



Crime Reduction & Community Safety Group

Tilley Awards 2007

Application form

Please ensure that you have read the guidance before completing this form. **By making an application to the awards, entrants are agreeing to abide by the conditions laid out in the guidance.** Please complete the following form in full, **within the stated word limit and ensuring the file size is no more than 1MB.** Failure to do so will result in your entry being rejected from the competition.

Completed application forms should **be e-mailed to tilleyawards07@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk**

All entries must be received by noon on **Friday 27th April 2007**. No entries will be accepted after this time/date. Any queries on the application process should be directed to Alex Blackwell on 0207 035 4811. Any queries regarding publicity of the awards should be directed to Chaz Akoshile on 0207 035 1589.

Section 1: Details of application

Title of the project: An inter-agency domestic violence policy and protocol to tackle domestic violence in the Derry City Council area.

Name of force/agency/CDRP/**CSP**: The Police Service of Northern Ireland, Foyle District Command Unit.

Name of one contact person with position and/or rank (this should be one of the authors):
Inspector Milton Kerr, Community Safety Coordinator, Foyle District Command Unit.

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If known please state in which Government Office area you are located e.g. Government Office North West, Government Office London etc:

Name of endorsing senior representatives(s): Drew Harris

Name of organisation, position and/or rank of endorsing senior representatives(s):
Assistant Chief Constable, Criminal Justice.

Full address of endorsing senior representatives(s):
Police Service of Northern Ireland, Headquarters, 65 Knock Road, Belfast, BT5 6LD, Telephone Number: 02890
650222.

Please tick box to indicate that all organisations involved in the project have been notified of this entry (this is to prevent duplicate entries of the same project):

Section 2: Summary of application

In no more than 400 words please use this space to describe your project (see guidance for more information).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.

A PARTNERSHIP PROTOCOL

An inter-agency domestic violence policy and protocol to tackle domestic violence in the Derry City Council area.

The Interagency Domestic Violence Protocol was developed in partnership with Foyle Women's Aid, Foyle District Command Unit, (Foyle DCU), and other agencies, due to the high number of domestic violence incidents recorded in 2001 and 2002.

The partners researched best practice and consulted both internally and externally to develop a protocol that would deliver a consistent and standardised approach that in turn would address the high level of incidents reported. This included a fact-finding trip to Boston, Massachusetts.

The main objectives of the protocol are as follows: -

- Reduce repeat victimisation, through the application of the new procedures.
- Increase the intervention level between repeat victims of domestic violence and offenders.
- Extend the partnership approach to victims to improve the quality of service provided.
- Raise community awareness; thereby increase community confidence and safety.
- Improve quality of service to victims.
- Raise police and agency awareness to ensure the most effective response to victims and offenders.

Domestic violence has been set as a local priority in Foyle DCU. The Domestic Violence Officers (DVO'S) provide monthly updates on crimes/ incidents recorded, repeat victims and high-risk offenders; this is briefed out to operational personnel. The partners provide training for DVO's and other police. This has been beneficial in providing casework training and good working relationships.

The protocol has facilitated a drop in domestic violence offences over the past two years. Indications are that this downward trend will continue, as the total number of offences has reduced by 30% FYTD in comparison with the PFYTD. This is the third highest percentage decrease across the service.

In September 2006, the Northern Ireland Policing Board launched their second report on Human Rights in the Police, which states that the PSNI should consider adopting the Foyle Protocol as a template of good practice for tackling domestic violence and distribute it to all its DCU Command Teams.

The Foyle Interagency Domestic Violence Protocol has now been operational for over three years. It was introduced at just the right time, when we were experiencing the worst recorded domestic violence in Northern Ireland. We were, and remain, committed to partnership work with all interested parties to tackle the issue of domestic violence.

(388 words).

Section 3: Description of project

Describe the project in no more than 4000 words (see guidance for more information in particular Section 7 - judging criteria).

