

National Domestic Violence Helpline run in partnership between Refuge and Women's Aid

In October a new joint database was installed for the national domestic violence helpline. This enables both the Bristol and London teams to access the same data for a caller and for a seamless and efficient service to operate. It has been a huge project over the past year, but the team is now in the process of refining the process.

A reporting module is currently being installed which will allow the helpline team to produce regular geographical statistics based on calls taken by Women's Aid and Refuge helpline staff. Once this is in place the helpline team will circulate the statistics via email. As this system is still being set up we are not able to provide statistics in this newsletter but will provide a full update in the next edition of Connected.

If you would like to submit information for the next quarterly newsletter please contact olivia_lamb@refuge.org.uk



Connected

A quarterly newsletter for London refuges produced by Refuge

Refuge celebrates 35th birthday

In 1971, Refuge pioneered the world's first refuge in Chiswick, West London. It was opened at a time when nobody talked about domestic violence and abuse remained private and kept firmly behind closed doors. Women and children flocked to the first refuge. What had gone on for centuries behind closed doors was at last being challenged.

Thirty five years later, Refuge is the largest provider of emergency accommodation and emotional and practical support to women and children in the country and the leading voice in the campaign to end domestic violence.

Throughout 2006, Refuge will be using the year as an opportunity to celebrate the thousands of women and children the charity has supported over the past 35 years – whilst also using the year to continue to challenge attitudes and reach out to yet more women and children in need of domestic violence services.

To celebrate Refuge's 35th birthday, a £3.5 million fundraising target has been set in order to improve existing services and develop further urgent life-saving services. Areas Refuge would like to grow are:

- Specialist services – psychologists (for women and children), child support workers
- Advocacy – developing the advocacy services for women using Refuge's services
- Training (external) – using Refuge's specialist knowledge to help professionals understand domestic violence and respond to abused women appropriately.

Refuge has a number of events planned throughout 2006 to celebrate this milestone birthday, so if you would like to be involved please contact Rose on rosanna_papararo@refuge.org.uk or on 020 7395 7724.



Patron: Cherie Booth QC

Chief Executive and Company Secretary:

Sandra Horley OBE

Council of Management:

Peter Wallach (Chair),

Dame Pauline Neville-Jones, Baroness Hamwee,

Lorraine Ainscow, Ruth Harding, Ruth Rogers,

Barbara Nokes, Ruth Rendell, Janice Panton

Registered Charity Number: 277424

Registered In England and Wales

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0808 2000 247

Run in partnership between
Women's Aid & Refuge



Refuge hosts 'Everyone's Responsibility' domestic violence conference

15th November 2005

On 15th November 2005, the first anniversary of the introduction of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act, Refuge hosted the 'Everyone's Responsibility' conference.

The conference provided an opportunity for families who have lost daughters/sisters to domestic violence to explore the issues around domestic violence.

Speakers included the chief executive of Refuge, Sandra Horley, OBE and key government officials, including The Hon Mike O'Brien QC MP (Solicitor General), The Hon Justice Toulson (Chairman, The Law Commission), John Dunworth (Domestic Violence Lead, Home Office), and Christine Mann (National Domestic Violence Co-ordinator, Department of Health).

Frank Mullane, who lost his sister Julia and nephew Will Pemberton to domestic violence in November 2003, and his family are the first family in the country to instigate a homicide review. Frank Mullane, who spoke at the November conference, said: "My sister and nephew died nearly two years ago to the day. My family remain adamant that lessons must be learnt to bring about positive change. We

want to see effective domestic violence practices become mandatory for all those working with the abused. Everybody who experiences domestic violence should be given the same level of expert support. No one should be expected to live their life confronted with a postcode response to domestic violence."

Speaking in support of the conference, Sandra Horley, OBE, chief executive of Refuge says,

"Domestic violence is a subject which touches us all – no matter where we work, how old we are, what religion or colour. It is 'Everyone's Responsibility'. People and politicians are beginning to realise that we all have a responsibility to do something about domestic violence. Many of the ingredients for a society free from violence are in place. But only when hitting a woman becomes as unacceptable as drink driving or smoking on the tube, then we can say we have made a difference."

The conference was attended by over 200 delegates. Due to the success of the conference Refuge will host another conference on the same date in 2006.

Julia Pemberton case

As mentioned opposite, in November 2003 Julia and her son William were shot dead by husband and father Alan Pemberton, who then killed himself.

Ever since then Julia's family has been trying to secure a full and thorough homicide review to understand why Julia and William did not receive the protection they deserved. Although the family presented their case to the House of Commons in March 2005 during an adjournment debate presented by Julia Drown MP, they have been struggling

ever since to ensure an extensive review. Refuge has been supporting the family through this process.

