



The Men's Advisory Project

Annual Narrative to The Health and Social Care Board 2016

James Knox

THE MEN'S ADVISORY PROJECT Floor 5, Glendinning House, 6 Murray Street, Belfast, BT1 6DN

The financial support provided by the Health and Social Care Board is invaluable, it has allowed us as an organisation over the years and particularly in this current funding cycle to consolidate, grow and develop our services to male victims of domestic abuse. The work of the Project Co-ordinator over the past year has focused on developing the external links of the organisation. The Co-ordinator has focused on MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences), the various domestic violence partnerships across Northern Ireland and developing a working relationship with other agencies in the field of domestic violence such as the various Women's Aid organisations across Northern Ireland and the overarching Women's Aid Federation and in developing our presence in the Western side of Northern Ireland.

The Co-ordinator has worked hard both in the background and at the forefront of developments in Northern Ireland in relation to domestic violence. One such way has been through representation on the Domestic and Sexual Violence Strategic Advisory Group which has developed a new Domestic and Sexual Violence Strategy for Northern Ireland with a new definition to be used by relevant agencies. The definition states that; *“domestic violence and abuse... [is] threatening, controlling, coercive behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, virtual, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional) inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or any form of disability) by a current or former intimate partner or family member.”*

The Strategy will be implemented by local Domestic Violence Partnerships across Northern Ireland. The Men's Advisory Project is one of the only voluntary and community representative organisations which is represented on all Domestic Violence Partnerships across Northern Ireland and also the Regional Strategy Group. This means that MAP has a very strong ability to influence the strategy document and also local plans for the betterment of male victims of domestic violence and abuse. MAP therefore continues to consistently 'punch above its weight'.

Services / activities

Over the course of the year the Co-ordinator has engaged with numerous organisations from the political, community, voluntary, statutory and private sectors. This has ranged from small one to one meetings to presentations at a range of conferences and staff meetings and training.

We regularly take part in MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences) which focus on supporting the needs of the most vulnerable victims who are experiencing difficulties with their immediate safety. These MARAC groups are facilitated by the police and include MAP, Women's Aid groups, health, housing and children's services where appropriate. It provides MAP with an opportunity to offer our services immediately to the most vulnerable and to share and learn practices and models from other agencies working in the field. As the year has progressed we have taken part in more and more MARAC's across Northern Ireland. The Project Co-ordinator represents MAP on MARAC's and has noticed since January 2015 that there has been an increase in male victims presenting to MARAC meetings having been attacked with a knife. A request was therefore made to the PSNI to record this information specifically in case it is a trend. An initial trawl of statistics was completed by the PSNI in relation to this and from January 2015 there had been 96 cases heard at MARAC involving male victims. However, of these 28 cases or (29%) of these involved the use of knives against the victim. Without regional representation at MARAC it may not have been noticed that this was happening.

The Project Co-ordinator has presented to a range of groups and conferences over the year with attendees totalling over 1,000 people across Northern Ireland. This has afforded us the opportunity to promote our services and ensure that individuals and agencies are fully informed as to the needs of male victims of domestic abuse and violence. Events have included, staff training with health trust staff, all police domestic violence officers across Northern Ireland, men's groups, women's aid organisations, local councils and conferences such as the first International Men's Day event held in Northern Ireland.

The work undertaken throughout the year has been to re-inject 'men' into the heart of people's thinking when they consider domestic violence and abuse as an issue. MAP has now re-established itself at the core of decision making in relation to this issue and has a strong presence and influencing role on these issues. MAP is fast becoming the go-to place for information, advice and support. The Project Co-ordinator's role has been core/key to achieving this.



Radio, TV and Newspaper

During the course of the year we took part in a talk show on BBC Radio Ulster in relation to domestic violence and abuse and also were interviewed with various local newspapers such as the County Down Spectator and the Newtownards Chronicle. The Co-ordinator also took part in TV interviews for a local community TV programme. And also British Forces Broadcasting Station (BFBS) which was broadcast across the world.

