

NATIONAL REPORT IRELAND 2016

DETAILS REPORT WRITING ORGANISATION

Country: Republic of Ireland

Organisation writing report: MEND [men ending domestic abuse]

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Representing any other organisations? Yes

Names of these organisations: This report has had input from organisations delivering intervention programmes in Ireland: MEND ([www.mend.ie](http://www.mend.ie)), MOVE Ireland ([www.moveireland.ie](http://www.moveireland.ie)) and NEDVIP (The North East Domestic Violence Intervention Programme) as well as input from Cosc, The National Office for the Prevention of Domestic, Sexual and Gender based Violence ([www.cosc.ie](http://www.cosc.ie)) who fund the programmes and oversee the implementation of the National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender based violence.

1. ORGANISATIONS/PROGRAMMES

MEND, MOVE and NEDVIP all deliver Domestic Violence Intervention Programmes with linked in Partner Support services.

WHAT TYPE OF ACTIVITIES RELATED TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PREVENTION HAS YOUR ORGANISATION CARRIED OUT DURING THE LAST THREE YEARS?

It is an ongoing challenge to profile our programmes to statutory agencies in order to maintain a flow of referrals, given that only a certain percentage of the men we assess will be suitable for the programme.

Retaining the services of facilitators and partner support workers can also be a challenge. We have high expectations in terms of the standard of service we deliver and yet we cannot pay workers at the level they might expect in the private sector.

Diminished staffing resources within the statutory sector over the last three years have made it increasingly difficult to commit facilitators to a lengthy group-work programme in the face of competing demands regarding the core functions of the agency.

Issues related to staffing also impact the development of a coordinated cross-sectoral structure which is needed to ensure a robust system of information gathering/sharing, risk assessment and interagency case management.

## 2. COUNTRY

PLEASE GIVE AN OVERVIEW OF GENERAL SITUATION IN YOUR COUNTRY REGARDING WORK WITH PERPETRATORS.

### Prevention

Awareness raising - a **national campaign** to inform and change attitudes.

A key action under the Second National Strategy on domestic, sexual and gender-based violence is a national awareness-raising campaign, and €950,000 has been secured for this purpose in 2016. **The campaign will commence in quarter four of 2016** and it is intended to run for a period of six years.

**The campaign's objectives are to bring about a change in long-established societal behaviours and attitudes in relation to domestic violence, and to activate bystanders with the aim of preventing domestic violence. The campaign will show the unacceptability of domestic and sexual violence, and its effects.**

The anticipated outcomes are

- more recognition and understanding of domestic violence among the general public;
- increased bystander intervention (in cases where it is safe to intervene);
- a decrease in domestic violence;
- increased reporting by victims and others;
- increased awareness of the sanctions for offending among perpetrators and potential perpetrators.

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PLEASE GIVE AN OVERVIEW OF YOUR COUNTRY'S CRIMINAL AND CIVIL RESPONSE TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, ESPECIALLY ANY CHANGES WITHIN THE LAST 3 YEARS? (I.E. WHAT ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT LEGAL AND POLICY MEASURES AND HOW HAVE THEY BEEN IMPLEMENTED?)

### **A. National Strategy**

Work with perpetrators is now included in both the First and Second National Strategy (2016 -2021) under High Level Goal 11: Provision of Services to Victims and Holding Perpetrators to Account.

#### **Action 2.3200**

*Continue to develop domestic violence perpetrator programmes during the term of the Strategy through:*

a. the introduction of risk assessment with a view to tailoring the approach to individual needs,

- b. the development of a national approach to programme content between providers,
- c. the introduction of two new programmes in 2016 and a new programme each year thereafter and,
- d. the further development of support for partners of perpetrators participating in programmes.

Implementing bodies:

Cosc will implement domestic violence perpetrator programmes. Individual service providers

will be involved in partner support. The Probation Service will liaise with existing providers in the delivery of perpetrator programmes.

Timescale:

- a. Quarter 4, 2016
- b. Quarter 4, 2016
- c. Ongoing throughout the term of the Strategy
- d. Quarter 2, 2017

Also related to Domestic Violence Intervention Programmes:

**Action 2:3100**

*Give judges legislative power to refer domestic violence perpetrators to programmes*

*in the Domestic Violence Bill (IST 18(2))*

Implementing bodies:

Department of Justice and Equality (lead), Courts Service (in the administration of new legislation).

