

**NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD**  
**HUMAN RIGHTS & PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

**DOMESTIC ABUSE THEMATIC REVIEW: UPDATE REPORT**

**MAY 2011**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Background**

Domestic abuse is a serious and endemic problem in Northern Ireland with the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) responding to, on average, a domestic incident every 21 minutes of every day. In Northern Ireland, during 2009/2010 there was a known domestic abuse motivation for approximately: 1 in 4 recorded murders, manslaughter and attempted murders; 1 in 3 recorded incidents of conspiracy or threat to murder; 1 in 8 recorded incidents of wounding or grievous bodily harm; 1 in 4 recorded common assaults or assaults occasioning actual bodily harm; 1 in 4 recorded incidents of intimidation or harassment; and, 1 in 5 recorded rapes or attempted rapes.<sup>1</sup>

Given the importance of the issue the Northern Ireland Policing Board (the Board) undertook a human rights thematic review examining how effectively the PSNI tackles domestic abuse. The review was carried out by the Board's Human Rights Advisor on behalf of the Human Rights and Professional Standards Committee (the Committee).<sup>2</sup> The thematic approach meant that the evidence which informed the review was gathered primarily from those members of the community affected by policing on the ground, thus enabling the Committee to assess the practical effect of PSNI strategy and policy. As stated throughout the Committee's work, it is the implementation of policy into practice which indicates whether and if so to what extent there is a human rights culture embedded within all aspects of police service delivery.

The thematic review, containing key findings and an analysis of PSNI's compliance with the Human Rights Act 1998 in the area of domestic abuse policing, was published on 24 March 2009.<sup>3</sup> A total of 14 recommendations were made for the PSNI to consider. The shared objective of the PSNI and the Board is to improve policing for the benefit of all members of the community and, most importantly, to ensure that victims of offending are treated sensitively and effectively and that perpetrators are made amenable for their offending. Throughout the process of

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<sup>1</sup> The table at page 38 of this report refers.

<sup>2</sup> Alyson Kilpatrick BL.

<sup>3</sup> The thematic review is available to download through the Board's website, [www.nipolicingboard.org.uk](http://www.nipolicingboard.org.uk), or a hard copy can be obtained from the Board upon request.

thematic review, stakeholders impressed upon the Committee that the most effective means of securing the co-operation of victims and the community in the policing of domestic abuse was the successful prosecution of perpetrators while ensuring the safety of victims.

The PSNI engaged with the Committee throughout the thematic review and responded positively to the report, indicating its initial acceptance of all 14 recommendations. It is that positive working relationship which enables the Committee on behalf of the Board to carry out its statutory function and to work with stakeholders and the police to improve service delivery to victims of domestic abuse. PSNI has taken a number of steps in the past two years to implement each of the recommendations, in particular, in relation to: the collection and analysis of statistics; the revision of policy; the development of a dip-sampling mechanism for decisions not to arrest; and the development and delivery of training targeted at the taking of initial reports. However, some work is required in order to implement all 14 recommendations. While there was an initial delay in the implementation of those recommendations which required a service-wide commitment the PSNI has returned to the issues and has provided further feedback on progress. This update report is intended to give an overview of PSNI's progress in implementing each of the recommendations. It is not intended as an in-depth critical analysis of the PSNI response to the thematic review. Such a critical analysis will be completed in the coming months once the Human Rights Advisor has had an opportunity to discuss the issues with relevant stakeholders.

### **Domestic abuse policing: two years on**

Since the thematic review was published in March 2009, domestic abuse will have had a devastating effect upon the lives of thousands of adults and children across Northern Ireland, with some lives sadly lost as a result. Despite limited resources, voluntary organisations and community groups continue to develop new initiatives aimed at raising awareness of, and eradicating, domestic abuse. They offer support to victims wherever and whenever they can and take every opportunity available to them to engage with government bodies and statutory organisations in order to influence change.

The Committee has met with a number of voluntary and community groups, for example, during two roundtable meetings held in G District (Foyle, Limavady, Magherafelt and Strabane) in May 2010 and October 2010. Also participating in those meetings were members of District Policing Partnerships (DPPs) and local police officers. Not only did the Committee hear examples of how local police had taken direct action to implement a number of the recommendations in the Board's thematic review,<sup>4</sup> additional examples of good policing practice were provided to the Committee. For example, civilian support workers have been seconded from Women's Aid into police stations in G District (thus bridging the gap between police and community). The Committee was also provided with issues of local concern. For example, there was concern that abuse is taking place increasingly through the use of social media (such as text messages, emails and social networking sites). That is an issue which needs to be addressed. It was noted, both by the Committee and by the PSNI, that domestic abuse is a societal problem which cannot be addressed by the police alone, but which requires input from all the criminal justice agencies, all government departments, all education providers and all those with influence in communities. Such multi-agency working is recognised as the only solution which is capable of making any meaningful impact on the lives of those affected by domestic abuse.

A good example of multi-agency working that is attempting to tackle domestic abuse for the benefit of members of a minority group who were often overlooked in the past is the work of NSPCC (NI). In September 2009, a workshop was organised by NSPCC (NI) to discuss multi-agency challenges to providing support to Traveller children witnessing domestic violence. This workshop was funded by the Board's Human Rights & Professional Standards and Community Engagement Committees. In June 2010, NSPCC (NI) published a conference report which outlined the challenges involved and made a number of recommendations for further action. NSPCC (NI) has disseminated that report widely.<sup>5</sup> One of the key themes arising from the conference report was the need to raise awareness of the issues and improve the training available for all of the relevant organisations (including PSNI). In

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<sup>4</sup> Of particular note was the approach taken in G District to implement Recommendation 4 of the thematic review: page 14 refers.

<sup>5</sup> Of particular note, West Yorkshire Police have requested copies of the report to share with key partners in other agencies in the North East of England.

particular, the report recommended that information and training should be provided on Traveller culture specifically and, more generally, on diversity issues.

Diversity was also considered in the Board's thematic review, and a specific recommendation was made that PSNI include information and guidance relevant to the specific needs of minority ethnic victims within their domestic abuse policy document.<sup>6</sup> PSNI has now implemented that recommendation and, over and above the recommendation, has undertaken a substantial amount of work in developing a series of service procedures to specifically address the needs of minority ethnic victims.<sup>7</sup> The PSNI should be commended for not only accepting and implementing the recommendation but for developing and building upon the spirit of the recommendation.

The Committee also considered the needs of members of other minority groups, and a recommendation was made in respect of lesbian, gay and bisexual victims of domestic abuse.<sup>8</sup> The Committee is currently undertaking a separate thematic review which is analysing policing with and for members of the community who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgendered (LGB&T). Domestic abuse is one issue that will inevitably be considered as part of that LGB&T review.<sup>9</sup> As domestic abuse is something that can affect anyone at any time, regardless of whether they are a member of a 'minority' or 'majority' group, it is likely to appear as a recurring theme throughout future thematic reviews undertaken by the Committee.<sup>10</sup>

A key development since publication of the thematic review, has been the roll out of Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs) across Northern Ireland. In a MARAC, local agencies meet formally to discuss "high risk victims" within their area. Information is shared about the risks faced and the actions needed to ensure victims' safety together with the resources available locally. A safety plan is developed for

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<sup>6</sup> Recommendation 12: see page 24 below.

<sup>7</sup> These service procedures (i.e. policy documents) specifically address Honour Based Violence, Forced Marriage and Female Genital Mutilation.

<sup>8</sup> Recommendation 13: see page 25 below.

<sup>9</sup> The children and young people thematic review, and the terms of reference for the thematic review on policing with and for members of the community who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgendered, are available to download at [www.nipolicingboard.org.uk](http://www.nipolicingboard.org.uk). Hard copies of either of these documents can be obtained from the Board upon request.

<sup>10</sup> The thematic reviews do not look at issues in isolation. They attempt to make connections between issues affecting policing: woven together they form a blueprint for ensuring best practice in all aspects of policing, for the benefit of the whole community.

each victim. The MARAC will normally achieve more successful outcomes in high risk domestic abuse cases than would be achieved by individual agencies working with their own limited information. MARAC was initially introduced as a pilot in the Antrim area and, following its success, the Northern Ireland Office (now the Department of Justice), the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for Northern Ireland (DHSSPS) and the PSNI agreed to fund a regional roll out. The roll out of MARAC across Northern Ireland commenced in December 2009.

