

Probation Board for Northern Ireland – Practitioner Forums

[keywords: *effective practice, professional supervision, staff support*]

Overview

Domestic violence is a significant issue in Northern Ireland and working with perpetrators of domestic violence is complex, demanding, and often highly stressful for the professionals concerned. In 2019 PBNI introduced practitioner forums, held every two months to review those individuals engaged in DV treatment with probation. The forums bring together a range of professionals – including programme facilitators and the treatment manager, the participants’ supervising officers, and staff supporting their victims – to share information between them on any progress made by participants, any changes in their risk profile, and any inconsistencies in the way they present in treatment vs the domestic setting. The forums complement ongoing clinical supervision and treatment management.

Its impact

Outcomes can include revised risk management plans and identification of additional treatment targets. The forums support public protection and victim safeguarding, can act as an early warning system, and enable greater consistency of support for the service user across the interventions and supervisory teams, as well as helping build confidence and address anxieties among those dealing with them. They are also an opportunity for progress made by service users to be evidenced in their real-world context.

What’s special about it

We think this is an example of best practice which is unique to PBNI at the time of writing (October 2024).

Wider applicability

We believe this could usefully be adopted more widely, across jurisdictions, and with other groups of service users.

Further information

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