

The Wish Centre Behaviour Change Programme Newsletter



Welcome to the latest installment of the WCBCN. This is an opportunity for us to share with you, the referrers, information relating to our perpetrator work monthly – namely the Gateway to Change workshop and the Make the Change programme. This newsletter will allow us to share the latest DA related news and topics and case studies and feedback with you, not only on how the programme works, but how important your referrals are to making a difference in the lives of those affected by DA/DV by enabling them the chance to make changes to their behaviours and, ultimately, their lives and the lives of those affected.

Important Updates for August 2023

We are pleased to introduce our new Behaviour Change Manager, Karina-Leigh Bentham who can be contacted by email - Karina.Bentham@thewishcentre.org
Welcome to the team, Karina!





INFORMATION ON SUBMITTING REFERRALS

We understand that time is precious when supporting people in the work we all do. In order to save you waiting time with referrals, there are a few key bits of information you may need to know.

- *There is a distinction between Make the Change and Gateway to Change. Gateway is a 2-session awareness raising workshop and comes with no report on completion. Make the Change is the full perpetrator programme which runs between 16-22 weeks (depending on the outcome of the assessment) which comes with a court accepted report upon completion.*
- *Make the Change and Gateway to Change are not anger management courses. They are for behaviour change in relation to DA and DV.*
- *We can only look at referrals relating to DA/DV towards an intimate spouse or ex/current partner.*
- *It is vitally important to complete the referral forms in as much detail as possible, providing relevant contact details where applicable. This saves time when processing the forms and enables the facilitator to have as clear a picture before going into any assessment.*
- *Men must acknowledge that their behaviour is or could be classed as abusive and want to change this.*
- *It's important to know that a referral does not guarantee a place. Acceptance on GTC and MTC is subject to assessment.*

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Blackburn & Darwen District Without Abuse

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Domestic Abuse in the Media

UK Businesses to Get Free Government Tool to Tackle Economic/Financial Abuse

Financial Secretary to the Treasury, Victoria Atkins, has revealed that UK businesses and charities are in line to gain significant advantages from a complimentary interactive handbook. This resource aims to assist their employees in recognizing and addressing instances of economic abuse during telephone interactions with customers. 95% of women who experience domestic abuse report experiencing economic/financial abuse. Victoria said –

"The government passed the landmark Domestic Abuse Act, and I am determined to build on that commitment to help victims. Economic and financial abuse can be less understood than other forms of domestic abuse, which is why it is vital organisations share best practice with one another whenever they can. That is why I've asked HMRC to work with charities and experts over the summer to produce a publicly available interactive guide which staff from any organisation which speaks to customers will be able use."

Economic abuse, which domestic violence charity Refuge estimates 16% of adults in the UK have experienced, is when an individual's ability to acquire, use and maintain economic resources are taken away by someone else in a coercive or controlling way. Details are forthcoming.

Groundbreaking Court Decision in Domestic Abuse Death

The family of a woman who tragically ended her own life following a history of domestic abuse has expressed their enduring struggle for justice, spanning several years, in their pursuit of an inquest verdict categorizing her death as an unlawful killing.

Kellie Sutton, aged 30, was discovered unconscious at her residence in Welwyn Garden City on 23 August 2017, a home she shared with her partner Steven Gane. While a prior inquest conducted at Hertfordshire Coroner's Court had initially determined her passing as suicide, this pronouncement has now been overturned.

The family of Ms. Sutton has labeled this new determination as "groundbreaking." Remarkably, this is believed to be the inaugural instance wherein an inquest has yielded a finding of unlawful killing in a case where a woman took her own life following a history of domestic abuse. The jury found that had further investigation or action been taken by police, it may have prevented the death.

News From Around the World

US Supreme Court Gun to Rule on Domestic Abusers Owning Guns

The U.S. Supreme Court has decided to take up a case that has the potential to grant individuals deemed to pose a credible threat of violence against their partner or child the ability to maintain ownership and usage rights of firearms. The case centers around a 1994 amendment to the Federal Firearms Act, which forbids individuals actively under domestic violence restraining orders from possessing firearms. The case is to be heard in Autumn 2023. It follows Zackey Rahimi, a resident of Arlington, Texas, in the ongoing case. In February 2020, Rahimi consented to a protective order subsequent to allegations of assaulting his former girlfriend. Despite the explicit prohibition against firearm possession in the order, Rahimi was reportedly linked to five shooting incidents in and around Arlington from December 2020 to January 2021. Following the discovery of firearms at his residence by law enforcement, Rahimi admitted guilt in contravening the Federal Firearms Act.