The funding package allows for a full-time MARAC co-ordinator, located within the central PSNI Public Protection Unit (PPU), and eight full-time administrators, located in the PPU within each of the eight PSNI Districts. Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs), who represent and support the victim within the MARAC process, have not yet been appointed to MARACs in Northern Ireland. The Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (CJINI) made a recommendation in its December 2010 report, *Domestic Violence and Abuse*, that an IDVA service for MARAC in Northern Ireland is developed by the Department of Justice as a matter of urgency.<sup>11</sup> The PSNI accepts that the appointment of IDVAs is a top priority and is actively working with partners in the Department of Justice and DHSSPS to secure funding for those posts.

To date, over 1,500 high risk cases have been discussed via a MARAC in Northern Ireland. Over 2,000 children have been involved in those cases. The police perform a central role within a MARAC. Each MARAC is, usually, chaired by a police officer from a PPU of at least sergeant rank. The information brought to the MARAC from the police officer should cover the risks to the victim and any children. The police officer should research any recent police involvement in every case and provide the MARAC with up to date information/intelligence about the family. The police officer should also inform partner agencies on the result of background checks against the perpetrator to identify previous convictions, bail conditions, warning markers and impending prosecutions. It is important for the police officer to research any child protection issues known to the police.

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<sup>11</sup> *Domestic Violence and Abuse*, Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (CJINI), October 2010, para. 6.2.

A 'DASH checklist' is used by all agencies engaging in the MARAC process. Where a victim is identified by the checklist as being "high risk", they will be referred to the MARAC process. The purpose of the DASH checklist is to provide a consistent and practical tool for practitioners working with victims of domestic abuse to help them identify risks, assess the risks, and manage the risks. It has been compiled taking into account the known risk factors, which have been drawn from extensive research and analysis by leading academics in the field of domestic homicides, "near misses" and lower level incidents. Other police services that have used the DASH risk tool have found that they are better able to identify and manage high risk cases.

PSNI's newly revised policy, *Police Response to Domestic Incidents*, requires that the DASH checklist is completed by all response officers (or domestic abuse officers if the case is passed immediately to the specialist officer) when attending the scene of all domestic abuse crimes, incidents and breaches of non-molestation and occupation orders.<sup>12</sup> Response officers and domestic abuse officers have received training on the completion of the DASH checklist, and domestic abuse officers have responsibility for ensuring the checklists have been completed properly. While some officers expressed initial dissatisfaction at the perceived bureaucracy involved in filling out the checklist, the relevant trainers and supervisors have stressed that the checklist must be filled in thoughtfully and fully in each case and re-emphasised that the checklist saves lives (a good example of the application of the article 2 ECHR duty to protect life). That message must be reinforced.

In its December 2010 report, *Domestic Violence and Abuse*, CJINI was generally positive about the service provided by PSNI, particularly domestic abuse officers. However, CJINI noted that some victim groups believed response officers would benefit from domestic abuse refresher training. CJINI identified a number of areas for improvement, such as the need to ensure greater consistency of service across all PSNI Districts. Consistency of service is an issue of concern that the Human Rights and Professional Standards Committee has raised with the PSNI. It seems that whilst police officers engage with stakeholders and local partners on issues involving domestic abuse in their local area, the quality and extent of that engagement varies

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<sup>12</sup> PSNI has also developed a brand new DASH Service Procedure which will be issued to the organisation shortly. The Service Procedure sets out in more detail PSNI policy and procedure in respect of risk identification, assessment and management in cases of domestic abuse, stalking and harassment and Honour Based Violence.



according to District. Consistency in service delivery is an issue for all aspects of policing and is being considered further by the Committee, which will report in this year's Human Rights Annual Report and a follow-up report on domestic abuse (as referred to in the introduction to this report).

The Committee does not doubt, however, the PSNI's service-wide commitment to tackling domestic abuse and was encouraged to hear that PSNI recently received a Gold Charter Award for its workplace policy relating to domestic abuse involving police officers and staff.

The thematic review signalled the start of a process of ongoing monitoring by the Board. The Committee intends to keep domestic abuse policing on its agenda and will continue to liaise with stakeholders to seek their input and feedback on this important issue. Evidence provided to the Committee during the roundtable meetings in G District was generally very positive as regards PSNI's contribution to tackling domestic abuse in the area. That does not mean that there is not more that can be done within that area (and elsewhere) but the progress has been very impressive. In order to satisfy itself that this standard of domestic abuse policing is achieved across Northern Ireland, the Committee intends to hold more roundtable meetings with stakeholders in various police Districts. The Committee will continue to maintain an interest in other reports concerning domestic abuse policing, including CJINI inspection reports. The Committee will keep itself informed as to any proposed legislative changes, and it will follow closely any initiatives or consultations instigated by the Department of Justice as it works towards developing its single strategy for tackling domestic and sexual violence.<sup>13</sup> Finally, and importantly, the Committee will continue to engage with the PSNI on the issue of domestic abuse.

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<sup>13</sup> The Department of Justice included a commitment in its draft Community Safety Strategy to work in partnership with the (DHSSPS) and other agencies to develop a single strategy by 2013 for tackling domestic and sexual violence (there are currently two separate strategies, both of which are led jointly by the Department of Justice and DHSSPS: *Tackling Violence at Home*, for domestic abuse, and a *Regional Strategy to tackle Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland*). Also of particular relevance to domestic abuse, was the announcement by the Justice Minister in December 2010 that changes would be made to the rules governing access to legal aid in order to provide increased financial assistance to those seeking a non-molestation order.

## **UPDATE ON IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **1. Disaggregated statistics**

#### **Background**

A lack of disaggregated data means it is difficult to give a true picture of the nature and extent of domestic abuse across Northern Ireland. The statistics compiled by the PSNI, and published annually in the PSNI Annual Statistical Report (which is available to download through the PSNI website), give the number of reported incidents and recorded offences with a domestic motivation. The statistics in the Annual Statistical Report are broken down according to the gender of the victim but do not record the gender of the perpetrator or the relationship of the victim to the perpetrator. Unless and until we know the statistics according both to gender and to relationship it is impossible to fully assess the scale and the true nature of the problem. It was therefore recommended in the thematic review:

#### **Recommendation 1**

**The PSNI should record, for every reported incident, the gender of both victim and perpetrator, the relationship of the victim to the perpetrator, the ethnicity of the victim and perpetrator and whether the victim is an adult or child. The disaggregated statistics should thereafter be included in the [PSNI Annual Statistical Report].**

#### **PSNI Action**

PSNI Central Statistics Unit has undertaken a substantial amount of work to explore what information can be extracted and collated from the raw data available on the police computer system (NICHE) for crimes with a domestic abuse motivation and for domestic 'incidents only' (i.e. those incidents where no offence has been disclosed). Statisticians in Central Statistics Unit have met with the Board's Human Rights Advisor to discuss the Recommendation and have kept the Human Rights Advisor informed on the outcome of their fieldwork. The Human Rights Advisor is grateful to the Central Statistics Unit and the Domestic Abuse Champion for their considerable efforts.

Central Statistics Unit has provided the Board with some of the requested data in respect of recorded crime for the 2009/2010 period (attached at **Annex A**, pages 29-32). The statistics provide victim information for recorded crimes with a domestic abuse motivation, and they provide offender data and victim-offender relationship information for those crimes that were detected/cleared during the year.<sup>14</sup>

As regards collating information on domestic ‘incidents only’, the Central Statistics Unit advises that some information could be provided in relation to only a very small sample of those incidents.<sup>15</sup> An analysis by Central Statistics Unit indicates that the ‘victim’ and ‘perpetrator’ characteristics of that small sample are much the same as the victim and perpetrator characteristics of recorded crimes with a domestic abuse motivation. Given the enormous amount of work involved in extracting and analysing that information,<sup>16</sup> but more importantly the fact that for technical reasons the results do not assist over and above those provided for crimes, the Board’s Human Rights Advisor has agreed with Central Statistics Unit that resources would be better directed towards the compilation of other statistics in which stakeholders were particularly interested.

