



European
Network

NATIONAL REPORT GUIDELINE

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1) **Organisation/programme** (max 3000 characters)

Q. Do you conduct any programme(s) for the domestic violence perpetrators at the moment? If yes, please describe it/them briefly. If not, please explain why

- Yes, MOVE offers a domestic violence intervention programme for men who perpetrate domestic violence.
- The MOVE (Ireland) Vision – MOVE seeks a safer world for all, but especially for women and children, affected by domestic violence.
- MOVE's specific remit is to promote the safety of women and children living in domestic violence contexts.
- MOVE provides professionally facilitated by substantially volunteer led, but professionally facilitated, domestic violence intervention programmes free of charge for perpetrators of domestic violence at a range of locations around Ireland.
- We work with men who are violent in their intimate relationships via a recognised domestic violence intervention programme (i.e. the CHANGE Programme).
- We facilitate men in a weekly group process that involves them taking responsibility for their violence and changing their attitude and behaviour.
- MOVE (Ireland) is substantially funded via Cosc, the National Office for the Prevention of Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence and executive office of the Department of Justice and Law Reform.

Q. What type of (other) activities regarding preventing domestic violence have you conducted within last four years?

- MOVE (Ireland) also engages in other activities in order to address domestic violence.
- We provide awareness of the issue of Domestic Violence so as to reinforce the concept that violent behaviour is unacceptable.

- MOVE engages with a network of other relevant statutory and voluntary agencies as part of a coordinated community response in our efforts to address violence against women.
- At regional level, MOVE (Ireland) engages in diverse advocacy and awareness-raising activities in relation to preventing domestic violence and in solidarity with 'victims' / survivors of this kind of violence.
- For example, MOVE (Cork) as part of our commitment to addressing VAW will host a 'White Ribbon' evening in December, 2013 <http://www.whiteribbon.ie/>.
- The White Ribbon Campaign aims to end men's violence against women and promote gender equality. MEND have been particularly active in promoting the White Ribbon Campaign.
- MOVE, MEND & NEDVIP have all been active in creating public awareness around domestic violence. This work has been supported by COSc e.g. awareness raising grant. MIDLAND MOVE have developed a DVD on domestic violence to help promote awareness in secondary and third level education. They are also pioneering mobile phone technology with in-built GPS systems in securing the safety of victims of domestic abuse. We are also involved in the MAN up campaign in conjunction with SAFE Ireland
- Positive publicity, via the media, is critical, as is engagement with high profile men who may act as 'Champions' in the collective societal effort to address domestic violence.
- As part of our commitment to safe and effective practice, we have also supported research into risk assessment strategies in domestic violence intervention contexts.

Q. What would you define as your most significant success regarding violence prevention within the last four years?

- Arguably, our most significant success regarding violence prevention is that MOVE (Ireland) is increasingly seen as an authoritative actor across a diversity of stakeholders: policy makers, service users, alongside the wider community and general public.
- This level of credibility and increasing national profiles an asset in attracting funding. Our credibility means that we can increase our capacity regarding domestic violence prevention activities, albeit within a highly constrained resource environment.

Q. What would you define as the biggest obstacles/challenges regarding violence prevention in your organisation within the last four years?

- One of the greatest obstacles/challenges regarding violence prevention in MOVE relates to funding issues.
- Recent years has seen a reduction in the amount of State funding available to MOVE, with resultant resource constraints. Put simply, as with other statutory and non-statutory agencies we are required to do 'more with less'.
- This outcome certainly challenges our capacity to maintain our core intervention service. This includes sustaining external proactive partner contact, alongside maintaining best child protection practice in domestic violence contexts, alongside related legislative and policy changes.
- Despite these obstacles, and while additional funding would be most welcome, MOVE remains resolute in promoting best practice in domestic violence intervention work, underpinned by the principles of victim safety and offender accountability.

2. Country (max 1800 characters)

Q. The overview of general situation in your country regarding work with perpetrators (e.g. what has change in your country legislation within the last 4 years? Most important legal and policy measures implementation; in which way they helped?)