Domestic Abuse in the Media

49% of Survivors Do Not Recognise What They Experienced as Domestic Abuse; research suggests.

A substantial portion, over 49%, of individuals subjected to controlling and coercive behaviors fail to recognise their encounters as instances of domestic abuse.

A study conducted by the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) has revealed that nearly half, specifically 49.3%, of those who have endured coercive control were unaware that their ordeal constituted domestic abuse. Conversely, only 29.6% accurately identified their situation as falling within the scope of domestic abuse.

As we reach the eight-year anniversary of the criminalisation of coercive control, this research shows that 15.5% of survivors did not wish to answer whether they perceived their experiences as domestic abuse and 5.6% did not know if what they experienced was domestic abuse.

Dr Emma Katz, author of *Coercive Control in Children's and Mothers' Lives* said: *"Coercive and controlling behaviour, especially from men towards women and children, is still routinely trivialised, normalised, or even romanticised as a sign of love and devotion."*

In 2017, a representative survey of 4,000 ordinary young UK men aged 18-30 found that 33% of these men agreed that 'a man should always have the final say about decisions in his relationship or marriage', while 25% agreed that 'men should use violence to get respect, if necessary'.

Katz said: *"What we see in these views is that male violence, possessiveness, entitlement, and authority over women are still quite widely approved of. In this climate, it isn't surprising that many people are left confused about where controlling behaviour from men crosses the line into abuse."*

Women's Aid said: ***"If something doesn't feel right in your relationship, it probably isn't."***

News From Around the World

Republic of Ireland - Fully paid domestic violence leave to start in autumn.

Victims of domestic violence will soon be able to receive their full pay if they need to take leave from work, making Ireland the first European country to introduce paid leave for domestic abuse victims. Workers will have to disclose the type of leave they are taking to their employer, but do not have to provide any evidence.

Domestic violence leave will be formally introduced in the autumn with the publication of regulations setting out the rate of pay and guidance for employers, currently being developed by Women's Aid.

The new form of leave was introduced as part of the Work Life Balance Act, which was passed earlier this year.

Minister for Equality Roderic O'Gorman said: *"Domestic violence leave gives a victim of domestic violence the chance to access support without impacting on their employment and income."*

"It is important that they can take the leave without worrying about losing income or being put at more risk. Ensuring that they can receive their full pay will go a long way to help with this."

We need to talk about... Smart Technology



In the digital age, smart technology has revolutionised the way we interact with the world around us. These innovative devices have brought convenience and efficiency into our lives, but for some, they have also become insidious tools of control and manipulation. For those trapped in domestic abusive relationships, smart technology poses grave dangers that go far beyond mere inconvenience.





In the confines of an abusive home, smart technology can act as an invisible adversary, enabling abusers to exercise their power and maintain dominance over their victims. As more devices become interconnected through the Internet of Things (IoT), abusers find new avenues to exploit these technologies for their sinister purposes.

One of the most alarming aspects is how IoT devices can be used for surveillance. Smart home security cameras, for instance, can be easily manipulated by the abuser to monitor the victim's every move, invading their privacy and instilling fear. Internet-connected voice assistants can become yet another instrument of abuse, with perpetrators using them to listen in on conversations or control household appliances in a menacing display of power. Moreover, abusers may take advantage of location tracking features on smartphones and other devices to monitor the victim's movements, making it challenging for them to escape or seek help discreetly. The constant fear of being tracked adds to the psychological torment that victims endure daily.

Social media platforms and messaging apps can also be double-edged swords. Abusers may use them to isolate their victims, cut them off from friends and family, and spread harmful rumours or manipulate online interactions. These actions further weaken the victim's support system and amplify their vulnerability.

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The increasing prevalence of smart home automation further complicates matters. Abusers can remotely control locks, lights, and thermostats, creating an atmosphere of constant surveillance and intimidation. The victim's home, the one place they should feel safe, becomes a digital prison.

Breaking free from such a toxic environment can be daunting. Even if the victim manages to physically leave, the abuser's access to smart devices might persist, perpetuating emotional abuse and stalking from a distance.

Recognising the dangers of smart technology in abusive relationships is crucial for developing strategies to protect victims. Companies must prioritise user safety, implementing robust security measures to prevent unauthorised access to smart devices. Public awareness campaigns should emphasise the potential risks of technology misuse and educate victims on how to safeguard their digital presence. The issues have been discussed in parliament this month with the term "technology-facilitated abuse" being the definition used.

