

Manchester Domestic Abuse Strategy Newsletter

Issue 5
November 2008

Welcome to the fifth issue of the Manchester Domestic Abuse Strategy newsletter, providing regular updates and information on the work across the city to tackle domestic abuse.

Alcohol links with domestic abuse

Manchester's recently-launched Alcohol Strategy describes the close connection between alcohol consumption and domestic abuse.

It also sets out measures to prevent and tackle these problems.

Full story – page 5.



Helpline celebrates 30-year anniversary

The Women's Domestic Violence Helpline (WDVH) celebrates its 30th birthday this month.

Since 1978 the helpline has provided a service to women who are experiencing or have experienced domestic abuse.

Karen Harrison, Helpline Co-ordinator, has worked with the team for the last five years. During this time the helpline has gone from strength to strength, and the project has recently won an award for Excellence in Volunteering.

Karen says: "We have a great team of volunteer telephone advice workers who we rely upon to provide a frontline service. They give advice and support to women who may be distressed, vulnerable and scared as a result of domestic abuse."

"The volunteers complete a two-day domestic abuse awareness training session and then they

progress to the buddies training, which involves 12 three-hour sessions working alongside an experienced volunteer or a paid worker. Once the volunteer feels confident with the information systems and handling the call, they will move on to the helpline."

The team of 15 volunteers handle just under 8,000 incoming calls every year. There has also been a steady increase in email requests and visitors to the website.

Future plans include a name change to the *Women's Domestic Abuse Helpline*, offering more training to both volunteers and outside agencies, and more partnership working.

For more information on the helpline visit www.wdvh.org.uk

30 years of achievement – See page 4

The Manchester Crime and Disorder Partnership defines domestic abuse as any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between people who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender. This includes forced marriage where one or both parties do not give consent to marriage.

Gay man tells the moving story of how a relationship turned into a nightmare

'Vicious beating from my bully partner put me in hospital'

I met my ex-partner John through a friend, after being introduced at a party. We dated and quickly became more involved.

We'd been together for around eight months when things started getting heated between us, and to begin with it was 'silly' things like raising his voice, sometimes shouting, maybe even smashing the occasional plate or two.

For a long time I put it down to him being stressed at work, or under a lot of pressure from his family [as he wasn't 'out' to them and they frequently quizzed him about his private life].

But soon it became more serious. John started bullying me verbally and lashing out at me and was completely unpredictable – almost anything would set him off.

Maybe I was late home from work or we'd run out of something that he needed or wanted – and then the shouting would start; everything would be impossible and somehow my fault.

No matter how much I tried to calm him he would end up pushing me or swinging a punch at me, sometimes he would even grab my throat and choke me, often backing me into a corner so I couldn't put up any resistance. He was so much stronger than me that I couldn't defend myself.

Then, afterwards, he would apologise under his breath, explain how he'd lost his temper and promise that it wouldn't happen again. But it did - almost weekly for another three months. His abuse toward me was completely calculated.

The last time he attacked me was a day when I hadn't been paid by my employer because of a problem with the payroll system. Even though we were going to be paid a few days later, when I told John about it at home that evening he flew into a rage, accusing me of 'not going to work' or 'taking time off'.

He threatened to call my boss, thinking that I was lying, and when I remarked that he couldn't as the office was closed; he turned to me in an instant and smashed my face with his fist, full force.

I immediately fell to the ground and was unconscious for a few minutes - I'm not really sure how long. When I picked myself up to go to the bathroom, I walked straight into him storming from the hallway back in to the living room and got knocked to the floor again.

He called me an idiot and kicked me in the chest, and walked right over me whilst I was struggling to breathe on the floor.

He was ripping paperwork and bank statements out of our dresser, ranting and raving about money and what I'd been spending... none of it made sense.

I dragged myself across the floor and into the bathroom to clean myself up. I remember feeling dizzy and sitting on the tub to try and balance myself before completely blacking out again.

When I woke up I was in hospital and completely disorientated. I tried to sit up but felt such a sharp pain across my back and chest that I had to lie down again. I drifted in and out of

consciousness for most of that day and have vague memories of various doctors and nurses checking up on me.

When I finally fully awoke the next day, John and my best mate Pete were at my bedside. I tried not to look or feel frightened as I knew Pete would have no idea what had happened.