- In Ireland, the Department of Justice and Law Reform (DJLR) has responsibility for legal initiatives, both civil and criminal, as well as preventative measures in relation to domestic violence.
- Cosc, the National Office for the Prevention of Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence, was established has responsibility for ensuring delivery of a well-coordinated 'whole of Government' response to domestic, sexual and gender-based violence. Cosc's primary function is to drive the implementation of the first *National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence 2010-2014*.¹
- Furthermore, in response to an increasingly ethnic and culturally diverse Ireland, there have been significant initiatives on policing. The Garda Racial and Intercultural Office (GRIO) was established in 2000, under the aegis of the Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration.
- The Office's key function is "to advise, monitor and co-ordinate all policing initiatives in relation to racial, ethnic, religious and cultural diversity."² The Office has also recently completed a five-strand EU funded programme entitled 'Intercultural Ireland, Identifying the Challenges for the Police Service', an initiative which has generated significant outputs.
- In addition, An Garda Síochána produced a *Diversity Strategy and Implementation Plan (2009 – 2012): Beyond Legal Compliance* in May 2009.³ The Plan outlines how the Force will deliver on its commitment to integrate all aspects of policing and diversity. These responses are potentially significant developments in regard to addressing domestic violence in an increasingly multicultural society. This strategy has been a long-awaited and very welcome development in efforts to address domestic violence in Ireland and promote victim safety.
- Children First National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children are being adhered to by all specialist domestic violence services. Disseminate Guidelines on Working with Children in Domestic Violence

¹ Cosc, *The National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence 2010-2014* (Dublin: Cosc, 2010). This strategy includes an action to promote and develop understanding and recognition of domestic, sexual and gender-based violence across the State sector. This strategy has been a long-awaited and very welcome development in efforts to address domestic violence in Ireland and promote victim safety.

² In 2002, the Gardaí published *Your Police Service in Multicultural Ireland*, a source of information for all minorities in Ireland aimed at facilitating an understanding of the role of An Garda Síochána. An Garda Síochána (Irish Police Force), *Your Police Service in Multicultural Ireland* (2002) <<http://www.garda.ie/Documents/User/Racial%20and%20Intercultural%20English.pdf>> (date accessed: 3 December 2011).

³ An Garda Síochána, *Diversity Strategy and Implementation Plan (2009 – 2012): Beyond Legal Compliance* (2009) <www.garda.ie> (date accessed: 12 April 2012).

Q. Do you know any other organisations/programmes in your country which deal with domestic violence prevention mostly by work with perpetrators? If yes please point them out

MEND

The South East Domestic Violence Intervention Programme (S.E.D.V.I.P) changed its name to MEND in February 2008. **MEND coordinates 4 programmes in the South East of Ireland** to help men stop being violent or abusive towards their female partners. These programmes are: Wexford MEND, Waterford DVIP, Carlow/Kilkenny DAIP and South Tipperary DVIP with integrated partner support services. The programmes are supported locally by inter-agency committees, with representatives from key statutory and non-statutory services.

A new website was set up to accompany the name change: www.mend.ie

MEND is part of the Men's Development Network. Programmes include:-

1. The Men's Development Programme
2. The Men's Health Programme
3. MEND – South East Domestic Violence Intervention Programme
4. Men's Development Training and Education
5. Equality and Equity

The North East Domestic Violence Intervention Programme

The NEDVIP was set up in 2005 as a direct result of research that identified a gap in service provision in terms of direct intervention with violent men and recommended that a treatment programme be established in the North East region to address this gap. A key message from this research was that solutions to the problem of violence against women lay in agencies, governmental and non-governmental pooling their expertise and working together in a co-operative and co-ordinated way. The NEDVIP steering committee is comprised of the Probation Service, the dedicated women's services, the HSE social work service and the Gardai.

The programme is a mandated one with all men referred either by the criminal court or by the social work service as part of a child protection plan. In keeping with Respect and Task Force Guidelines it was agreed that in tandem with the male intervention programme a parallel support service would be offered by the dedicated women's services to the female victims of the men on the programme. Funding for the programme is provided by Cosc, an agency within the Justice Department.

The central aim of the NEDVIP is to protect and enhance the safety of women and children affected by domestic violence. The four key tenets of the intervention programme are:

1. Victim Safety – to be facilitated by a dynamic risk assessment process and the sharing of relevant information between the different agencies in the best interest of the victim.

