Breaches of Orders

Breach of a Non-Molestation Order or Occupation Order is a criminal offence under the Family Homes and Domestic Violence (NI) Order 1998. This legislation has further deemed that breaches of these Orders are arrestable offences and therefore carry powers of arrest contained within Article 26 of the Police and Criminal Evidence (NI) Order 1988.

The PSNI has had a formal pro-arrest policy in respect of domestic violence since the early 1990s. The new powers available to us have given us considerable strength in our approach to domestic incidents. Officers should therefore fully utilise these powers when breaches of the Orders are reported/detected.

Where there is sufficient evidence of an offence with a power of arrest, suspects will be arrested, unless in the circumstances of that specific case, an arrest at that time is clearly inappropriate to deal with the allegations. If in doubt, officers should seek guidance from their supervisory Sergeant or the Domestic Violence Unit.

When a court has issued a Non-Molestation/Occupation Order the issuing magistrate effectively becomes the injured party in the case of a breach. Therefore, the police should pursue prosecutions in respect of breaches of the Orders, even when the person protected by the Order is reluctant to do so, or as has sometimes been the case in Foyle, there is an allegation by the offender that the protected person has invited them into their home.

Foyle DCU operates a pro-charge policy in respect of breaches of NMO/OOs. This is to ensure the offender is promptly brought before the court. It is important that the victim is kept informed throughout the court process.

Summary of Relevant Legislation and Powers

Article 25 of the Family Homes and Domestic Violence (NI) Order 1998

Any person who contravenes:

- (a) a Non-Molestation Order;
- (b) where there is in force a Non-Molestation Order prohibiting that person from molesting another person, an Occupation Order or an Order under Article 18;
- (c) an exclusion requirement, included by virtue of Article 57A of the Children (NI) Order 1995 in an interim Care Order under article 57 of that Order;

or

- (d) an exclusion requirement included by virtue of Article 63A of the Children (NI) Order 1995 in an Emergency Protection Order under Article 63A of that Order;

shall be guilty of an offence.

Power of Arrest

Article 26 of the Family Homes and Domestic Violence (NI) Order 1998 amends Article 26 of PACE (Arrestable Offences) to include a power of arrest for an offence under:

- (a) Article 4 of the Protection from Harassment (NI) Order 1997;
- (b) Article 25 of the Family Homes and Domestic Violence (NI) Order 1998.

Any person who is breach of:

- (c) a Non-Molestation Order;
- (d) an Occupation Order attached to a Non-Molestation Order;
- (e) exclusion requirements under the Children (NI) Order 1995,

commits an arrestable offence and is therefore liable to arrest under Article 26 of PACE.

Power to Enter Premises

Common Law - Under Common Law, a constable has the power to enter premises to prevent or deal with a breach of the peace, and the power to arrest to prevent a breach of the peace.

PACE (NI) Order 1989 - Article 19 of PACE provides a constable power to enter any premises to:

- (i) arrest a person for an arrestable offence, which includes assaults occasioning grievous or actual bodily harm or wounding (and now for suspected breach of Orders);
- (ii) save life or limb or prevent serious damage to property.

Firearms (NI) Order 1981

Article 51 of the Order states - a constable may seize and detain any firearms or ammunition in the possession of a person whom he believes to be in possession of those firearms or that ammunition in contravention of any of the provisions of the Order.

Service Level Agreement Domestic Violence Unit/Foyle DCU

- 1a. The Domestic Violence Unit will provide a flexible response for the investigation of allegations of serious domestic violence, including AOABH, GBH and GBH with intent. Minor assaults, criminal damage and, breach of Non-Molestation Orders/Occupation Orders will be dealt with by uniformed personnel. The exception will be when the defendant is a repeat offender or the case is of special interest - such matters may be reported to Public Prosecution Service - and may be dealt with by the Domestic Violence Unit. On these occasions, uniformed personnel will carry out any initial action. The Domestic Violence Sergeant will review the investigation at an early stage and will decide on the appropriate personnel to investigate.
- 1b. Access to Domestic Violence Officers will be via the DCU Crime Manager who will screen requests. If a Crime Manager (or Deputy) is not available, the duty Response Inspector should be contacted. It will be the responsibility of the Duty Sergeant to evaluate a domestic incident and determine the course of action and appropriate investigator.
- 1c. Domestic Violence Officers should not be called out for routine and minor cases such as verbal altercations and common assaults. As a consequence, Sergeants and Inspectors in the DCU should take a keen interest in the supervision of such cases. In a devolved investigation, the Domestic Violence Unit can still be called upon (subject to other commitments) to interview the victim, when he/she is particularly vulnerable, provided the victim specifically requests this or it is felt the expertise of the unit is required. The Domestic Violence Unit will also be on hand to provide up to date histories in respect of particular cases, and reports in respect of court hearings.
- 1d. Very serious assaults such as attempted murder will be investigated by CID Officers from the DCU. If required, Domestic Violence Officers will interview the victim and may be called upon to provide other assistance subject to agreement from the Crime Manager who will intervene in disputes concerning whether the investigation should fall to CID, the Domestic Violence Unit, or uniformed personnel.
- 1e. The Domestic Violence Sergeant will quality control all investigations involving domestic violence prepared by uniformed personnel, in partnership with the Criminal Justice Unit. Uniformed personnel will submit the file as normal to the Criminal Justice Unit. The file will then be passed to the Domestic Violence Sergeant who will review the investigation and make directions regarding areas of clarification, further investigation, and amendments required. The Domestic Violence Sergeant will direct on all uniformed investigations of domestic violence, and those investigations carried out by the Domestic Violence Unit. Where a victim has declined to prosecute, the Domestic Violence Unit will examine all available evidence and may prepare a report to the PPS for consideration in respect of criminal proceedings.
2. With regard to criminal investigations, the Domestic Violence Unit will be responsible to the Crime Manager, who will also be the budget holder for overtime in respect of the Unit. The Domestic Violence Sergeant will keep the DCU Crime Manager updated on the progress of investigations. At present there is no overtime budget set for the Unit. It is proposed a

budget of 15 hours per officer per month should be allowed. This will be open to review, depending on the workload of the officers concerned, and changing trends in the reporting of domestic violence. The Domestic Violence Sergeant will also be responsible with regard to domestic violence policy, protocols and initiatives, to the Priority Manager for domestic violence, and will provide monthly progress reports/taskings to the Priority Manager and the TCG. The Domestic Violence Sergeant will perform the role of Deputy Priority Manager.

2. Crime Analysts (Foyle DCU) will monitor cases of domestic violence and inform the Crime Manager of emerging trends.
3. The Domestic Violence Unit will be responsible for the administration of Non-Molestation and Occupation Orders. The Domestic Violence Sergeant will formulate and review protocols for the management of Non-Molestation and Occupation Orders. Responsibility for service of the Orders will remain with uniformed personnel. Any difficulties in service of Orders should be reported to the Domestic Violence Unit, who will make further enquiries regarding location of the respondent. The Domestic Violence Sergeant will ensure the respondent is alerted via email and DCU briefing pages after 72 hours, if there have been clear unsuccessful attempts to serve the Order.
4. The Domestic Violence Unit will maintain, collate and analyse (with assistance from Crime Analysts) statistics relating to domestic violence and submit the required quarterly return to Community Safety Branch, HQ.
5. The Domestic Violence Unit will deal with requests for disclosure of information from solicitors who act on behalf of Social Services or the victims of domestic violence.
6. The Domestic Violence Unit will perform regular analysis and risk assessment of all offenders/victims who are classified as repeat offenders/victims. The unit will compile and maintain a list of repeat/high risk offenders and vulnerable persons and will regularly brief uniformed sections regarding same.
7. The Domestic Violence Sergeant will arrange appropriate training for DVOs within the unit and will engage in and advise on training for uniformed personnel as required.
8. The Domestic Violence Sergeant will implement and review DCU protocols on domestic violence.
9. The DCU Commander will appoint and maintain dedicated Domestic Violence Officers (a Core Specialist role as per Human Resources review). They will be located centrally within the District Command Unit, in appropriate self-contained premises, suitable for the interview of victims. The DCU will provide sufficient administrative support, transport, training and equipment to enable the Domestic Violence Unit to effectively carry out their role.
10. The DCU Commander should endeavour to provide the Domestic Violence Unit with a temporary 3-month secondment on a rotational basis. The Personnel Manager will establish and maintain an annual list and will liaise with the Domestic Violence Sergeant. Secondment to the Domestic Violence Unit should be on the basis of:
 - (a) An identified and documented need from the Domestic Violence Sergeant.
 - (b) Suitable and willing applicants.
 - (c) Availability from DCU resources, given current resource pressures.

11. The Domestic Violence Unit will ensure where an offender has access to a legally held firearm, steps are taken to revoke their Firearm Certificate. The Domestic Violence Office will perform checks with Firearms Branch for every NMO or Occupation Order received, and brief uniformed personnel of the result, with directions to seize the weapon as appropriate.
12. The Domestic Violence Unit will conduct a follow-up with all reported victims of domestic violence by: (a) letter, and/or (b) telephone, and/or (c) home visit, (d) meeting at police venue or elsewhere (eg Women's Aid premises/refuge). Information will be provided to victims regarding legal recourse, support services available, and the availability of preventative measures such as Non-Molestation/Occupation Orders. For repeat victims of domestic violence, ongoing contact/support/passing attention is to be provided by sector police.
13. The Domestic Violence Unit will refer all children involved in domestic violence incidents to Social Services. The Unit will set up and attend multi-agency case conferences in respect of vulnerable persons and children.
14. The Domestic Violence Unit will refer all victims of domestic violence to Women's Aid and Victim Support, if they consent. The Domestic Violence Office will continue to provide support to the victim through the investigation and court process, as required.
15. Domestic Violence Officers will maintain office hours namely 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday, however, they will work outside these times as and when required.