Furthermore, authorities must adapt to the digital dimension of domestic abuse, investigating cases involving smart technology misuse and providing appropriate resources and support for victims. The figures are staggering already.





Coco Khan, writer for The Guardian, states – "Between 2018 and 2022, the domestic violence charity Refuge saw an increase of 258% in the number of survivors supported by their tech abuse team. The problem is, despite the lightspeed adoption of smart tech, making sure it's safe and fit for purpose hasn't kept the same pace. Until recently, there was no legal requirement for a smart product to be secure at all – mandatory safety tests were much more concerned with things like electrical fires – and it was left to manufacturers to mark their own homework when deciding if security was something they wanted to invest in. Some did, some didn't."

In this brave new world, the benefits of smart technology should never come at the cost of human safety and well-being. By raising awareness, advocating for stronger safeguards, and supporting victims, we can work towards harnessing technology for a brighter, safer future, free from the unseen shackles of abuse.



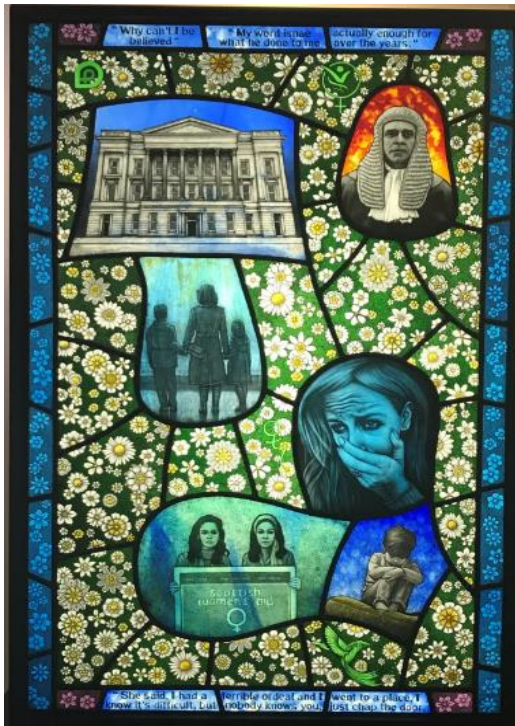
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Glass Walls Art – Shining a Light on Domestic Abuse







A community-driven endeavor is underway in Scotland, seeking to heighten understanding about domestic abuse by means of captivating art and the inspiring stories of women.

Stained-glass art boasts a rich narrative tradition, historically adorning church windows to communicate tales in an era when literacy was limited. In this context, it serves to give voice to a narrative that deserves wider recognition. The emblematic act of illuminating a subject that lingers in obscurity lends glass a compelling role in conveying this narrative.

The emblem of a stained-glass hummingbird encapsulates the grace, tenacity, and optimism of the women who have triumphed over domestic abuse and have become integral to this initiative.

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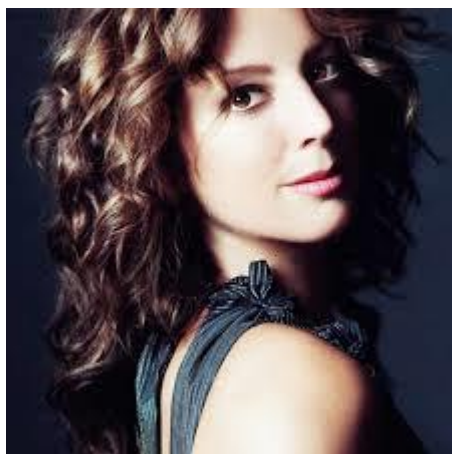
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Songs About Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault

Music possesses a tangible influence on society, serving as a catalyst for social interaction and connection. Our personal encounters with the music we listen to remain profoundly intimate and emotionally charged yet the rhythm, tone, and phrasing evoke sensations and convey significance that transcend mere lyrical content and have a way of allowing people to empathise and relate to somebody's experience more in depth. Since starting work at The Wish Centre, I have been hearing songs all over the place which have struck me quite intensely with their descriptions of DA/DV and thought it would be interesting to share some of these with you each month.

Sarah McLachlan







“Good Enough”

Sarah McLachlan sings about a woman in an abusive relationship who feels that nothing she does is good enough. Speaking with Addicted to Songwriting, McLachlan said: *“That song has been such an amazing experience for me because I've learned so much from it. There are so many different stories that I attach to it now. But it sort of came from, initially really missing my best girlfriend. It started out as fiction, about a couple in which the woman was pretty much alienated by just about everybody, because her husband was really abusive and domineering, which sort of somewhat mirrors*

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my mother and father's relationship. And basically, I am the friend coming in, saying, 'Hey, you deserve more than this, why don't you come with me, and I'll take care of you.'"