1. Background.

1.1 Londonderry is the second largest city in Northern Ireland. In recent years, Foyle District Command Unit was identified as having the highest reported incidence of domestic violence in Northern Ireland. Incidents had increased in the last number of years and this caused us to critically analyse our policies. In the year 2002/2003 we recorded 1394 incidents compared with 1336 incidents in 2001/2002. The Foyle District Command Unit have been key members of the Foyle Interagency Partnership on Domestic Violence (FIAP) since its inception in 1997. Within this Partnership (formerly Forum) PSNI senior managers and personnel were regularly engaged with a range of local partners to tackle the issue of domestic violence. This included training opportunities, meetings when problems arose with specific agencies etc. However around 2000 – 2001 direct meetings with Foyle Women's Aid began to highlight that, whilst both agencies worked very well together when specific problems arose or patterns emerged, the rate of domestic violence in the Foyle area continued to be alarmingly high. Indeed it had increased year on year at this point for a three-year period and a critical review of the issue was deemed urgent by all those involved.

1.2 It was agreed that a more formal and strategic approach would be needed by all agencies involved in responding to the issue of domestic violence to tackle this issue in a coherent and effective manner. It was also agreed that the agency with key responsibility and remit for doing so would be PSNI, in partnership with others and in particular Foyle Women's Aid. As a result of examining best practice and conducting both external and internal consultations, radical changes have been made to the methods our District Command Unit and the PSNI in general currently adopt in tackling domestic violence. These changes, which were first introduced in 2003, were designed to make our approach to tackling domestic violence more effective.

1.3 It was also agreed that whilst there was a high level of localised knowledge regarding domestic violence that, as part of this new approach, international and national research would be useful to guide and inform the work to be carried out.

2. Identification of need for policy and protocol:

2.1 From the research carried out and a review of the projects, protocols and activities internationally and nationally, it was agreed that an Interagency Protocol pertaining to responses in the Foyle District Command Unit would be of benefit. This would clarify and direct responses to domestic violence in line with best practice and also in line with the aims of the project. Commitment was given by the Foyle DCU Commander to resource a specially designed Domestic Violence Unit with increased staffing levels, a dedicated sergeant and administrator and a purpose built unit to house personnel in the grounds of the Strand Road Station, but outside the main building so as to encourage greater victim response to the services on offer.

2.2 A draft protocol was developed with a core team of PSNI and Foyle Women's Aid staff working together. It was sent for consultation to key members of the Foyle Interagency Partnership on Domestic Violence such as Foyle Health & Social Services Trust managers, Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Victim Support and others. Comments and feedback were discussed by the core steering group for the project and integrated into the protocol.

2.3 It was agreed that whilst there were key partners to the project, the door would be left open for other agencies to sign up to the protocol when it was deemed appropriate. This ensured that the document remained a live document that could be reviewed, amended and brought up to date with activities as the project progressed in the Foyle DCU area.

2.4 The issue of high rates of domestic violence was increasingly of concern at the 6 weekly interagency partnership meetings of FIAP and also at internal police meetings and reviews within Foyle DCU. The issue was also highlighted regularly in the local media.

2.5 The key stakeholders concerned with identifying the problem had already established relationships and an excellent day-to-day working relationship within the Derry City Council area. But outside of the larger interagency partnership (FIAP) set up under the remit of FHSST there were no specific practitioner based projects like this identified.

3. Objectives of the Project:

3.1 The protocol's main objectives are to:

- Reduce repeat victimisation through increased intervention levels;
- Extend the partnership approach to improve the quality of service provided to victims;
- Raise community awareness;
- Increase community confidence and safety; and
- Inform and make more effective police and other agency responses to domestic violence incidents;

3.2 The success criteria for the project were the following:

- Initial increase in first time reporting of domestic violence from domestic violence victims.
- Initial increase in reporting of domestic violence incidents, with a projected downturn in subsequent years.
- Decrease in level of recorded domestic violence crimes as a result of implementing a robust, proactive partnership protocol.
- More efficient and effective response to repeat victims.
- Increased feedback from victims about the quality of service they received
- Records of all inter-agency work and meetings attended in relation to domestic violence to evidence level of partnership working, also records of internal meetings where domestic violence is raised as a key issue for Foyle DCU so as to evidence internal awareness raising opportunities.