When the doctor came on rounds and asked me how I'd hurt myself, John was still in the room and I felt powerless to say anything against him, so I lied and said I couldn't remember.

John chipped in, telling the doctor how I'd slipped down the stairs on a dog toy, and that he'd found me in a pile half way down the staircase. I didn't disagree. I didn't dare to. I had suffered a broken nose, fractured jaw and ribs.

When I was discharged from hospital I considered calling the police but I was so petrified of what John would do to me if he were to get arrested that I didn't. I tried talking to my friends, but as John was such a

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nice guy publicly none of them really believed me and one even accused of me being an attention-seeker.

I felt very down and dark for weeks. I tried the Citizens' Advice Bureau and other agencies to try and seek support and even applied for local authority housing under domestic abuse but everything was geared towards women & children back then, and because I hadn't reported him to the police, I was told there was nothing that could be done to help me

Luckily, I was able to move in with a friend and end my relationship, and, with the help of an LGBT counselling service, eventually learnt to deal with the emotional trauma of being bullied and physically abused, which has made me a stronger, more resilient person and thoroughly unwilling to accept behaviour like that in my life again.

When I was abused by my partner, there were very few men's services to offer support with domestic violence, which added to the reasons why my ex-partner wasn't brought to justice, and why, even now, I'm so cautious with men in new relationships.

But these days, there are fantastic helplines, websites, support groups and counselling services which can help, regardless of age, sexuality or culture.

Domestic abuse against anyone is a crime, which means the people committing these offences against you are criminals and they can be brought to justice.

Confiding the abuse you are suffering to a close friend/relative and reporting it to the police are the first steps to freedom and a life away from fear, pain and solitude. You will be taken seriously and offered every support available.

Police view

Detective Inspector Jayne Shackleton, Head of Greater Manchester Police's Public Protection Investigation Unit, which includes the Domestic Violence Unit, and lead officer for domestic violence in the city says: "It is a great pity that the young man who writes so movingly about his own experience of domestic abuse did not feel able to contact the police.

"We know that as a police force we have more to do to encourage reporting of domestic abuse from lesbians and gay men.

"So I would like to take this opportunity to reassure lesbians and gay men that GMP takes all cases of domestic abuse very seriously, and that the police respond to domestic abuse in lesbian and gay relationships in the same way as they would to domestic abuse in heterosexual relationships.

"If you are experiencing domestic abuse I would urge you to contact the police whose only concern will be your safety and well-being."

Domestic abuse in the LGBT community – some FAQs from the Broken Rainbow website

Q: I don't get hit. How can it be domestic violence?

A: Domestic violence is not always physical, and that means that the signs may not be obvious. DV can involve controlling a person's contact with their friends and family (isolating them), destroying property, verbal threats in private or public, etc.

Q: Does lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender domestic violence exist?

A: Broken Rainbow's national lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender domestic violence helpline took 800 calls between January and April 2008. We spoke to callers for over 35 hours on LGBT DV, signposting, listening, talking through issues.

Surveys show that at least 1 in 4 LGBT people experience domestic violence. LGBT domestic violence exists. It is real.

Q: When two women fight isn't it just a lover's tiff?

A: There is nothing blasé about violence in a relationship and referring to it this way minimises the impact it has and is one reason why LGBT domestic violence remains a hidden issue.

Q: When two men fight isn't it just sex games like S&M?

A: S&M is a consensual sexual practice. Domestic violence is abusive and one sided and features no such consent. Sexual role play is not the same as domestic violence.

Q: Isn't lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender domestic violence the same as heterosexual domestic violence?

A: In some ways it is, but there are very important differences. One main point is the lack of support services available to LGBT DV sufferers. Also, another is the issue of having to 'out' yourself to report the domestic violence.

Q: How can it be domestic violence if the smaller person hits the bigger one?



A: Size and stature is not reflected in one's abusive behaviour. Just because someone is smaller, does not mean they can not hit you, destroy your possessions, threaten to 'out' you to your friends and family, control your finances or belittle you in front of others.

Q: What benefits are there to me calling Broken Rainbow and not a mainstream helpline?

A: LGBT people inherently know the issues and problems another LGBT person will face. Our LGBT workers will not judge you for your sexuality; they deal with those experiencing domestic violence and those perpetrating it.

