

National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence, 2010-2014

Final Review and Proposals for New Strategy

Introduction

- ✓ Please complete the questions below which relate to your area of work or experience.
- ✓ Be specific in your answers referring to particular actions under the National Strategy and to data, evaluations and reviews where possible.
- ✓ A key section of the questionnaire asks you to say what you can do under the next strategy. Actions need to be feasible, do-able and ambitious. Any wish lists under this heading should be labelled as such.
- ✓ The questions are purposefully open-ended. Please be as specific and as comprehensive as possible in your answers.
- ✓ Please remember specific developments or actions in relation to vulnerable or high risk groups, including Travellers, people with a disability, older people, migrants, young people, pregnant women and those involved with substance abuse.
- ✓ Do not expect to fill in each and every subheading; the subheadings are meant to prompt your memory.
- ✓ It is better to spend time developing the comment than agonising over which subheading it should go under.
- ✓ Do not get lost with all the subheadings; there are basically five questions:
 - 1. What was good about the strategy?**
 - 2. What was not good?**
 - 3. Have you any evidence either way?**
 - 4. What do you want to do in the next strategy?**
 - 5. What should others do?**
- ✓ Your submission will be published on the Cosc website with the final review.

Name of your organisation: Ascend Domestic Abuse Service

Positive developments

As a result of actions under the current Strategy what, if any, positive developments have occurred in relation to domestic, sexual or gender-based violence under the following headings:

- 1.1 Victims' experience of state services
- 1.2 Victims' experience of voluntary sector services
- 1.3 Accountability of perpetrators
- 1.4 Awareness and attitudes
- 1.5 Prevention
- 1.6 Policy making or service planning
- 1.7 Research or data collection
- 1.8 Structures or processes to support the strategy (consultation, meetings, six monthly review reports etc.)
- 1.9 **Outside the Strategy** what, if any, have been the positive developments in relation to domestic, sexual or gender-based violence, generally or under any of the categories above, in the period 2010-2014?

Undesirable developments

As a result of actions or inaction under the current Strategy what, if any, undesirable developments have occurred in relation to domestic, sexual or gender-based violence under the following headings:

- 2.1 Victims' experience of state services
- 2.2 Victims' experience of voluntary sector services
- 2.3 Accountability of perpetrators
- 2.4 Awareness and attitudes

- 2.5 Prevention
- 2.6 Policy making or service planning
- 2.7 Research or data collection
- 2.8 Structures or processes to support the strategy (consultation, meetings, six monthly review reports etc.)
- 2.9 **Outside the Strategy** what undesirable developments, if any, have occurred in relation to domestic, sexual or gender-based violence, generally or under any of the categories above, in the period 2010-2014?

The Evidence

- 3.1 What actions did you take to evaluate or review the impact of any of the actions under the National Strategy? Please forward copies of any relevant publications or documents.
- 3.2 Are you aware of evaluations or reviews by others of the impact of any actions under the Strategy? Please forward copies of any relevant publications or documents, or contact details of those who undertook the evaluation.

What can be done better in the future?

By you

What specific actions is your organisation proposing to undertake in the context of a new national strategy on domestic, sexual and gender-based violence, in the period 2015-2019, under any of the following categories.

- 4.1 State services for victims
- 4.2 Voluntary sector services for victims
- 4.3 Accountability of perpetrators
- 4.4 Awareness and attitudes- We are proposing to run a social marketing campaign. The social marketing campaign we are proposing is based on a specific behaviour change. The behaviour that we want to change is people's willingness to

take action in situations of domestic abuse in their community. Our primary message is that Domestic abuse is not a private matter. The secondary message is to identify ways and means that people can recognise, respond and refer to the needs of women in their community in a safe and responsible way.

We arrived at these two areas of work through *extensive consultation* with our own team and through a *literature review*. Research has shown us that one in four women have or will experience domestic abuse in her life in Ireland. This increases the odds that members of the general public would know someone who is in an abusive relationship.

Our message is targeted at the adult population of North Tipperary. We have conducted a series of *focus groups* with groups of adults in the area and gauged their understanding of Domestic Abuse, and more specifically their willingness, knowledge and ability to respond if they were aware of an abusive relationship. Focus group findings suggested that the general public may not always be able to identify non-physical Domestic Abuse. Our findings have also shown that people are scared to get involved if the male perpetrator is a stranger. This is positive, and means that we can reinforce a message that people are already subscribing to.

