

## **Protocol – The New Way Service**

The purpose of this guidance is to confirm the arrangements for referring to this service and making best use of its intervention.

### **Introduction**

This service was set up in response to a recognition that domestic violence impacts considerably upon the well-being of children and young people. In 2006 when this service was set up domestic violence and abuse accounted for 80% of those children who were then on the child protection register.

The service was designed to meet the needs of parents who either did not recognise or accept the impact of their behaviour on their children. The service aims to, empower parents and reduce the effects of the conflict in their adult relationships and thereby improving the quality of life and outcomes for their children.

New Way is based upon a harm minimisation model developed in County Tyrone. The intervention focuses on working with perpetrators and victims to establish a new way for them to resolve their conflict in less damaging ways. The intervention with the victim is to empower them to safeguard their children and themselves. This may result in separation between the adults, which will impact on the children, but enable them to separate in a more constructive way and resolve issues of contact.

New Way will work with the parents to reduce the risk to the children from domestic violence and abuse. The service will support the non-abusive parent to be better placed to engage in new adult relationships and reduce the potential for further victimisation. The non-abusing parent takes this learning with them to avoid future abusive relationships.

The perpetrator of domestic violence is invited to reflect upon their behaviour and consider strategies to avoid violent expressions of conflict. They are asked to consider the impact of their behaviour on the children and to consider their own childhood and the impact of any trauma upon their own development. The intention being that they are given space to re-evaluate the nature of adult relationships and the importance of parenting

### **Service Delivery**

The programme of work runs on an average of 8 sessions for each parent, a male and female worker are employed to reflect the gender issues inherent in this behaviour

## Process

### A child in need

- Referrals are received from professionals,( the service is not self-referring), and a referral is completed outlining the DVA and the motivation of the service user to address their behaviour
- The referrer discusses the referral with Maggie Ward (Domestic Violence social worker)
- This is best achieved through a face to face meeting but can be by telephone.
- It is the **responsibility of the referrer to prepare** the parents for the intervention explaining the role and responsibilities of the New Way practitioners and how this differs from other professional interventions.
- It is the responsibility of the referrer to measure the motivation of the parents to engage in change. They need to identify what the parents want to change and why and to report this in the referral.
- This will be reflected in the evaluation form that will be completed after the first session to establish a base line for the outcome measures that are reviewed at the end of the intervention
- Prior to the start of the work with New Way, the referrer will complete a feedback form with the children. At the end of the work the referrer will complete a further feedback form with the children to measure change and how New Way has impacted on the well –being of the children
- If the referral is made by a social worker, they retain case responsibility and their focus is to meet the needs of the child and commence or update the core assessment. All other referrers will need to continue to support this work.
- New Way will contribute to the core assessment's parenting capacity dimension
- The parents should be informed at the outset of the intervention, the conditions of attendance and in what circumstances the work will cease, this should also cover issues related to non-engagement and failure to arrive for planned sessions
- The social worker must ensure they are recording any incidents of DVA and report this to New Way at the earliest opportunity for them to address in their next session
- The purpose of this is to ensure that the family are making accurate reports to all concerned.
- The referrer will meet with the New Way workers and the parents after 4 sessions to share the progress of the work.
- This meeting might decide to cease work on the basis of changed circumstances, increase the intervention and or plan additional sessions.

### Child Protection

- When the child is made the subject of a Child Protection Procedures and New Way is recommended as part of the action plan, it is essential that the recommendations reflect the need for all agencies to ensure that the parents are engaged with this work.

- To ensure that the parents are well prepared for the intervention, the Conference Chair will remind the core group that New Way is a time limited service
- New Way was set up primarily to meet the needs of those families who are committed to stay together.
- New Way recognises that when parents separate there is often the potential for an increased risk of domestic violence and abuse towards the victim and the children.
- There are consequences of non compliance with this work. In any subsequent care proceedings reference will be made to this service having been offered and the nature of the parent's response.
- In the event that care proceedings are initiated, it is essential that any reference made to the intervention of New Way at this point, is based upon an understanding that the model is not accredited but is validated by the Local Authority
- A Community Based Assessment model is being developed in response to the Public Law Outline, to which New Way is signed up. Where domestic violence is a feature in this context, a report will be produced to be incorporated as a module into the assessment documentation for the court
- MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference)  
At referral stage in either category (Child in Need or Child Protection) the referrer should consider whether there is a need to refer the abuse survivor and children to a Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference, if they are assessed as being at medium risk of harm, high risk or very high risk.

### **Concluding the Service**

- At the end of the agreed number of sessions there is an opportunity for a meeting between New Way, the referrer, and the parents to evaluate the impact of the intervention.
- 3 months following the intervention, another post evaluation form will be completed by the Lead Professional, where appointed, to complete with the parents asking them to reflect on the ongoing impact of the work and if any new incidents have arisen.
- Where there is no lead professional involved, the New Way service will contact **both** parents and complete the evaluation.