4. Definition of the Problem:

4.1 The information highlighting the need for the project came from a number of sources:

- Foyle DCU domestic violence statistics as kept by the Domestic Violence Officers
- Foyle Women's Aid monthly and yearly statistics of women and children seeking support and help from them.

4.2 Advice & Information Research by CMWorks, 2003 on behalf of Foyle Women's Aid indicated that a significant number of victims did not come to either agency in the first instance and this could lead to issues of misdirection, lack of criminal investigation and inappropriate referrals.

4.3 Monthly meetings to review the statistics and trends underlying domestic violence incidents in the Foyle DCU area were initiated with partners. These were named "Intervention Meetings". Issues of concern were identified in these meetings by the practitioners and these were highlighted to senior managers in PSNI, Foyle Women's Aid, court representatives and social services representatives. From this and reviews of the statistics coming to both Foyle DCU and Foyle Women's Aid, information was brought together to highlight the problems thought to be underlying the issue in this area both in qualitative and quantitative terms.

4.4 From these meetings a series of issues were identified as being problematic, these included:

- Police response to domestic violence differed with a variance in technique, approaches and outcomes depending on the training officers had received.
- Information about the range of support available to victims was not clear. A referral process was not explicit and information given to victims varied from officer to officer

- It was agreed that a more direct, clear set of guidelines needed to be incorporated in a policy and protocol on domestic violence to be specially devised with other partners in the Foyle DCU area.
- It was also highlighted that the role of the Domestic Violence Officers and related staff within PSNI dealing with domestic violence needed to be incorporated in this document also so that all agencies and PSNI personnel were clear about the role.
- It was also highlighted that new policing approaches to dealing with the issue needed to be inserted as practice to be followed within the document and appropriate training to police personnel needed to be given to inform this practice.
- Issues such as court orders and whose responsibility these were at every point of the process needed to be included as these were problems surrounding the issuing and serving of these orders. Clarity regarding the role of the officers serving the orders was needed.

4.5 The process to get to this point of the project was consistent with the development of best practice in that the problem had been identified, the key partners and stakeholders were included in the steering group to tackle the problem and research and review periods had taken place before action or drafts were drawn up for a policy and protocol.

4.6 Information gaps were identified such as the recording of children within households. Also the recording of which men were on the Men Overcoming Domestic Violence programme and the need for PSNI to be informed of these details regularly. Information regarding male victims was requested from Victim Support. It was also highlighted that same sex domestic violence information needed to be researched, as little was known of this specific victim group. The agency representing this group was contacted and included in consultation. The Science Shop, University of Ulster, commissioned specific research. This project won a top award for the student and provided insightful information for the project team developing the protocol and policy.

4.7 All key stakeholders from the statutory and voluntary sectors in the problem were involved in the identification of the issues and the development of the protocol. This process directly involved users of Foyle Women's Aid services being consulted. As part of a specialised week of training, a half-day consultation with 8 users of Foyle Women's Aid services was attended by senior PSNI staff.

5. Response to the Problem:

5.1 The review and analytical stage of the process was clearly defined and joint decisions made between partners as to how to best progress a response to the problem.

5.2 It was decided that a core document to outline best practice and responses would be the most effective mechanism to effect change and to direct staff in all agencies as to the appropriate and correct organisational response from PSNI regarding domestic violence. It was felt that, whilst some may view policy and protocol as not necessarily effective, the main difference would come from the following:

- Training for all relevant PSNI personnel highlighting the protocol and document.
- PSNI personnel to highlight the document whenever possible - especially the domestic violence unit.
- Publicity for the launch of the protocol and policy.

5.3 Other development options included a One Stop Shop, however it was felt that the project was in its early stages and that such a development would be pre-emptive until results and outcomes from the implementation of the policy and the training was collated and reviewed, including:

- Evidence presented that the intervention was effective and sustainable.
- The project demonstrating effective partnership working.
- The project being planned implemented and costed with adequate resources allocated.

