

The Wish Centre Behaviour Change Programme Newsletter



Welcome to the latest instalment 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 will allow us to share case studies 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 June 2024

- The Online MTC/GTC workshops were a success! Thank you to everyone who attended. Please drop me an email if you are interested in attending a future session - Andrew.mcauliffe@thewishcentre.org





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.*
- *If open/known to Family Court/CAFCASS additional information/documentation will be requested.*
- *Men must acknowledge that their behaviour is or could be classed as abusive and want to change this.*
- *It is 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

Women's justice charity unveils training programme for defence lawyers.



A charity led by lawyers, dedicated to holding the state accountable for violence against women and girls, has launched a training program for criminal defence lawyers. This program aims to help them understand the dynamics of domestic abuse to better represent accused victims. The Centre for Women's Justice (CWJ) has found that legal gaps often lead to the prosecution of domestic abuse victims without considering their abuse experiences.

The Centre director Harriet Wistrich said – *"What we are trying to do is explain our understanding and analysis from working with women who are victims of abuse, understanding why women do not disclose why they remain in relationships where they are victims of abuse, why they might send [loving] messages to someone abusing them. We are trying to get across the context for lawyers so they can much more ably represent these women. We see so many miscarriages of justice... it is [about] the context, which can help build an actual defence."*

The training programme comprises four online training sessions and can be booked online here - <https://www.tickettailor.com/events/centreforwomensjustice1/1263666>

Women's Aid launches campaign to highlight domestic abuse during Euro 2024



Women's Aid is raising awareness of domestic abuse during Euro 2024 with a fundraiser, reassuring survivors, "You are not alone." Influencer and personal trainer Alice Liveing, a survivor of teenage domestic abuse, is leading a new campaign to address the rise in domestic violence linked to football matches.

Women's Aid head of media Teresa Parker told the PA news agency: *"Campaigns like this bring attention to domestic abuse, a prevalent issue often hidden behind closed doors. While football does not cause domestic abuse, incidents can spike after big football games, so it is vital we signpost to support and also start important conversations to let survivors know they will be believed if they speak out."*

One study has shown a rise of up to 38% in cases of domestic abuse after football matches, the charity said.

Domestic Abuse News from Around the World

IRELAND - Report highlights 'Alarming Increase' in Domestic Abuse



Women's Aid Ireland reported a record 40,048 domestic abuse disclosures in 2023, an 18% increase from 2022. The highest in its 50-year history, these included 21,974 cases of emotional abuse, 7,851 of physical abuse, 4,297 of economic abuse, 4,478 of child abuse, and 1,448 of sexual abuse. Nine women were killed in 2023, bringing the total to 266 since 1996 according to Women's Aid's Femicide Watch.

Sarah Benson, chief executive of Women's Aid, described the number and nature of disclosures made as "utterly appalling."

"It is shocking that in our 50th year of service to women, we are still receiving record disclosures of domestic abuse," she said, adding that the number of disclosures was "just the tip of the iceberg. One in four women in Ireland is subjected to domestic abuse and there are also so many children, families and whole communities also impacted," she said, adding that multiple forms of abuse were often combined, constituting coercive control.

Domestic Abuse in the Media

Guernsey looking to expand their Domestic Abuse law.



Drink spiking, stalking and non-fatal strangulation could be made specific offences in Guernsey under a new law. A register may also be created for convicted domestic abusers to reduce the risk of reoffending. The island's Home Affairs Committee is considering adding a second phase of proposals to the Domestic Abuse Law 2024 which is now in the final stages of consultation.





It is expected to be put in front of the States for approval by the end of the year.

Committee member, Deputy Sue Aldwell, says: "This significant piece of work will go a long way toward protecting victims of these horrible offences and ensuring our courts and law enforcement has the powers to punish offenders."

These new measures aim to protect survivors and their families. The Committee says it would like to get into more schools to spread awareness of domestic abuse and update existing legislation to bring it into the 21st century. Guernsey's first Violence Against Women and Girls meeting was held in June with issues from domestic abuse to workplace inequality highlighted.

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Domestic Abuse within the LGBTQ+ Community - Why is Pride Month Important?

By Andrew McAuliffe-Shave






As a gay man, Pride month is a very important time. Pride Month is a celebration of diversity, resilience, and the ongoing struggle for equality everyone within the LGBTQIA+ community faces.

