

# Domestic Abuse Policy

## (Operational)

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## **Alternative Formats**

This documentation can be made available in alternative formats such as large print, Braille, disk, audio tape or in an ethnic-minority language upon request. Requests for alternative formats can be made to the Probation Board using the following contact information:

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## 1. Rationale

PBNI recognises that Domestic Abuse is a serious problem which can have devastating impact on victims and their families. The Domestic Abuse Policy and supporting procedures seek to provide staff with clear guidance in dealing with service users who are perpetrators of domestic violence, and also victims or potential victims of domestic violence.

Domestic Abuse, also referred to as domestic violence or intimate partner violence in literature, is defined as *“threatening, controlling, coercive behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional) inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender or sexual orientation) by a current or former intimate partner or family member.”* (Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety and Department of Justice, 2013)

Domestic Abuse behaviour can undermine self-confidence, creating isolation of the victim from friends and family and controlling access to money, food, transportation and telephone. It can account for destruction of property, stalking and violent crime across a range of offences, including murder. It can significantly affect children who witness abusive behaviours and contribute to trauma and long-term psychological damage. The level of violence may escalate over time and go unreported or denied. Within heterosexual relationships, while the majority of victims are women, men can also be victims. Domestic Abuse also occurs within same sex relationships.

## 2. Aim

That PBNI works, in partnership with other agencies, to protect the public from offences of domestic abuse and thereby making communities safer.

## 3. Objectives

- To make best use of up to date research and information in assessment and management of risk presented by the perpetrators of Domestic Abuse with whom PBNI works
- To monitor the need for, and to plan and implement appropriate new interventions to develop PBNI’s suite of programmes to address this offending behaviour
- To contribute to effective partnership working through participation in local and regional Domestic Abuse Partnerships; MARAC conferences and Domestic Violence and Abuse Disclosure Schemes (DVADS), In addition PBNI will liaise with PPANI in respect of perpetrators of domestic abuse managed under the arrangements and PSNI DV officers and Crime Prevention Officers specifically in relation to vulnerable victims.
- To support the DoJ Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse

in Northern Ireland: A Seven Year Strategy (2016) by implementing those objectives identified in the Draft 4 Year Action Plan.

- To ensure PBNI staff are provided with appropriate clarification in relation to policy and supporting procedures and partnership working arrangements

Expected outcomes from implementation of this policy are:

- Victims / survivors of Domestic Abuse will be protected by reducing service users' opportunity and propensity to offend.
- Registered Victims will be provided with relevant information and support from the Victim Information Unit.
- The assessment and management of risk posed by service users under PBNI supervision will contribute to public protection
- Effective PBNI service delivery through reports to courts and Parole Commissioners; case management; programmes, oversight of partner link work and strong partnership working.

#### **4. Procedures**

PBNI will implement interventions appropriate to addressing domestic abuse based on risk, need and responsivity. These will include nationally accredited interventions and locally developed initiatives based on best practice, theory and research. PBNI will continue to deliver, develop and evaluate programmes and interventions for Non adjudicated perpetrators in conjunction with our partners in Health and Social services.

#### **5. Structures/mechanisms**

This policy links with the following policies, procedures and arrangements

- Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland: A Seven Year Strategy March 2016 (DoJ)
- A Thematic inspection of the handling of domestic violence and abuse cases by the Criminal Justice System in N.I CJINI June 2019
  - ~~Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults: Regional Adult Protection Policy and Procedural Guidance September 2006~~
- Adult Safeguarding Operational Procedures: Adults at Risk of Harm and Adults in Need of Protection. (HSCB 2016)
  - Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC Operating Protocol)
  - ~~Risk of Serious Harm Policy (PBNI) July 2014~~
- Significant Risk of Serious Harm to Others Procedures (PBNI) May 2017
- PBNI – Child Protection/ Safeguarding Policy – June 2017

- ~~PBNI Risk of Serious Harm Policy and Procedures 2014~~
- Public Protection Arrangements Northern Ireland: Guidance to Agencies and Manual of Practice
- PBNI Domestic Violence and Abuse (Workplace) Policy 2019
- PBNI Corporate Plan 2017-20. Strategic Priority 1 “Prioritising Service Delivery on perpetrators of crime against vulnerable people.”
- Tackling Violence at Home – A Strategy for Addressing and Domestic Violence Abuse in Northern Ireland October 2015
- Survived...but at what cost? A study of women in the criminal justice system who experienced domestic abuse and the potential for change Geraldine McGuigan and Ruth Walker 2019.

With regard to recent and current developments

- PBNI considers there is a gap in current law relating to patterns of non-violent abuse in intimate relationships, and as such, supports the law being strengthened to include a specific domestic abuse offence that captures patterns of coercive and controlling behaviours in intimate relationships. Similarly, PBNI would welcome a review of the legislation in relation to Stalking and Harassment offences which do not yet come under the Public Protection Arrangements.
- PBNI considers that the introduction of VOPOs (Violent Offences Prevention Orders) has strengthened the Public Protection Arrangements in respect of perpetrators of domestic violence.
- PBNI fully supports the ~~spirit of the proposal~~ introduction of a Domestic Violence Abuse Disclosure Scheme to Northern Ireland.
- PBNI supports the introduction of Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs).

## **6. Responsibilities**

- In the operation of the policy and supporting procedures PBNI staff shall address the risks posed by perpetrators of Domestic Abuse in a way which is lawful, necessary and proportionate, taking into consideration the concerns of victims.
- Staff shall respond to the individual needs of perpetrators and victims regardless of race, gender, age, religious beliefs, sexual orientation or disability.
- PBNI is committed to an inter-agency approach in dealing with

perpetrators and victims of domestic violence.

- All staff shall take any incident /alleged incident of Domestic Abuse or abuse in respect of an service user in contact with PBNI seriously, and shall record and address both the incident/alleged incident and subsequent actions, including referral to other appropriate agencies.
- Staff shall follow PBNI's Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy and Procedures in respect of children exposed to domestic violence, and shall also refer on to other arrangements, including MARAC and PPANI.
- Victims shall be treated with care, sensitivity and respect.
- Staff shall recognise that some service users may be victims of abuse and that their offending may therefore be linked to their experience of abuse.
- Managers shall monitor the implementation and operation of the reviewed Domestic Abuse Policy and Procedures.

## **7. Resources**

Implementation of this policy will be within existing resources. Training in this policy will include

- All new operational staff and students receiving training as part of their induction to PBNI.
- On-going training and support available as required through identification of need in staff supervision arrangements.

## **8. Communication**

This Policy is supported by a separate Procedures document. Both documents are available on PBNI's website and Intranet.

## **9. Monitoring and Evaluation**

The policy will be kept under review to ensure it is in keeping with current legislation and effective practice guidance. The operation of the policy shall be monitored through staff supervision; file monitoring; internal audit, and may be subject to external inspection. Evaluation of the operation of the policy and supporting procedures may be carried out by the Audit Team, on behalf of an Assistant Director/Head of Psychology & Interventions.

## **10. Review**

This policy will be reviewed four years from the date of approval. Interim reviews may be prompted by feedback, identified changes in legislation or wider policy initiatives.

#### **11. Implications of non-compliance**

PBNI will seek to implement this policy in line with agreed procedures. Where this is not carried through PBNI will seek to understand the reasons why and to address to ensure appropriate compliance. Breach of the Board's Policy and Procedures by employees may merit consideration under the Board's Disciplinary Policy.