Domestic Violence Unit, Foyle

Service Standard

Aim

To provide a high quality, proactive and effective policing service by the thorough, sensitive and professional investigation of all reported cases of domestic violence.

Victims

We undertake to treat all victims with sensitivity and confidentiality, in accordance with the European Convention on Human Rights, and recognising that their needs extend beyond the criminal justice system and that the welfare of children in particular is paramount.

We will ensure that a trained Domestic Violence Officer is available as far as possible to deal with serious reported cases of domestic violence. We will also be on hand to assist uniformed personnel with their investigations of minor cases of domestic violence, within Foyle DCU.

We will endeavour where possible to provide victims with a choice of location of interview.

We will make our facilities as accessible, comfortable and convenient as possible for victims.

We recognise the need to advance investigations at the victim's pace and will take account of her/his wishes at all stages of the investigation. We will, however, deal with repeat offenders in a proactive positive way, pursuing prosecutions in the absence of a complaint if sufficient evidence exists.

We will monitor patterns of domestic violence and will identify victims at high risk of violence, putting protocols into place to afford the best possible protection for these victims.

We undertake to keep victims informed on the progress of our investigations and provide ongoing support through this process, the court process, and beyond.

We will refer victims, with their consent, to other statutory and voluntary agencies who may be able to help, or we will provide the necessary information for the victim to make contact themselves, if they so wish.

We will refer all children involved in domestic violence incidents, whether victims or not, to Social Services. We will set up and attend organised case conferences in respect of vulnerable children and adults (within domestic violence setting).

We will work in co-operation with other agencies to improve services and facilities available to victims of domestic violence and their families.

Offenders and Suspects

We will adopt a proactive and positive approach with regard to repeat offenders of domestic violence, pursuing prosecutions where sufficient evidence exists.

We will treat all offenders and suspects in a fair and professional manner and in accordance with relevant legislation and the European Convention on Human Rights.

We will be sensitive to the needs of offenders and suspects and will not disclose any information concerning them, unless it is our duty to do so.

We undertake, where appropriate, to involve suspects and offenders in relevant case conferences and to ensure that they are informed of the outcome.

Other Agencies/Professionals

We will co-operate with other organisations and individuals in the field of child protection and domestic violence.

Where appropriate we will draw up and implement joint protocols and procedures to ensure the best use of our resources and in the best interests of the victims of domestic violence.

We will share information where appropriate - and if necessary with the consent of the victim/suspect/offender - in the interests of the victim, of child protection generally, or to further our investigations.

The Community

We will provide information to the community on the work of the Domestic Violence Unit, and contact numbers/addresses for each Unit.

We will do all we can to make our facilities as accessible as possible to interested groups and individuals.

We will continue to adopt a multi-agency approach to domestic violence and child protection, and in particular the management of domestic violence in the community.

We will disclose information on offenders to individuals or groups where this is legal, appropriate and necessary.

We will co-operate with other agencies to increase the awareness of the community on issues related to domestic violence and child protection.

Local Social Services Offices

Foyle Health and Social Services Trust

Family and Child Care Programme Manager
Riverview House
Abercorn Road
Londonderry
BT48 6SB

Tel: 028 7126 6111

Sperrin and Lakeland Health and Social Services Trust

Family and Child Care Programme Manager (**Omagh Sector**)
Community Services Department
Tyrone and Fermanagh Hospital
Omagh
BT79 0NS

Tel: 028 8283 5020

Sperrin and Lakeland Health and Social Services Trust

Family and Child Care Programme Manager (**Fermanagh Sector**)
Community Services Department
2 Coleshill Road
Enniskillen
BT74 7HG

Tel: 028 6634 4000

In an emergency, out of hours, a social worker can be contacted through the Duty Co-ordinator, by contacting Altnagelvin Hospital on 028 7134 5171.

Summary of the Main Provisions of Legislation

1. Common Law

Under Common Law, a Constable has the power to enter premises to prevent or deal with a breach of the peace, and the power to arrest to prevent a breach of the peace.

2. Police and Criminal Evidence (Northern Ireland) Order 1989

- (1) Under Article 19(1)(b) of the Police and Criminal Evidence (NI) Order 1989, a Constable may enter any premises for the purpose of arresting a person for an arrestable offence, which includes assaults occasioning grievous or actual bodily harm or wounding.
- (2) Under Article 19(1)(e) of PACE, a Constable may also enter premises for the purpose of saving life or limb or preventing serious damage to property.
- (3) Under Article 26 of PACE, a Constable may arrest any person who is suspected of having committed an arrestable offence, or is about to commit one.
- (4) Under Article 27 of PACE, a Constable may arrest a person where there are reasonable grounds for believing it is necessary to prevent any physical injury being caused to another or to protect a child or other vulnerable person.
- (5) The general powers of arrest under Article 27 may also apply in appropriate circumstances.

3. Offences Against the Person Act 1861

- (1) Under Section 42, a Constable may arrest any person whom within his view unlawfully assaults or beats any person.
- (2) Under Section 47, it is an offence to assault any person thereby occasioning actual bodily harm.
- (3) Under Section 18, it is an offence to unlawfully and maliciously by any means whatsoever wound or cause any grievous bodily harm to any person, with intent to do some grievous bodily harm to any person.
- (4) Under Section 20, it is an offence to unlawfully and maliciously wound or inflict any grievous bodily harm upon any other person, either with or without any weapon or instrument.
- (5) Under Section 52, it is an offence to indecently assault any female (ie some threat or hostile act accompanied by circumstances of indecency), which expresses the sexual desire on the part of the offender.

4. Criminal Justice (NI) Order 2003

- (1) Article 18 of the Order provides that it is an offence for a man to rape any person who at the time of the intercourse does not consent and at the time he knows that they do not consent or he is reckless as to whether they consent or not.
- (2) Article 21 of the Order provides that it is an offence to indecently assault a man (a man can be a male of any age).

5. Criminal Damage (NI) Order 1977

Article 3 of the Order states that a person who without lawful excuse destroys or damages property belonging to another intending to destroy or damage any such property or being reckless as to whether any such property would be destroyed or damaged shall be guilty of an offence.

6. Protection from Harassment (NI) Order 1997

- (1) Article 3 of this Order prohibits a person from pursuing a course of conduct, which amounts to harassment. References to harassing a person include alarming the person or causing the person distress. In order to commit the offence it is necessary to show that harassment was caused by a 'course of conduct' defined in the Order on more than one occasion.
- (2) Course of conduct may include speech and the alleged offender must know, or ought to know, that the course of conduct amounts to harassment of the other.
- (3) This legislation should be considered where there is no evidence of physical or sexual abuse but where emotional or financial abuse is present.

7. Firearms (NI) Order 1981

Article 51 - a Constable may seize and detain any firearms or ammunition in the possession of a person whom he believes to be in possession of those firearms or that ammunition in contravention of any of the provisions of the Order.

8. Family Homes and Domestic Violence (NI) Order 1998

- (1) Article 18 - a court may specify certain conditions in respect of a dwelling house, including who may occupy that house.
- (2) Article 20 - a court may grant a Non-Molestation Order prohibiting a person from molesting another person.
- (3) Article 26(2) PACE - a Constable may arrest without warrant any person who contravenes a Non-Molestation or Occupation Order.

9. Children (NI) Order 1995

- (1) Article 65 - Where a Constable has reasonable cause to believe that a child is likely to suffer significant harm, he may remove the child to suitable accommodation and keep him there; or take such steps as are reasonable to ensure that the child's removal from any place, in which he is then being accommodated is prevented.
- (2) Article 66 - Where an authority has reasonable cause to suspect that a child who lives, or is found, in that authority's area is suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm, the authority shall make enquiries to enable it to decide whether it should take any action to safeguard or promote the child's welfare.



RESULTS ANALYSIS

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROTOCOL

FOYLE DCU

FOYL/RA/DV/01/07

This information is based on incidents reported from a variety of PSNI sources and is believed to be current at the time of publication. These figures refer to incidents only and do not represent official crime figures.

This information has been provided by the PSNI and must not be quoted without express permission of Foyle DCU Commander.



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Background to the Problem

This report has been produced at the request of Inspector Kerr to assess the success of the *Interagency Domestic Violence Protocol* introduced in Foyle DCU in March 2003.

The Interagency Domestic Violence Protocol was developed in partnership with Women's Aid, Probation Board for Northern Ireland, Western Health & Social Services Board, Victim Support Northern Ireland and PSNI, due to the high number of Domestic Violence Incidents recorded in 2001 and 2002. Domestic Violence incidents increased by 4% from 2001 to 2002, resulting in 1394 recorded incidents in Foyle DCU for 2002¹. Furthermore in comparison to other DCUs Foyle consistently fell in the top 3 DCUs for the highest number of Domestic Violence Incidents recorded during 2001/02 and 2002/03².