It is worth noting that included in previous years’ Annual Statistical Reports were statistics showing the type of offence for each domestic motivated offence, for example, murder, manslaughter, grievous bodily harm etc. This information was not included in the 2009/2010 Annual Statistical Report due to disclosure restrictions (which are aimed at protecting the rights of all individuals to privacy) however, upon request, Central Statistics Unit has provided the Board’s Human Rights Advisor with the information. Central Statistics Unit has also provided an unrestricted but redacted version of the information that would not breach disclosure rules if published: this is included in **Annex A** (pages 33-35).

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<sup>14</sup> Offender data and victim-offender relationship information can only be extracted from NICHE at the point of detection/clearance – prior to this no charge has been laid and so there is no ‘offender’ as such.

<sup>15</sup> This is due to the way in which persons involved in ‘incidents only’ are identified and recorded on NICHE. As no crime has been disclosed there is no victim and no offender as such, and so persons involved can be recorded on NICHE under a wide range of classifications. Only in a small proportion of ‘incidents only’ (approximately 14%) have persons involved been broadly classified as a ‘victim’ and/or a ‘suspected perpetrator’.

<sup>16</sup> Which represents only a very small sample of the ‘incidents only’ (approximately 14%)

An analysis of the 2009/2010 domestic abuse statistics provided to the Board is attached at **Annex B** (pages 36-38).

PSNI has indicated that it will, in principle, publish the disaggregated information that is available on an annual basis (provided its disclosure does not breach disclosure rules). PSNI intends to publish the disaggregated information for 2010/2011 separately from the Annual Statistical Report.<sup>17</sup> Where more detailed information cannot be made public due to privacy issues, the information can still be disclosed to, and monitored by, the Committee and the Board's Human Rights Advisor on a confidential basis. The same applies to a number of organisations, such as NSPCC, with whom PSNI have an information sharing agreement. Work on this recommendation is therefore ongoing.

## **2. Non-molestation orders**

### Background

The PSNI has a policy to be proactive in the arrest and prosecution of breaches of non molestation-orders. PSNI includes statistics on recorded offences of "Breach of Orders" in its Annual Statistical Report. However these figures include breaches of all types of court orders and so it is not possible to discern from these how many of the offences relate to a breach of a non-molestation order. The thematic review stated that to better assess whether the PSNI policy is applied in practice, statistics on breaches of non-molestation orders must be disaggregated and thereafter monitored. It was therefore recommended:

### **Recommendation 2**

**The PSNI should record separately all reported incidents and recorded crimes of breach of non-molestation orders and the sanction and non-sanction clearance rates.**

### PSNI Action

The purpose of Recommendation 2 is to capture and thereafter monitor whether each report of breach of a non-molestation order is actioned appropriately or, put

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<sup>17</sup> PSNI aims, in principle, to have that separate information published by August 2011.

another way, to ascertain whether police officers and/or call handlers are taking seriously (and following policy thereafter) all reported breaches.

PSNI Central Statistics Unit has provided the Board with statistics on the number of breaches of non-molestation orders (i) recorded; and (ii) detected/cleared during 2009/2010 (attached at **Annex A**, page 32). Given that Recommendation 2 is intended to be an ongoing recommendation, it is hoped that PSNI will make this information available publically in the future, either in the Annual Statistical Report or by publishing these figures separately.

If breach of a non-molestation order is reported, but not recorded on the police computer system as breach of an order, then that particular incident cannot be captured by statistics (as the raw data will not exist). Therefore it is not possible to gauge through statistics alone whether all reports of breaches of non-molestation orders are being actioned appropriately. However, ACC Criminal Justice has provided the Board with assurances that he has no reason to believe that officers are not properly investigating reports of breaches of non-molestation orders or not recording them appropriately. Supervisors routinely check serial codes to ensure that all incidents which potentially involve breach of a court order are being identified as such and properly recorded. PSNI has also made it mandatory for supervisors in each Public Protection Unit to dip-sample decisions not to arrest in domestic incidents, including those incidents where a non-molestation order has potentially been breached (see below at page 20). This appears to be a sensible compromise in the circumstances. Those processes which may provide the necessary assurance will continue and will be reviewed in due course.

### **3. Role of domestic abuse officers**

#### Background

Domestic abuse officers are specialist officers located within PSNI Public Protection Units (PPUs) who are dedicated to dealing with domestic abuse cases.

During the thematic review it was reported by a number of domestic abuse officers that the amount of administrative work they were required to do resulted in less time being available to them to engage at the 'sharp end' of policing domestic abuse.

With the funding package secured for MARAC to include provision for a dedicated MARAC administration officer in each PPU together with one co-ordinator across Northern Ireland, it was expected that more support would be available to domestic abuse officers freeing them up to take on a greater investigative role.

Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) guidance issued in 2008 suggests that domestic abuse officers should be investigative and that consideration should be given to the desirability of a domestic abuse officer being a member of every first response team, or at least being available to every first response team.<sup>18</sup>

There are a number of issues that arise in domestic abuse cases at every stage, from the first report to the conclusion of the investigation, which are particular to domestic abuse. To have a domestic abuse officer available throughout that process enhances greatly the service provided to victims and the management of risk. It was therefore recommended in the thematic review:

### **Recommendation 3**

**The PSNI should consider again the desirability of having a specialist domestic abuse officer available to each first response team dealing with a report of domestic abuse.**

#### PSNI Action

Since the thematic review was published, each PSNI District has reviewed the role and responsibilities of domestic abuse officers. PSNI advises that in all Districts domestic abuse officers are now investigative, concentrating for example on the more serious offences, high risk victims and repeat alleged perpetrators of domestic abuse.

As regards Recommendation 3, PSNI has advised that domestic abuse officers are readily available to response teams to provide guidance. However, the availability of domestic abuse officers to first response teams is dependant upon the working hours, shift patterns and number of domestic abuse officers in each District. This

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<sup>18</sup> *Guidance on Investigating Domestic Abuse 2008*, ACPO and National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA), page 78.

issue was highlighted by the thematic review and a recommendation (Recommendation 4) was made.

#### **4: Working patterns and number of domestic abuse officers**

##### Background

Each District Commander decides, according to the local domestic abuse profile, the number of domestic abuse officers needed to manage the level of reported incidents of domestic abuse. In the thematic review it was noted that the working hours of domestic abuse officers vary from District to District, but generally they work from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday. That being the case, during those times when domestic abuse is known to more frequently occur (i.e. evenings and weekends), a domestic abuse officer is not available. The thematic review also queried whether 50 domestic abuse officers across the whole of Northern Ireland was a sufficient number to protect victims and make perpetrators amenable. It was therefore recommended that:

##### **Recommendation 4**

**The PSNI should consider whether the number of domestic abuse officers within each District is sufficient to meet its domestic abuse requirements and in particular whether provision should be made for a domestic abuse officer to be available to each shift. The PSNI should report to the Human Rights and Professional Standards Committee with the outcome of its considerations within 6 months of the publication of [the thematic review].**

The December 2010 CJINI report, *Domestic Violence and Abuse*, made the same observations as the Board's thematic review as regards the lack of consistency across Districts in the working patterns of domestic abuse officers, with most working 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday and only some working weekends (albeit during the day). CJINI commented that "it would be sensible if this weekend cover rota operated consistently across the PSNI in order that specialist officers were available for follow-up incidents which occurred on Friday and Saturday nights, as this is the time when domestic incidents are most likely to occur."<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> *Domestic Violence and Abuse*, Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (CJINI), October 2010, para. 2.6.

### PSNI Action

Following discussion of Recommendation 4 with PPU Inspectors, PSNI advised the Board in April 2010 that it was of the view that there is a sufficient number of domestic abuse officers within each District to meet domestic abuse requirements.

PSNI further examined the staffing of domestic abuse officers as part of an internal review of PPUs carried out in June 2010. Of the Districts visited as part of that internal review there was unanimous agreement that domestic abuse officers need not be available to response teams at peak times of commission of domestic abuse. The rationale behind this was that where either party has consumed alcohol and/or drugs, the urgency of hospital treatment must take primacy over the investigation; and the heightened emotional state of the victim may mean that they are not amenable to providing a coherent complaint statement.

