

Safeguarding Children affected by Domestic Abuse, Venue Cymru, 28 March 2014

Report to Anglesey Sacre

In the morning we were addressed by a variety of speakers

- Lesley Griffiths AM, the Assembly minister for Local Government, gave an update of legislation proposed in the areas of Safeguarding Children from Domestic Abuse, Female Genital Mutilation, and anti-slavery.
- We heard an extremely moving and powerful presentation from a survivor of Domestic Abuse, following almost 20 years of suffering from controlling behaviour and violence. She told how her husband had trapped her by constantly moving around so she had no opportunity to form relationships, she was cut off from her family, she was not allowed a mobile phone or to learn to drive, and she felt an obligation to her children. Eventually she realised that he would never change, got in touch with her family again, and with Social Services. There had never been any previous concerns raised about her children, but they were now placed on the Child Protection Register, and eventually her husband was jailed for 9 years. She praised the support of the Social Services and the police, and told how she had now passed her driving test, had a social life, all her children at home with her, and was happy.
- Paula Hardy, the Chief Executive of Welsh Women's Aid, spoke of the impact Domestic Abuse can have on children, of possible indicators of Domestic Abuse, of why victims sometimes fail to disclose that they are being abused, of how victims can be enabled to disclose, and of the responsibilities of those to whom abuse may be disclosed.
- Professor Lorraine Radford, from the University of Central Lancashire, spoke of how to 'build resilience' in victims of Domestic Abuse, how to help victims to survive without lasting negative effects. One key element is to ensure a continuing relationship with the non-abusive parent.
- Gerallt Evans, a solicitor with the Crown Prosecution service who works on prosecuting cases of Domestic Abuse involving children, spoke about the procedure and issues involved in this, and how children can be supported if they are needed to give evidence.

In the afternoon we had a choice of workshops. I went first to a talk by two representatives of the Probation Service who spoke about how they seek to monitor and support perpetrators of Domestic Abuse during their sentence, and on release from prison if it is a custodial sentence. Secondly, I went to a workshop where we were presented with a number of case studies and invited to reflect on how we would respond if faced with a similar situation.

All in all, it was a very informative day, and very useful for me in my role as one of the Methodist Church Safeguarding Officers in Wales.

Deacon Stephen Roe