In the early stages of the protocol the partners researched Best Practice and consulted both internally and externally in a bid to develop a protocol that would deliver a consistent and standardised approach that, in turn would address the high level of Domestic Violence Incidents reported in Foyle DCU. The main objectives of the protocol are as follows:-

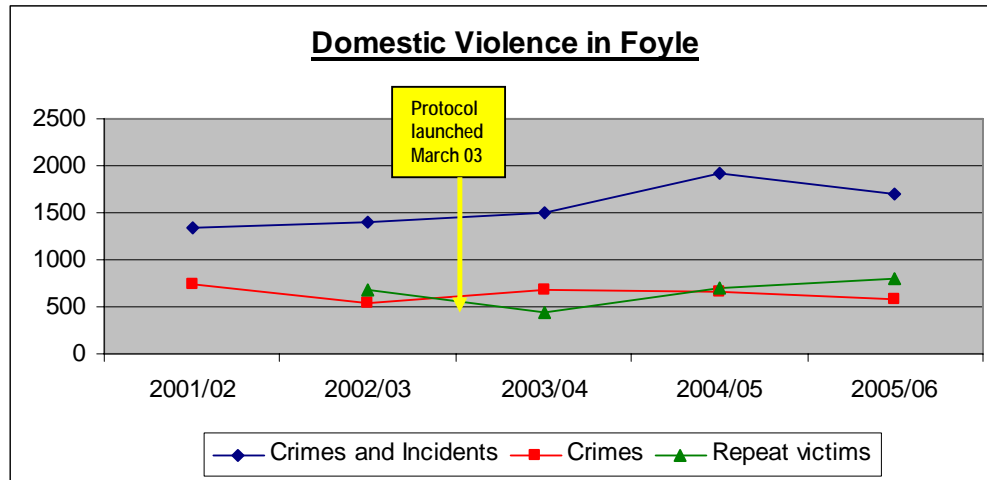
- Reduce repeat victimisation, through the application of the new procedures.
- Increase the intervention level between repeat victims of domestic violence and offenders.
- Extend the partnership approach to victims to improve the quality of service provided.
- Raise community awareness; thereby increase community confidence and safety.
- Improve quality of service to victims.
- Raise Police and Agency Awareness to ensure the most effective response to victims and offenders.

Domestic Violence has been set as a local priority in Foyle DCU and is monitored through the TCG process, the DVO provide a monthly update on crimes/ incidents recorded, repeat victims and high risk offenders, this is briefed out to all operational personnel. In addition, the partners meet regularly to review and evaluate the protocol and discuss emerging trends. Training for Domestic Violence Officers and other Police Personnel is also provided by the partners, such as Women's Aid, this has been particularly beneficial in providing realistic case training and promoting a good working relationship between Police and other agencies, it has also provided another appropriate channel for communication.

¹ Figures taken from Foyle DCU Interagency Domestic Violence Policy

² Figures provided by Women's Aid

Analysis



Produced using both Official and operational figures, Breach of NMOs not included to allow for fair comparison³

The above chart displays the trend for crimes, incidents and repeat victims of Domestic Violence in the period from April 2001 - March 2006 in Foyle DCU, (NB figures for repeat victims were not available for 2001/02).

Crime/ Incidents

The blue line on the chart indicates the number of crimes and incidents reported of a Domestic Violence nature. As can be seen from the chart crimes/ incidents were increasing slightly prior to the introduction of the Protocol however more significant increases in the reporting of crimes/ incidents was realised soon after the introduction of the protocol particularly in the second half on 2003/04 and 2004/05 when crimes/ incidents reported peaked at 1921 reports. This increase was anticipated and indeed hoped for by the partnership as it indicates increased confidence in reporting and in turn a heightened awareness of the services offered by Domestic Violence Officers. In 2005/06 the number of reports started to decline, again this trend met the expectations of the partners' as it was believed that once the protocol was in place and the proactive measures and robust reactions taken by the Domestic Violence Officers take effect the level of Domestic Violence would fall as potential offenders would be suitably deterred.

Crime

The red line on the chart indicates the number of crimes that have been recorded as a result of all the Domestic Violence Incidents. It is interesting to note that the level of crime was increasing in the lead up to the introduction of the protocol however soon after the introduction of the protocol the level of crime reported reduced despite an increase in the number of crimes/ incidents reported, this downward trend has continued. Early indications suggest that this downward trend in recorded crimes will continue as in the period from 1 April 2006 – 13 January 2007 recorded domestic violence offences have reduced by 30% in comparison with

³ Produced by Adrian Moyne, Trainee Analyst Foyle DCU

the same period in 2005/2006⁴. This strongly supports the success of the protocol as it indicates that the severity of Domestic Violence Incidents has decreased, it is reasonable to infer that this is due to the prompt, high quality service that is being provided by the partnership. Furthermore it may be suggested that the action taken by the DVO may have been robust enough to deter offenders from committing more serious offences, this may also be an indicator that Community Awareness has been raised.

The clearance rate for Domestic Violence offences has also increased in the last two years suggesting that the DVU are dealing with offences effectively, in 2004/05 the DCU had a clearance rate of 66%, this increased to 79% for 2005/06.

Repeat Victims

The green line on the chart overleaf represents the repeat victims of domestic violence since the force year 2002/03. Before the protocol was introduced the number of repeat victims was in decline however this may not have been a positive situation as it may suggest that victims did not have confidence to continually report incidents possibly because the service they received was not of a high enough standard. Shortly after the introduction of the protocol the number of repeat victims rose substantially, indeed there was a 58% rise in repeat victims in 2004/05 (691 repeat victims) compared to 2003/04 (438). In 2003/04 repeat victims accounted for 36% of all crimes/ incidents reported, this increased to 47% in 2005/06.

Although one of the objectives of the protocol is to reduce repeat victimisation this initial increase has been viewed as favourable by the partners as it is an indicator that victims are receiving a high quality service from the Domestic Violence Unit as they are prepared to come back and report additional incidents. Furthermore, an increase in repeat victims coupled with a decrease in recorded offences suggests that the partners are successfully intervening relationships where domestic violence exists and lessening the severity of the incidents, this suggestion has been further corroborated by feedback provided by Women's Aid. Representatives from Women's Aid who regularly meet with victims of Domestic Violence have given feedback to say that the victims have stated that they are happy with the way they have been dealt with by Officers from the Domestic Violence Unit.⁵

The partnership recognises that the protocol is not a short-term fix and that not all objectives will be met initially however it is envisaged that as the protocol continues and expertise develops the objective of decreasing repeat victimisation will be met in the longer term.

⁴ Official Figures taken from Saturn on 18 January 2007 – include Breach of NMOs, figures subject to change

⁵ Source: Margaret Gallagher, Women's Aid

Summary

OBJECTIVE	RESULT
Reduce Repeat Victimisation	Over the past two force years repeat victims have increased so to date this target has not been met however this reflects an increase in confidence in reporting. Furthermore the partnership has received qualitative information to suggest that the reasons for the increase in repeat victimisation is that victims believe they are receiving a high standard of service and are now reporting all incidents irrelevant of how minor they are.
Increase the intervention level between repeat victims of domestic violence and offenders	The increase in the number of repeat victims coupled with the decrease in crime suggests that the severity of domestic violence incidents has decreased which in turn suggests that the partners involved in the protocol have been successfully intervening relationships in which domestic violence exists.
Extend the partnership approach to victims to improve the quality of service provided	The increase in reporting by repeat victims suggests that victims have confidence in the DVO, also feedback received by Women's Aid suggesting victims believe they are receiving a high standard of service. Clearance rates for domestic offences have also increased with a recorded clearance rate of 79% for 2005/06 suggesting that incidents are being dealt with effectively.
Raise community awareness; thereby increase community confidence and safety	The number of crimes and incidents reported increased significantly by almost 30% in the year following the introduction of the Protocol (2004/05) suggesting that the DVU were well publicised and more people were coming forward to report. Recorded offences increased initially due to an increase in reporting since the protocol was introduced in March 2003 however since 2003/04 recorded offences have fallen consistently; this would suggest that community safety has increased.
Improve quality of service to victims	Reporting of domestic violence crimes/ incidents has increased which suggests increased confidence and awareness. Clearance rates have also increased suggesting Domestic Violence Officers are effectively dealing with offenders therefore providing an improved service to victims.
Raise Police and Agency Awareness to ensure the most effective response to victims and offenders	Through the protocol and TCG process all officers are briefed on High Risk Offenders and actions to be taken on a monthly basis. Regular meetings are also held between the partners to gain feedback.

Conclusion

From the information gathered in this report it is reasonable to infer that the Interagency Domestic Violence Protocol has been highly successful in Foyle DCU and should be continued. Most notably the protocol has facilitated a drop in Domestic Violence Offences over the past two years, early indications are that this downward trend will continue as the total number of Domestic Violence Offences (inclusive of Breach of Orders) has reduced by 30% FYTD in comparison with the PFYTD. This is the third highest percentage decrease across the service and significant as this equates to a reduction of 170 recorded offences. Furthermore it is also important to be aware that Foyle DCU no longer falls within the top 3 DCUs in the Service for Domestic Violence and currently ranks 5th across the service, with 45% less recorded offences FYTD than the DCU with the highest number of recorded offences⁶.

The summary table overleaf shows that all of the objectives have been met, most of which in full but those that have not fully been met have been met in part. It is certain that without the long-term commitment and contribution of all the partners this would not have been achieved as the feedback, training and expertise provided by all agencies involved have proved invaluable to the ongoing success of the protocol.

Distributed to: -

CSI Russell
Supt Hanna
Inspector M Kerr
Analysis Centre

⁶ Official figures taken from Saturn on 17th January 2007, subject to change.

The Foyle District Command Unit **Domestic Violence Unit**



Persons involved in the consultation, research, interagency meetings and the Protocol:

**Inspector Milton Kerr, Community Safety Coordinator, Foyle DCU.
Sergeant David McKay, Domestic Violence Liaison Officer, Foyle DCU.
Temporary Superintendent Johnny McCarroll, (retired).**

Domestic Violence officers and administrative support:

**Constable Cherith Craig, PW1807
Constable Norma McMillan, PW1857
Constable Gareth McMillan, 20168.
Constable John Wilson, 18281, (now crime prevention).
Mr Ronnie Harper, (retired police officer).**

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Telephone: 01 4086500
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Faics: 01 4086599
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Gréasán: www.gsinsp.ie

To Whom It May Concern:

I understand that the Foyle District Command Unit's Interagency Domestic Violence Policy has been nominated for Community Awards 2007 in the "Partnership Category". I am writing to wholeheartedly endorse the nomination.

Several years ago, prior to my service on the Patten Commission, I travelled to Northern Ireland to participate in a series of seminars and discussions on the important subject of Domestic Violence. I became acquainted with several representatives of Women's Aid, including many in the Foyle District. It was clear during that period of the mid-1990's, that there was little interaction between the police and the community in addressing this very complicated and often devastating issue.

