

Cross Party Working Group on Men's Violence Against Women & Children

27th June 2012

1./2. Present/Apologies:

Present:

Malcolm Chisholm MSP (Chairing)
 Moira Dunworth, for Alison Johnstone MSP
 Graham Goulden, Violence Reduction Unit
 Rhoda Grant MSP
 Ann Hayne, NHS Lanarkshire
 Ellie Hutchinson, Scottish Women's Aid
 Louise Johnson, Scottish Women's Aid
 Jenny Kemp, Zero Tolerance (minutes)
 Christina McKelvie MSP
 Amanda McKenzie, British Psychological Society
 Anne Meikle, Stirling Council
 Francine Orr, Equality and Diversity Consultant
 Marsha Scott, West Lothian Council/Engender
 Keiran Watson, Izzy's Promise (EAV)
 Maureen Wylie, VAW Network

Apologies:

Claudia Beamish MSP
 May Chamberlain, Relationship Scotland
 Lily Greenan, Scottish Women's Aid
 Lorna Kettles, Scottish Women's Convention
 Mhairi McGowan, ASSIST
 Jamie McGrigor MSP
 Jeanette Myles
 Kathy Norrie, Open Secret
 Gil Paterson MSP
 Morag Rennie, Central Scotland Rape Crisis and Sexual Abuse Centre

Malcolm Chisholm welcomed people to the meeting and noted there had been various apologies which would be minuted.

3. Cabinet Secretary for Justice – "Making Justice Work"

Action:

3.1 The Justice Secretary, Kenny McAskill, updated the group on a wide range of current developments in the justice system, and issues raised by the group, including:

- The Victim and Witnesses Bill
- issues arising from Lord Carloway's review
- the issue of domestic abuse perpetrators contacting victims from prison

Re: victims and witnesses, there was a genuine desire to improve matters, due to a recognition that witnesses have been neglected in the system until now. The EU Directive on Victims should

<p>lead to a levelling up across Europe. The government remains open to changes – the consultation is open. KM is especially interested in the issue of victim impact statements being delivered in different ways using new technologies.</p> <p>Re: Carloway, the government will respond to his recommendations very shortly, KM is minded that it may take a while to get this right, as it did with police and fire reform. He is not prejudging any changes to jury numbers, majority required for verdicts etc, and is still considering what assurances might be needed if corroboration is abolished that justice is being delivered.</p> <p>Re: contact from prison, KM is happy to look into how this issue can be addressed. The government was disappointed to lose the case at the ECHR re: phone-calls from prison requiring prior notification, now working with Parole Board to resolve this. There is also an issue relating to the immediacy of release from prison and lack of a phased release with planning, victim notification etc; a designated preparatory period may be needed.</p> <p>In the discussion that followed other issues mentioned included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the value of automatic special measures for victims of domestic abuse or sexual violence • the patchwork of services supporting new domestic abuse courts (e.g. in West Lothian) and the need for review of this to achieve greater consistency • the need for more information from UK government colleagues on reserved matters e.g. ratification of the CoE convention on VAW and DV, anonymous voter registration for women who have left abusive partners etc • the need for specialist services for victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence • the need for the VAW sector to engage with judicial studies and with Lord Gill’s review of civil courts • the need for local cooperation between police and VAW/CPD partnerships to continue under the single police force, using existing local protocols • the current 22 week delay between custody and trial at the Glasgow DA court (the target being 8-10 weeks) • the forthcoming Bill on criminalising the purchase of sex being brought forward by Rhoda Grant MSP • the value of financial and practical support for victims and witnesses • the need for progress on anonymous voter registration • the debate around gender quotas for police/fire boards as per the amendment proposed by Jenny Marra MSP in the debate on the reform bill. <p>The Cabinet Secretary was happy to look into these matters and noted that the ‘Making Justice Work’ programme should help with improving justice services across the board, it was not a one-off piece of work but ongoing for a decade already and would continue. He agreed to investigate delays at the Glasgow DA court as these were not acceptable. Re: the Rhoda Grant Bill KM had asked his officials for briefing on the benefits, consequences etc.</p> <p>It was agreed that to progress the issue of obtaining information from UK Government officials, the CPG could write to ask Christina McKelvie, as chair of the European External Relations Committee to ask for more engagement.</p>	<p>CPG to seek an update from the Justice Secretary by the next meeting</p> <p>CPG to write to CMcK to ask her to raise issues at EEEC</p>
<p>3. Minutes of last meeting (25 April 2012) and matters arising</p>	<p>Action:</p>
<p>3.1 Re: minute 4.1, Malcolm noted that he had met with ‘For Our Daughters’ in May and their primary aim appeared to be making gender a new basis for hate crime prosecution. He had not had further discussions with them since then.</p>	

