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From: **WILLIAM STEVENSON**
Victims Liaison Unit
14 June 1999

R. To see

cc see distribution list below

16 JUN 1999

10678

*Mr McLaughlin
Mr Ferguson.*

PS/Mr Ingram (B&L)

**INTERDEPARTMENTAL WORKING GROUP TO CONSIDER
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BLOOMFIELD REPORT**

Summary

Issue: *Minister's briefing for the Inter-departmental
Group on Implementation of the Bloomfield
Report.*

Timing: *Immediate.*

Recommendation: *That the Minister notes this briefing.*

Background

2. Following the Minister's meeting with the Permanent Secretary from DHSS and Mr Pover from DENI, it was decided to establish an Interdepartmental Working Group with representatives from the NIO and all Northern Ireland Departments.

3. The first meeting of the Interdepartmental Working Group to consider implementation of the Bloomfield Report will take place on Thursday, 17 June 1999, from 9.00 am-10.00 am in the Minister's room, Castle Buildings.

Mr McFall will attend with the following Departmental representatives:-

- Noel Cornick - DANI
- Leslie Frew - DHSS
- Christine Jendoubi - DENI
- Perry McDonnell - DED
- Jim Sullivan - DFP
- Billy Stevenson - NIO

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John McConnell from DOE is unable to attend.

4. Each Departmental representative was asked to submit a short briefing paper outlining:

- what your Department has done to take forward the recommendations in the Bloomfield Report;
- what is still to be done;
- an indication of any resources which have been directed to this issue, or would be required.

5. A summary of the Departmental responses is attached at Annex A, together with a first draft of the outcome of our consultation exercise (Annex B). The Annexes have been distributed to all members of the Interdepartmental Group.

Departmental Responses

6. Apart from the DHSS, which has issued specific guidance on Bloomfield and has sought detailed responses from the HPSS, no department has really addressed the Bloomfield report, over and above what they were already doing for vulnerable groups. Specific questions which could be raised with each Department are:

DHSS

DHSS has issued circulars and sought responses from the HPSS but has itself not directed any additional resources specifically towards victims. They

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have costed implementation of Bloomfield (£16.6m over 3 years) but received only £7.5m as part of a total mental health bid of £38.9m. The tenor of the DHSS response is that victims are unlikely to get a high priority when spending this £7.5m in the context of overall mental health demands.

Appropriate questions or comments might be:

- Bloomfield places a large responsibility on DHSS;
- DHSS has made a start, much needs now to be done.
- If no additional resources are made available how will DHSS encourage additional services for victims within existing resources - prioritisation?;
- has any thought been given to how DHSS might interface with proposals by the Memorial Fund re pain relief and respite care?;
- how specifically is the SSI report being taken forward?;
- Will the needs of victims be factored into any regional plans for the HPSS in NI?

DENI

8. Basically DENI have not introduced any specific proposals in response to Bloomfield. Indeed, the fact that they did initiate work in schools following the Omagh bomb begs the question how have all the children traumatised by previous events been helped. The answer is probably that they have not always been helped.

The need for remedial education has featured largely in our consultation - hence the introduction of the Educational Bursary Scheme. Appropriate questions might be:

- would DENI recognise that there are specific needs of victims of violence which have not been met?

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- How would they see the Educational Bursary Scheme being developed and funded?
- Do they have any Peace and Reconciliation money to allocate?
- How could we promote LLL (Lifelong Learning) with victims - can they have special programmes?
- Can we use the Save the Children research to enhance teacher training in the identification of trauma in children?

DANI

10. DANI's response is based on their contacts with FEAR and their view that there is no support available. Appropriate questions:

- Could DANI provide any support to victims within family/rural communities, ie retraining, counselling, economic development programmes? If not now, is there any scope to develop programmes, maybe using Peace and Reconciliation funds.

11. Reports have not been received from DED, DFP and DOE. They will be forwarded separately if they arrive before the meeting.

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Attendance

12. I will provide support at this meeting together with Mary Butcher. I will be on hand from 8.45 am in the event that the Minister arrives in time for a pre-brief.

William Stevenson

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cc PS/Secretary of State (B&L)
PS/Mr Semple
Mr Watkins
Mr Jeffrey
Mr Maccabe
Ms Butcher
Mr O'Mahony

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