Since 1995, I have closely followed the progress that has emerged and attended some meetings and events relating to this important partnership. In 2004, I was very pleased to host the group's visit to Boston where they attended numerous meetings with the Boston Police Family Justice Division and victims advocates across Massachusetts. It was clear at that juncture that very considerable progress had been made.

Since 2004, the partnership has continued to flourish and I noticed that it was even highlighted as an example of good practice in the Northern Ireland Policing Board's Annual Report on Human Rights in 2006.

I believe this progress is remarkable and that this very crucial and effective partnership deserves Community Awards 2007 recognition.

Sincerely,

Kathleen O'Toole
Chief Inspector

12th January, 2007

District Registry of the High Court of Justice

*Barnsley County Court
12 Regent Street
Barnsley
S70 2EW*

DX 702080 Barnsley 3

*Telephone 01226 777550
Fax 01226 779126*

Mobile: 07715108410

Email: DistrictJudge.Mornington@HM-Courtservice.gsi.gov.uk

18th January 2006.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Re: Nomination to the Northern Ireland Policing in the Community Awards 2007 (Partnership Category)

It gives me great pride to write in my capacity of Lead on Domestic Violence for the Family Justice Council and Chair of the Interjurisdictional Initiative 'Raising the Standards' to nominate Foyle District Command for the above award. The quality, effectiveness and innovatory approach of their work to protect the women and children so badly affected by domestic violence has been long known to me and I had the great pleasure of personally visiting them and seeing at first hand their efforts. Their best practice is known and emulated in many parts of the British Isles

In 2002 the Foyle Police District Command Unit and Foyle Women's Aid identified that the Derry City Council Area had the highest reported incidence of Domestic Violence in Northern Ireland. As a result Foyle Women's Aid began more intensive partnerships, supported by Foyle Interagency Forum, working to find a solution to this problem. Through research of best practice nationally and internationally, and external/internal consultation it was decided that an innovative partnership approach was required.

To this end a robust protocol was developed which combined the theoretical findings with practical policing, to provide a standardised approach to Domestic Violence.

This protocol has proved to be extremely successful and I know has been held up as a model of good practice in the Northern Ireland Policing Board's Annual Report 2006 on Human Rights. It has since been adopted service wide. The District Commander is submitting this protocol to the Northern Ireland Policing with the Community Awards 2007 in the Partnership Category.

Yours sincerely,

Marilyn Mornington

**DISTRICT JUDGE MARILYN MORNINGTON LLB (HONS) SHEFF. ;
FWAAS; FRSA**

15th January 2007

To Whom It May Concern:

**REF: Nomination to the Northern Ireland Policing
With the Community Awards 2007
(Partnership Category)**

I would like to take this opportunity to support the nomination of Foyle District Command Units Domestic Violence Protocol for the Policing with the Community Awards.

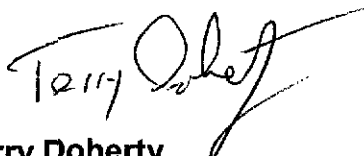
I have worked closely with Foyle DCU as operational Area Manager for PBNI in the Foyle/Northwest area. In particular I have valued the support given to PBNI's programme for domestic violence perpetrators, i.e. Men Overcoming Domestic Violence Programme which was set up in the Foyle area in 1999, given the high reported incidence of domestic violence in the area. This Programme continues to run, with the partnership support of PSNI and other agencies, including Women's Aid.

I am also well aware of Foyle DCU's ongoing commitment to tackle domestic violence and to support various initiatives to that end through my involvement in the Foyle Interagency Partnership on Domestic Violence and Derry City Council's Community Safety Partnership.

The Protocol has been a comprehensive and effective response by Foyle DCU towards addressing the various aspects of domestic violence for the area. In particular I would mention the raised level of Police awareness about domestic violence, and I know that Foyle DCU is the major recipient of awareness and interagency training carried out by Foyle Women's Aid on behalf of the Interagency Forum in Domestic Violence. Furthermore the Protocol and its application is a reflection of the commitment to improved quality of service to victims, and to reducing repeat victimisation.

I therefore am happy to support this nomination.

Yours faithfully



Terry Doherty
Area Manager
Probation Board for N. Ireland

Western Health and Social Care Trust

Office of the Chief Executive

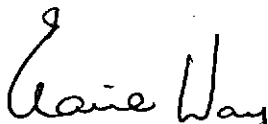
23rd January 2007

To Whom It May Concern

~~In my former roles as Chief Executive of Foyle Health & Social Services Trust and Altnagelvin Hospitals Health & Social Services Trust we worked very positively with the Interagency Forum.~~

As Chief Executive Designate of the Western Health & Social Care Trust I am fully supportive of and committed to the partnership between Foyle Interagency Forum on Domestic Violence and Foyle Police District Command Unit. This partnership has worked successfully to develop a protocol rooted in best practice providing an approach to dealing with domestic violence that is both practical and robust. The collaborative working in this partnership is proving to be very effective and I am pleased to recommend it for this award.

Yours sincerely



ELAINE WAY (MRS)
Chief Executive

Western Health & Social Care Trust
23a Bishop Street, Londonderry, BT48 6PR
Telephone: 028 7127 3675
Fax: 028 71273699

the
Rainbow
project



To whom it may concern,

The Rainbow Project has been working on an Inter Agency approach with others including the PSNI on tackling the issue of domestic abuse in the Foyle DCU area for a number of years.

The Rainbow Project is an agency that specifically focuses on health needs of gay and bisexual men delivering services around sexual, emotional and mental health. As well as developing targeted health promotion initiatives, Rainbow was keenly aware that there was a need to challenge **same gender** domestic abuse, which we view as a major factor in determining health for our community. The obvious approach was to engage with a broad coalition and generate a community based response, the results of this programme are clear for all to see.

The phenomenal success of this inter agency approach is testament to the leadership demonstrated by the PSNI Community Safety Unit (Foyle DCU). This initiative has received unstinting commitment and support from the partner agencies and has achieved a very visible media and community profile extending much further afield than the geographical area it covers. It is broadly accepted that this unique working partnership has been central in achieving the consistent downward trend in the numbers and severity of domestic crime and the strength of the community support that had emerged in the Foyle area.

As a result of this support and inter agency approach, we have been able to design a resource and raise awareness of this issue within the Lesbian Gay Bisexual (LGB) Community as well as the wider community. This in turn has seen people from same gender relationships approach us for support

We are keenly aware that domestic crimes has seen a 30% drop in the last year and we are seeing victims from same gender relationships recognising domestic abusive situations and reporting them to the PSNI. This without a doubt is due to the success of this inter agency approach, which has been recognised as good practice by the Northern Ireland Policing Board's Human Rights Report.

Kind Regards



Sean Morrin

The Rainbow Project

8 Commercial Court • Belfast • BT1 2NB
12a Queen Street • L'Derry • BT48 7EG
Belfast: 028 90319030 • L'Derry: 028 71283030
email: info@rainbow-project.org
Website: www.rainbow-project.org

RAINBOW HEALTH LTD T/A THE RAINBOW PROJECT

A Company Limited by guarantee No. NI30101

A charity registered with Inland Revenue No. XR17450

Women's aid

Foyle

26th January 2007

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

**Re: Nomination to the Northern Ireland Policing in the Community Awards 2007
(Partnership Category)**

As Area Management co-ordinator of Foyle Women's Aid I would like to endorse Foyle District Commands nomination for the Northern Ireland Policing in the Community Awards 2007. We have worked very closely with the Foyle District Command Unit on these protocols and know that as long as they are properly adhered to they will continue to have a very positive impact on those affected by Domestic Violence and will continue to be held up as a model of good practice.

Yours sincerely



Marie Brown
Area Management Co-ordinator
Foyle Women's Aid

Working to end domestic violence

Aftercare & Outreach Centre Pathways, 24 Pump St, L'DERRY, BT48 6JG. Tel: 028 7128 0060 Fax: 028 7128 0061
Email: info@foylewomensaid.org Website: www.foylewomensaid.org 24 Hour Domestic Violence Helpline: 0800 917 1414

Office outreach hours Mon-Fri 9am-5.30pm, 24 Hour refuge services Ashleywood House 028 7134 4499

Charity No: XN48783-BT Company Reg No: NI23041

Diocese of Derry



Bishop's House
St. Eugene's Cathedral
Derry BT48 9AP
Northern Ireland
Tel. 028 - 71262302
Fax. 028 - 71371960

15 January 2007

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I should like to express my support for the nomination of the Foyle Interagency Policy and Protocol on Domestic Violence, by Foyle District Command Unit, for the Northern Ireland Policing Community Awards 2007 (Partnership category).

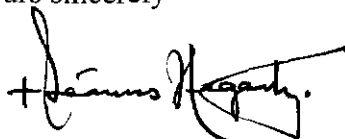
Domestic violence is a serious and continuing blight on society. It destroys relationships, harms individuals, sometimes to the point of losing their lives, and in many cases overshadows the lives of the children who witness it. In the past there was a culture if not of tolerance, then at least of ignoring what happened behind closed doors. Thankfully, that culture is changing and the Foyle Protocol represents a significant and creative advance.

I am well aware of the partnership work that has gone into the development of the Protocol and, in particular, I commend the interagency aspect. This partnership is seen both in the development and the operation of the protocol. A serious issue and crime such as domestic violence can only be tackled effectively by various agencies and stakeholders working together. I have met with police in relation to the Protocol and was pleased to see that, even at this level, such meeting included partnership with those involved in tackling domestic violence in the local community.

Of particular note is that the protocol has been taken up by other District Command Units in Northern Ireland, a testament to the knowledge and creativity brought to this project by all the partners involved.

The Foyle Interagency Policy and Protocol on Domestic Violence by Foyle District Command Unit is worthy of merit and I am delighted to offer my support for nomination.

