

Technology Facilitated Abuse Awareness Raising Event: Friday 28 November, Mellon Country Inn, Omagh.



Background

To mark the beginning of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence the Western Domestic and Sexual Violence Partnership, Fermanagh & Omagh Police & Community Safety Partnership, Western Digital Safeguarding Steering Group and the Locality Planning Groups collaboratively organised an event to enhance awareness of the detrimental use of technology by perpetrators of domestic violence. Each of these organisation are fulfilling actions aligned within the Strategic Framework and Delivery Plan of End Violence Against Women and Girls. The aim for the event was to provide contemporary knowledge of how victims are targeted, identify the behaviour of the perpetrator and inform practitioners supporting victims how to prevent this form of abuse and importantly safeguard themselves.

Under the collaborative auspices of all above, Mr. Steven McNeill, Senior Social Work, South Eastern Trust facilitated an insightful session for eighty-six practitioners from the statutory, community and voluntary sector who support people experiencing domestic abuse. Steven provided practitioners with an understanding of the power and control which can be enforced by the perpetrator on a victim through their use of technology. He shared how the perpetrator uses this misuse to continue to try and control and abuse and the risk this then presents to the victim's personal safety. Steven provided ideas and strategies which can be used by victims/survivors to access help to ensure their safety and remain connected to family and friends.

Every practitioner who attended this event reported that after listening to Steven their knowledge of this form of omnipresence abuse had increased. Approaches have already been made to the collaborative event organiser's of ways of beginning to turn this innovative knowledge provided by Steven into measurable actions throughout communities through the Western Domestic and Sexual Violence Partnership and Western Digital Safeguarding Steering Group.

How much did we do?

Range of Organisation Invited to Attend

- 98 organisations from local & regional statutory, community & voluntary sectors booked on event
- 86 participants attended including PSNI, PCSP, DPP & Special School & ED Personnel.

How well did we do It?

Questions & Responses To Survey (30 Respondents)

Question 1:

- The session information was easy to understand: Strongly Agree (26)
Agree (4)

Is anyone better off?

Question 2:

Was the session content relevant to area of the participant's work? (23) Strongly Agree

(6) Agree

(1) Neither Agree / Disagree

Question 3:

Upon completion of the session how did the participant rate their knowledge now? (2) Extremely Confident

(11) Very Confident

(7) Some What

Recommendations moving forward

Question 4:

How likely will you be to recommend this session to others? (25) Very Likely

(4) Likely

(1) Neither Likely / Unlikely

Actions

- Respond to request for further online resource from several participants and general sign posting to SBNI.
- Further training needs were identified and gaps will hopefully be considered for 2026 by WDSVP & WDSP.
- Responses from survey will inform planning for Digital Safeguarding Day (10.02.26)

Did the participants find the event useful?

The use of reports published in social media was very effective to show severity of domestic abuse/ stalking cases in NI. Great knowledge of stalking behaviour and the use of technology in abusive cases. Uncomfortable viewing at times, but very informing in terms of future practice with victims. We get the MASRA reports but the reports fails to report the impact on the victim. I now understand why the mummy I am working with says with exasperating tone that she struggled to get her ex partner out of her home...

The power of coercive control, gas lighting and psychological domestic abuse and to be made aware of all the new legislation with reference to Harrassment, Stalking and Trafficking.

The information being shared was extremely interesting and relevant to my area of work, I learned a lot of new things. I could have sat for a longer session to hear more about it.



L-R Dr Priscilla Magee, WHSCT/CYPSP; Donna Downey, WHSCT, Sonia Campbell, WHSCT; Steven McNeill, SEHSCT & Sandra Armstrong, PCSP.

Within my role in the legal system it was interesting to learn all the different ways a phone could be used to track a victim and this may be something that police need to be looking at during an investigation.