5.4 Foyle DCU from the outset were mindful of the fact that any change in policy and protocol would need to be supported by training and administration. They identified as mentioned before the need to resource a specially designed Domestic Violence Unit as part of the response to the problem. This included the allocation of a sergeant and four constables supported by full time administrative support to a dedicated Domestic Violence Unit. Foyle DCU was the first DCU to have this level of commitment and resourcing to the issue of domestic violence and notably this is still the case. Financially this commitment was significant, however consideration was given to specific outcomes to offset this; in the long term a reduction in domestic violence incidents and secondly an increase in confidence to use PSNI, thus targeting strategic aims for the Foyle DCU. The special domestic violence suite required significant financial investment in relation to office refurbishment and the provision of suitable furniture and equipment and Domestic Violence Officers within the district who are specially trained to investigate allegations in a way that is sensitive to the needs of the victims and to bringing about a resolution. All our officers are encouraged to recognise the signs of domestic violence and ensure that cases are brought to the attention of the Domestic Violence Officers. Officers at all levels have completed a partnership Domestic Violence Officers' Programme and District Training in domestic violence is ongoing on a regular basis. Domestic Violence Officers are also available one day a week to attend an inter agency surgery for victims, which is held at the Foyle Women's Aid premises at 'Pathways' in Derry. The project was costed with funds coming from the local initiative budget.

5.5 Problems encountered included: -

- Lack of enthusiasm from some partner agencies (not the key partners of PSNI Foyle DCU and Foyle Women's Aid).
- The unwillingness of existing Domestic Violence Officers to accept the change to a proactive, investigatory role.
- Difficulty in recruitment of administration support staff.
- Delay in the office refurbishment work required for the Domestic Violence Unit and delivery of required furniture/equipment.

All of the above problems could have been foreseen and were indeed identified at an early stage of the decision making process. As a result they were taken into account when the objectives were set. There was some frustration, however, because some of the problems, such as the office refurbishment work, was out of our control and did cause delay. An implementation plan was drawn up and, through a process of monitoring, changes were made to the tasks to be completed, which arose from circumstances outside our control.

5.6 In the early stages of the project fortnightly meetings were held to keep the work on track. This then moved to monthly meetings between senior personnel, however as the protocol was developed this led to weekly and sometimes daily contact as the document was proofed, printed and sent for consultation.

5.7 From the outset it was envisaged that this would be a long-term commitment from Foyle DCU. The protocol has been reviewed continually in practitioner meetings (Intervention Meetings) but also through the interagency partnership (FIAP). A full review took place Spring/Summer 2006 as feedback was given and amendments made.

5.8 The response to the problem of the high incidence of domestic violence in the Foyle DCU area was creative in that it took the partnership approach and extended this to a written protocol and policy, which had not be carried out before in Northern Ireland. The Protocol was also innovative in that it used and reviewed best practice from the UK mainland and combined this with international research. The quality of this approach was then enhanced by site visits to the US and attending conferences in the UK. This resulted in a more realistic picture of what could be achieved by implementing such a policy and the value to all the partner agencies from improved partnership working to clear guidelines.

5.9 In April 2004, police from Foyle DCU participated in a fact-finding trip to Boston, Massachusetts, (MA), with a representative from Foyle Women's Aid and the Foyle Trust, to consider best practice. Meetings were held with a number of professionals working in the area of domestic violence as follows:

Meetings included:

- The Commissioner of the Boston Police, Kathleen O'Toole, to discuss their domestic violence strategy.

- Boston Public Health Commission to discuss their Domestic Violence Programme (DVP) whose mission is to increase awareness about domestic violence in the City of Boston and to support community efforts to address the problem.
- Boston Police Domestic Violence Unit to discuss the innovative programs implemented by the Boston Police Department.
- Interagency meeting at the Women's Crisis Centre at Newburyport, MA with Salisbury Police Department to discuss their Rapid Response Unit.
- Lowell Police Department, MA, to discuss their task force, which was formed to conduct and analyse a study on domestic assaults, identify opportunities for intervention, and develop strategies for reducing these incidents.
- Meeting at the Holy Family Medical Centre and the Haven Mass General Hospital to discuss such things as the 'Sexual Assault Nurses Programme', and the 'Hospital Emergency Room Protocols'.