Yours sincerely



✠ Séamus Hegarty
Bishop of Derry



The Bishop of Derry and Raphoe

The Rt Revd Ken Good

3rd January 2007

To whom it may concern:

I have no hesitation in commending the Foyle District Command Unit's protocol for a Community Award 2007.

The Foyle District Command Unit has shown considerable imagination and creativity in addressing major social issues in the community, and their pro-active approach to tackling the problem of domestic violence has been one which involved local partnership, particularly with Foyle Women's Aid, to find creative solutions to this serious problem.

I believe that initiatives such as this deserve recognition in the wider community, and therefore I strongly commend them for consideration for a Community Award.

+ Ken Derry and Raphoe

Rt Rev K Good
Bishop of Derry and Raphoe

6 Templemore Park
Derry
BT48OEQ

24TH Jan.2007

Re. Interagency Domestic Violence Protocol

Derry City Council Area -----

To whom it may concern,

Derry, like many places, has had a long and disturbing history of domestic violence. Women, in particular were subject to cruel and destructive behaviour within their homes. The physical suffering and the emotional damage was heightened by the difficulty of making public that which involved intimate and personal relationships. It was always going to take time and hard work to break down the deep fear and suspicion attached to this problem. The police would be unlikely to do it on their own. They would have to liase and work with other agencies and supports to begin the building of trust and confidence that would encourage victims to break the culture of silence and mistrust.

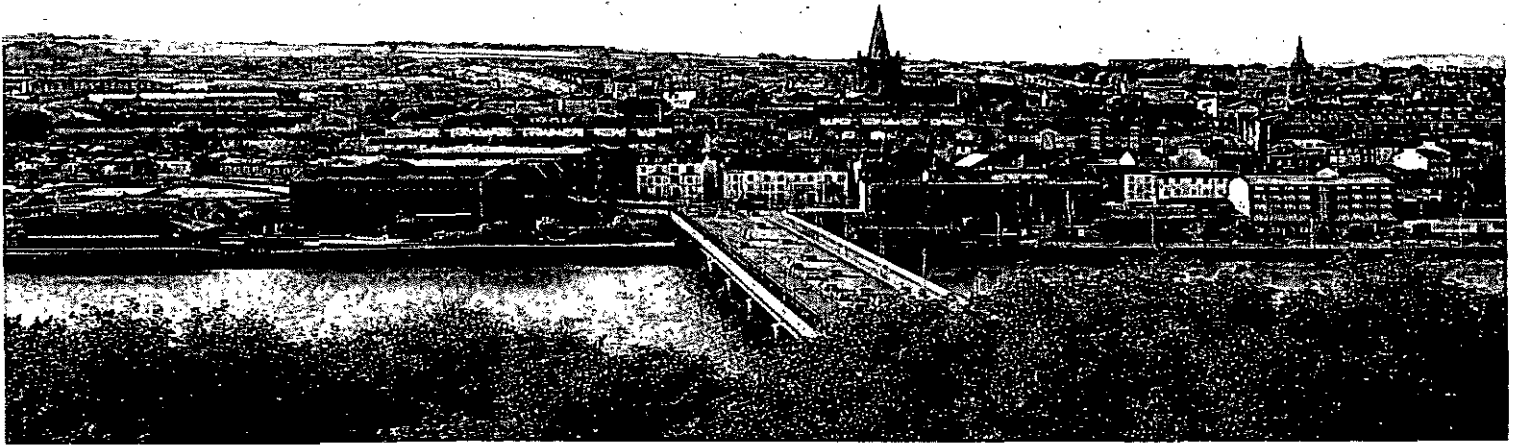
What has been achieved in the Derry Council area had been an example of best practice in action. Story after story has been told of domestic violence victims being treated with respect and efficiency. These stories have seeped into the consciousness of the public and especially into the consciousness of those who have suffered.

In this climate of growing trust it was inevitable and predictable that those presenting for help would initially grow in numbers and then reduce as the problem was effectively tackled. That is precisely what has happened.

All the partners in this project deserve the greatest praise for their efforts. The police men and women who have contributed to this work and who have developed and sustained this work and who have grown the trust between the various partners deserve recognition and confirmation of their work and their successes.

I am delighted to give the highest recommendation to this project and hope the panel are in a position to publicly recognise their success.

Denis Bradley



26 January 2007

To whom it may concern,

I have studied and made myself informed on the work of the Foyle Interagency Partnership on Domestic Violence, I was very impressed by the team and the way they have worked with the other statutory authorities. The Foyle DCU Protocol on Domestic Violence works extremely well. Those involved in the project in Foyle have worked hard at the programme and the other divisions within PSNI should recognise the value of the protocol and work towards its implementation across the region.

The protocol has resulted in a 30 % reduction in reported domestic violence.

Yours faithfully

Brendan Duddy

Brendan Duddy

75, Glen Road

Derry~Londonderry

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Fax 028 7126 4746

Email info@duddygroup.com



Derry

District Policing Partnership

Local people shaping local policing

9 January 2007

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Foyle Interagency Partnership on Domestic Violence and Foyle DCU Protocol on Domestic Violence Partnership nomination for the Northern Ireland Policing with the Community Awards 2007.

I would like on behalf of Derry DPP to express our support for the above Partnership and Protocol.

The DPP are very much encouraged by the proactive stance that PSNI has developed in partnership with a range of voluntary and statutory agencies, to tackle the unacceptable levels of domestic violence within the Foyle area.

The Protocol was established over three years ago in response to reported local levels of domestic violence which, at the time, represented the highest recorded in Northern Ireland.

The Foyle Interagency Partnership, Foyle Women's Aid and Foyle District Command Unit have researched and developed supportive intervention mechanisms, which combine theoretical and practical standards designed to assist victims of this type of crime.

Through its implementation, it has grown in strength as evidenced by substantial reductions in the number of domestic violence incidents, reductions in the levels of repeat victimisation and high clearance rates.

In line with the main DPP aim of seeking measures and public co-operation to reduce crime, we would recognise the value of the joint partnership protocol, which aims to improve the quality of service to victims. The provision of specially trained domestic violence officers, and the introduction of a domestic violence suite at Foyle DCU has served to increase awareness, instil confidence and promote safety in the wider community.

As a Partnership, we believe that the success to date of the Protocol lies in the robust interagency approach. We welcome that fact that the Protocol has been adopted as a model of best practice in the Northern Ireland Policing Board's report on Human Rights 2006, and we acknowledge this worthwhile achievement.

Yours sincerely

**Chairman
Derry DPP**



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Constituency Office 23 Bishop Street Derry BT48 6PR

Tel: 028 7136 0700 Fax: 028 7136 0808 Email: m.durkan@sdlp.ie

8 January 2007

To whom it may concern

I write to commend the PSNI Foyle District Command Unit's protocol, on tackling domestic violence for the 'Partnership Category' of the 2007 Northern Ireland Policing with the Community Awards.

In response to the very disturbing problem of domestic violence in our community, Foyle DCU has worked with a number of relevant local agencies – including Foyle Women's Aid - to deliver a pioneering partnership model. Their collaborative efforts have made a real and positive difference in the lives of many of our citizens. It is now rightly regarded as a model of best practice throughout the PSNI. It is a first class example of the police working effectively with the community, for the community.

I am delighted to give my support to Foyle DCU's nomination for this partnership award. This protocol represents effective, responsive policing at its best. It deserves positive recognition and affirmation.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Durkan".

Mark Durkan



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Parliament Buildings
Belfast BT4 3XX

9 Ebrington Terrace
Waterside
Londonderry
BT47 1JS

Tel: 028 7134 6271

Fax: 028 7132 9550

Email: williamhaydup@btconnect.com

10 January 2007

To Whom It May Concern

Re: Nomination to the Northern Ireland Policing with the Community Awards 2007, Partnership Category

I am extremely pleased to have the opportunity to support the nomination of the Foyle District Command Unit's 'Partnership Approach' to tackle the problem of domestic violence in Northern Ireland in the Partnership Category for the Community Awards 2007.

Work began on this approach many years ago with concentrated partnership working with Foyle Woman's Aid to find solutions to address the problem of domestic violence with the City of Londonderry. Through research of best practice nationally and internationally and internal/external consultation, it was decided that this creative partnership approach was required.

To this end a vigorous course of action was developed which pooled the academic findings with practical policing, to provide a standardised approach to domestic violence.

This set of rules has prove extremely successful and has been used as a model of good practice in the Northern Ireland Policing Board's Annual Report 2006 on Human Rights. It has since been adopted service-wide.

As a member of the Northern Ireland Policing Board I feel the 'Partnership procedure' has helped immensely to combat the issue of domestic violence in Foyle.

Yours sincerely,

William Hay MLA
Foyle Constituency



Office of Pat Ramsey
1 Infirmary Road
Derry City
BT48 7HG

Tel; 028 7136 1444

Fax; 028 7136 1555

E mail; p.ramsey@sdlp.ie

19th January 2007

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in support of the application from the Foyle DCU for their nomination to the Northern Ireland Policing with the Community Awards 2007 (Partnership Category).

The partnership between Foyle Woman's Aid and the Foyle DCU has worked extremely well, developing an innovative protocol to address the serious issue of Domestic Violence. This protocol has assisted the Police Office in Foyle DCU when dealing with a report of domestic violence and has improved working relationships between the Police Officers and Foyle Woman's Aid.

This protocol has been successful and has been hailed by the Northern Ireland Policing Board as a model of good practice. This protocol is an excellent example of how policing in the community can identify an issue of concern such as domestic violence, and devise appropriate structures and practices to address this issue.

Yours Faithfully

Pat Ramsey

Pat Ramsey

SDLP Assembly Member for Foyle.