Promotion

Over the course of the year we moved up a gear in relation to the promotion of males being victims of domestic abuse in Northern Ireland and also that services are available to male victims of domestic abuse.

Over the course of the year MAP was able to secure funding for 36,000 MAP leaflets. These have been disseminated across Northern Ireland to police stations, doctor's, solicitors, army welfare, libraries and at events throughout the year where we had stands/stalls. We also disseminated 6,000 business cards with our contact details to organisations and clients.

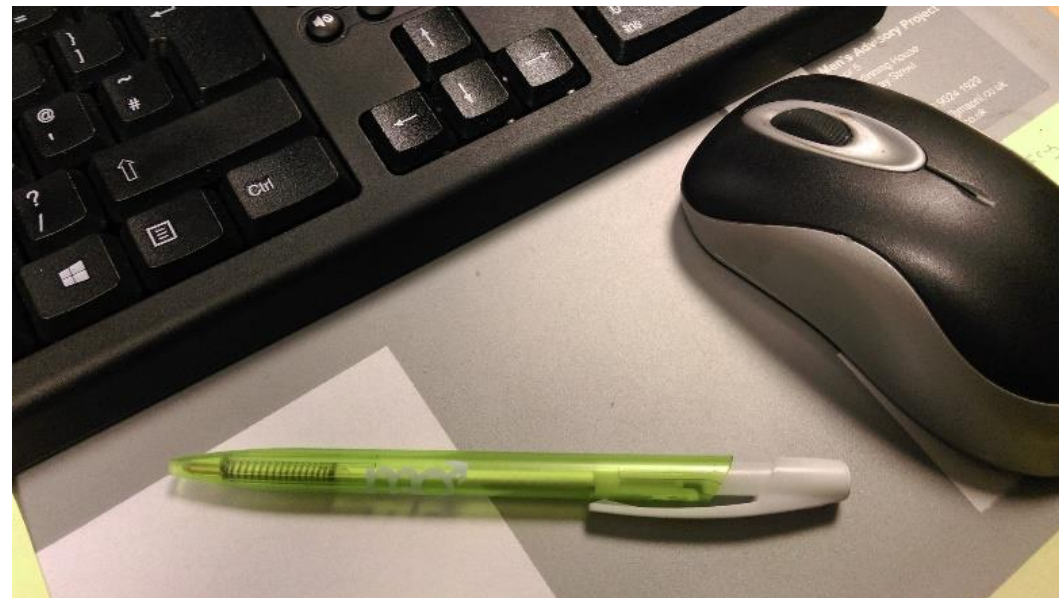
A card and leaflet are also posted out to our clients once they have made appointments this also lets them know more about our organisation before they arrive to see us and serves as an appointment reminder. But it has also reduced our DNA's (Did not attends) on their first appointment with us.



Through funding we received from The Big Lottery in relation to promotion we were able to purchase:

- 1 new pop-up banner
- 1,000 balloons
- 500 foam aeroplanes
- 2,500 pens
- 1,000 keyrings
- 500 stress balls and
- 100 document bags for our present and future volunteers.

This is a major shift for MAP as in our 17 years of existence we never had promotional items. This has been very helpful in attracting people to our table at events and in relation to creating a discussion with people.





During the year we hoped to increase the number of clients and people engaging with us from the Western Health Trust area. Besides dissemination of materials and direct engagement at events we also added a new phone number to the organisation for Foyle 028 71 160 001. We hope this will increase the number of people from the Western Health Trust area and make MAP appear less Belfast-centric.



Men's Advisory Project Website

With a small staff team of two we have tried to ensure that our website is functional and provides as much information as possible. This is for two reasons, the first is that men in general tend to take longer to follow up contact past their first exploration of support. Therefore it is important to ensure that as much information as possible can be viewed. The second reason is that with two members of staff we would find it difficult to cope with a large influx of people through to the office therefore we try and encourage people where possible to visit our website. Over the past year (Calendar year for 2015) we have had 10,144 individual views of our website with 87% of these being new people. Ensuring that our website is up to date and has accessible information on the services we offer is important as it is clearly a major communication tool for the organisation.

