

## LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR LIDAS

### 1. The Learning and Development Strategy in Context

National Strategies including Call to End Violence against Women and Girls and Together we can end violence against women and girls and Domestic Violence: The Male Perspective, recognises the important role of Learning and Development in working towards the elimination of domestic abuse. Learning and Development can both improve service provision to women men and children experiencing domestic abuse and impact on the prevention of abuse through conveying strong and unequivocal messages about its unacceptability.

The focus of this strategy is on identifying Learning and Development activity required to support improvement in services to women, men and children who are experiencing domestic abuse. It is based on increasing capacity to deliver Learning and Development.

Domestic abuse Learning and Development is essential to enable staff to provide a good service. It is recognised that this Learning and Development Strategy is ambitious, and that a phased implementation will be required across the organisation to allow for collaboration and negotiation and to achieve sustainability.

It is essential that this Learning and Development Strategy is supported by the development of attitudes and behaviour, skills and competencies which underpin effective collaborative working. This requires leadership to ensure that organisational cultures make joint working a key objective and that there is effective support to promote new ways of working across professional and institutional boundaries.

This Learning and Development Strategy should be regarded as a "living" document which will evolve over time. Some of the detail remains to be finalised, which will be a task undertaken by the Management committee and the senior management team

### 2. Definition of domestic abuse

It is clear from prevalence studies that domestic abuse is widespread throughout the world and cuts across class, age, religion and ethnic group.

Abuse is never acceptable, regardless of the gender of the victim or the perpetrator. This should be emphasised at the beginning of any Learning and Development on domestic abuse. Domestic abuse is the physical, emotional, sexual or financial abuse of one person, by another person with whom they are having, or have had an intimate or close relationship.

Domestic abuse (as gender-based abuse), can be perpetrated by partners or ex-partners and can include physical abuse (assault and physical attack involving a range of behaviour), sexual abuse (acts which degrade and humiliate and are perpetrated against their will, including rape) and mental and emotional abuse (such as threats, verbal abuse, racial abuse, withholding money and other types of controlling behaviour such as isolation from family and friends).

In accepting this definition it must be recognised that children are witness to and subject to much of this abuse and that there is some correlation between domestic abuse and child abuse. It must also be recognised that in some families, other family members may be involved in or may participate in the abuse of the woman.

In tackling domestic abuse it is necessary to take account of the specific experiences of particular groups and to ensure that any action/provision is relevant and appropriate to them. The needs of women, men, children and young people who experience additional discriminations, e.g. black and minority ethnic groups, those with no recourse to public funds, disabled women, men and children including those with learning disabilities, older people, those in same sex relationships, gypsy travellers, refugee women, men and children and asylum seekers, women, men and children living in rural areas, women and men with mental illness or mental health issues and women and men with addictions should be mainstreamed through all actions and provisions.

### **3. Aims of the Learning and Development Strategy**

The Learning and Development Strategy's ultimate aim is to assist in the elimination of domestic abuse. In working towards achieving this, the Strategy aims to ensure:

- That at all times LIDAS has resources of people with the necessary knowledge, skills, experience and attitude to achieve present and future objectives.
- It is recognised that any organisation comprises two parts. One is the organisation and the other is the individual employed to achieve the organisation's objectives. The best results will be achieved when there is close accord between the needs of the organisation and those of the individual.

There are therefore two sets of sub objectives:

For the organisation

- To improve the effectiveness and performance of workers who provide services to LIDAS;
- To generate the development of appropriate attitudes;
- To reduce costs related to personnel and to the resources which they operate;
- To raise the general level of skills, motivation and understanding of workers;
- To give the best possible service to LIDAS's client group;
- To have versatile training and learning opportunities which will meet the requirements of LIDAS's growth?
- To create a reservoir of in-depth capabilities and knowledge for as yet undetermined activities which will require a widened perspective and more responsibility?
- To shape the future of LIDAS, particularly in terms of the organisation becoming a learning and development provider.

For the individual

- To improve and develop skills, aptitudes, attitudes and knowledge;
- To realise the optimum potential of workers;
- To contribute fully in their present role and equip themselves for future activities;
- To find enrichment in work activities;
- To realise motivation and job satisfaction;
- To achieve increase in status, recognition, security and opportunities.