COMHAIRLE CHATHAIR DHOIRE
DERRY CITY COUNCIL

Mayor's Parlour
Guildhall, Derry BT48 6DQ

—
Parlús an Mhéara
Halla Na Cathrach, Doire BT48 6DQ
—

Tha Provost's Chaumer



A Shared City

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Derry City Council is committed to working in partnership with other agencies and bodies in the statutory and voluntary sector to combat domestic violence. This has been demonstrated by the adoption of the Council's Policy on Domestic Violence and Guidelines for Managers, which was officially launched on Friday 24th May 2002. Domestic Violence Awareness training was delivered by Foyle Women's Aid for all employees and line managers of Derry City Council in April/May/June 2002.

I would endorse the protocol, which was developed by the Community Safety section of the Foyle District Command Unit as part of an innovative partnership approach to the issue of domestic violence locally. I understand that this protocol was held up as a model of good practice in the Northern Ireland Policing Board's Annual Report 2006 on Human Rights and has since been adopted service wide.

I am aware that the District Commander has submitted this protocol to the Northern Ireland Policing with the Community Awards 2007 in the 'Partnership Category' and I would support this nomination.

COUNCILLOR HELEN QUIGLEY
MAYOR

All correspondence to: Mayor's Office, Derry City Council, 98 Strand Road, Derry BT48 7NN
Comhfreagras Uile Chuig: Oifig an Mhéara, Oifigí Comhairle Chathair Dhoire, 98 Bóthar na Trá, Doire BT48 7NN

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(028) 7126 5448

E-mail/R-phost
mayor@derrycity.gov.uk

www
derrycity.gov.uk

Date: 9th January 2007

To Whom It May Concern:

Re: Foyle DCU Protocol on Domestic Violence

I am writing on behalf of the Derry City Council Community Safety Partnership to convey our support for the above protocol.

This protocol has been in operation for the past number of years in response to the high levels of domestic violence in the Derry City Council area. The protocol in effect has established an investigation team based within the domestic violence unit within the Foyle DCU.

The protocol has been successful in that there has been an increase in reporting of domestic violence crime to the PSNI and a reduction in cases where serious offences were committed.

The Community Safety Partnership welcomes the joint partnership working on the domestic violence protocol and has no doubt that an interagency approach has added to its success.

We believe that this protocol has added to the reduction of domestic violence crime in the Derry City Council area, and will continue to do so. It enhances the work of the Community Safety Partnership and is in-line with the objectives set out in the Derry City Council Community Safety Strategy and Action Plan.

The Community Safety Partnership would like to congratulate the PSNI on the proactive steps taken to implement this initiative and welcome the fact that the protocol has been adopted as a model of best practice.

Thomas Conway

P.P.

Chairperson
Community Safety Partnership

• Derry City Council
• Community Safety Partnership
• Council Offices
• 98 Strand Road
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Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Provost (Magee)

Professor J M Allen

9 January 2007

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I would like to lend my strong support to the Foyle District Command Unit's nomination to the Northern Ireland Policing with the Community Awards 2007 (Partnership Category).

I have been aware of the excellent interagency work that has been ongoing since 2003 in relation to tackling the difficult issue of domestic violence. From a personal point of view I have been involved in a number of innovative partnership projects with the Foyle District Command Unit over the last number of years. This particular project was ground breaking in terms of the spectrum of partners involved and also the range of innovative activities to address the issue.

The Foyle DCU was the first in the province to develop an interagency domestic violence policy, supported by a dedicated specialised team of investigative officers. They were also the first to set up a special domestic violence suite to facilitate victims accessing services more readily. This provided evidence of the commitment that Foyle DCU have to this serious issue and the community safety of everyone within the Derry City Council area. The Foyle DCU are to be commended for their partnership work in the area of domestic violence and they would be most deserving of recognition for this excellent work.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J M Allen'.

Professor J M Allen
Pro Vice Chancellor & Provost (Magee)

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BELFAST COLERAINE JORDANSTOWN MAGEE
08 700 400 700



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

9 January 2007

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Re: Nomination by Foyle DCU to the Northern Ireland Policing with the Community Awards 2007 (Partnership category)

As a former District Commander for the Foyle District Command Unit I was fully aware of the extent of the problem that existed regarding domestic violence in the Derry City Council area in 2001/2002 and I personally met with representatives from Foyle Women's Aid regarding the issues contributing to this serious problem.

Officers from the Foyle District Command Unit were already involved in meetings with Foyle Women's Aid and the Foyle Interagency Partnership on Domestic Violence. Due to the increase in domestic violence, work was commenced to critically analyse police policy on this issue. A working group was established to carry out consultation and research into best practice both nationally and internationally. Two senior officers went on a fact finding trip to Boston Massachusetts, (MA), with representatives from Foyle Women's Aid and Foyle Health & Social Services Trust. Meetings were held with a number of professionals working in the area of domestic violence and also with the Commissioner of the Boston Police, Kathleen O'Toole, to discuss their domestic violence programmes/strategies.

On their return work continued, particularly with Foyle Women's Aid, and this resulted in a draft Domestic Violence Interagency Policy & Protocol being developed, which was offered for consultation with other partner agencies. Amendments were made and feedback incorporated into this document, to make it as succinct and user friendly as possible.

To support this work resources were secured for a self contained domestic violence unit with an investigatory role. In addition to this a specially designed domestic violence suite was set up adjoining the main Strand Road police station, to facilitate victims and their families to talk to officers confidentially.

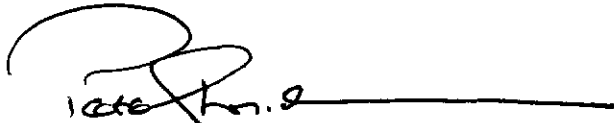
I am aware that there are ongoing reviews of both the protocol and the domestic violence unit through monthly meetings and other mechanisms. A considerable amount of work has gone into raising the profile of domestic violence in the Foyle DCU area, with a key focus on the message that victims need not suffer in silence and that support is available through PSNI and other partners. I was delighted to see

-2-

that the recent report from the Northern Ireland Policing Board, "Monitoring the Compliance of the PSNI with the Human Rights Act 1998", cites the Foyle DCU Protocol as a template of good practice for tackling domestic violence and recommended that it be distributed to all DCU command teams.

I would therefore like to commend the excellent partnership work that has gone into tackling what would generally be considered one of the most complex and sensitive areas of policing. I have no hesitation in supporting this nomination from Foyle DCU for the Partnership Award 2007.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Sheridan', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

PETER SHERIDAN
ACC Crime Ops

Survivor of D V testimony for award.

1. Teresa Campbell –Teresa experienced severe violence for most of her married life she eventually left her husband after one particularly bad beating – after which her oldest children told her they could not watch it happening to her anymore. She has infants at this time also.

“When I first contacted the police about my situation about 8 years ago it was very intimidating – compared to now, not as intimidating with the separate building, training seems to have made them more empathetic and they also came out quicker when you ring them now and give you more information on Foyle Women’s Aid and Victim Support. They also ask if children are on the premises and you get a letter follow up about support on offer from the Domestic Violence Officer”. (Teresa has had to recently use the services for her daughter and has experience of the new unit)

2. Tony Shields – Survivor of domestic violence, experienced abuse when a child from his father and sought help in the early 70’s from the police, he took part in the police training organised as part of the Interagency Protocol in Foyle DCU. Tony did not want to talk about his experience with the training as being with police officers, he felt they were human beings and they listened to his experience as individuals and he felt no sense of being fearful because of their manner.

“From 5 or 6 years of age my father started hitting me, by the time I was 7, the abuse became severe beatings, punches, kicks etc even biting. I had no-one to turn to my mum got the same treatment as did some of my sisters. I tried approaching the police at 14, but the desk sergeant wasn’t interested. I doubt I had the strength to make a statement against my so-called father. To meet people later in life and share my experience with them wasn’t a problem, it was great to think my contribution would make these people I spoke to aware of a survivors predicament and if my story can help others then that would be the icing on the cake. Many thanks to the people who listened to me – that day I never felt uncomfortable”.

3. Teresa Phelan – In 2000 Teresa's neighbours called the police during an attack on her by her husband. She left her home that night with her 3 young children to go to Foyle Women's Aid refuge. Teresa has been involved with Foyle Women's aid ever since as a survivor, a volunteer and now as full-time employee.

"I had a good experience in 2000 from the police, they were very supportive then. I can still see now though that improvements have been made to make sure everyone gets a good response. As I work with Foyle Women's Aid I am aware of all the work going on day to day and it is great to see all these agencies working so well together – but as we still have a big problem with domestic violence in this town there's still more to be done".

Domestic violence down 12% in Derry

BY CLARE WEIR

POLICE and campaign groups have welcomed a 12% drop in reported domestic violence incidents in Londonderry.

The PSNI say that, in the financial year to the end of March, 572 incidents were reported, compared with 651 in the previous financial year.

This was the second successive year the figures fell.

Of these incidents, 79 per cent were cleared, an increase from the previous clearance rate of 67 per cent.

The changes come in the wake of a focused initiative involving police and other statutory and voluntary organisations.

The Foyle Interagency Partnership on Domestic Violence and the police protocol on domestic violence have been operational for over three years, having been set up at a time when Foyle had the worst record of domestic violence in Northern Ireland.

The Foyle area no longer holds that unenviable record.

The reduction has been welcomed by Chief Superintendent Richard Russell, the Foyle DCU commander, but he added the figures are still

"far too high".

In 2005 it was revealed that more than 4,000 women sought help with domestic violence in the North West, with over 1,000 more women contacting Foyle Women's Aid offices in Londonderry and Strabane for help compared to the previous year.

"We are committed to working with all interested parties to end an ethos that seems to think that violence within the family home is acceptable," said Chief Supt Russell.

"Domestic violence affects entire families, not just individuals within them. In recent years we have been encouraging individuals to report these incidents, rather than suffering in silence.

"We have domestic violence officers within the DCU who are specially trained to investigate allegations in a way that is sensitive to the needs of the victims and to bringing about a resolution.