Further support

The Lesbian Community Project, 49-51 Sidney Street.
0161 273 7128

Village Citizens' Advice Bureau - advice@thevillage.org.uk
0161 834 2005

Inner Enigma (trans support) - info@innerenigma.co.uk
0845 838 1264

Female born/raised transsexuals at morf.org.uk.

Age Concern Manchester – LGBT Worker Sue Morris.
0161 833 3944

Icebreakers (gay & bisexual men) icebreakersmanchester.org.uk

Manchester LGB Asylum Group - 07816 992218

Triangle Club (for deaf LGBs) - triangle_club@hotmail.com

Bisexual support - biphoria.org.uk

Young lesbians and gay men - lgym.org.uk

Domestic Abuse Christmas Vigil

5pm December 10, Peace Gardens

Come along and support the Domestic Abuse Christmas Vigil. As well as lighting candles to remember the victims of domestic abuse, we will also be cutting a cake to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Women's Domestic Violence Helpline.

Last year's vigil.



Helpline's 30 years of successes and achievements

1978: The WDVH started out as a drop-in centre in Portland Street in Manchester city centre. Women who had lived and worked in refuges volunteered their time to run the drop-in.

1987: After receiving grants from Social Services and the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities (AGMA) to extend the drop-in hours, WDVH moved into the Town Hall and offered a dedicated helpline service.

1992: WDVH moved into the Corn Exchange in Manchester and received 845 calls from women seeking safe accommodation.

1993: The project changed its name from Women's Aid Centre and was officially known as the Women's Domestic Violence Helpline.

Manchester City Council Voluntary Sector Policy & Grant Unit provided funding for a part-time co-ordinator. WDVH installed a second phone line and received 2570 calls.

1994: A full-time co-ordinator was employed with part-time funding. WDVH started to provide training and consultancy to outside agencies.

1995: Through Safer Cities funding, the WDVH offered a part-time Community Helpline Language Service (CHLS) for 12 months.

1996: The Safer Cities funding continued to support the CHLS and a dedicated part-time Inter-agency Worker. Greater Manchester Probation Service (GMPS) provided funding for a Women's Support Service, which would work with partners or victims of men, on the perpetrators programme.

1997: GMPS increased the funding to the Women's Support Service so that they could provide 23 hours of work per week.

1998: The Volunteer Training Programme was developed.

2003: WDVH won an award for *excellent services to women in Manchester* in celebration of the centenary of the formation of the Women's Social & Political Union.

2005: WDVH secured a three-year contract with GMPS to continue to support the new Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme (IDAP).

2006: AGMA gave a grant to develop a database, buy computers and update the WDVH website.

2007: The WDVH received 7758 calls to the helpline; 2931 were seeking safe accommodation. The WDVH received recognition for partnership working with GMPS.

Specialist courts bring new hope for victims

People subjected to domestic violence have been promised increased prosecution rates for attackers with the opening of a special court in Manchester.

The court, whose staff and magistrates have expertise in cases of domestic violence, aims to increase the number of prosecutions in Greater Manchester, which has reached 4,127 since last year - 2007-8 - with a 72.1 per cent successful conviction rate.

The Specialist Domestic Violence Court -SDVC - which will operate from Manchester magistrates' court, has separate entrances, exits and waiting rooms so victims do not come into contact with attackers.

Victims will receive pre-court welfare support and witnesses will be met by staff at court.

Det Sgt Victoria Shaw said: "I am delighted by the announcement that victims of domestic violence will now be able to receive extra help and support. In other force areas across the country these courts have been very effective in securing convictions against domestic abusers.

"The more convictions we achieve, the stronger the message it sends out to victims that they can come to

police in complete confidence. We will not rest until those who commit these terrible crimes are brought to justice. Domestic violence is an awful crime and it can make victims feel prisoners in their own homes.

"These new courts will go a long way to showing victims that they need not suffer in silence. They can come to us and we will work tirelessly to bring the perpetrators to justice."

Earlier this year, nine SDVCs were opened in the North West, including South Cheshire, Burnley and Preston.

The Manchester court is one of six SDVCs now opening across the country, bringing the total number to 104, as part of the government's efforts to improve support and care for domestic violence victims.

Home Secretary Jacqui Smith said: "We know this approach is working - the number of prosecutions has doubled in the past four years and an average of 70 per cent of cases now result in a successful prosecution.

"These six additional Specialist Domestic Violence Courts will mean that even more victims can benefit from these services."