Good Enough - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZjKPJbtghvs>

Suzanne Vega







"Luka"

Victims of abuse often present familiar excuses for their injuries, like saying, "I lost my balance" or "I walked into the door." These are among the multitude of justifications that many victims of abuse will provide for their injuries. In the song, the protagonist is speaking to a downstairs neighbor in their apartment building who will have heard the disturbing events that occurred late at night. Luka diligently strives to safeguard their abuser by attempting to persuade the neighbour that the situation is nothing serious or not what they think they heard. Though the song was originally written about child abuse, Vega has acknowledged how powerful and relevant the song is to men and women experiencing domestic abuse.

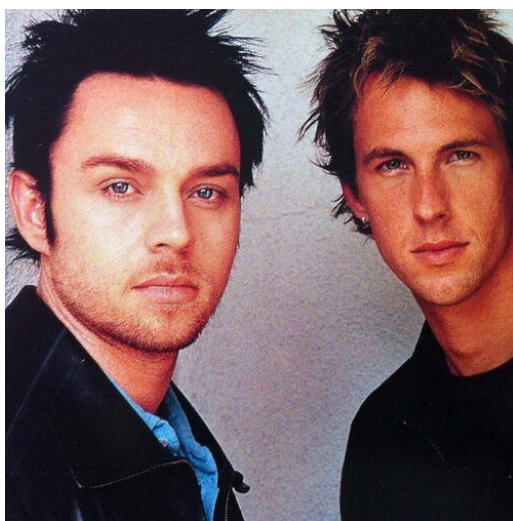
Luka - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VZt7J0iaUD0>

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Savage Garden



“Two Beds and a Coffee Machine”

This song narrates the story of a woman ensnared within an abusive harmful relationship. In a bid to shield herself and her children, she frequently escapes and seeks refuge in cheap hotels furnished with double beds and a simple coffee maker. She's aware that financial obligations loom large, realising her inability to sustain herself independently, inevitably foreseeing her eventual return to her place of origin – the DA relationship. The song was written from Darren Hayes' firsthand experience as a child.

Two Beds and a Coffee Machine -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yIXrYN6pYHk>

The Beatles



"Run For Your Life"

"Run for Your Life" finds its place on The Beatles' 1965 album Rubber Soul, predominantly crafted by John Lennon with a collaborative touch from Paul McCartney in the writing process.

The song's perspective delves into that of a possessive and abusive man, who issues ominous threats of harm, even death, towards his partner should he ever discover her with another man. The tone resonates with intense menace, and he addresses her as "little girl."

This song has faced intense criticism for potentially endorsing aggression and violence towards women.

Run For Your Life - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yzHXtxcIkg4>

End of Programme Participation Feedback – PJC



What has been your main learning from attending the Make the Change programme?

Identifying different aspects of abuse, breaking the abuse cycle, and the impact abuse has on the people closest to us.

Has it changed your views/ reflections to previous experiences of domestic abuse?

Yes, most definitely, it has made it less of a taboo subject to discuss and easier for me to open up about it.

What do you hope to achieve in future relationships?

A more balanced and respectful understanding of others' needs and of my own, better communication between myself and my wife especially.

What part are you going to play in having a non-abusive relationship?

Be more open and less critical of myself, listen more and react less.

How do you feel about N (wife) and B (child) now you have completed the programme?

I admire my wife in her understanding and reasoning during this difficult time, I will be more of a father figure and set clear boundaries agreed with my wife – rather than act as a friend. Have more patience with B and give time to her rather than force her to do what I want straight away.

Do you feel you have a better understanding of other people's feelings and perspectives?

Yes, most definitely the programme has helped me to gain a clearer understanding.

What was difficult for you on the programme?

Reacting to previous experiences, and the subjects around children – especially the phone recording to the emergency services that was played back to me.

Domestic abuse is..

An incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening, degrading and violent behaviour, including sexual violence, in the majority of cases by a partner or ex-partner, but also by a family member or carer. It is very common. In the vast majority of cases, it is experienced by women and is perpetrated by men.

<https://www.womensaid.org.uk/information-support/what-is-domestic-abuse/>

***Please do continue to
send referrals for
GTC/MTC to
info@thewishcentre.org***