Timescale:

The general scheme of the Domestic Violence Bill was published in July 2015 and refers to the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Justice, Defence and Equality for pre-legislative scrutiny.

Enacted quarter 1 2016.

**Action 2:3700**

*An Garda Síochána will promote perpetrator programmes for domestic and sexual violence and will, where necessary, encourage perpetrators to engage with such programmes.*

Implementing bodies:

An Garda Síochána

Timescale:

Quarter 4 2017

## B. Legislation

The Second National Strategy contains an action to enact the Domestic Violence Bill. The Bill is to be published in the current Dáil session. This legislation is key in order to advance both the implementation of the Istanbul Convention, and the Second National Strategy.

This legislation will enhance the measures available within the civil law system to support and protect victims. The Bill, when enacted, will also introduce reforms under the Istanbul Convention.

Key improvements include:

- Access to interim barring orders in emergency or crisis situations will be extended from the current eight working days. It will no longer be necessary for a person to have a greater or equal interest in a property in order to bar a perpetrator from that property.
- It will be possible for a victim to give evidence by televisual link to avoid the risk of intimidation by the perpetrator, or an associate, in civil and criminal proceedings.
- The court will be able to appoint an expert to ascertain the views of a child in cases where an order is sought on behalf of, or will partly relate to, that child.
- There will be restrictions on the categories of person allowed in court during criminal proceedings relating to domestic violence, so that the victim will not have to give evidence, potentially of a distressing nature, before a large number of strangers.
- The court in a domestic violence case will be able to refer a perpetrator to services which address the roots of the offending behaviour.

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PLEASE TELL US ABOUT THE PROGRESS YOUR COUNTRY HAS MADE IN RELATION TO ISTANBUL CONVENTION.

Ireland is fully supportive of the aims and terms of the Istanbul Convention and signed the Convention on 5 November, 2015. Work has commenced on implementing the 18 legislative and administrative actions which will enable Ireland to ratify the Convention. All of the actions required for the ratification of the Istanbul Convention are contained in the Second National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence which was published in January of this year.

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DO YOU KNOW ANY OTHER ORGANISATIONS/PROGRAMMES IN YOUR COUNTRY THAT CARRY OUR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PERPETRATOR WORK? IF YES, PLEASE, LIST THEM.

This report has had input from all organisations delivering intervention programmes in the Republic of Ireland.

### 3. BEST PRACTICES

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TELL US ABOUT BEST PRACTICES IN WORK WITH PERPETRATORS IN YOUR COUNTRY.

#### **Interventions with Perpetrators**

Ireland is moving to a single, higher quality national programme for all organisations, commencing in 2017. The training for the implementation of this new national programme commenced this year and it is expected that up to 32 facilitators will be trained to implement the new programme by the end of 2016. Further training will be completed by the end of the first quarter of 2017. At the end of the training it is anticipated that training and supervision will have been delivered to up to 50 staff and volunteers associated with the new national programme.

The new national domestic violence intervention programme is called “**Choices**”, and it was developed in the UK by Paul Wolf Light, Kelly Maguire and Dave Potts. The programme is in line with the requirements for the RESPECT UK Accreditation Standard.

#### 4. NEEDS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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WHAT HAS TO BE DONE TO PREVENT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN YOUR COUNTRY (REGARDING WORK WITH PERPETRATORS)?

Domestic violence intervention programmes need to be rolled out nationally, in order to ensure that programmes with linked in partner support services are consistently available to people in all parts of the country. This has already begun as part of the Second National Strategy.

WHAT ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT TASKS AND STEPS THAT YOU FEEL SHOULD BE FOCUSED ON IN YOUR COUNTRY IN ORDER TO TACKLE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ON A GENERAL LEVEL?

Early intervention with children and adolescents is critical. Research has shown that it is possible to identify young people who are likely to end up in abusive relationships, as either victim or perpetrator. If we view the issue purely from a gender perspective, we miss the early experiences of childhood trauma, disorganised attachment and the witnessing of domestic violence/abuse that are key factors in identifying who will be vulnerable to entering an abusive relationship as victim or perpetrator.

Written by John Doyle, MEND [men ending domestic abuse]

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