



# Connected

A quarterly newsletter for London refuges produced by Refuge

Fathers 4 Justice is great at pulling off publicity stunts and securing airspace on prime time TV, not so great at explaining the reasons for the alleged injustice against them. They prefer dressing up as superheroes to taking part in constructive debate or providing clear evidence to support their actions.

With so few men denied contact by the courts, shouldn't we be asking Fathers 4 Justice why they cannot see their children?

Meanwhile Bob Geldof tells us that women's unreasonable expectations are leading to increased divorce rates. As a result children and caring fathers suffer. He suggests divorced men and women should share parenting equally. An idea that is all well and good in theory, but which completely ignores the terrible damage inflicted on women and children by violent, abusive men.

Geldof's message is damaging and dangerous. It suggests to abused women that they are responsible for their partner's behaviour and should try to change. It tells women that by leaving they will damage their children.

The reality is that staying with a violent partner places both the abused woman and her children in danger.

Yes, we should be talking about the family, about what is best for a child when a relationship breaks down. But we must never ignore that child's right to safety. As a society we have a duty and responsibility to protect our children.

*If you are a woman who is experiencing domestic violence, get help. Call the 24 hour National Domestic Violence Freephone Helpline on 0808 2000 247, run in partnership between Women's Aid and Refuge. Or visit: [www.refuge.org.uk](http://www.refuge.org.uk)*

## Date for London Wide Helpline Meeting 2005

**Important dates for your diary: London Wide helpline Meetings 2005**

**10th February 2005**

**12th May 2005**

**15th September 2005**

**15th December 2005**

The meetings will be held at Refuge Head Office at

2-8 Maltravers Street, London WC2R 3EE between 2pm – 4pm.



Head Office Refuge, 2-8 Maltravers Street,  
London WC2R 3EE

Office Telephone: **020 7395 7700**

Office Fax: **020 7395 7721**

24-hour National Domestic Violence Helpline:

**0808 2000 247**

Run in partnership between  
Women's Aid & Refuge

### Chief Executive and Company Secretary:

Sandra Horley OBE

### Council of Management:

Peter Wallach (Chair),

Dame Pauline Neville-Jones, Baroness Hamwee,

Cherie Booth QC, Manel de Silva,

Lorraine Ainscow, Ruth Harding, Ruth Rogers,

Barbara Nokes, Ruth Rendell, Janice Panton

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Registered Office: 2-8 Maltravers Street,

London WC2R 3EE

## Refuge website launch

The new Refuge website is going from strength to strength. For those of you who were able to join us at our website launch party we hope you enjoyed the evening. And we'd like to pay a special thanks to The Body Shop team who raised the funds to make the site possible.

When we launched the site to the media at the end of September we managed to secure some

really positive coverage including The Sun, a full page on the [www.ivillage.co.uk](http://www.ivillage.co.uk) and a 15 minute slot on This Morning, ITV, which was great. And thank you too to all those who have sent our website address to their contacts. Since launching the site we have managed to quadruple the average weekly number of visits to our site which is great.

## London boroughs quarterly statistics

Call Summary for Third Quarter (July - September) 2004

CALLS	July	August	September
UK-wide Calls (including London)	2,964	2,992	2,625
London-wide Calls (London only)	1,138	1,173	1,006
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,102</b>	<b>4,165</b>	<b>3,631</b>

### Outgoing Calls From Helpline

Over 5,600 outgoing calls were made, in relation to London calls, for July-September 2004

Reasons & Outcomes for London Calls For Third Quarter (July - September) 2004

REASON FOR CALL	July	August	September	TOTAL
Information / Advice (including legal/housing advice to women; safety planning; advice to refuge workers/social services/agencies etc)	397	415	359	1,171
Talk / Support / Key messages	40	42	40	122
Seeking Refuge Space	607	621	565	1,793
Other	94	95	42	231
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,138</b>	<b>1,173</b>	<b>1,006</b>	<b>3,317</b>

	July	August	September	Total
REFERRALS TO REFUGES / OTHER PLACES OF SAFETY	248	188	146	582