#### **4. Requirements of the Learning and Development Strategy**

For the Learning and Development Strategy to succeed it must focus on attitudes and beliefs as well as information and procedures. Domestic abuse is a complex and sensitive issue, which cuts to the core of individuals' personal beliefs and experiences of intimate relationships. It is also the subject of many myths and misconceptions, many of which are widely accepted as reality, but are potentially dangerous to women men, children and young people if used to inform practice.

A shared analysis of the causes of domestic abuse is therefore essential to achieve consistency of approach. The Learning and Development Strategy recognises that "domestic abuse is associated with broader gender inequality and should be understood in its historical context, whereby societies have given greater status, wealth, influence, control and power to men. It is part of a range of behaviours constituting male abuse of power, and is linked to other forms of male violence". It is also important to acknowledge that the attitudes and structures which have supported abuse to date can be changed.

All domestic abuse Learning and Development activities should therefore be underpinned by the above theoretical framework. It should value diversity and acknowledge respect for the individual and their right to live free from the fear of domestic abuse. It should avoid any inferences that domestic abuse is caused by alcohol or drug misuse, poverty, unemployment, stress, or mental illness, although they can contribute to or exacerbate the abuse. In addition, the cultural or religious background of the abuser is not an excuse for their abuse, and women men and children who experience abuse are not responsible.

#### **5. Content of Learning and Development**

The Learning and Development Strategy recognises the need for a comprehensive package of Learning and Development programmes.

The focus initially will be to ensure that all staff are included in the newly reviewed induction process.

The following subject areas/themes have been identified but do not provide an exhaustive list. A full package will be developed and will be issued as a learning and development schedule.

- Nature, extent, effects and causes of domestic abuse
- Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults
- Children and young people's experiences of domestic abuse
- Risk assessment
- Health and Safety at work
- Prevention of suicide
- Specific issues relating to women, children and young people who experience additional discriminations/difficulties (including black and minority ethnic women, children and young people, disabled women, women in rural areas, children and young people, lesbians and older women)
- Responding to men and women who use violence and controlling behaviours
- Awareness of/attitudes to gender issues
- Importance of/reasons for confidentiality
- Empowerment of women, children and young people
- Working with Male Victims

- Issues relating to substance use
- Mental health issues
- Importance of multi agency work
- Leadership and management

The schedule will also take account of the competency framework and the business plan objectives for LIDAS.

## **6. Innovative and evidence based delivery.**

For the first time this learning and development strategy will feature new and creative ways to delivery events. Whilst traditional types of deliver will feature there will be opportunities for participants to engage in mentoring, practice development sessions, self study time with access to research repositories Distance learning, e-learning and the use of new technologies such as web based discussion forums.

## **7. Evaluation**

All learning and development events either internal or external will be subject to evaluation to ensure LIDAS can

- track the development of staff knowledge and skills
- find out if the learning is being applied in the workplace
- identify training gaps and future training needs
- establish if the investment was worthwhile
- inform future training plans and strategy
- ensure training continuously improves

A standard evaluation form will be devised to monitor all learning and development events

## **8. Priorities**

Implementation of this strategy must take account of the cost of learning and development opportunities and of the ability to release workers from their day to day responsibilities. It is possible that in any year more training needs may be identified than can be fulfilled immediately for these reasons

Priorities will be decided primarily though not exclusively on the basis of the benefit they will bring to LIDAS.

## **9. Budgets**

To provide a more effective use of learning and development budgets the practice of each person having a sum of money to spend on training will be replaced by a system managed by the Manager of LIDAS. Staff will be asked to complete a simple needs analysis form and will be assisted in using supervision to identify learning and development needs. This will again be managed by the manager of LIDAS. The will also be a move towards using internally available learning and development activities

## **10. Coordination**

To ensure that correct priorities are given to training and development activities, and that the best possible use is made of available resources, an annual training plan for workers will be produced. This will help identify training and development needs, consider how best they can be met and facilitate the delivery of learning opportunities. Appropriate records will be kept