On 1 February, the Royal Court of Justice granted the family a full judicial review. Not only is this a great result for the family, but it is of huge importance to abused women and children. This will mean that Julia and William's deaths will be better understood and serious lessons will be learned which in turn will mean that the lives of abused women and children will be protected.

Policy update

Forced marriage consultation

Refuge, along with many other voluntary organisations, has recently submitted a response to the government's consultation paper on forced marriage. We support the view expressed in Southall Black Sister's response to the consultation paper, that it is not necessary to create a separate criminal offence of forced marriage. Existing legislation, if properly implemented, would be as effective as primary legislation. Southall Black Sisters is also urging the government 'to address civil law, access to

legal aid, provision of alternative safe and secure housing, financial support and increased awareness in schools as some alternative means by which to signal to society that forced marriage is a crime', Refuge fully supports these recommendations.

To read Refuge's response in full please visit the policy pages of Refuge's website www.refuge.org.uk

Refuge launches new 2006 campaign

Refuge has recently launched a new advertising campaign focusing on the thousands of children who experience domestic violence every year.

The four emotive adverts have run on the London Underground and are running in national press, on the back of black cab seats and on poster sites. A radio campaign was also launched at the beginning of February. The new campaign uses children's own words taken from diary entries and letters. The adverts show that many children experience domestic violence in silence. The aim of the campaign is to raise awareness of the fact that domestic violence incidents are witnessed by children.

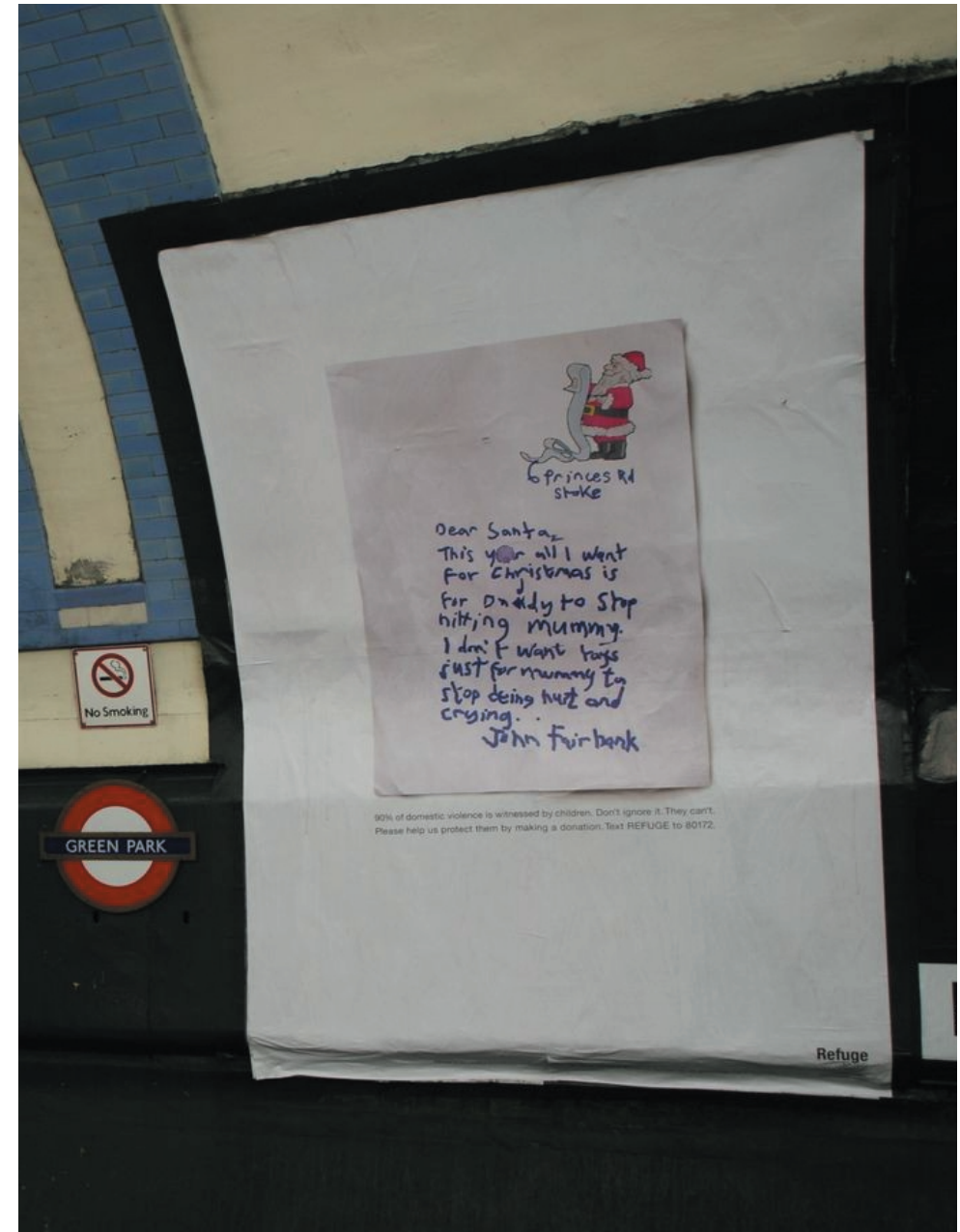
One of the executions shows a diary note from a young child which reads: 'I hate dad when he hits my mum. It is really scary when he gets angry. I close my eyes really tight when he hits her. I try to plug my ears so I can't hear mum cry. I wish he wasn't so mean to mum. I wish I was bigger so I could stop him!'