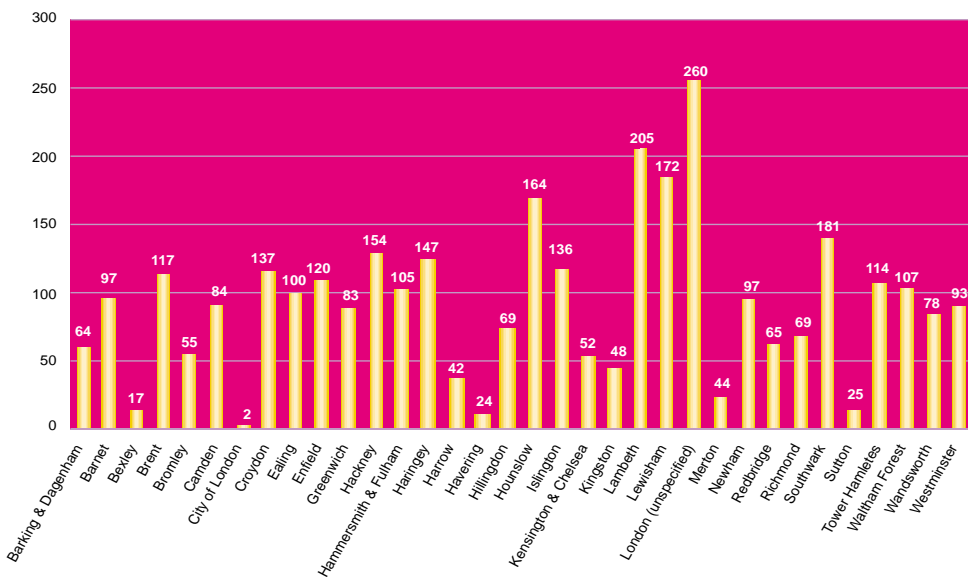
**0808 2000 247** 24 hour National Domestic Violence Freephone Helpline

Run in partnership between Women's Aid and Refuge

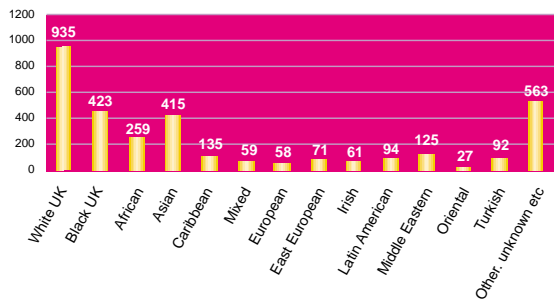
# London boroughs statistics July to September 2004

TOTAL CALLS ANSWERED FROM LONDON JULY-SEPTEMBER 2004 = 3,317

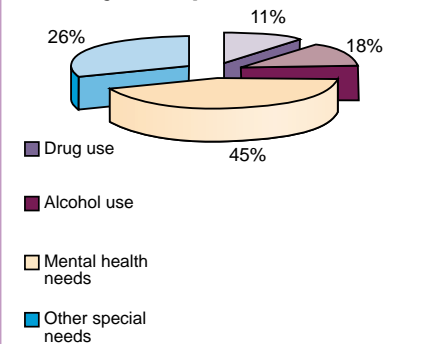
## Breakdown of London calls July-September 2004, by borough



## Breakdown of ethnicity of London callers July-September 2004



## Special needs of London callers July to September 2004



# Sheryl Gascoigne launches new domestic violence website for Refuge



On 29 September, Sheryl Gascoigne celebrated the launch of Refuge's new website for women and children escaping domestic violence.

The new site [www.refuge.org.uk](http://www.refuge.org.uk), which will help the 1,000s of women living in daily fear and terror of domestic violence, is a result of a very successful mobile phone recycling campaign run in over 300 The Body Shop stores across the UK.

Whether you're a woman looking for support, a friend seeking information or simply someone trying to find out more about domestic violence, the site will be an invaluable source of knowledge for all. With internet use and access growing amongst all age groups (58% of adults used the internet in 2003/04\*) the site will help those who feel unable to call the helpline and those who feel it's inappropriate to do so.

Sheryl, who divorced Gazza in 1998 having suffered mental and physical abuse during their

marriage, says: "I know from personal experience that it takes courage and strength to pick up the phone to make the first move. But Refuge's new site will allow women to access information in their own time. And by encouraging women, friends and family to visit the website it will mean that more urgent calls will be able to get through to the helpline. It's fantastic that The Body Shop has worked so hard to get this website off the ground."

