



The Men's Advisory Project

Annual Report to HSCB 17/18

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This year has shown the highest number of domestic abuse incidents since records began. 31% of all victims of domestic abuse in Northern Ireland are men. (PSNI Stats)

We are horrified by the number of domestic incidents but are also heartened that so many male victims now feel secure enough to come forward to the PSNI.

The tender provided by the HSCB 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 tender allows us to focus on awareness raising through our work across Northern Ireland providing talks and stands driving the focus of the issues of male victims of domestic abuse and their children into the community.

A major strand of the work we undertake is through the provision of counselling services. This work, much refined, has allowed us to manage a much larger number of men accessing the service. We provide a service which can refer and signpost to others confidently and safely and which expertly screens men for suitability thus focusing on risk.

Finally we have delivered 4 courses of personal development to help men overcome the difficult emotions they face having been victims of domestic abuse.

With HSCB support this year we were able to change the way that we deploy staff. We employed two Project Co-ordinators over the past year to allow us to adequately focus on the entire region of NI. Their ongoing focus has been on forging strong bonds with other third sector organisations.

The Co-ordinators have 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 development of the Domestic Homicide Review framework and in in-depth work on the development of the laws concerning Coercive Control and the statutory provision of DVADS. We have worked very closely with the Department of Justice and PSNI in the development of these pieces of work.

The Men's Advisory Project is the only voluntary and community representative organisation which represents male victims of Domestic Abuse at all levels across Northern Ireland. We are active members of all the Domestic and Sexual Violence Partnerships, present at

Strategic Advisory Group, Inter Agency Group, All Party Group and also the Regional Strategy Groups. MAP has a strong ability to influence and provide a voice for male victims of domestic violence and abuse at local and governmental levels.

Services / activities

MAP via members of the Board but largely through the work of the Co-ordinators engaged widely with organisations from the political, community, voluntary and statutory and private sectors. This ranged from small one to one meetings to presentations at a range of conferences, staff meetings and in the provision of training.

The Co-ordinators have presented to a range of groups and conferences over the year. We have spoken on 4 occasions at Stormont and were honoured to speak about the difficulties facing the children of male victims at the Women's Aid "See, Hear, Act" conference. This 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. This is a significant step forward in how victims of domestic abuse have been addressed. Events included: staff training with Health Trust staff, Housing Executive Staff, Staff from the 24hr Domestic and Sexual Violence Helpline and PSNI officers. We undertook talks with men's groups to include men of different ages and to reach out to men in rural locations. We targeted getting our message to men in harder to reach areas and spoke to older men via the Men's Shed network and younger men via sporting groups. We worked with Belfast City Council to target getting our message to men from the PUL grouping as they had identified those men as particularly hard to reach with regard to services available to them.

We focus on trying to understand how to reach all men who might be in need of our service. This means that we must continue to provide stands at open days and awareness raising points across the entire province. We are happy to do this work as it highlights to the public that large numbers of men are victims of domestic abuse. We always gain referrals from any outreach work we do from direct contact, families or friends or from men who take note and call when they are ready to do so at a later time.



Radio, TV and Newspaper

During the course of the year we took part in a talk show on BBC Radio Ulster Talk Back in relation to coercive control and domestic violence and abuse. We were interviewed by BBC Spotlight. We provided information for The View magazine for its Domestic Abuse edition. We also provided information for The Irish News and Belfast Telegraph.

Promotion

We continued the wide promotion of services available to male victims of domestic abuse in Northern Ireland.

Over the course of the year MAP was able to secure funding for MAP leaflets and cards. These have been provided widely across Northern Ireland. We focussed again on police stations, GP surgeries, solicitor's offices, Army welfare, barbers, libraries, sports facilities, gyms, pubs and at events throughout the year where we had stands/stalls.

We run ongoing campaigns to leaflet and contact those who may have contact with men throughout the year.

A card and leaflet are posted out to our clients once they have made appointments. This process is in place to educate the man accessing the service about our organisation, to normalise his feelings and to serve as an appointment reminder. This process is a continuation from that which we have used before as we have found that layering it alongside a text reminder reduced our DNA's (Did not attend) on first appointment with us.



Through funding we received from The Department of Justice we were able to update our computer and IT facilities to enable us to provide talks across the province. They provided us with funding to enable us to purchase new laptops to support the work of the co-ordinators and projectors and screens to ensure that we are able to provide professional talks at even the most basic venue.

We also updated our training room and refurbished an area of the office to provide a purpose built waiting area.



Men's Advisory Project Website

We were lucky to receive funding during Q4 to develop a new website from the Department of Justice. Our current website whilst functional provides as much information as possible but is hard to use via mobile devices. We know that men generally tend to take longer to follow up contact past their first exploration of support. Therefore it is important to ensure that the information is easily able to be viewed. This year we have seen an uplift in the number of people accessing our website. As such, it provides us and victims with support offering information and highlighting risk. Further development of the website is required to ensure that men are able to self-refer easily.

Computer Systems

In 2015 an Awards for All grant allowed us to purchase computers which made a significant difference in our ability to respond to e-mails, online requests and in accessing and disseminating information. These along with our newly purchased laptops and stronger IT and internet storage facilities mean that we have a high quality of computer provision for the organisation.

We spent sometime this year scoping the remodelling of an Access Database. Though our strong working connection with WAFNI they have offered that we become part of their Oasis model of database. This proposal made sense as it would be ideal if all third sector organisations working in the field of domestic and sexual violence were able to report on the same things. Our basis as a region for research would be much simpler. We undertook training on this highly effective, safe and powerful system with the hope of moving onto the system in Q2.

Client Services

Our services continue to be over subscribed. We have seen an increase in men accessing counselling services and those requiring group support. We have used a much more stringent telephone screening system and have found that using a triage service had allowed us to be more effective in referral signposting and using our resources wisely.

In order to assist this increase we have advertised for new counselling volunteers and over the year we have taken on board four new counsellors. As we have moved further toward only offering a trauma informed service we have had to ensure that all of our staff are

highly trained in the client group that they are servicing. We offer induction which involves training counsellors over a series of weekends and modules lasting 6months.

All our counsellor are trained in Asist and Mental Health First Aid. They have been further trained in Trauma, specialist DASH and MARAC training for male victims, Child Protection Training, DASH, MARAC, UNOCINI form confidence building sessions and in Coercive Control training.

MAP are registered with every Foodbank in Northern Ireland and issue vouchers to men who require support. We hope over the coming year to increase this information and referral service.

Funding

Funding remains a significant issue. Service users and their demands have increased and even with better processes in place regarding assessment eventually we will have to accept that the increased and varied need outstrips provision. We were extremely grateful to have an additional group course funded by HSCB this year. This help to free some of those waiting on the list for 1-2-1 therapy who would otherwise have been better provided service via a group.

- £19,950 Department of Justice – Laptops, Projectors, Refurbishment, Website redesign
- £1050 Mid and East Antrim Police and Community Safety Partnership – for the purchase of business cards and leaflets
- £5000 Halifax Foundation - staffing
- £30,000 Tudor Trust - staffing

Whilst all of these applications were successful; we did apply for many others but were unsuccessful. We will continue to refine those applications and build relationships with those funders.

We continue to strive for recognition from the Department of Health in the form of Core Funding. Whilst meetings have taken place little movement has been made.

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.



As a “Safe Employer” we are committed to the following;

1. Never to commit, condone or stay silent about domestic violence or abuse.
2. Acknowledge that domestic violence or abuse are problems that impact on all of us as a society, and play our part in supporting anyone affected.
3. 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.