Alcohol abuse and domestic abuse – an intimate relationship

Key findings from a Home Office report into alcohol and intimate partner violence back up concerns highlighted in Manchester's recently-launched Alcohol Strategy.

Domestic abuse is frequently committed by perpetrators who have been drinking or who have alcohol problems, and many victims, although less likely to have been drinking, also have alcohol problems.

Manchester's alcohol strategy outlines how agencies will work in partnership to address the health and social problems and the crime and disorder that can result from alcohol misuse in the city. Domestic abuse is highlighted within the strategy as an area of particular concern.

Although there is limited local data about the link between domestic abuse and alcohol abuse, national research suggests that a third of women who experience domestic violence also have alcohol problems, meaning that approximately 5,500 women in Manchester who experience domestic abuse will also have problems with alcohol.

Numerous studies also indicate that a substantial proportion of perpetrators had drunk alcohol just before the incident, with problem drinking often found amongst perpetrators.

Reviews indicate that rates of alcohol abuse and dependence among perpetrators of domestic violence may be two to seven times higher than in the general population.

Key findings from a Home Office document give more detail to this picture.

- ◆ The British Crime Survey indicated that 32% of incidents of intimate partner violence were committed when the perpetrator was under the influence of alcohol.
- ◆ Offender-only drinking is common in incidents of intimate partner violence, whilst victim-only drinking is rare.
- ◆ Alcohol abuse is common among perpetrators, and 'problem' drinking predicts intimate partner violence over time.
- ◆ Heavy drinkers are at increased risk of intimate partner violence victimisation. Many women develop alcohol 'problems' following victimisation.

Alcohol is likely to contribute to intimate partner violence in a variety of ways. Levels of consumption relate to the likelihood and severity of violence. Alcohol appears to be particularly important in escalating existing conflict. As with all areas of alcohol-related violence, the characteristics and consequences of alcohol-related violence are complex.

Many studies show that the likelihood of violence increases with higher levels of alcohol consumption and that violence is more severe when alcohol is involved.

Research evidence suggests that the victim's alcohol consumption heightens their risk with one research study finding that victims of domestic assault had higher levels of alcohol consumption than non-victims and that the risk of violence increased with increasing levels of drinking.

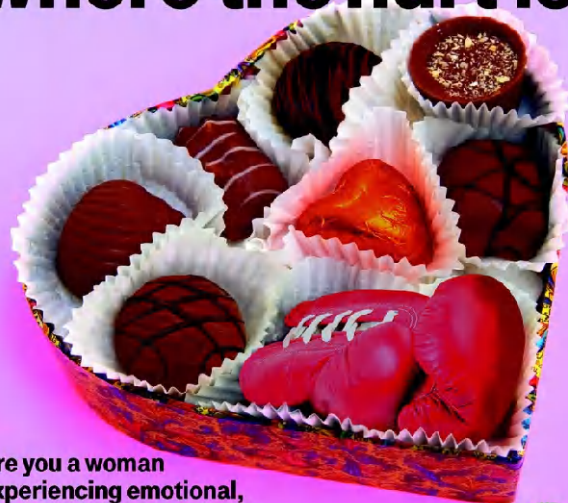
There is also evidence that victim's alcohol problems appear to be worsened by their experiences of domestic violence, with the victim drinking as an effect of their abuse.

Efforts to improve women's safety therefore clearly need to focus on reducing the victim's alcohol consumption as a way of protecting her from violence in addition to tackling the consequences of abuse on her alcohol consumption.

Children are also at particular risk in households where there is alcohol abuse and domestic abuse. There is clear evidence of the harm that children experience from parental alcohol-related domestic violence, and increasing evidence that women and men who have been abused as children are at increased risk of developing adult substance

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Is your home where the hurt is?



**Are you a woman
experiencing emotional,
physical or sexual abuse?**

If you need to talk to someone in confidence
call the Women's Domestic Violence Helpline...

0161 636 7525

Monday - Friday: 10am - 4pm



◆ **Continued from previous page.**

problems – either drugs or alcohol. Children need to be protected now to prevent them from becoming the perpetrators and victims of tomorrow.

Within such a context, Manchester's alcohol strategy seeks to prevent and tackle alcohol abuse by improving alcohol education and awareness, improving treatment and care for those misusing alcohol, increasing support for young people and their families and tackling alcohol-related crime.