The website has been specifically designed and built in response to first hand feedback from women staying in Refuge's safe houses. Above all women wanted:

- Information about all types of domestic violence.
- Help and information for children (the silent witnesses), friends and families.
- Case examples of women's experiences.
- Safe access to the site – the 'hide the site' button immediately removes all Refuge branding and colour.
- Key information in a variety of languages.

Louise Leadbetter, pictured alongside Sheryl, who experienced domestic violence during her marriage says: "I didn't reach out to get help as I didn't really understand what was happening to me. I didn't realise that 1,000s of other women were experiencing similar daily emotional and physical terror. So I just kept quiet. If the Refuge website had been available then I would have been able to log on when my ex husband was at work. I would have understood what I was experiencing, read other



Refuge home page

women's stories and I could have prevented a lot of that abuse. I just hope women find out that the website is there and get the help that is available to them."

Sandra Horley, OBE, chief executive of Refuge, says: "[www.refuge.org.uk](http://www.refuge.org.uk) will provide a key source of information to many groups of people. It will not only cut through the confusion and myths that embroil this issue but will reassure women and children that there is help out there, whilst signposting them to it.

"The website will also act as a very important tool in educating people and changing attitudes

## Refuge 'Don't Ignore It' campaign – going from strength to strength

The Don't Ignore It campaign has been rewarded with a 'highly commended' from the Charity Awards 2004 and has won the Liliith Project's 'Word on the Street Award'.

The Liliith Project praised 'Don't Ignore It' and proclaimed it to be 'A faultless campaign ... which challenged the ordinary person on the street to recognise when domestic violence happens and to take action to stop it.' June

to domestic violence. Domestic violence is a crime and must not be ignored. Logging on could be the first step to saving a life."

Dame Anita Roddick, founder of The Body Shop said: "I'm delighted that the money The Body Shop raised has enabled Refuge to create this fantastic new website which I hope will help vulnerable women across the UK to take their first step towards their new lives."

Celebrity supporters of the new website include:

Denise Van Outen, "I imagine that for a woman experiencing domestic violence the Refuge website would be a huge source of information. It even tells you what your bedroom would be like at a refuge."

Zoe Wanamaker, "Domestic violence has always been such a hidden, taboo subject in this country, but the wealth of information available on Refuge's new website should help to bring the issue out of the shadows."

Baptiste, Refuge project manager, attended the presentation and collected our award in early September.

Thanks to McCann Erickson, our ad agency, which has secured all space completely free of charge, the London Underground poster coverage and cinema coverage continues. In fact since the beginning of the year McCann Erickson has nearly secured Refuge £1

million worth of advertising space which is brilliant. Feedback from the public has been very positive.

In light of our recent website launch we're working on the next phase of the campaign - an internet banner advertising campaign which we'll circulate to you all as soon as we can.

June Baptiste



## Refuge international trip to India to explore domestic violence, August 2004

Domestic violence in South Asian communities is a very serious issue, but it is very often hidden. This is largely due to the fact that by admitting to such issues a woman brings disgrace and shame on her immediate and wider family – and such disgrace is to be avoided at all cost. Violence and abuse that South Asian women experience is often extreme and complex – and often perpetrated by not only the husband, but the wider family as well. Jasvinder's trip to India highlighted many of these problems and also showed that women in India face similar issues to those faced by South Asian women in Britain.

During her trip Jasvinder and her team met with British Embassy staff to discuss linking with refuges in the UK so that British subjects who are taken abroad and forced into marriage can be helped and supported (conservative estimates put the number at 1,000 women who are annually subjected to forced marriage whether in the UK or during a visit to India, Bangladesh or Pakistan under the guise of a holiday or visiting a sick relative). The Refuge team also met with the Delhi Police and the Delhi Women's Police Unit discussing the high

number of murders each year which are linked to dowry issues.

Commenting on her experiences in India Jasvinder said: 'I'm Indian, proud to be Indian. I love everything about my culture. But oppressive cultural practices must not be part of that culture.

'India has opened my eyes to a whole new world. Women in India are second-class citizens, same as the Asian women I see in England. But in England, in terms of understanding the problem, I would say we're scratching the surface and it's far worse, mainly because we don't see or hear enough about what's going on behind closed doors. There's so much denial going on.

'We have learnt a great deal from our trip. Not only have we been able to share our learnings and practice with lots of other organisations, but we have also been able to build some key contacts that will help support women facing domestic violence and issues such as forced marriage in the future.'