Super Connected Cities

We applied for a voucher provided by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport through Belfast City Council to the value of £3,000 to become Super Connected to broadband. This change occurred in September and our internet has been transferred over from BT to B4B. This will ensure that our broadband is fast and remains so and ensures that MAP remains able to offer our services, update our website and social media platforms.

New computers

Towards the end of 2014 we were successful in an application to purchase a new suite of computers for MAP. During 2015 the computers were purchased and have made a significant difference in our ability to respond to e-mails, online requests and in accessing and disseminating information. This was because our previous computers had been purchased in 2008 and were therefore really slow and unreliable.

Client Services

The year (calendar year) has become increasingly busy for the MAP team. With an increased profile has come an increase in our client figures. The investment from our main funders The Tudor Trust and the Health and Social Care Board has clearly, we believe, had a positive impact upon this. For every year looking back we have worked, roughly, with 300 men per year in relation to offering our counselling services. The Project Co-ordinator began working in November 2013 and in 2014 and in 2015 there has been a significant and dramatic increase in our client figures. Where in 2014 we had 498 new clients and in 2015 until the 22/12/2015 we had 536 new clients. Obviously this creates a significant challenge for MAP as we move forward into 2016. The table below shows our client figures for the past

2015	536
2014	498
2013	294
2012	297
2011	279
2010	343
2009	301

number of years.

In order to assist this increase we have advertised for new counselling volunteers and over the year we have taken on board eight new counsellors. In the beginning months of 2016 we took on a further six. We have also looked at limiting the number of sessions a client can

receive which may help in seeing more clients and also in having more locations where we offer our services. Such as Ballynahinch, which are aiming to open later in 2016.

We have also over the year looked to enhance our information and referral services by having a wider range of information on other services available such as information on organisations specialising in depression, equality issues, debt, homelessness and MAP are now registered with every Foodbank in Northern Ireland and can issue vouchers to men who require support. We hope over the coming year to increase this information and referral service.

Funding

The Project Co-ordinator secured the tender from the Health and Social Care Board for the provision of three services over the coming three years for the whole of Northern Ireland. This amounts to £81,951.50 per year for three years therefore providing some further stability for MAP in moving forward as an organisation and service provider.

- £3,000 Super connected Broadband Voucher – Department of Culture Media and Sport, through Belfast City Council
- £2,000 North Belfast Police and Community Safety Partnership (to March 2016) – Advertising campaign
- £190 Army Welfare 38 (Irish) Brigade – to cover the costs of leaflet printing
- £81,951.50 Health and Social Care Board – Annual Tender amount for MAP services

All of these applications were successful; we did apply for others but were unsuccessful in those including £50,000 from The Big Lottery's "People's Projects".

Training and development of volunteers

Some of the funding we secured towards the end of the previous reporting period were used to provide training and development to our staff and volunteers. Mental Health First Aid and the Impact of Domestic Violence and Abuse on Children and Families.

We secured a little funding from Belfast city Council at the end of the financial year and were able to purchase the entire reading list of books which is used in the University of Ulster courses at Undergraduate level in Counselling and Therapeutic Communication. We have instituted a lending process for our volunteers in order for them to borrow these books and further their personal development and reflection.

MAP is also listed on various other organisations both statutory and voluntary across Northern Ireland who offer a range of training and we ensure that these are forwarded onto volunteers as and when they become available, helping to develop their skills and training needs.

Safe Place

Established in 2007 as a Social Enterprise, Onus offers specialist training and consultancy services on domestic violence and abuse.

Onus developed the Workplace Charter on Domestic Violence to enable organisations and communities to be recognised for their support to anyone affected by domestic violence or abuse.

Onus believe that in order to create a society that has zero-tolerance towards domestic violence or abuse, prevention and early intervention work is crucial.