At the roundtable meeting held by the Human Rights and Professional Standards Committee in G District in October 2010, the Committee was advised that following the publication of the Board's thematic review in March 2009, the shift patterns of domestic abuse officers in the District were reconsidered. As a result, their working hours have been readjusted to ensure that there will always be a domestic abuse officer working Monday to Friday, 8am – 10pm, and two officers working on a Saturday and Sunday, one from 8am – 4pm and one from 9am – 5pm. The officers are based in Strand Road but are available to provide a service throughout the District. There will also always be a domestic abuse officer in the District available on call to response officers outside of these hours.

The Committee believes this to be a pragmatic approach to the staffing of domestic abuse officers as it ensures that there is a specialist officer on call during the peak times of commission of domestic abuse (i.e. Friday and Saturday nights). It also means a domestic abuse officer can visit the victim and take statements from the parties involved the following day, rather than waiting until Monday morning.

Following the roundtable meeting the Committee highlighted the G District staffing model for domestic abuse officers with ACC Criminal Justice, who has since advised that the good practice has been disseminated across all Districts. This is an issue which requires further work and will be monitored further to ensure that appropriate



levels of service are provided. The Committee is considering whether the PSNI response is adequate.

## **5: Training on taking initial reports of domestic abuse**

### Background

The initial contact a victim of domestic abuse has with the police can impact both positively and negatively upon his or her expectations and will inform the future progress of the case through to prosecution. The process starts from the moment a report is received, whether that is by telephone to the '999' system, by walk-in to a local police station, a referral from an external agency or contact made with the police by a concerned friend or relative.

Current ACPO guidance states that all call-handlers should be trained to give the appropriate advice on, for example, safety and first aid and to keep the caller informed as to the deployment of police officers. The caller should be asked whether the perpetrator is at the scene and if so, be kept on the line. The call-handler needs to obtain as much information at that stage as is possible in the circumstances. That information will inform the first response officers who will then be in a better position to plan their attendance at the scene.<sup>20</sup> It was recommended in the thematic review:

### **Recommendation 5**

**The PSNI should devise a training programme that ensures all officers (including supervisory officers) and police staff whose duties include or may include the taking of reports of domestic abuse, receive specialist domestic abuse response training.**

### PSNI Action

PSNI has advised that a call handling training programme has been developed and all relevant persons in all Districts have received (or will receive, by April 2011) this training. As part of the programme, officers are trained in the aims and principles of the PSNI Policy Directive *Police Response to Domestic Incidents*; use of correct questioning skills during the initial call; the correct application of the principles of the

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<sup>20</sup> *Guidance on Investigating Domestic Abuse 2008*, ACPO and National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA), section 2.

policy within the context of practical examples; recognising the importance of recording and dealing professionally with the first report and PSNI's duty of positive action; recognising the need for urgent medical assistance where appropriate; and the role of statutory and voluntary sector support agencies available for victims of domestic abuse. The lesson includes victim focus, call handling techniques, ViSOR<sup>21</sup> and SHOGUN<sup>22</sup> checks. In line with ACPO guidance, the PSNI Domestic Abuse Champion is compiling a checklist as part of the Target Operating Model for staff receiving calls reporting domestic abuse incidents.

In addition to the above, staff from PSNI Occupational Health and Well-being Branch also received training in relation to the use of the DASH risk identification checklist.<sup>23</sup> This will allow these members of staff to identify and assess the risk to victims of domestic abuse within the PSNI and engage with local domestic abuse officers as regards relevant support and referral to MARAC.

It is important that PSNI keeps the call handling training under regular review and Districts must ensure that it is provided to all new officers or members of staff who have not previously received it. As per the ACPO guidance this should include front desk staff and supervisors in communication rooms.

## **6: Dip-sampling of emergency calls**

### Background

Training on taking initial reports of domestic abuse (as per Recommendation 5), together with the call handler checklist, should assist with ensuring that reports of domestic incidents are dealt with according to the correct policy and procedure and no victim of domestic abuse is deterred from reporting further incidents or from continuing to co-operate with the police investigation and the PPS prosecution. However, in order to ensure that the training is effective and put into practice, the thematic review stated that PSNI should monitor call-handling by random dip-sampling of calls. It was recommended:

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<sup>21</sup> The ViSOR system is a national database of sex and violent offenders.

<sup>22</sup> SHOGUN provides firearms licensing information.

<sup>23</sup> The DASH checklist is a tool used to identify 'high risk' victims of domestic abuse: see pages 4 – 6 above.

## **Recommendation 6**

**The PSNI should devise a mechanism for random dip-sampling emergency calls against policy and procedure and provide to the Human Rights and Professional Standards Committee an annual report of its analysis of the dip-sampling exercise. This first report should be provided to the Committee by 31 March 2010.**

### PSNI Action

In accepting this recommendation, PSNI initiated a pilot during 2009 in F District (Cookstown; Dungannon and South Tyrone; Fermanagh; and Omagh) to dip sample domestic abuse related emergency calls. Unfortunately the pilot proved unworkable, the reason given was that the call handler receiving the emergency call would elicit brief details from the caller on the emergency line prior to ringing the caller back on another phone to free up the emergency line. However, PSNI is currently developing a mechanism to sample calls against policy and procedure under the remit of the R4 Project.<sup>24</sup> Once a sampling process has been validated, PSNI will consider implementing the process across all Districts.

Whilst PSNI has not yet implemented this specific recommendation, all domestic abuse Sergeants in all Districts are required, as supervisors, to take proactive steps to monitor the responses of officers in their charge (including call handlers) to domestic abuse incidents. The Human Rights and Professional Standards Committee heard evidence during the roundtable meeting in G District in October 2010 that a Superintendent in Foyle Area Command regularly reviews calls involving domestic abuse incidents and, where necessary, holds officers to account for the way in which the call was handled. PSNI has advised that this is common practice across other Districts.

## **7: Training on associated investigations**

### Background

There are established links between domestic abuse and other offences. Public Protection Units (PPUs) established in each police District lead in child protection,

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<sup>24</sup> The R4 Project aims to make improvements in citizen contact, victim support and quality of service.

missing and vulnerable people, sex offender management and domestic abuse. Unless all operational officers within PPUs have received training in the identification of domestic abuse and the policy to be adopted thereafter, victims and potential victims may not be guaranteed the protection they are entitled to. It was therefore recommended in the thematic review:

#### **Recommendation 7**

**The PSNI should devise a training programme that ensures all officers within each Public Protection Unit have received or will receive joint training on all aspects of their respective roles. That programme should be provided to the Human Rights and Professional Standards Committee within 6 months of the publication of [the thematic review].**

#### PSNI Action

PSNI has advised that there is not a joint training programme for officers within PPUs but that there is a range of training programmes in place which incorporate reference to more than one specialism (for example, upcoming training on Honour Based Violence will include representatives specialising in domestic abuse and child protection). PSNI has advised that, where relevant, the various training programmes for PPU officers include elements to illustrate the links between domestic abuse and other offences. Policies are cross-referenced to associated investigations and an intranet site has been developed for newly appointed officers and those interested in specialising within such roles to find out more information about the various areas and associated documentation, including service procedures, policy guidance and links to support agencies.

It is important that PSNI keeps its policies, intranet site and the PPU training programmes under regular review. The Committee will continue to monitor the implementation of this recommendation and assess whether the steps taken by PSNI have resulted in an improvement in practice.