2. Accountability of the perpetrator for his violence – to be facilitated by a challenging groupwork process and continuous evaluation with the experience of the victim being a central consideration.
3. A multi-agency approach: to ensure timely, informed and co-ordinated response across the statutory and non-governmental agencies.
4. Pre-Programme 1-1 work and relapse prevention aspect

The programme with male perpetrators of domestic violence is run and managed by the Probation Service in Louth. The current format is that it combines a comprehensive assessment process, 6 individual pre-group work sessions, 24 weekly 3 hour groupwork sessions and 6 follow up sessions post programme.

The Women's Services offer 1-1 counselling and group work support to the partners and ex-partners of the men who are on the MODV Programme.

MOVE Ireland, MEND & NEDVIP provide a comprehensive assessment for men which include:

- his level of acceptance of responsibility for his behaviour;
- his level of motivation to change;
- his level of cognitive functioning
- any mental health issues including any contact with mental health services in relation to
- debilitating depression and borderline personality disorder;
- any addiction problems that he may have and how these are currently managed;
- any other issues that may support or challenge his potential for engaging with the group;
- his general levels of violence and his experience of violence/abuse in intimate relationship
- his current level of risk for violence/abuse

Under action 16 of Ireland's National Strategy, Cosc has established a Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programme Committee to support and co-ordinate the work of intervention programmes and to improve their overall performance and outcomes by working towards strengthened co-operation and co-ordination between programmes and other relevant service providers including uniform protocols and procedures

The programmes offer fixed length or rolling programmes of group work with up to twelve men who have used domestic violence against a female partner or ex-partner, and participants are referred or self-refer. The most recent statistics indicate that 373 men were referred to programmes in Ireland, with 283 assessed as being ready to engage with the work. During this period 134 men commenced the work and 87 completed a programme (a 65% completion rate - 2012)

3. Best practices (max 1800 characters)

- Point out the best practices in work with perpetrators existing in your organisation/country
- Can they be implemented in other organisations/countries? If yes – how? If no – why
- MOVE (Ireland) seeks to engage in best practice (i.e. safe and effective practice), in order to support victim safety and offender accountability. In consequence, MOVE's work with men who are violent in their intimate relationship has been significantly informed by the work of Prof. Edward Gondolf.

- Gondolf (2002) contends that the precise effect of perpetrator programmes is impossible to measure and that it is 'the system that matters' (Gondolf, 2002).
- In addition, since Gondolf (2002) the definition of "community response" now embraces prevention measures.
- The overarching aim of community response activities is to promote a societal atmosphere where domestic violence is stigmatised and where victims will be protected.
- Consistent with Gondolf's theoretical framework, MOVE seeks to work from a whole of community response in its efforts to address domestic violence.
- Furthermore, MOVE has a demonstrable commitment to safe and effective practice and outcomes with strict adherence to Respect Statement of Principles and Minimum Standards of Practice, as prerequisite to good practice.
- We believe that these best practices can be implemented in other organisations/countries, provided it is done in a culturally competent and context sensitive manner and grounded in the principle that victim safety is paramount.

The delivery of these programmes is co-ordinated by Cosc through a national Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programme Committee that is made up of the service providers and government officials – MOVE Ireland, MEND, NEDVIP

The involvement of partner contact workers has improved the ability of programmes to monitor men's compliance with the requirement to refrain from engaging in abusive behaviour. This has resulted in increasing numbers of women and children being safer whilst their partner attends the programme, as evidenced in research studies examining such partner support (Bullock et al., 2010).

A reflection of the work of programmes to improve the safety of women and children is that a representative from the perpetrator programmes now sits on the National Steering Committee on Violence against Women.

Best practice has been shared between programmes. It is recognised internationally that the key to measuring the outcomes and effectiveness of domestic violence perpetrator programmes rests on the collection and analysis of robust data about the programme participants, their progress through the programme and subsequent follow up (Akoensi et al. in press).

Internationally, the main form of intervention with perpetrators of domestic violence is group-based programmes, which have a limited evidence base of effectiveness. A systematic review by Smedslund et al. (2011) found that, at best, group-based programmes work for some male perpetrators, in some circumstances, some of the time.