In order to be awarded our Silver Award as a “Safe Employer” we have committed ourselves to the following;

1. We will support the Safe Place Campaign Pledge: never to commit, condone or stay silent about domestic violence or abuse.
2. We will acknowledge that domestic violence or abuse are problems that impact on all of us as a society, and will be prepared to play our part in supporting anyone affected.
3. We will provide a Safe Place for anyone affected by domestic violence or abuse to confidentially access information and make it clear that abuse of any kind will not be tolerated.

4. We will ensure that we can effectively respond to disclosures of abuse and how to seek support.
5. We will ensure that anyone affected by domestic violence or abuse will not be disadvantaged within the terms and conditions of their employment and will take all reasonable measures to facilitate any needs in the workplace.
6. We will commit to raising awareness of support in the community and to engaging with other organisations to facilitate best practice.
7. Our policy (or policy statement) will be clearly communicated to all employees and will be easily and discretely accessed within the workplace.
8. We will ensure that there are sufficient employees trained within our organisation to effectively respond to employees affected by domestic violence or abuse.
9. We will regularly update and evaluate our organisational policy/policy statement on domestic violence or abuse in consultation with Onus.

We were awarded our Silver Award on the 13 June 2015 and have proudly displayed our certificate alongside our Bronze Award we received in 2013 in our reception area.

Breastfeeding Friendly Organisation

Over the course of the year MAP signed up to the Breastfeeding Friendly scheme managed by the Health Promotion Agency. It ensures that as an organisation:

Breastfeeding is acceptable in all public areas

Breastfeeding mums will not be asked to move or stop breastfeeding

And that everyone in the organisation is aware and are supportive of the needs of breastfeeding mums.

This came about as our services were accessed by a man who brought his daughter with him for support and she was a breastfeeding mum. We therefore needed to ensure that the organisation is welcoming and doing all it can to ensure people feel comfortable when accessing our services.

Counselling

Over the course of 2015 76 clients were 'ended'. Which is the term we use once the client has completed their sessions and the counsellor has completed an ending form for their sessions.

We provide clients on their last appointment to provide feedback to us on the service they received. Many clients choose not to provide feedback but I have included a couple of these comments below from those who did.

"Your work and services is priceless to people like myself, thank you."

"MAP and my counselling service have been a great help and I would absolutely recommend the service to anyone that needed help."

"A very valued service, words can't explain how good this service was for me."

"When I came here I was in a state and really needed help, I am so much better and feel now I can cope so thank you."

*"***** was a fantastic counsellor who showed me a lot and treated me with total respect."*

From January to December 2015 our volunteer counsellors offered 1,416 counselling sessions. Each session last approximately 50 minutes. Counsellors are also required to attend a clinical supervision session with a Counselling Supervisor once a month (one supervision session for every three clients seen) and also attend a peer group supervision once a month with other volunteer counsellors. The time commitment from our volunteers can be quite intensive and we are appreciative of this.

Reasons for counselling

Domestic Violence or abuse 168

Relationship Breakdown 106

Anger issues 415

Other 26

These figures include both new clients and existing clients.

Phone calls

From March 2015 we began logging phone calls into the organisation. This was done in order for us to be aware of the types of organisation and people who are making contact with us which then helps to inform our communications out.

From March to December 2015 there were 847 calls logged. This included:

344 – Referrals (New appointments)

194 – Statutory agencies

65 – Voluntary agencies

34 – Friends/family

210 – Other

Group Programme

Over the course of the year we held three group programmes. 65 men were offered to take part in this process. We also tried to ensure that these were held across Northern Ireland to ensure over the three years of the tender we hold from the Health and Social Care Board that at least one group programme is held in each Health Trust area, of the five health trusts in Northern Ireland.