## 8: Issues arising from use of NICHE

### Background

During the thematic review, a number of domestic abuse officers reported their difficulty accessing information on the PSNI computer system (NICHE)<sup>25</sup> and problems associated with use of the system. They reported that those difficulties were delaying and hampering their investigations. It was not clear whether the problem was the system itself or whether it arose as a result of inadequate training on the use of the system. It was therefore recommended in the thematic review:

### **Recommendation 8**

**The PSNI should identify the issues arising in the use of the NICHE system within 12 weeks of the publication of this report and thereafter ensure that all domestic abuse officers using the system have received sufficient refresher training to better manage and use NICHE. The PSNI should provide that assurance to the [Human Rights and Professional Standards] Committee within 12 months of the publication of [the thematic review].**

### PSNI Action

In accepting this Recommendation, PSNI committed to research the issues and provide reassurance to the Committee accordingly. PSNI subsequently reported in April 2010 that during a consultation exercise domestic abuse officers raised matters of a technical nature as opposed to areas of concerns which could be resolved by further training. PSNI advised the Committee, as a means of reassurance, that 'Floorwalkers' are available to attend stations and departments to reinforce training and answer queries. Similarly, there are a number of services available for officers to avail of should they experience difficulties, for instance, the NICHE Help Desk, web pages on the police intranet (PoliceNet), and local NICHE Champions in each District.

Whilst Recommendation 8 has been implemented, it is important that PSNI ensure that the training needs of domestic abuse officers, in respect of information technology, is kept under regular review. Domestic abuse officers are responsible for

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<sup>25</sup> The NICHE system, feeds into a centralised (CAUSEWAY) system linked to other Criminal Justice Organisations, including the Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland (PPS) and the Northern Ireland Court Service (NICS).

over-seeing that domestic abuse incidents have been dealt with appropriately, that DASH risk identification checklists have been completed correctly and, where appropriate, referrals made to a MARAC. In order to fulfil these duties, it is vital that domestic abuse officers are confident in navigating their way around the police computer system.

## **9: Analysis of decision not to arrest**

### Background

The PSNI Policy Directive, *Police Response to Domestic Incidents*, contains comprehensive guidance on the power of arrest; the presumption of arrest;<sup>26</sup> and the requirement to record, with reasons, a decision not to arrest. The thematic review noted that in order to ensure that officers are applying the policy in practice, PPU supervisors should regularly review the record of decision-making where no arrest has been made and re-assess the situation. It was therefore recommended that:

### **Recommendation 9**

**Each PSNI Public Protection Unit supervisor should carry out an analysis of the recorded decisions not to arrest, on a six monthly basis. The analyses for each Public Protection Unit should then be provided to the Human Rights and Professional Standards Committee annually.**

### PSNI Action

In accepting this recommendation, PSNI initiated a pilot in A District (North and West Belfast) to ensure an accurate mechanism for analysing the decisions not to arrest a suspect involved in a domestic abuse incident. As a result of this a *proforma* has been incorporated into Policy Directive *Police Response to Domestic Incidents*, which was revised and reissued in December 2010. The Policy states:

The PPU Inspector will ensure that an analysis (of a minimum of 3% of domestic abuse crimes) is carried out of the recorded decisions not to arrest, on a six monthly basis. This should consist of dip-sampling cases identified as domestic abuse and reported breaches of orders (pertaining to Non

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<sup>26</sup> There is a presumption to arrest where a power of arrest exists and where it is necessary and proportionate in order to carry out an effective investigation and/or to prevent the commission of further offences.

Molestation/Occupation Orders) on Command & Control serials where a power of arrest existed but an arrest was not made. The analysis should include an overview of the officer's details, alleged offence, whether the rationale for not arresting was recorded, and whether this decision was justified. These records should be scrutinised to ensure that officers are applying the Policy in practice and where issues or non compliance is found, to ensure appropriate action is taken. The analysis will be collated by Inspector, Public Protection HQ.

The first set of analyses, covering the period 1 November 2010 – 31 April 2011, will be provided to the Committee later this year and on an annual basis thereafter.

## **10: Public Prosecution Service (PPS) and PSNI Memorandum of Understanding**

### Background

PSNI Policy Directive, *Police Response to Domestic Incidents*, contains guidance on taking statements and gathering “best evidence from potential sources in order to build a prosecution case that does not rely entirely on the victim’s statement.” The Policy details information to be included in a withdrawal statement, and states that when taking the statement, “the victim should be advised that by withdrawing support for a prosecution, this does not mean that the PPS will withdraw the case. As a general rule, PPS will prosecute cases where there is sufficient evidence and an absence of factors preventing the case from continuing.”

A good relationship between the PSNI and the PPS is essential to the effective prosecution of domestic abuse cases. Each organisation must be clear about its respective role and responsibilities and maintain an open line of communication. A Protocol between the PPS and the PSNI already exists and is useful in providing general guidance to police officers and providing them with the opportunity to obtain pre-charge and prosecutorial advice to help with investigations. The thematic review noted that the PSNI Domestic Abuse Champion had discussed with the PPS the merits of agreeing a written Memorandum of Understanding or Protocol between the two organisations to specifically deal with the prosecution of domestic abuse cases. The thematic review recommended that:

## **Recommendation 10**

**The PSNI should continue to work with the PPS to agree a Memorandum of Understanding between the two organisations, which sets out in clear terms their respective roles and responsibilities. This should include a check-list of the information required by the PPS to be contained in a domestic abuse crime file, including in particular, the contents of a withdrawal statement. The PSNI should report to the Human Rights and Professional Standards Committee on progress within 6 months of the publication of [the thematic review].**

### PSNI Action

A Service Level Agreement between the PSNI and the PPS was finalised in April 2011. As required by Recommendation 10 of the thematic review, the Agreement sets out the respective roles and responsibilities of both organisations in terms of investigating and prosecuting cases of domestic abuse. It contains a checklist of the information required by the PPS to be contained in a domestic abuse crime file, and it includes detailed information on how both the PSNI and PPS will deal with withdrawal statements (which includes reference to 'victimless' prosecutions). Both PSNI and PPS will monitor implementation of the Agreement and it will be reviewed and updated as required to ensure that it reflects any changes to policy or practice. Whilst it is disappointing that it has taken two years since the recommendation was made to complete the Agreement, the fact that it has now been finalised is a positive step.

The recently revised PSNI Policy Directive, *Police Response to Domestic Incidents*, states that "files should be dealt with expeditiously and the PPS kept informed of any changes or developments throughout the life of a case. Care should be taken to identify those witnesses who may require special measures and officers should respond rapidly to a PPS request for further evidence or information."

PPS prosecutors commented to CJINI during its recent inspection of the handling of domestic abuse across the criminal justice system that "the quality of evidence gathering varied depending on the individual officer and their supervisor. Where police statements were poor the issues tended to be in relation to describing the scene, which could be assisted by the use of photographs. Prosecutors confirmed that photographs were used for domestic violence and abuse cases in the Belfast



region and for more serious cases but prosecutors from other regions stated that photographs were rarely provided.”<sup>27</sup> CJINI therefore made a recommendation that the PSNI, in consultation with the PPS, introduce digital photographic equipment to be made available to response officers for use in domestic violence and abuse offences.<sup>28</sup>

CJINI also commented on anecdotal evidence of examples where use of ‘Body Worn Digital Recording System’ (‘head cameras’) equipment had resulted in an early guilty plea or had directly contributed to the prevention of crime. The Board’s thematic review also considered head cameras and stated that “not all officers have access to a camera but unless one is available at the scene, vital evidence may be lost.” Use of head cameras has been rolled out in the Lisburn Area and, at the time of the CJINI inspection, preparations were underway for roll out to Antrim and Newtownabbey. CJINI made a recommendation that the PSNI, in consultation with the PPS, should explore the feasibility of further roll-out of head cameras across Northern Ireland.<sup>29</sup>

## **11: Advice from the Public Prosecution Service (PPS)**

The domestic abuse officer is an important point of contact for the prosecutor but so too must the prosecutor be available to the police officer to provide advice and guidance on the prosecution. It was therefore recommended in the thematic review:

### **Recommendation 11**

**The PSNI should work with the PPS to devise an agreed mechanism by which advice can be requested and given to a police officer throughout the progress of a [domestic abuse] case from pre-charge to prosecution. The PSNI should report to the Human Rights and Professional Standards Committee within 6 months of the publication of [the thematic review].**

### **PSNI Action**

PSNI has advised that this recommendation has been incorporated into the PPS/PSNI Service Level Agreement on domestic abuse cases. The Service Level

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<sup>27</sup> *Domestic Violence and Abuse*, Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (CJINI), October 2010, para. 2.16.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.* para. 2.17.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.* para. 2.18.