**Jasvinder's trip was filmed by the BBC and was broadcast on Newsnight on 25th August.**

## STELLA PROJECT TRAINING OUTLINE

- Up to 30% of men who assault their partners do so when under the influence of alcohol<sup>1</sup>
- Women who experience domestic violence and who also abuse substances are often likely to do so as a **consequence** of their abuse. One study found that violent partners drank more during violence but women drank more after the violent incident<sup>2</sup>
- In a study of inner London treatment agencies in 2000, 30% of women reported physical violence from their current partner<sup>3</sup> although this figure is estimated to be higher due to women's fear and difficulty in disclosing their experiences of violence and abuse
- 50-90% of women in treatment are survivors of current or past abuse<sup>4</sup>

### Survivors of violence often use substances to cope – but can your organisation work with them effectively?

On the 3rd of December the Stella Project are running basic drug and alcohol awareness training at City Hall, at the discount rate of £20 per person.

This fee includes the Stella project toolkit: Domestic Violence, Drugs and alcohol – Good Practice Guidelines, lunch and a full day's training.

The training is comprehensive, cost effective and has already been conducted in several London boroughs.

Please contact the Stella project to find out more

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The Queen's Walk  
London , SE1 2AA  
Tel: 020 7983 4510  
Fax: 020 7983 4241  
E-mail: michelle.newcomb@london.gov.uk  
www.lat.org.uk

**The Stella Project promotes good practice and supports direct service providers across the drug, alcohol and domestic violence sectors in Greater London.**

- 1 Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy For England. Cabinet Office. (2004)
- 2 Jacobs, J (1998) The links Between Substance Misuse and Domestic Violence, Alcohol Concern: London.
- 3 Powis, B., Gossop, M., Bury, C., Payne, K. and Griffiths, P. (2000) 'Drug-using mothers: social, psychological and substance use problems of women opiate users with children.' Drug and Alcohol Review 19, 171-180
- 4 Duffy and Becker (2002) Women Drug Users and Drugs Service Provision. Home Office: London

## Refuge policy activity 2004

### Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Bill receives Royal Assent

On 15th November the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Bill became legislation. Sandra Horley, OBE, chief executive of Refuge said: "Refuge welcomes the new domestic violence legislation and the new powers it brings to the police. Common assault is now an arrestable charge and if a perpetrator breaches an order then this will lead to arrest. We have waited 30 years for legislative change and Refuge is delighted by the government's commitment to tackling this most abhorrent of crimes. The new legislation gives a clear and strong message to perpetrators and society at large that domestic violence is both unacceptable and criminal.

"But it's important to remember that many women don't use the criminal justice system.

The legal system is only one part of the equation and government must get the balance right. For the legislation to work most effectively it must be implemented and specialist services to address both practical and emotional needs of women and children must be provided.

"Refuge looks forward to seeing the government put a national strategy in place, with funding to match, which will ultimately mean that fewer women and children will be at risk of violence and death."

Refuge continues its policy work and is progressing the GP re Parental Separation to ensure child safety concerns are recognised. More to follow in the next newsletter or to download a copy of Refuge's response visit our policy section at [www.refuge.org.uk](http://www.refuge.org.uk)

## General media update

On Monday 11 October Bob Geldof launched the first of a series of 'Geldof on Fathers' programmes. This hour long programme was followed by a documentary about Fathers 4 Justice. In response to both of these documents Refuge wrote the following letter which was published in The Sun, 14 October 2004.

### Sandra Horley, OBE, chief executive of Refuge – The Sun

Bob Geldof and Fathers 4 Justice claim that caring fathers across the land are kept away from their children by bitter exes and unfair court rulings.

For a judge to rule that a father must stay away from his child, there has to be a very good reason. The reality is that less than 1% of fathers are denied the right to see their children following separation.

In many cases the reason is domestic violence.

At Refuge we know the terrible effects on children of witnessing or experiencing domestic violence. We see the trauma, suffering and lasting fear. The priority must be keeping those children safe.

Yet still two children die on average each year during unsafe contact arrangements. Countless others are forced into meetings where they dread coming face to face with their mother's abuser.

Of course it is best for a child to have regular contact with both parents following separation. But most important is the child's safety. And while most fathers can and should play an important role in their child's upbringing, violent fathers are not positive role models.