Specific measures to tackle alcohol abuse and domestic abuse include the training of front-line workers in brief intervention (advice for problem users that has been proved to be effective), targeting alcohol awareness campaigns around problem home drinking; providing information about problem alcohol misuse through local settings such as the GP, and encouraging workplaces to develop policies on alcohol use.

The need for alcohol treatment services for women victims of domestic abuse is highlighted, along with the need to ensure education on alcohol abuse is included with any voluntary perpetrator programme developed in the city.

It is clear that Manchester has serious problems with domestic abuse and alcohol abuse and that the two are inextricably linked.

Through the Alcohol Strategy and the Crime and Disorder Strategy it is hoped that a joint approach can be put into effect to reduce the misery caused by this very intimate relationship.

Please note, information from this article is taken from www.homeoffice.gov.uk and www.alcoholconcern.org.uk, which contain detailed references for the research mentioned.

For a copy of Manchester's Alcohol Strategy, please contact the Drug and Alcohol Strategy Team on 0161 219 6922.

Conference spotlights sexual assault services for teenagers

The challenges of providing co-ordinated and relevant sexual assault services to teenagers and young adults is the focus of Manchester's St Mary's Sexual Assault Referral Centre's 7th Annual Conference, which will take place on February 25 and 26 at Manchester Town Hall.

Vernon Coaker, Home Office Minister for Police, Security and Community Safety, will formally open the two-day conference and join keynote speakers.

The annual conference provides a valuable insight into sexual assault services in the UK to practitioners working in a range of agencies, including police, health, voluntary agencies, charities and social care.

Areas of debate will include dilemmas in sharing information, how to approach child-on-child sexual contact, difficulties in age determination of victims from images, and the changing nature of teenage communication.

For booking details contact: Claire Gledhill on 0161 276 6515 or visit www.stmaryscentre.org.

Forced Marriage Conference

The Race Equality Foundation, Henna Foundation and Manchester City Council are hosting a conference on Monday 1 December to explore the complexity around Forced Marriages and "Honour" related abuse.

Power, Pride & Punishment is at the Radisson Edwardian Hotel, Peter St, Manchester, and is FREE.

To find out more please call Amina Lone on 0161 839 9799 or email amina@racefound.org.uk

To coincide with the implementation of the Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act 2007 on 25 November 2008, Rights of Women is holding a new programme of half day seminars and training:

Forced marriage: is legislation the answer? - Seminar
Cardiff, 18 November and London, 20 November.

Forced marriage: the new law - Training course

London, 11 February; Manchester, 4 March; Birmingham, 11 March; Leeds, 18 March and Cardiff, 25 March 2009.

Places are allocated on a first come, first served basis and are limited. Seminars and courses are open to women only. See the website for details of other courses.

Malinda Mukuma, Training Officer, Rights of Women, 52-54 Featherstone Street, London EC1Y 8RT. Tel: 020 7251 6575/6. Fax: 020 7490 5377. Textphone: 020 7490 2562.

St Mary's centre offers 24/7 help

St Mary's Centre, the UK's first sexual assault referral centre, provides a comprehensive and co-ordinated forensic counselling and aftercare service for anyone in the Greater Manchester area, regardless of sexuality, who has been raped or sexually assaulted.

Victims of rape or sexual assault are offered a forensic medical examination, emergency contraception, support, counselling, and screening for sexually transmitted services and HIV counselling.

Telephone support and information is also available on 0161 276 6515 – day and night.

There is always a member of the team 'on call' who will try to help. Support and counselling is also offered to a client's partner, family or friends.

St. Mary's Centre is based at St. Mary's Hospital, Hathersage Road. www.stmaryscentre.org

**If you or someone you know needs help, contact:
Women's Domestic Violence Helpline 0161 636 7525 10am- 4pm (Urdu and Punjabi spoken Mon & Tues 10am-1pm and Wed 1pm -4pm).**

- **National 24 hour Helpline 0808 2000 247.**
- **Help for Male Victims 0808 801 0327.**
- **Advice for perpetrators can be found from Respect 0845 122 8609.**
- **In an emergency call 999.**

For more information on Manchester's Domestic Abuse Strategy please contact Juliet Appleby, Manchester Partnership Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator by email to j.appleby@manchester.gov.uk or tel 0161 234 3177.