Agreement, which was finalised in April 2011, references the fact that the PPS must provide PSNI with pre-charge and/or prosecutorial advice at any stage of an investigation. It states that PSNI should request this advice in accordance with the PPS/PSNI Protocol. The Protocol was agreed in 2006 and it contains a section which sets out when an officer can request pre-charge and prosecutorial advice (generally, not just in domestic abuse cases), how they should go about the request, and it requires that the prosecutor must respond to a request for pre-charge advice within two hours and must respond to a request for prosecutorial advice within two working days. However, this general guidance is not what was envisaged when Recommendation 11 was made. The Board will continue to work with PSNI to implement this recommendation and will report further in due course.

## **12: Minority ethnic victims**

### Background

The barriers faced by victims when it comes to reporting domestic abuse are compounded where the victim's language is not English and/or he or she is unfamiliar with their local surroundings or community. The thematic review noted that unless and until there is an abundant supply of interpreters to meet the needs of victims, minority ethnic victims will not receive the high standard of service they are entitled to expect. All information on support and referral services must be contained in leaflets translated into the various languages spoken in Northern Ireland.

It was also noted in the thematic review that the PSNI Policy Directive, *Police Response to Domestic Incidents*, did not contain express guidance relevant to minority ethnic victims of domestic abuse. Whilst such guidance is included in the PSNI Policy Directive, *Dealing with Victims and Witnesses* and the PSNI *Guide to Culture and Diversity*, the thematic review stated that such specific provision should be contained within the primary policy itself. It was therefore recommended that:

### **Recommendation 12**

**The PSNI should incorporate within Policy Directive 09/08 *Police Response to Domestic Incidents* information and guidance relevant to the specific needs of minority ethnic victims.**

### PSNI Action

The PSNI Policy Directive, *Police Response to Domestic Incidents*, was revised and reissued in December 2010. It now incorporates guidance relating to victims with particular needs, including those for minority ethnic victims, older victims, disabled victims, young victims, and Traveller victims.

The PSNI domestic abuse *Infocarte*, *Time and time and time again*, has been translated into eight minority languages, specifically: Czech, Lithuanian, Polish, Ulster Scot, Russian, Irish, Mandarin and Portuguese. Other literature has also been translated into minority languages.

In March 2010 and April 2011, the PSNI Domestic Abuse Champion and the MARAC Coordinator provided training to interpreters working for the Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM) on the subjects of domestic abuse and the introduction of MARACs to Northern Ireland as a means of ensuring further support for victims of a minority ethnic background. A commitment has been made by the PSNI to continue providing a domestic abuse input into any future NICEM training.

Multi-agency training is scheduled to be provided by representatives from Crime Training in June 2011 in relation to Honour Based Violence. PSNI has recently published service procedures to specifically address the police response to Honour Based Violence and Forced Marriage. A service procedure to address Female Genital Mutilation was also recently finalised and will be published shortly.

### **13: Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual (LGB) victims**

#### Background

In order to ensure that awareness of domestic abuse within same sex relationships was raised within the PSNI, it was recommended in the thematic review that:

#### **Recommendation 13**

**The PSNI should continue to work with LGB interest groups to review and thereafter devise a training plan to better enshrine LGB issues within police policies and training programmes**

### PSNI Action

PSNI, in accepting this recommendation, stated that it has worked with LGB groups in the past in this regard and that it will continue to work with them in the future to improve service delivery. In particular:

- A number of LGB awareness sessions were delivered during 2009 with attendees from across most Districts and Departments. The course was designed in consultation with the Rainbow Project, SHOUT and the Gay Police Association.
- All police officers and police staff have access to an e-learning module which aims to cultivate awareness of issues relating to sexual orientation that may arise in the workplace and in the delivery of policing. It looks at the prejudices and various forms of discrimination often faced by LGB people. The course highlights the need to become aware of these prejudices, to challenge inappropriate or discriminatory behaviour and to promote equality.
- Training provided by the PSNI Equality and Diversity Unit focuses on the needs and requirements of all sections of the community in line with section 75 themes.
- LGB issues were a composite of a number of Equal Opportunities training packages delivered during 2009/2010, for example *Diversity Works; Managing Diversity; Bullying; Harassment and Grievance Awareness; Managing Bullying; Harassment and Grievance for 1st Line Managers; and Section 75 for Policy Writers*.
- PSNI has worked in partnership with the Rainbow Project, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and Belfast City Council to establish an Advocacy service for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGB&T) people. The Advocacy service offers support and information to LGB&T people who are a victim or witness to a hate incident or crime; a victim of domestic abuse; facing discrimination or inequality when trying to access products and services; or who have specific needs relating to their housing and personal safety. Leaflets have been developed to raise awareness of the Advocacy service for both professionals supporting LGB&T people, and for potential LGB&T victims of hate crime, discrimination and domestic abuse.

- Additional guidance is included in PSNI's DASH Service Procedure (which will be issued to the organisation soon) for risk assessing domestic incidents involving LGB&T individuals.<sup>30</sup>

PSNI has a LGB&T Independent Advisory Group and it also participates in the Board's LGB&T reference group. In addition to this, many Hate Incident Minority Liaison Officers (HIMLOs) had been working in close partnership with LGB&T stakeholders in their local area (although the level of engagement varied from District to District). However, in summer 2010 HIMLO duties were removed from officers working in District Community Safety Teams and have been given instead to constables working in Neighbourhood Policing Teams (to be taken on in addition to their pre-existing duties). The impact this will have on PSNI's overall engagement with LGB&T interest groups, and the knock on effect this will have on training, remains to be seen and will be considered in more detail in the thematic review currently being undertaken by the Board into policing with and for LGB&T individuals.<sup>31</sup>

## **14: Flagging on NICHE of domestic abuse incidents**

### Background

To ensure that each and every case of domestic abuse is brought to the attention of the PPS and the Northern Ireland Court Service, the case should be flagged by the PSNI when it is entered on the police computer system (NICHE) from which it is then entered onto the centralised computer system (Causeway) thus making it easier for other criminal justice organisations to identify high risk situations and individuals. It was therefore recommended in the thematic review that:

### **Recommendation 14**

**The PSNI should ensure that a system is in place to flag all domestic abuse incidents correctly when they are input onto NICHE and consider an effective**

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<sup>30</sup> The Service Procedure sets out policy and procedure in respect of the DASH risk tool. The DASH risk tool is used to identify 'high risk' victims of domestic abuse, harassment and Honour Based Violence

<sup>31</sup> The terms of reference for the LGB&T thematic review are available through the Board's website: [www.nipolicingboard.org.uk](http://www.nipolicingboard.org.uk)

**mechanism for flagging the assessment of risk. The PSNI should report to the Committee within 6 months of the publication of [the thematic review].**

#### PSNI Action

In light of the development of the MARAC process (outlined at pages 4 - 6 above), 'person' flags have been added to NICHE to:

- Identify victims assessed as 'high risk' who have been referred to a MARAC;
- Notify the PPU Administration and PPU Domestic Abuse Sergeant if a high risk victim has been involved in another incident or if more information comes to light about the linked perpetrator; and
- Identify and monitor alleged perpetrators (even if not convicted) of domestic abuse.

In each case, additional remarks can also be made, for example, to outline particular concerns. The flags will remain against the relevant persons until all agencies to a MARAC, including the police, are satisfied that neither the victim nor alleged perpetrator are at or pose a risk.

Instructions as regards the new flagging system have been incorporated into the revised Policy Directive, *Police Response to Domestic Incidents*. It should be noted that the flags on NICHE are for police information only and will not be seen by the PPS or the Northern Ireland Court Service. The recently agreed Service Level Agreement between the PPS and PSNI (pages 21 - 23 above refer) instructs that PSNI will ensure that all domestic abuse cases are clearly identified as such before they are submitted to the PPS. This will be done by completing the motivation screen in the NICHE system to clearly indicate that the relevant case involves domestic abuse. This does not however satisfy the purpose of the recommendation, which was to ensure that all persons/parties dealing with a case (whether through MARAC or otherwise) were immediately aware of the nature of the case and the risk associated with that case. This recommendation requires further action. The Board will be pursuing the matter further with the PSNI.