"All our officers are also encouraged to recognise the signs of domestic violence. Strand Road has a special domestic violence suite that enables victims and their families to talk to officers in con-

fidence.

"The reporting of domestic violence incidents is just the start of a process that continues through enforcement of the law and finding resolution for families.

"I think the whole community should support all the work that is going on to end a scourge that for too long has been ignored by all but a few concerned people."

Foyle Women's Aid has also welcomed the new figures, with Marie Brown, the area management co-ordinator, congratulating the work of the Interagency Partnership for its help securing the reduction.

"Foyle DCU set up a Domestic Violence Unit and worked in collaboration with Foyle Women's Aid, Probation and Social Services in Developing Interagency Protocols on Domestic Violence," she said.

"These extra resources demonstrated a commitment by the commander to take the lead in tackling the crime of domestic violence and sent a clear message to perpetrators of this crime that it will no longer be tolerated within our community."

Children urged to read all about it

BY BRENDAN McDAID

CHILDREN aged between nine and 11 are being urged to join a new reading club taking place at the Central Library in Londonderry.

Staff at the library will provide an introduction to mystery, magic, adventure in print for the young people.

Reading activities will include stories on the web, book reviews, quizzes and treasure hunts.

A spokeswoman said: "Reading is a vital part of children's development and our reading club will encourage a greater interest in reading, offering greater reading choices, all within a fun-filled environment.

"Reading groups are part of the Western Education and Library Board's commitment to increasing literacy within the wider community by encouraging children from different backgrounds to meet up.

"The reading group's first meeting will take place in the Central Library at 2pm on Saturday October 14."

Anyone with inquiries is asked to contact library staff on 7127 2310.

'Still far too high' but:
**Domestic
violence
rates fall**

There's been a 12 per cent drop in the number of domestic violence incidents reported to police in the Derry area, new figures show.

In the year to the end of March 2006, 572 incidents were reported - compared with 651 in the same period the previous year.

This was the second successive year in which the figures fell.

Of these incidents, 79 per cent were cleared, which is an increase from the previous clearance rate of 67 per cent.

The changes come in the wake of a focused initiative that has involved police and other statutory and voluntary organisations.

The Foyle Interagency Partnership on Domestic Violence and the police protocol on domestic violence have been operational for more than three years.

They were set up at a time when Derry had the worst record of domestic violence in Northern Ireland. The Foyle area no longer holds this unenviable record.

The reduction has been welcomed by Chief Superintendent Richard Russell, the Foyle DCU commander.

However, he says the figures are "still far too high."

"We are committed to working with all interested parties to end an ethos that seems to think that violence within the family home is acceptable," he says.

"Domestic violence affects entire families, not just individuals within them. In recent years we have been encouraging individuals to report these incidents, rather than suffering in silence."

"We have domestic violence officers (DVOs) within the DCU who are specially trained to investigate allegations in a way that is sensitive to the needs of the victims and to bringing about a resolution. All our officers are also encouraged to recognise the signs of domestic violence and to ensure that cases are brought to the attention of the DVOs."

Ch. Supt. Russell says Strand Road police station houses a special domestic violence suite that enables victims and their families to talk to officers in confidence.

"The reporting of domestic violence incidents is just the start of a process that continues through enforcement of the law and finding resolution for families," he added.

Value input

"We value the input we receive from statutory agencies and voluntary organisations. I think the whole community should support all the work that is going on to end a scourge that for too long has been ignored by all but a few concerned people."

Support group Foyle Women's Aid has also welcomed the new figures.

Marie Brown, the area management co-ordinator, said: "We would like to congratulate Ch. Supt. Russell on achieving a reduction in domestic violence incidents within the Foyle DCU. This is very much an outcome of inter-agency Partnership working to support victims."

"Foyle DCU set up a Domestic Violence Unit and worked in collaboration with Foyle Women's Aid, Probation and Social Services in Developing Interagency Protocols on Domestic Violence."

"These extra resources demonstrated a commitment by the commander to take the lead in tackling the crime of domestic violence and sent a clear message to perpetrators of this crime that it will no longer be tolerated within our community."

Further support

"This is just the beginning of a range of initiatives that Foyle Women's Aid, PSNI and others are currently negotiating to further support victims of domestic violence."

Domestic violence figures down

By DONNA DEENEY

THE number of domestic violence in the Foyle area reported to the police has fallen for the second year, with figures dropping by 12 percent this year.

when we had the highest number of domestic violence reports in Northern Ireland but it is now held as a model of excellence.

In the financial year to the end of March 2006, 572 incidents were reported, compared with 651 in the previous financial year.

Of these incidents, 79 per cent were cleared, an increase from the previous year in domestic violence incidents.

C/Supt Russell on achieving a reduction in domestic violence incidents within the Foyle DCU. This is very much an outcome of inter-agency Partnership working to support victims.

These extra resources demonstrated a commitment by the commander to take the lead in tackling the crime of domestic violence and sent a clear message to perpetrators of this crime.

The fall in figures is a step in the right direction and an incentive for the Agency to continue its innovative work.

We would like to congratulate C/Supt Russell on achieving a reduction in domestic violence incidents within the Foyle DCU. This is very much an outcome of inter-agency Partnership working to support victims.

These extra resources demonstrated a commitment by the commander to take the lead in tackling the crime of domestic violence and sent a clear message to perpetrators of this crime.

that it will no longer be tolerated within our community.

This is just the beginning of a range of initiatives that Foyle Women's Aid, PSNI and others are currently negotiating to further support victims of domestic violence.

The changes come in the wake of a focused initiative that has involved police and other statutory and voluntary organisations. The Foyle Violence and the police protocol on domestic violence have been operational for over three years, having been set up at a time when Foyle had the worst record of domestic violence in Northern Ireland. The Foyle area no longer holds that unenviable record.

The reduction was also welcomed by Chief Superintendent Richard Russell, the Foyle DCU commander.

He added: "The figures are, however, still far too high.

"We are committed to working with all interested parties to end an ethos that seems to think that violence within the family home is acceptable.

"Domestic violence affects entire families, not just individuals within them. In recent years we have been encouraging individuals to report these incidents, rather than suffering in silence.

"We have domestic violence officers within the DCU who are specially trained to investigate allegations in a way that is sensitive to the needs of the victims and to bringing about a resolution. All our officers are also concerned people."

"We value the input we receive from statutory agencies and voluntary organisations. I think the whole community should support all the work that is going on to end a scourge that for too long has been ignored by all but a few concerned people."

"We value the input we receive from statutory agencies and voluntary organisations. I think the whole community should support all the work that is going on to end a scourge that for too long has been ignored by all but a few concerned people."

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Domestic violence on the rise in Limavady

BY CLARE WEIR

REPORTED domestic violence incidents have risen in Limavady in a year, while figures for Londonderry and Strabane have declined.

The revelation comes as a seasonal campaign to combat such crimes was launched in Derry.

Yesterday local Women's Aid workers also said that last Christmas, the number of families using its refuge nearly doubled.

In the 2004/2005 financial year, police in the Derry area recorded 651 incidents of domestic violence. In 2005/2006 that dropped to 572.

In Strabane, the 04/05 figure

was 323 incidents, falling to 216 last year. But in Limavady the 04/05 period recorded 204 incidents, and 222 last year.

Women's aid worker Margaret Gallagher said the statistics probably show that more women are coming forward to report violence.

"Our services in Limavady are about a year behind Strabane and the fact that reported incidents of abuse have risen could be a sign that more people are coming forward," she said. "If figures go up year on year, then that is more worrying. We need to be targeting repeat victims and repeat offenders. Our services in Limavady are being ex-

panded and it is one of our busiest centres."

Incidents of domestic violence are known to increase at Christmas, and this week police joined with Foyle Women's Aid to help bring the figures down.

Much of the reduction in reported incidents in the Derry area has been put down to a successful partnership involving police, Foyle Women's Aid and other statutory agencies.

PSNI Foyle District Commander Richard Russell said: "Police will respond sympathetically to calls and we will enforce any breaches of non-molestation orders granted by the courts"

Foyle Women's Aid offers a 24-hour 365-day service in the Foyle area.

Christmas Time Abuse Highlighted

Christmas may be a time of festive cheer and goodwill for many, but there is a darker side to the season, with some in the community dreading what lies ahead.

A time that produce such joy also leaves many families left reeling with the effects of domestic violence.

Incidents of domestic violence are known to increase at this time of year, and this week local police joined with Foyle Women's Aid to highlight to all support agencies the greater need the next few weeks will bring.

In the 2004/2005 financial year, police in the Derry area recorded 651 incidents of domestic violence, while the corresponding figures for 2005/2006 dropped to 572. Much of that is due to a partnership protocol involving police, Foyle Women's Aid and other statutory and voluntary agencies.

Commented C/Supt Richard Russell, the local DCU commander: "At one time a few years ago this area had the unenviable record of the highest number of domestic violence incidents in Northern Ireland.

"That shocking situation caused us all to have a close look at what was going on and police had to sit down and look at the way we responded to reports.

"The message must be that there are choices; there are changes that can be made; no one needs to suffer abuse in silence.

"Police will respond sympathetically to calls and we will enforce any breaches of non-molestation orders granted by the courts"

Marie Brown, area management co-ordinator of Foyle Women's Aid, said: "Unfortunately, for all too many families Christmas time is not peaceful and the number of women seeking support from our services increases dramatically over the holiday period.

"Last year the number of families using our refuge increased by nearly 100% in November and December. It is particularly difficult for young children to understand why they may have to leave their home on Christmas Eve or Christmas night.

"We try as best we can to support women to stay in their homes and have a family Christmas for the children, but all too often for their safety they have to go. When this happens we try and make as enjoyable a Christmas as is possible in the refuge.