The other major finding has been that both men and women feel more comfortable intervening if the abuser or victim is known to them. *'I would stop them on the street, in a pub, in my neighbourhood- no problem. I would call the Gardaí if I was scared for my own safety. I would assist the woman. In the case of a neighbour I would knock on the door, and say that they are making too much noise etc., use an excuse. But I wouldn't do so if it was the first time the incident happened.'*

When broached of the barriers to intervening most people felt that the gardaí would not take them seriously or that the victim would not make a statement to the gardaí. They also felt that they would be told that everything is fine by the victim, and that she might face recriminations if she spoke up.

The last major finding was the various ways that the general public felt that they could help the victim. These were very closely aligned with our own recommendations of *'We can talk to the person, give them information. Support them. Ask them to speak to their GP. We can confront the abuser. Report it to the Gardaí if the children are abused. Set up a meeting with a DA services. If it's a neighbour, then knock on the door.'*

The overall feeling at all the focus groups was that:

If the abuser had a fear of intervention there would be less Domestic Abuse.

The second element of the campaign is to raise the level of *acceptance of intervention* in North Tipperary. We have contacted several public and community groups such as GAA clubs, local religious congregations, library Book clubs, women's craft groups, local development partnership, etc. asking them to stand behind our campaign. They have agreed for us to visit their group, deliver a short presentation about our work and campaign and photograph the group with visual materials such as banners and posters supporting this campaign. These photographs will be used in the campaign. This is to help the general public to identify with this cause and emulate local leaders in their behaviour.

The newspaper campaign will be split into two parts. The first advertisement will list the signs that you or somebody you know may be experiencing domestic abuse. This will help create awareness about non-physical abuse.

The second advertisement will feature a few pages after the first advertisement will list ways that you can assist someone who is experiencing domestic abuse. It will also identify that this campaign is being run in collaboration with the local gardaí to allay their fears that they will be taken seriously (*we have an agreement in place with North Tipperary Gardaí, so that they can be prepared for an increase in reporting*). It will also caution people not to confront the perpetrator directly as their own safety is important. This advert will give a clear listing of practical actions that a member of the public can take to support someone. The group photographs of local community groups will feature in this advertisement. The contact numbers of local gardaí, Domestic Abuse service and other useful numbers will also be listed.

The two advertisements in each issue will be designed as part of a series and indicate continuity to the reader.

Benefits of this campaign will be twofold: increased awareness of the types of domestic abuse and provision of tools of safe intervention to the public. The risks may include over or mis-reporting, disagreements between victims and their friends and family, and frustration amongst the responding services. However, these risks will abate with time and the long term benefits far out-weight the risks.

The print campaign will be supported through our website, Facebook page, Billboards in three county locations, radio interviews and advertisements and a poster roll-out across the county to reinforce the message.

- 4.5 Prevention
- 4.6 Policy making or service planning
- 4.7 Research or data collection
- 4.8 Structures or processes to support the strategy (consultation, meetings, six monthly review reports etc.)
- 5. What specific actions is your organisation proposing to undertake for victims generally which will also apply to victims of domestic, sexual or gender-based violence, in the period 2015-2019, under any of the above categories?

By others

What other specific actions should be undertaken in the context of a new national strategy on domestic, sexual and gender-based violence, 2015-2019, under any of the following categories?

Who should undertake these actions?

Please also state, with your reasons, if you believe that there should be no further action by anyone under any heading.

6.1 State services for victims

COSC should implement the original strategy. It hasn't been completed and the actions must be followed-up and completed in the next 4 years.

Domestic Abuse Training for those working in the judicial system is essential.

Social work and Domestic abuse services need to develop a joint protocol of engagement, communication and information sharing.

6.2 Voluntary sector services for victims

6.3 Accountability of perpetrators

6.4 Awareness and attitudes

Run a consistent national campaign with one message. The same message must reach all communities.

A zero acceptance of Domestic Abuse by ALL members of society needs to be promoted. It should not continue to be seen as a private matter and recognised as a crime.

6.5 Prevention

6.6 Policy making or service planning

Prioritising housing needs for those made homeless due to Domestic Abuse.

6.7 Research or data collection

6.8 Structures or processes to support the strategy (consultation, meetings, six monthly review reports etc.)

7.1 What specific actions should be undertaken for victims generally which will also apply to victims of domestic, sexual or gender-based violence, in the period 2015-19, under any of the above categories?

Faster redress in court. There must also be legal systems in place to enforce maintenance agreements. Gardai must enforce their pro-arrest policy.

Access to public funds for women that may not meet the Habitual Residency condition, and also independent immigration status that allows her to stay in Ireland if she so chooses.

7.2 Who should undertake the actions mentioned above?

Judiciary and Gardaí.
INIS and Social Protection.

And finally

8. Please make additional comments, if any, here.

The new strategy needs to be achievable and realistic. The actions and objectives of the previous strategy are mostly unachieved.