**ALYSON KILPATRICK BL  
GILLIAN EDGE**

**PSNI DISAGGREGATED DOMESTIC ABUSE STATISTICS, 2009/2010**

**General Notes to accompany data**

Domestic motivation definition: Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence, or abuse (psychological, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional) by one family member against another or adults who are or have been intimate partners, regardless of gender, and whether a crime has occurred or not, will be recorded as domestic abuse.

**Recorded Crimes**

- Recorded crimes (sometimes referred to as notifiable offences) are those which are deemed to be indictable or triable-either-way.
- A crime will be recorded as domestic abuse where it meets the definition provided above. Not all domestic abuse incidents will result in the recording of a crime.
- Domestic abuse crimes are classified according to the Home Office Counting Rules and form a subset of the overall recorded crime figures.

Data Quality: The PSNI's statistics on incidents and crimes with a domestic abuse motivation are derived from a motivation 'tick box' contained in the Occurrence Management Form which has to be completed by a police officer or member of police staff for each such reported incident/crime. The correct application of a domestic abuse motivation for all such incidents/crimes is not quality assured by the PSNI's Central Statistics Branch, but quarterly audits are conducted to ensure that any under or over-recording is corrected.

Information on victim characteristics is based on the number of offences with a domestic abuse motivation recorded in 2009/10, whereas information on offender characteristics is based on the number of offences with a domestic abuse motivation detected in 2009/10. Please note that offences detected in 2009/10 may have been recorded in a previous financial year.

**2009/10 crimes recorded with a domestic abuse motivation  
by victim characteristics**

<b>Victim characteristic</b>	<b>Total offences recorded</b>
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	2,289
Female	6,449
Unknown/Missing	98
Offences relating to a breaches of non-molestation orders <sup>1</sup>	1,067
<b>Total – all genders</b>	<b>9,903</b>
<b>Age</b>	
16 and under	805
17 and over	7,891
Unknown/Missing	140
Offences relating to a breaches of non-molestation orders <sup>1</sup>	1,067
<b>Total – all ages</b>	<b>9,903</b>
<b>Ethnicity</b>	
White	8,091
Black	50
Asian	40
Other	37
Unknown/Missing	618
Offences relating to a breaches of non-molestation orders <sup>1</sup>	1,067
<b>Total – all ethnicities</b>	<b>9,903</b>

Source: PSNI Central Statistics Unit

<sup>1</sup> Breaches of non-molestation orders are counted as a state based offence for crime recording purposes.

<sup>2</sup> The domestic abuse offence figures shown above do not include assault on police.

<sup>3</sup> Note that a person could have been a victim of more than one offence on more than one occasion during the time period. The figures above therefore relate to the victim characteristics of each offence recorded rather than number of discrete victims.

<sup>4</sup> Victim characteristics are taken from a live crime recording system and will be subject to change.



**Crimes detected with a domestic abuse motivation  
by offender characteristics**

Offender characteristic	1 Apr 2009 to 31 Mar 2010
<b>Crimes</b> with a domestic abuse motivation which have been detected <sup>1</sup> during 2009/10	<b>4,288</b>
Total number of <b>offenders</b> for 2009/10 detected crimes <sup>1</sup> with a domestic abuse motivation	<b>4,309</b>
<b>Offender Gender</b>	
Male	2,942
Female	402
Unknown/Missing	965
<b>Total – all genders</b>	<b>4,309</b>
<b>Offender Ethnicity</b>	
White	3,135
Black	28
Asian	7
Other	38
Unknown/Missing	1,101
<b>Total – all ethnicities</b>	<b>4,309</b>
<b>Relationship between victim / offender<sup>2</sup></b>	
Parent and child	624
Grandparent and grandchild	26
Sibling	215
Current spouse, partner, girlfriend, boyfriend etc	1,002
Ex spouse, partner, girlfriend, boyfriend etc	1,101
Other family relationship	83
Unknown/Missing	1,258
<b>Total – all relationships</b>	<b>4,309</b>

Source: PSNI Central Statistics Unit

<sup>1</sup> Offender characteristics have only been included for those offenders who have received a formal sanction for the offence. The following methods of detection involve a formal sanction:

- Charging or issuing a summons to an offender;
- Issuing a caution to the offender;
- Having the offence accepted for consideration in court;
- The offender is a juvenile who is dealt with by means of an informed warning, restorative caution or prosecutorial diversion.

In addition, for the most serious offence types ('indictable only' – see recorded crime paragraph above for explanation) a non-sanction detection can be claimed if:

- The Public Prosecution Service (PPS) directs no prosecution; or
- The case cannot proceed because the offender has died.

Note that a person could have been an offender in relation to more than one offence on more than one occasion during the time period. The figures above therefore relate to the offender characteristics of each offence detected rather than number of discrete offenders. It is also important to note that more than one offender can be detected for the same offence.

<sup>2</sup> Although breach of a non-molestation order is an offence against the state, where a victim offender relationship has been supplied in relation to this offence it has been included in the figures above.

**2009/10 – breach of non-molestation orders – offences with a domestic abuse motivation recorded and detected**

	<b>1 Apr 2009 to 31 Mar 2010</b>
Total number of offences recorded	1,067
Total number of offences detected	759
Detection rate (%)	71.1%

Source: PSNI Central Statistics Unit

**NOTE:** Disclosure control has been applied to the data in the following tables, whereby any cell with a value of three or less has been replaced with a \*. This is to avoid disclosure of any personal information about an individual. In order to allow disclosure control to be fully implemented, in some cases the next largest value has also been suppressed.

**Recorded Crimes with a Domestic Abuse Motivation: Offences Recorded by Type of Offence and by District<sup>1</sup> 2009/10**

	Total offences recorded	Offences recorded by type of offence <sup>2</sup>										
		Murder, Manslaughter, Attempted murder	Threat or conspiracy to murder	Wounding / GBH (incl with intent)	AOABH / common assault	Intimidation / harassment	Rape (incl attempts)	All sexual assaults/ sexual activity	Other Violent Crime	All criminal damage	Breach of orders	All other notifiable offences
A District	1,186	*	146	38	536	33	*	17	12	186	137	70
B District	806	*	66	19	459	48	*	8	5	91	64	36
C District	1,187	7	91	19	642	54	11	9	11	135	148	60
D District	1,610	*	141	41	823	79	16	19	*	203	187	87
E District	1,554	9	128	53	729	107	22	30	8	224	168	76
F District	906	*	49	23	491	73	13	15	*	113	65	56
G District	1,521	4	102	43	741	104	13	32	7	222	169	84
H District	1,133	*	86	34	562	38	10	21	*	160	129	86
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>9,903</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>809</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>4,983</b>	<b>536</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>1,334</b>	<b>1,067</b>	<b>555</b>

<sup>1</sup> The domestic abuse offence figures provided above do not include assault on police.

Source: PSNI Central Statistics Unit

## Recorded Crimes with a Domestic Abuse Motivation: Offences Recorded by Type of Offence and by Area 2009/10

(i) Urban Region

	Total offences recorded	Offences recorded by type of offence <sup>1</sup>										
		Murder Manslaughter Attempted Murder	Threat or conspiracy to murder	Wounding / GBH (incl with intent)	AOABH / common assault	Intimidation / harassment	Rape (incl attempts)	All sexual assaults/ sexual activity	Other Violent Crime	All criminal damage	Breach of orders	All other notifiable offences
Antrim	352	*	26	*	189	7	*	6	*	42	50	22
Ards	330	*	16	9	200	*	*	*	4	38	36	12
East Belfast	449	*	40	7	243	28	5	*	5	60	38	19
North Belfast	713	*	75	27	348	21	*	10	8	109	68	38
South Belfast	357	*	26	12	216	20	*	*	*	31	26	17
West Belfast	473	*	71	11	188	12	*	7	4	77	69	32
Carrickfergus	190	*	14	*	112	10	*	*	*	25	19	*
Castlereagh	199	*	18	5	95	*	4	*	4	21	28	19
Down	331	*	39	*	147	32	5	*	*	46	39	15
Lisburn	662	*	62	19	303	45	6	11	*	80	86	43
Newtownabbey	406	*	39	13	219	17	6	*	*	56	32	*
North Down	327	*	18	5	200	10	*	*	*	30	45	14
<b>Urban Region</b>	<b>4,789</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>444</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>2,460</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>615</b>	<b>536</b>	<b>253</b>

<sup>1</sup> The domestic abuse offence figures provided above do not include assault on police.