As a result of examining this and other best practice and conducting both external and internal consultation, radical changes have been made to the methods our District Command Unit and the PSNI in general currently adopt in tackling domestic violence.

6. Evaluation:

6.1 From the beginning of the process to develop a response to the problem of rising domestic violence incidents, it was clear that the recording of domestic violence and the analysis of this information was crucial to measure the success of the protocol. Whilst we could rely on anecdotal information and feedback from service users for qualitative purposes, to identify successful outcomes in terms of addressing the emerging patterns and measuring change we relied significantly on the quality of recording and the support of our police analysts. The Inspector responsible measured this information monthly for domestic violence, then quarterly and annually to look at seasonal adjustments and other factors, which can influence levels of crime.

6.2 From the information gathered in the analyst report (see appendix) it has been stated that "it is reasonable to infer that the Interagency Domestic Violence Protocol has been highly successful in Foyle DCU and should be continued. Most notably the protocol has facilitated a drop in Domestic Violence Offences over the past two years, early indications are that this downward trend will continue as the total number of Domestic Violence Offences (inclusive of Breach of Orders) has reduced by 30% FYTD in comparison with the PFYTD. This is the third highest percentage decrease across the service and significant as this equates to a reduction of 170 recorded offences. Furthermore it is also important to be aware that Foyle DCU no longer falls within the top 3 DCUs in the Service for Domestic Violence and currently ranks 5th across the service, with 45% less recorded offences FYTD than the DCU with the highest number of recorded offences¹."

6.3 Secondly this quantitative data which indicates success on one level is qualified by user testimony of the service that is being delivered to victims of domestic violence in the Foyle DCU area. This is further enhanced by the level of interagency support for the protocol as evidenced by the letters of endorsement from our partner agencies and from key social partners in the Foyle area. All of this information indicates that not only did the protocol achieve its initial aims but it is very much an active and working interagency process which is improving with reviews and input from our social partners as we progress. This is enhanced by our interagency meetings, regular press and media work and our on the ground relationships which have benefited from a clearer working process due to this protocol.

6.4 The method of evaluation relied heavily on statistical information gathering regarding the level, extent and range of domestic violence occurring in the Foyle DCU. This was an appropriate method for evaluation as domestic violence as a criminal offence and our response as a police service to this issue was key to tackling the issue. Whilst we recognise there are still significant numbers of victims who may not have come forward yet, the only reliable data is those victims who do call upon our partners and ourselves for support. Qualitative information regarding our response and services also informed the evaluation as we sought user feedback and partner agency feedback as we progressed.

¹ Official figures taken from Saturn on 17th January 2007, subject to change.

6.5 The evidence of the impact of the interagency protocol has been clearly identified by our analysts, and moreover has been noted in the significant decrease in the number and level of offences being committed in the Foyle DCU area.

6.6 Each of the lead partners, Foyle DCU and Foyle Women's Aid, committed to enhanced information gathering and more regular reviews of data to inform the steering group if the protocol was having an ongoing noticeable impact on the practice of PSNI and also on reporting patterns to both PSNI and Foyle Women's Aid.

6.7 The evaluation of the statistical information has identified patterns, which we had hoped to see as outcomes such as an initial increase, then decrease in reported incidence of domestic violence. Secondly that actual crimes committed has decreased suggesting the level of violence has decreased by perpetrators. Interesting is the fact that there is an increase in repeat victims. This was not a pattern we would have predicted at the outset, but now fits clearly into the other statistics in that women in particular continue to have confidence in contacting PSNI regarding all levels of domestic violence incidents and therefore we would see this as indicative of increased confidence in both the PSNI attending the scene and the services on offer from the Domestic Violence Unit.