<p>3.2 Re: minute 4.5, the CPG on Trafficking has now been constituted; Jenny Marra MSP and Christina McKelvie MSP will be co-convenors, with secretariat provided by TARA and the Refugee Council.</p> <p>3.3 Re: minute 4.9, May Sharpe's briefing paper on challenging pornography has not yet been circulated to the group – Lily to check if she has it.</p> <p>3.4 Re: minute 4.4, Rhoda Grant MSP provided an update on her member's Bill on criminalising the purchase of sex. The Justice Committee had recently decided that a new consultation was needed since her's was a narrower proposal than Trish Godman's, and she was aiming to get the consultation paper out by the end of summer.</p> <p>3.5 Re: minute 4.3, Marsha reported that there was another engender discussion event coming up, on trafficking, gender and migration.</p>	<p>LG to check if she has May Sharpe paper and circulate</p>
<p>5. A.O.C.B.</p>	<p>Action:</p>
<p>5 (b) Dates and topics for next meetings</p> <p>The next meetings would be in September, November, January and March. Dates would be sent out by email. Suggested topics for future meetings included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic abuse courts – review of where we are with these • Alcohol and VAW • Pornography – ideally with a presenter – find out if any organisations are having guest speakers on this topic who could also speak to the CPG • Participation and children and young people – possibly involving the ZT/WSP 'Porcupines' project, the WLC young survivors work etc. <p>5 (a) Information sharing</p> <p>5.1 Anne Meikle noted that the BBC radio 4 programme You and Yours was making a programme on forced marriage and learning disability and she has been asked for information.</p> <p>5.2 Ellie reported that SWA was organising events for peace day. They were planning candlelight vigils in 5 cities across Scotland on 21 September.</p> <p>5.3 Jenny noted that Richard Simpson MSP was consulting on 'Shifting the Culture' around alcohol and the closing date was Friday 30 June, it might be useful to respond making comments around community decisions in licensing of lap-dancing venues. She also reported on a minor victory: having reported a bookshop to trading standards for pornographic content in the window, an inspection revealed it was selling DVDs without the right licenses and these had been seized and a full investigation started.</p> <p>5.4 Graham reported that the VRU domestic abuse campaign was coming up. Would be good to get the CPG to support and profile that our work in this area is genuinely cross-party. He would circulate more info and ensure to link with SWA.</p> <p>5.5 Marsha reported that WLC had new VAW funds to shift work upstream, looking at e.g. housing pathways for perpetrators, involving young survivors, etc. She could provide briefing info on this. She had also sought funds from DAPHNE with 2 universities to do a piece of work around hearing children's voices in child contact cases and would hear the outcome in August. Engender were working on a shadow report to CEDAW (Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women) and would be seeking CPG members' input.</p> <p>Malcolm thanked everyone for their attendance and reminded them the next meeting would be in September – date tbc.</p>	<p>Dates to be circulated</p> <p>All to notify of any speaker visits they become aware of</p> <p>GG to circulate info on VRU's planned campaign</p> <p>MS to provide briefing info</p>