"We would urge all agencies working to support families to be aware that this is a high risk time for women and their children and to familiarise themselves with the range of services available. Foyle Women's Aid offer a 24-hour 365-day service in

the Foyle area and staff are available day and night to offer support and information to agencies and to women who may need help. We also can arrange transport from throughout the Foyle area day or night for families who may wish to come to our refuge.

“But in the event of an emergency, please ring 999. Police officers are trained to respond to domestic violence and ensure your safety. The Domestic Violence Unit is also available to support families throughout the festive period”

Added C/Supt Russell: “Radical changes have been made to the methods our District Command Unit and the police service in general currently adopt in tackling Domestic Violence. These changes were designed to make our approach to violence more effective and to ensure that the victims and families were given the best possible support.

“I recognise the hard work that organisations such as Foyle Women’s Aid were doing and now there are even more options open for the victims of domestic abuse.

Foyle Women’s Aid can be contacted on 028 71280060 or 24-hour 028 71344499 or by contacting the Domestic Violence Helpline (available to all those who are experiencing domestic abuse) which is free from landlines and some mobile networks on 0800 917 1414 (please check your network provider) or view our services on www.foylewomensaid.org <<http://www.foylewomensaid.org>>

The Domestic Violence officers at Strand Road station can be contacted on 0845 600 8000. Strand Road has facilities in which the victims of domestic violence can talk in confidence to trained officers.

Bradley welcomes new domestic violence unit

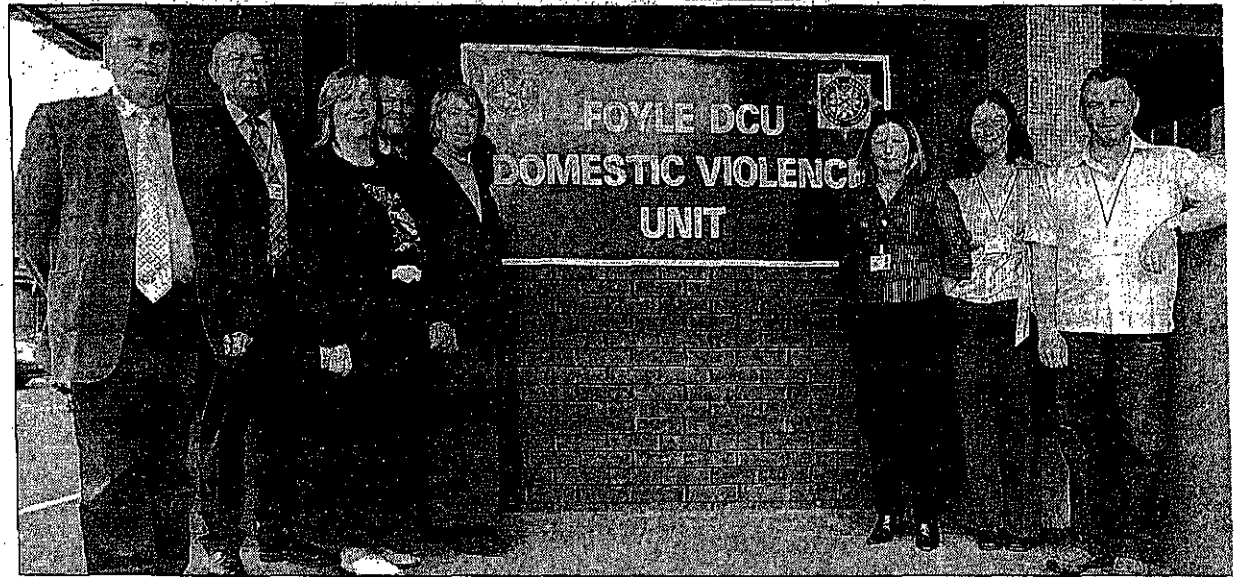
S.D.L.P. Assembly Member for Foyle, Mary Bradley has welcomed the new Domestic Violence Centre at Strand Road, Derry.

Mrs. Bradley said: "Earlier this week, a new specialised police unit dealing specifically with domestic violence opened its doors for the very first time in Derry. This unit is completely separate from the P.S.N.I. Station at Strand Road, and I hope this will encourage more victims of domestic violence to come

forward and report it.

"Unfortunately, over recent years we have seen an increase in domestic violence. It is a particularly difficult problem to tackle, however, I must commend the good work by Women's Aid and the police in Derry, who have worked closely together to get this unit up and running."

"I would appeal to anyone who is suffering as a result of domestic violence to come forward and use this unit to put an end to their pain and anguish".



Group pictured at the opening of the Domestic Violence Unit at the PSNI station at Strand Road. Included from left are John Kerr, chairman, DPP; Johnny McCarroll, Superintendent; Margaret Gallagher, Foyle Woman's Aid; Phil Mahon, Foyle Interagency partnership on Domestic Violence; Milton Kerr, community Safety Co-ordinator, and Katrior O'Hara, John Wilson and DI Shaw, Domestic Violence Liason Officers. (2304A03)

New figures reveal:

Derry continues to top domestic violence league

DERRY CONTINUES to have the highest rate of domestic violence in the North, police chiefs revealed week.

The city's police commander, Chief Superintendent Richard Russell, revealed that, between April 2003 and March 2004, there were almost 1,500 reported incidents of domestic violence - a rise of 100 (7%) on the previous year's figure.

Of these, 685 involved actual violence - again a significant rise of 151 (28%).

The latest figures, say Foyle Women's Aid - the local group which counsels victims of domestic violence - are a clear indication that much remains to be done to combat the problem.

The group's area management co-ordinator, Marie Brown, has told the 'Journal' that the local figures for domestic violence are, once again, the highest recorded by any police district across the North.

She said: "While, thankfully, no murders were committed in the area, five attempted murders were recorded - a very serious indicator

of the level of abuse being perpetrated."

Ms. Brown added: "In the past year, much has been done on an interagency basis by Foyle Women's Aid and local police personnel to develop and implement best practice, policy and protocols in relation to the handling of domestic violence in this area.

"While a lot has been achieved, we did anticipate that the figures would increase this year. This is to be expected when more proactive work is undertaken.

"However, the figures outline to all of us involved in the fight against domestic violence that there is more than enough work still to be carried out and that complacency is not an option."

Living in fear

Ms. Brown says that, behind "these raw statistics", hundreds of families are "living in fear and abuse".

"As we know, most

women and their children do not come to the attention of authorities, such as the PSNI, until they have suffered, on average, five years of abuse with at least 35 unrecorded assaults. Unfortunately, for a lot of families, this is the minimum they have

experienced.

"Children are, once again, the hidden victims who witness and experience violence and abuse in their homes daily in this city.

"We, in Foyle Women's Aid, continue to commit ourselves to challenge this crime and abuse in

the coming year and, with our interagency partners and a strategy, we hope to eventually eliminate violence in the home. This work will take resources, commitment and courage from all partner agencies involved," concluded Ms. Brown.



Marie Brown



Up pictured at the Foyle Women's Aid AGM, held in the City Hotel. Included, from left, Katrina O'Hara, PSNI domestic violence officer, Marie Mahon, Foyle Womens Aid chairperson, John Wilson PSNI domestic violence officer, Phil Mahon, chairperson of Foyle Inter Agency Partnership for Domestic Violence, and Jacinta McCool, Foyle Women's Aid vice chairperson. (0607PG04)

16/7/2004

Derry Journal, Tuesday, 13th July, 2004 - 17



Andrew Lewis Pratt, chairman, Accessible Retail, third from left, presenting the new mini bus, donated through the society club, to Foyle Women's Aid. Included, from left, are Mr. Mike Taylor, ex chairman, Marion Mullan, team leader, Phil Mahon, chairperson of Foyle Inter Agency Partnership for Domestic Violence, volunteer driver Toby Barnes, chair-

Come in for a tour – cops tell SF woman

The police in Derry yesterday invited Sinn Féin councillor Maeve McLaughlin for an “educational tour” of their new domestic violence office.

By Darinagh Boyle

The offer was made in response to severe criticisms the Northlands representative leveled at police over the new facility.

She claimed the public lacked trust in the PSNI-staffed initiative and, controversially, suggested PSNI officers might exploit victims’ visits to gather and pass on information.

Police opened the dedicated facility in an annex to the main police station on Tuesday.

Figures released late last year showed Derry has the highest rate for domestic violence in the Six Counties, and the number of reported cases here has risen sharply.

Two Domestic Violence Officers have been appointed to join the new unit’s staff.

Margaret Gallagher of Women’s Aid in Derry strongly welcomed the police initiative and said the extra resources showed the PSNI were “serious partners” in the drive against violence in the home.

But the police have suggested Cllr McLaughlin’s critical stance exposed a “lack of responsibility” towards victims.

“It is clear from her statement that Cllr McLaughlin does not fully understand or appreciate the essential investigative role of the police in this partnership,” said a spokesperson.

“Her comments do nothing to alleviate the suffering felt by those who are affected by domestic violence including the hundreds of victims who have come to the police and received professional support.

“If she wishes to receive a briefing on the role of the domestic violence officers she should contact superintendent Johnny McCarroll at Strand Road who can arrange a tour of the office, explain our policy and address her concerns.”

Gleaned

Cllr McLaughlin believes victims of domestic abuse fear that officers might

exploit visits to the Centre to gather information.

She also claimed “many people” would be reluctant to seek help from a PSNI-staffed facility located within police barracks.

She said: “[This office] will not be used by large numbers of people who do not trust this force to maintain confidence if it decides that information gleaned during interviews, with either a victim or an accused, could be passed on to other branches of this force.

“The fact that the Centre will be staffed entirely by PSNI personnel is also not conducive to serving the entire community.

“The Centre should be located away from the precincts of any PSNI Barracks and those that unfortunately find themselves in need of its services should only have to talk to PSNI personnel if the individual requests such an interview.

“It would be more appropriate to provide proper funding for counselling and referral services to existing organisations such as Women’s Aid or the Well Women Centre.”