- Belfast (Belfast Health and Social Care Trust) April 2015 – 25 men
- Lisburn (South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust) September 2015 – 20 men
- Omagh (Western Health and Social Care Trust) January 2016 – 20 men

Looking forward

- Implementation of our new Strategic Plan in 2016. The plan itself has taken longer than expected to develop due to volunteer time commitment and engagement with staff, volunteers and Trustees within the organisation. The plan currently focuses in on consolidating the current work MAP conducts and also focuses in on a preventative and transformative aspect to domestic violence and abuse with the overall aim of ending domestic violence and abuse in all its forms. Once the plan is complete I will ensure that the Health and Social Care Board receive a copy of it. We also intend to establish a range of meetings with partners such as government, politicians, funders and the wider community who will of course all have a hand in helping us to achieve our aims and goals.
- We hope to aim for a Gold Award as a “Safe Place” with Onus over the coming year. This would place the Men’s Advisory Project on a par with Belfast City Council, Triangle Housing Association, Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council, the Youth Justice Agency and the Probation Board for Northern Ireland. Beyond that is the platinum award, the only organisation to be awarded this to date is the Police Service of Northern Ireland.
- We are currently investigating the possibility of the Men’s Advisory Project becoming an accredited centre with the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy. Becoming an accredited organisation with BACP is for organisations who provide therapeutic counselling/psychotherapy services either as an entity in itself, or as part of a portfolio of mental health & wellbeing services. Only distinct counselling/psychotherapy services with a minimum of three qualified counsellors/psychotherapists can be awarded accreditation. This will help to ensure our services remain the best that can be offered and also ensure that as an organisation who rely on volunteer counsellors that we remain attractive to them.
- A new communications plan will be completed for MAP for 2016 this will be reflective of developments within the sector and will allow MAP to maximise opportunities for male victims to become aware of our services or be reminded of the services we offer. We also hope to maximise opportunities to raise particular aspects of domestic abuse by using various International days, such as Men’s Health Week 13 – 19 June; International day of innocent children victims of aggression on the 4th June; International day of

older people 1 October; International Day of non-violence and International Men's Day 19th November.

- In January 2016 we ran an advertising campaign in bars and clubs in North Belfast. This was funded by the North Belfast PCSP (Policing and Community Safety Partnership) it is for 45 posters. The estimates for the number of people to see the posters is 120,000 people. This ran from the 18 January 2016 – 31st January 2016. We distributed posters and leaflets in the North Belfast area to pharmacies, doctor's, politicians, community groups and others to help maximise our publicity around this issue. We had also been in contact with UTV about doing a story on us for the local evening news to help highlight the issue. These dates also fit in with the Police Service of Northern Ireland campaign which ran over the holiday period. We came in on the end of that campaign in the hope of maximising our exposure. Following this campaign we were contacted by a local housing association who we are currently as a direct result of the advertising campaign negotiating with to open a shelter for male victims of domestic abuse. We are being supported in this venture by Foyle Women's Aid.
- In October and November 2015 we were offered the opportunity to take part in a funding opportunity with the Big Lottery. This was called the "People's Project" the idea being that invited charities put forward ideas for how to spend £50,000 and then these ideas were to be put to a televised public vote. Our proposal was unsuccessful, however in the process we now have a plan for taking forward the opening of a second office in Londonderry/Derry. This will raise our profile in the West of Northern Ireland and provide us with a secure base to further develop MAP as a Northern Ireland wide agency. The plan we developed and called "Into the West" will be used to apply for funding to bring this idea to fruition. We were not successful in this application however we now have a plan developed for opening an office in the North-West.
- As a volunteer led organisation we deem it important to ensure that we are giving back to our volunteers where possible and we want to work towards the Investor's In Volunteers charter mark.
- We also intend over the coming period to increase our general fundraising efforts with street collections and other fundraising ideas. The funds raised from this will help to give MAP a secure funding footprint and help to increase our organisational reserves.

- Our idea of cross country learning took a small step forward during 2015. Our Co-ordinator attended a conference in Doncaster run by the Mankind Initiative, and we took the opportunity to engage with AMIS (Abused Men in Scotland), ManKind, ourselves and AMEN (From the Republic of Ireland). We all agreed that it would be a useful exercise to engage with each other more and to discuss further in 2016 how each of our countries could engage more for the betterment of male victims across the countries of the UK and the Republic of Ireland. This could reap rewards in relation to engagement, lobbying for change, research/information sharing, campaigning, possibly resources and of course better support for male victims of domestic violence and abuse.