

From: Simons, Sheila <[REDACTED]>
Sent: 28 September 2020 23:40
To: Givan, Paul <paul.givan@mla.niassembly.gov.uk>
Subject: FW: Operation Encompass

Dear Mr Givan

I am a senior manager within Children's Safeguarding Services in the SE HSCT and I am Chair of the SE area Domestic & Sexual Violence and Abuse Partnership. I have also attended the APG on domestic violence on a number of occasions. Consequently I follow all matters pertaining to domestic and sexual violence in order to support families where such abuse occurs.

I have been following the Assembly business in relation to evidence being presented with regard to the proposed new Bill. I have read the minutes of evidence from the Committee for Justice held on 17/9/20 and I noted significant discussion with regard to Operation Encompass. The SE area Domestic Violence Partnership brought the creators of Operation Encompass, David and Elisabeth Carney-Haworth to NI approximately 5 years ago to speak at a conference which was attended by 200 delegates and included representatives from the PSNI, Education and the Safeguarding Board NI amongst others. David was a serving Police Sergeant in Devon/Cornwall and his wife a Principal of a Primary School. In their respective roles both interfaced with families where Domestic Violence was a significant issue and yet each did not know that they were working with the same families. As a consequence they created Operation Encompass to address this communication deficit and to ensure children were supported in school following police call outs to the home due to Domestic Violence.

On the back of our conference our partnership has been keen to support the roll out of this initiative in NI. I have agreed to pilot the initiative in the Down Locality where I am based. The PSNI and the Education Authority are fully committed to the roll out but we are restricted by the fact there is no legislative basis for the PSNI to notify schools in regards to concerns for the well-being of a child. In the absence of legislation the Police will notify schools re their contact with a family if they have the victims consent to do so. As a consequence there are likely to be less notifications made and may elevate risk to the victim if perpetrator learns notification was made with their consent. The pilot working group which includes representatives from the PSNI, the EA and DV partnership are currently working on the development of an on-line training package to be shared with the Principals, Board of Governors and Designated safeguarding Teachers in the Pilot. Also relevant awareness-raising materials and Policy and Procedures developed by the creators of the initiative are being adapted for implementation in NI.

I note from the minutes of the Justice Committee there are different understandings regarding the purpose of Operation Encompass and I have attached a link explaining the initiative to assist in your deliberations. I hope you will find this helpful and if the Partnership can be of any assistance to the Committee please do not hesitate to come back to me.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p03y9r5h>

Yours Sincerely

Sheila Simons, MBE
Senior Manager - Safeguarding Children
Chair of the South Eastern Area Domestic & Sexual Violence and Abuse Partnership