6.8 As demonstrated in the statistical analysis of reporting trends in relation to domestic violence in the Foyle DCU area, this is clearly one of the most striking impacts the protocol has had. Furthermore other agencies within the Foyle Interagency Partnership on Domestic Violence (FIAP) have identified the need for local protocols and writing up of guidelines for practice such as between NSPCC & Foyle Women's Aid to support interagency work and consolidate the relationship between the agencies.

6.9 It is our belief that this inter-agency partnership and protocol is having an extremely positive effect. The message is finally getting out that victims no longer have to endure violence, but that there is support for them and a means through the law to resolve the intolerable situation they find themselves in.

7. Conclusions:

7.1 The policy has been designed to challenge attitudes and to change procedures previously adopted to tackle domestic violence. Senior management in Foyle DCU has made the issue of tackling domestic violence a priority in our crime reduction strategy. At the heart of the policy is the desire to take 'positive action' in relation to domestic violence. Our research has shown that a robust police response to domestic violence has had a beneficial effect on the subsequent behaviour of the alleged offender. The 'Domestic Violence Repeat Victimization Model' identified by the Policing and Reducing Crime Unit, Home Office Research as best practice, has been adopted by a number of UK police forces and has demonstrated a significant reduction in the incidence of domestic violence when applied. This model has been incorporated into the Foyle crime reduction strategy.

7.2 In September 2006, the Northern Ireland Policing Board launched their second report on Human Rights in the Police Service of Northern Ireland. In chapter 10, 'Victims', the report refers to the Foyle DCU inter-agency domestic violence policy as a template of good practice. Recommendation 35 states that the PSNI should consider adopting the Foyle Protocol as a template of good practice for tackling domestic violence and distribute it to all its DCU Command Teams. This has subsequently been circulated by e-mail to all District Commanders asking them to adapt and implement the Foyle Protocol in their respective areas.

7.3 We expected to see an increase in reported incidents in the first year or two as public confidence to report these incidents increased. This proved to be correct, and we recorded 1491 incidents in 2003/2004 and 1921 in 2004/2005. On a positive note, the number of incidents involving disclosed offences fell from 685 in 2003/2004 to 651 in 2004/2005.

7.4 The District is pleased to say that this trend has continued. In the financial year to the end of March 2006, 572 incidents involving disclosed offences were reported. This is a 12% drop on the previous year's figure of 651. Of these incidents, 79% were cleared, an increase from the previous clearance rate of 67%.

7.5 The reduction in domestic violence incidents is very much an outcome of inter-agency partnership working to support victims. The Foyle Interagency Partnership on Domestic Violence and the Police Protocol have now been operational for over three years. They were introduced at just the right time, when we were experiencing the worst recorded domestic violence in Northern Ireland. We were committed to work with all

interested parties to end the misguided belief that domestic violence in the family home is acceptable, and to encourage individuals to report these incidents, rather than suffering in silence.

(3999 words).

Section 4: Endorsement by Senior Representative

Patricia Perkins
5th floor
Peel Building (SE Quarter)
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

12 April 2007

Dear Patricia

RE: ENTRY FOR TILLEY AWARDS 2007

As nominated Senior Representative for the Police Service of Northern Ireland, I endorse this application for the Tilley Award 2007.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J A Harris', written in a cursive style.

J A HARRIS
Assistant Chief Constable
Criminal Justice Department

Checklist for Applicants:

1. Have you read the process and application form guidance?
2. Have you completed all four sections of the application form in full including the endorsement from a senior representative?
3. Have you checked that your entry addresses all aspects of the judging criteria?
4. Have you advised all partner agencies that you are submitting an entry for your project?
5. Have you adhered to the formatting requirements within the guidance?
6. Have you checked whether there are any reasons why your project should **not** be publicised to other police forces, partner agencies and the general public?
7. Have you saved you application form as a PDF attachment and entitled your message 'Entry for Tilley Awards 2007' before emailing it?

Once you are satisfied that you have completed your application form in full please **email it to Tilleyawards07@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk**. Two hard copies must also be posted to Alex Blackwell at Home Office, Effective Practice, Support & Communications Team, 6th Floor, Peel Building (SE Quarter), 2 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4DF.