He subscribes to the view that perpetrators of domestic violence are a heterogeneous group, and as such individuals are likely to be differentially responsive to treatment as they have both differing patterns of behaviour and motivations for their behaviour (Emery, 2011).

One of the weaknesses of group-based programmes is that they were originally developed by and have evolved through an ideological perspective on the root causes of domestic violence, rather than an empirical model of intervention development.

There is emerging evidence that some men, with the right prompts, may be encouraged to self-refer to programmes for perpetrators of domestic violence (Stanley et al. 2012). The motivation to change amongst this group may be markedly different to those who are referred by the courts, or coerced by social services or partners. There is a need to reduce any perceived stigma associated for these men seeking help, and to ensure that there are services available which can respond to individuals taking personal responsibility for their behaviour change. A key issue for governments is whether resources should be directed towards supporting those men who can be helped to take personal responsibility for their behaviour, compared to holding to account, through the criminal justice system, those who are not prepared to acknowledge the pain and suffering caused by their actions. At present the international evidence indicates that the resource which goes into holding men to account through the criminal justice system may be better used.

Could some of the funding within the criminal justice sector be redirected towards treatment services for men who are self-referring in a genuine effort to change their behaviour?

The challenge will be in ensuring that the balance is maintained between the funding required to work directly with men, and that available to provide the very important and necessary support to women. If the overall goal is a reduction in the prevalence of domestic violence then both aspects need to be seen as mutually interdependent.

If service providers feel that they are in competition for funding then it is less likely that they will develop the type of collaborative working arrangements that have been shown to improve the safety and wellbeing of women and children in the longer term (Devaney, 2008), and reduce rates of recidivism (Buzawa et al, 2012).

Outcomes can be seen at two levels. On a societal level it is a perfectly appropriate expectation that all forms of domestic violence and abuse are wrong, and that civil society should strive to bring an end to violence against women and children. However, at an individual level it may be unreasonable to expect that all perpetrators of domestic violence will immediately cease their abusive behaviour as a result of intervention.

If we are to better understand whether and how interventions make a difference this will only be achievable through data being gathered and analysed in a consistent manner within programmes, between services and across countries, which in turn will inform the design and implementation of

future, more effective programmes.

4. Needs and recommendations (max 1800 characters)

What has to be done in regard to prevent domestic violence in your country (mostly regarding to work with perpetrators)?

- Point out the most urgent, most important and most promising tasks and steps that should be focused on
- There have some really positive developments in relation to tackling domestic violence in Ireland. There is no room for complacency, however. For example, attrition has been identified as a significant issue of concern in Irish policy studies. Attrition, in cases of domestic and sexual violence, relates to the lack of progress on to completion of criminal cases. More specifically, the terms refers to the stages at which cases drop out from the criminal justice system, i.e. from the report state to the final stage of court proceedings.⁴ Significantly, however, *the National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence 2010-2014 (copy attached appendix 1)* includes a commitment to minimise attrition in domestic and sexual violence cases, where appropriate.⁵ This is a most welcome development.
- Domestic violence research has also consistently indicated that few perpetrators who were reported to the police have been convicted.⁶
- Furthermore, Women's Aid notes that many survivors are discouraged from engaging with the Criminal Justice System because of inappropriate sentences as well as extremely low conviction rates.
- These issues raise the important question of how Irish law and social policy can improve this rather disturbing reality.
- Arguably, there is a real need for a more finessed and sensitised legislative response to domestic violence such as the UK's Domestic Violence Crime and Victims Act (2004).
- This Act has sought to create more robust and effective legal remedies for victims and survivors alongside tougher sanctions for perpetrators.
- The Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act, 2004 introduced specialist courts (SDVCs)⁷ and procedures as part of a wider strategy to address domestic violence in the criminal justice system in the UK.⁸ Other recent cross-Government initiatives in the UK have included the introduction of Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs)⁹ and Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences

⁴ See, for example, Cosc, *The National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence 2010-2014*, 4.

⁵ Cosc, *The National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence 2010-2014*, 4.

⁶ M. Hester, "Making it through the Criminal Justice System: Attrition and Domestic Violence" (2006) 5 *Social Policy and Society* 79.