Source: PSNI Central Statistics Unit

(ii) Rural Region

	Total offences recorded	Offences recorded by type of offence <sup>1</sup>										
		Murder Manslaughter Attempted Murder	Threat or conspiracy to murder	Wounding / GBH (incl with intent)	AOABH / common assault	Intimidation / harassment	Rape (incl attempts)	All sexual assaults/ sexual activity	Other Violent Crime	All criminal damage	Breach of orders	All other notifiable offences
Armagh	245	*	19	5	124	7	*	10	*	27	37	12
Ballymena	399	*	39	10	197	9	*	8	*	66	49	19
Ballymoney	136	*	7	*	66	5	*	4	*	16	22	9
Banbridge	160	*	14	5	78	10	*	*	*	30	11	10
Coleraine	348	*	21	12	180	17	4	6	*	45	29	31
Cookstown	186	*	7	4	94	11	6	*	*	18	21	21
Craigavon	620	*	38	22	303	39	11	13	*	104	55	30
Dungannon & S	237	*	20	5	140	13	*	*	*	26	11	13
Fermanagh	252	*	11	6	139	25	*	5	*	37	14	11
Foyle	949	4	70	27	433	71	6	16	5	148	115	54
Larne	167	*	14	7	79	*	*	*	*	21	22	16
Limavady	269	*	9	*	141	25	*	*	*	33	31	13
Magherafelt	118	*	7	*	72	*	*	*	*	17	7	9
Moyle	83	*	5	*	40	*	*	*	*	12	7	11
Newry & Mourne	529	6	57	21	224	51	6	7	5	63	65	24
Omagh	231	*	11	8	118	24	*	4	*	32	19	11
Strabane	185	*	16	7	95	*	4	8	*	24	16	8
<b>Rural Region</b>	<b>5.114</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>365</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>2.523</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>719</b>	<b>531</b>	<b>302</b>

<sup>1</sup> The domestic abuse offence figures provided above do not include assault on police.

Source: PSNI Central Statistics Unit

**ANALYSIS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE STATISTICS FOR 2009/2010**

**The below analysis was prepared by the Policing Board and is based upon the PSNI Annual Statistical Report 2009/2010 and the disaggregated statistics contained in Annex A of this report.**

During 2009/2010 there were a total of 24,248 incidents with a domestic abuse motivation recorded by the PSNI. Of these, 9,903 (41%) were recorded as an offence, and of these, 4,288 (43%) were detected.

The disaggregated information provided to the Board by PSNI (contained in Annex B of this report), indicates that of the 9,903 domestic motivated offences recorded during 2009/2010:

- Where the gender of the victim was known (i.e. for 8,738 offences), 6,449 (74%) offences involved female victims and 2,289 (26%) involved male victims. Victim gender was not known for 98 offences.
- Where the age of the victim was known (i.e. for 8,696 offences), 805 (9%) offences involved victims under the age of 16 and 7,891 (91%) involved victims aged 17 and over. The age of victims was not known for 140 offences.
- Where the ethnicity of the victim was known (i.e. for 8,218 offences), 8,091 (98%) offences involved white victims; 50 involved black victims; 40 involved Asian victims; and 37 involved “other” victims. Victim ethnicity was not known for 618 offences.

Note that gender, age or ethnicity of the victim is not recorded where the domestic motivated offence is breach of a non-molestation orders, the rationale for this being that a breach of a non-molestation order is a crime against the State and therefore “victimless” for statistical purposes.

The disaggregated information also indicates that of the 4,288 offences detected/cleared by the PSNI during 2009/2010:

- Where the gender of the offender was known (i.e. for 3,344 offences), 2,942 (88%) offences involved male offenders and 402 (12%) involved female offenders. Offender gender was not known for 965 offences.

- Where the ethnicity of the offender was known (i.e. for 3,208 offences), 3,135 (98%) offences involved white offenders; 28 involved black offenders; 7 involved Asian offenders; and 38 involved “other” victims. Offender ethnicity was not known for 1,101 offences.
- Where the relationship between victim and offender was known (i.e. for 3,051 offences)<sup>1</sup>, 1,101 (36%) involved an ex-spouse/partner; 1,002 (33%) involved a current spouse/partner; 624 (20%) involved a parent and child; 215 (7%) involved siblings; 26 (1%) involved grandparent and grandchild; and 83 (3%) involved another family relationship. The relationship between victim and offender was unknown for 1,258 offences.

Of the 9,903 domestic motivated offences recorded, 1,067 of these were for breaches of non-molestation order. Of these 1,067 offences, 759 (71%) were detected.

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<sup>1</sup> Note that although breach of a non-molestation order is an offence against the State, where a victim-offender relationship has been supplied in relation to this offence, it was included in these figures.

**Recorded Crimes including a breakdown of those with a Domestic Abuse Motivation, 1 April 2009 – 31 March 2010**

<b><u>Offence Type</u></b>	<b><u>Overall Recorded Crimes<sup>2</sup></u></b>	<b><u>Recorded crimes with a domestic abuse motivation<sup>3</sup></u></b>	<b><u>% of Overall Recorded Crimes with a domestic abuse motivation</u></b>
<b>Murder, Manslaughter, Attempted Murder</b>	136 <sup>4</sup>	33	24.3%
<b>Threat or Conspiracy to Murder</b>	2,223	809	36.4%
<b>Wounding/GBH (incl. with intent)</b>	2,080 <sup>5</sup>	270	13.0%
<b>AOABH/Common Assault</b>	19,780 <sup>6</sup>	4,983	25.2%
<b>Intimidation/Harassment</b>	2,206 <sup>7</sup>	536	24.3%
<b>Rape (incl. attempts)</b>	461 <sup>8</sup>	101	21.9%
<b>Sexual assaults/sexual activity</b>	974	151	15.5%
<b>Other Violent Crime</b>	5,240 <sup>9</sup>	64	1.2%
<b>Criminal Damage</b>	26,450	1,334	5.0%
<b>Breach of orders</b>	1,239	1,067	86.1%
<b>All Other Notifiable Offences</b>	48,350 <sup>10</sup>	555	1.1%
<b><u>TOTAL (all types of offences)</u></b>	<b><u>109,139</u></b>	<b><u>9,903</u></b>	<b><u>9.1%</u></b>

<sup>2</sup> Source: PSNI Annual Statistical Report 2009/2010. It has been necessary to combine some figures within that report and where this has occurred the figures as stated in the report are referenced in the footnotes below.

<sup>3</sup> Source: PSNI Central Statistics Unit.

<sup>4</sup> PSNI Annual Statistical Report 2009/2010: Murder (18) PLUS Manslaughter (4) PLUS Attempted Murder (114).

<sup>5</sup> PSNI Annual Statistical Report 2009/2010: Wounding with Intent/GBH with Intent (1,266) PLUS Wounding/GBH (814).

<sup>6</sup> PSNI Annual Statistical Report 2009/2010: Assault Occasioning Actual Bodily Harm (AOABH) (12,394) PLUS Common Assault/Aggravated Assault (7,386).

<sup>7</sup> PSNI Annual Statistical Report 2009/2010: Intimidation (580) PLUS Harassment (1,626).

<sup>8</sup> PSNI Annual Statistical Report 2009/2010: Rape (446) PLUS Attempted Rape (15).

<sup>9</sup> PSNI Annual Statistical Report 2009/2010: Violent Crime (33,100) LESS figures in footnotes 3 to 7.

<sup>10</sup> PSNI Annual Statistical Report 2009/2010: Burglary (12,584) PLUS Theft (26,605) PLUS Fraud and Forgery (3,352) PLUS Offences Against the State (1,488) PLUS Other Notifiable Offences (excluding Breach of Orders) (4,321)