It gives us a chance to look back and give thanks to all those who have come before us and fought so hard to enable us to have the rights we have today. (Please take the time to look up the Stonewall riots at the very least.) There is still much more work that needs to be done but I am immensely grateful to live in a country that allows me the same rights and freedoms to be the person I am and to love the person I love. However, it is also a time to address the unique challenges that the community faces, including domestic abuse. Domestic abuse in this community is often underreported and misunderstood. The statistics in and of themselves are shocking.

Stonewall's national surveys from 2008 and 2011 reveal that one in four lesbian and bisexual women have encountered domestic abuse in a relationship. Additionally, nearly half (49%) of gay and bisexual men have experienced at least one instance of domestic abuse from a family member or partner since the age of 16. Trans individuals might be at an even greater risk; a Scottish study found that 80% of trans people had suffered domestic abuse from a partner or ex-partner. Also, according to SafeLives'

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latest dataset, only 2.5% of all survivors accessing domestic abuse services in England and Wales identify as LGBTQIA+. Furthermore, from March 2017 to March 2018, just 1.2% of cases discussed at MARAC involved LGBTQIA+ victims or survivors. In the world of domestic abuse, the queer community is largely unseen.

As a survivor of historic domestic abuse, highlighting intimate abuse within the LGBTQIA+ community during Pride Month is crucial for several reasons. It is often misunderstood, partly due to societal stigmas, deeply ingrained homophobia and bias, and a lack of targeted resources.





Raising awareness helps to dismantle the stigma and silence that surrounds domestic abuse in LGBTQIA+ relationships. Traditional narratives about domestic abuse often centre on heterosexual couples, which can marginalize the experiences of queer individuals and make it harder for them to seek help. Current studies show that up to 80% of all LGBTQIA+ victims of DA never report the abuse to the police. From my own experience, I can relate. The police did not take it seriously and even made hurtful jokes and comments to my face, in front of my abuser. There was zero signposting to any service that could help me, and this ultimately led me to being isolated and alone. Suicide rates among the queer community stand at around 44% compared to 26% of heterosexual people. Support is immensely important to save lives and by bringing these issues to light, we validate their experiences and promote inclusivity.



Education is a powerful tool for domestic abuse prevention. Many people, including those within the LGBTQIA+ community, may not recognise certain behaviours as abusive due to a lack of awareness or understanding of healthy relationship dynamics. Public education campaigns during Pride can provide vital information about what constitutes abuse, how to recognise it, and where to seek help.

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There is also a severe lack of funding for services that provide support for LGBTQIA+ individuals which in turn creates additional barriers when seeking help, such as discrimination from some service providers or a lack of understanding of LGBTQIA+ history and relationship dynamics. A recent report found that there is a huge lack of specialist support for LGBTQIA+ victims of domestic abuse across England and Wales. Out of 803 full time frontline domestic abuse support workers (known as IDVAs) there are only 3.5 that are LGBTQIA+ specialists. No funded LGBTQIA+ 'by and for' domestic abuse services exist in the Southwest and Northeast of England, or in Wales. There are no LGBTQIA+ specific services for perpetrators and/or perpetrator programmes. The Domestic Abuse Commissioner is calling for a dedicated funding pot of £262.9m for specialist 'by and for' services including for LGBTQIA+ survivors.




Addressing domestic abuse during Pride Month reinforces the core values of the LGBTQIA+ movement: equality, respect, and dignity for all. It reminds us that the fight for queer rights must include ensuring safe and healthy relationships for everyone in the community and standing up to abuse in all forms. Everybody deserves a loving, caring relationship and abuse has to end for everyone. Nobody should be left behind and I believe that that every member of the LGBTQIA+ community deserves to live free from fear and harm. Be your awesome, unique, authentic self this Pride month.

For more information about the Stonewall riots, check out this wonderful article which beautifully puts the events in illustrative form – <https://www.npr.org/2019/06/28/733500331/why-we-remember-stonewall>



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Make the Change Case Study - Mick



Mick was a self-referral to the Make the Change perpetrator prevention programme. At the time of his assessment Mick disclosed that he had used physical and verbal abuse towards his current partner Sarah over the course of 30 years. Abuse had been witnessed by the couple's two children now adults. The physical abuse had included kicking Sarah and on various occasions throwing things at her with one item being substantial and would have resulted in a serious injury if it had made contact with her at the time. There was also a lot of name-calling and emotional abuse that had taken place over many years, often with the two children present during incidences.