⁷ See for discussion, C. Vallely, et al., "Evaluation of Domestic Violence Pilot Sites at Caerphilly (Gwent) and Croydon 2004/2005" (London: Crown Prosecution Service, 2005); A. Robinson "Paper 102: Measuring what matters in Specialist Domestic Violence Courts" (Cardiff: Cardiff University School of Social Sciences, 2008) <www.cardiff.ac.uk/socsi> (date accessed: 20 January 2012).

⁸ Related major developments have also included the implementation of Good Practice Guidance on Domestic Violence (2005) alongside recent Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) initiatives. The CPS has developed significant new policy, procedures, guidance and training in the management of domestic violence cases, with new CPS Domestic Violence Co-coordinators in the 42 force areas. These initiatives have included matters like charging, training, victim and witness care, pre-trial witness interviews, as well as the Violence against Women strategy.

⁹ For discussion see for example, A. Robinson, *Independent Domestic Violence Advisors: A process evaluation* (Cardiff: Cardiff University with the assistance of Policy Research Institute, Wolverhampton University, 2009).

(MARACs)¹⁰ as well as a review of Specialist Domestic Violence Courts – ‘Justice with Safety’.¹¹ Other legislative reforms include the Part II Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act, 1999 and the Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act, 2007.

- Alongside these policy measures, there needs to be far greater resourcing of domestic violence intervention projects for men who are violent, particularly at community level.
 - Consistent with best practice, these projects would regard the safety of victims and their children as a priority.
 - These projects would also hold perpetrators responsible for the abuse and for its cessation.
 - There is also a need for early stage preventative work with young boys and men, across a diverse range of settings.
 - This kind of work needs to be culturally appropriate, taking account of diversity, across a range of factors, including the boy or man’s socio-economic positioning.
 - There are a range of factors that combine to place minority ethnic women at risk of domestic violence and which may limit their capacity to secure State protection from this kind of violence.
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- In this context, there needs to be greater engagement with men from minority ethnic communities not just as perpetrators, but also with change agents within the community, who can influence positive change at the ‘grassroots’ and community levels.
 - This work needs to be culturally appropriate and culturally competent and needs to be especially aware of the diverse barriers which minority ethnic communities face in their everyday lives.
 - Above all, this work needs to be done in a way which promotes rather than foregrounds the safety and well being of women and children within minority ethnic communities.
 - In addition, there is a need for the development of appropriately sensitised legal and policy responses to female asylum seekers ‘vulnerable’ to domestic violence.
 - Finally, violence at the hands of a current or former partner occurs in same-sex relationships. This kind of violence remains largely invisible in Ireland. There is an evident need to address this silence and invisibility by acknowledging that this kind of abuse occurs and developing collaborative, victim-centred, sensitised responses.
 - These responses need to be grounded in evidence-based research, i.e. what is that works best, so as promote optimal practice outcomes.

¹⁰ Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs) were developed in Cardiff in 2003 to respond to the needs of very high-risk victims and their children. See for example, D. Cook, et al., *Evaluation of Domestic Violence Pilot Sites at Gwent and Croydon 2004/2005: Interim Report* (London: Crown Prosecution Service, 2004); A. Robinson & J. Tregidga, “Domestic Violence MARACS (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences) for Very High-Risk Victims in Cardiff Wales: Views from the victims” (Cardiff: School of Social Sciences, Cardiff University, 2005); N. Steel, et al., “Supporting High Risk Victims of Domestic Violence: A Review of Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs)” Research Report 55 (Summary) (London: Home Office, 2011).; See in the Northern Irish context, Public Protection Arrangements Northern Ireland, “Victim Involvement in Public Protection Arrangements” <<http://www.publicprotectionni.com/victims>> (date accessed: 3 January 2012).

¹¹ See, Crown Prosecution Services (CPS), “Specialist Domestic Violence Courts Review 2007-2008: Justice With Safety” (2008) <http://www.cps.gov.uk/publications/equality/sdvc_review.html> (date accessed: 6 March 2012).

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The information compiled in this report has been provided from the following individuals / reports

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Discussion Paper: *Measures to Fight Violence Against Women*, Spain, 16-17 April, 2013

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