Sandra Horley, OBE, chief executive of Refuge, says: "Everyday at Refuge we support hundreds of children who have

experienced domestic violence. For many children, coming to a refuge may be the first time that they will have spoken out about domestic violence. With the right understanding and support Refuge can help them overcome the trauma.

I hope that the **'Don't Ignore It. They Can't.'** campaign, which highlights genuine experiences of children, will help people to understand just how many children are seriously affected by domestic violence. Everybody has a responsibility to challenge domestic violence and in so doing protect children - today's children are tomorrow's future."

Celebrity supporter, Ruby Wax said: "Refuge's new advertising campaign shows exactly how alone and frightening it can be growing up with domestic violence. Everyone must realise that domestic violence is a crime that has far reaching consequences. Refuge is doing a great job supporting women and children who have experienced domestic violence, but I know they wish they could do more. I'm urging everyone to stop ignoring this abhorrent issue which affects thousands of children in this country every day."



New report slams lack of government leadership on violence against women in the UK

On 23rd November 2005, Julie Ann Boyle and Jill Saward, both survivors of sexual violence, and Liz Longhurst, Frank Mullane and Carol Faruqui, all relatives of women who have been murdered, delivered a report to Downing Street on the Government's failure to protect women in the UK from violence. The report gives the Government just one out of 10 for its efforts in this area.

The report is published by the new End Violence Against Women (EVAW) Coalition of which Refuge is a member. The Coalition has been formed because violence against women – including domestic violence, forced marriage, crimes in the name of honour, rape and sexual assault, trafficking, female genital mutilation, sexual harassment and stalking – is at crisis levels in the UK.

'Making the Grade: An independent analysis of Government violence against women initiatives' comprehensively examines each Government department's performance in tackling violence against women. It finds a picture of disarray across government with little or no co-ordination between departments and many not understanding the relevance of violence against women to their work.

The EVAW Coalition Campaign is calling for the Government to develop and implement a joined-up integrated violence against women strategy, which would include:

- All levels of Government working to an agreed definition of VAW, working within the framework of international human rights law.
- Locating work on VAW within the gender duty in the current Equalities Bill.

- Setting up a single over-seeing body to develop a coherent and comprehensive plan of action.
- Working with and building on the work done by Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.
- Making sure each Government department knows about VAW and how it fits in to their policy.

And in the longer term:

- Studying the causes, consequences and nature of VAW so we know what's going on.
- Conducting awareness-raising through education and public information programmes, leading to attitudinal change.
- Ensuring that accessible, just and effective criminal and civil remedies are in force against all forms of VAW.
- Training for key agencies (including the police, the Crown Prosecution Service, the judiciary, social services, immigration and health services) on the impact of violence and the remedies available.
- Devising minimum standards of provision for all key agencies that are implemented and monitored.
- Ensuring full access to emergency, legal, support and rehabilitation services for all women,
- Ensuring adequate resources to implement effectively all elements of a strategy.

The EVAW coalition's report on the UK Government's performance on violence against women will be annual. You can view the report at:

www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk .



The UK Gold Book

A guide to refuge and domestic abuse services 2006

The UK directory which provides public contact details for refuge and domestic violence services for women and children.

Featuring a unique indexing system which allows access to categories including:

- Geographical Area
- Sexuality and Gender
- Language
- Accessibility
- Religion
- Specialist services for Black and Minority ethnic women

An essential reference tool for domestic violence survivors, the refuge network and professionals in housing, criminal justice, health and welfare agencies who work to support women and children affected by domestic abuse.

The UK Gold Book costs £25 and is available from Women's Aid, PO Box 391, Bristol BS99 7WS. Call 0117 944 4411 or email info@womensaid.org.uk for an order form.

Published by Women's Aid Federation of England, 2005 Registered Charity No: 105151 ISBN: 0 907 817 12 2