Mick had some understanding of the impact of this on the children, but this had not been enough to correct the behaviour he was exhibiting, and some learning was certainly required to assist in the process of him being able to work towards making some changes. He was faced with a conversation of having to leave the family home if these changes did not take place.





Of note in this case are the following points: The children are now adults and have both found the confidence to tell their father that they have made the decision not to have their own children due to what they were subjected to throughout their own childhoods, along with stating they feel the situation impacted to such a level it ruined their lives.

Mick advised his motivation for undertaking the programme was to become a better person and be the man his partner deserves while working towards being a calmer individual. Mick felt his anger would flare up in seconds and he would not consider his actions before exhibiting the abusive behaviours. Along with wishing to learn about how domestic abuse affects the children.

In terms of Mick's background and engagement with the programme, Mick had grown up in a home where his parents both drank and shouted a lot. He would often hear this and see the change in them when they were drunk and fighting and that it scared him. Mick

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feels his drinking problem stems from his childhood and feels he like is father gets angry very quickly over little things. Mick had tried many times to reach out for help with his anger issues and his drinking but said he was met with either dead ends entirely or on one occasion has attended some form of counselling but stated the counsellor ended up telling him more about his own life than the other way around, so he felt this was not helpful.

During the course Mick was open and honest about his accounts of his own abusive behaviour and as time went on was much more able to reflect in a productive manner. As each incident was discussed Mick became more aware of the true impact that his behaviour was having and had previously had on his partner. He was able also to identify that his abusive behaviour was impacted by alcohol at times and so a conscious decision to drink much less was made.

At the time of being assessed for Make the Change Mick advised that he had never undergone any previous courses other than the counselling sessions mentioned above that were nonproductive.

Mick was allocated a facilitator who could work one to one with him to accommodate the fact he was not local to the group sessions. The course started in January 2024. This worked really well for Mick who always attended his sessions.





Initially, Mick showed himself to be uncomfortable speaking openly and there was a little reluctance to engage in an open manner during the weekly sessions. As each session progressed, he was encouraged to open up and reminded that it was a safe space in which he would not be judged but rather challenged in a productive way to openly discuss his views of what had happened in his relationship with a view to assist him to see things from new perspectives there in helping him with any future conflict that may present in his relationship which would be beneficial to both parties himself included.

Mick began to question his beliefs and to properly consider his responsibility in perpetrating abuse towards his partner in a new way that saw him being able to take the responsibility for his own responses with less thought processes around being stuck on an inability to change since it had gone on so long. Mick came to the session one week with a pleasant surprise that he had utilised some of the advice discussed in the session the previous week and what would have previously been conflict between himself and his partner, had seen him respond with both hesitation to allow some thinking time and a response that for the first time in many years did not result in his partner afraid or upset. This highlighted to Mick that there were things he could do to facilitate change to take place in his relationship for the better and that all hope was not lost as he had previously come to think and feel.

Micks partner Sarah was contacted by the team's IDVA, gaining valuable feedback which informs the facilitator's work with Mick. In doing so we have also ensured that as a victim

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Sarah is aware of how-to safety plan and where to go to for help. Mick's partner told the IDVA that she had seen changes of a positive nature in Mick during his time on the programme and that she had high hopes he would continue to present as calmer as time passed, of note she stated he was not responding immediately to a trigger and had developed an ability to walk away rather than reacting when things were potentially about to become heated.

Mick completed the Make the Change programme just before summer 2024 and is of the opinion that he has learnt some valuable things. In particular he referenced the time out strategy and colour breathing, two techniques that clients learn during their time on the programme to defuse and give time to respond to challenging situations positively and safely. Mick went as far as stating when the end of the course was approaching that he felt it was a shame, which highlights how much he had taken from attending the programme. Mick was signposted to another charity that offer anger management programme work which he had been trying to get access to for many years without success through his GP. Mick has reported that he has made contact with the charity, and they have given him an assessment appointment with a view to possibly taking him on to their programme so he may continue his journey towards becoming the calmer and non-abusive individual he set out to become.




This case serves to highlight the importance of courses like Make the change as Mick had gone from being an individual who would become very angry very fast over the smallest of things and often become so abusive the risk to his partner was at times very high, to being able to step away, defuse himself and his emotions to such a level he is able to respond in a safe manner leaving his partner less afraid and less at risk of any further harm. Although this is the start of Mick's journey in terms of change it has given him the building blocks on which to work from, previously this was not there for this male and his home environment was very unsafe.

Sabrina Stobbs

Behaviour Change Facilitator

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***Please do continue to
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