



Meeting the needs and promoting the rights of women who have experienced domestic abuse

# Independent Choices newsletter

[www.wdchoices.org.uk](http://www.wdchoices.org.uk) Volume 2, Edition 1 March - October 2010

## Welcome to our Autumn 2010 newsletter

**We are having a busy year with involvement in campaigning, direct support services and at a strategy level across Greater Manchester. We work toward our vision that 'All women and their dependents are made aware of their rights and offered choices so that they can live without the fear of domestic abuse' and we are grateful to do this work with our partners. We hope you find this newsletter informative and we would be happy to hear from you if you would like to know more about what we are currently doing.**

**Sam Priestley** Chief Officer

International Women's Day at Manchester Town Hall



### END THE FEAR CAMPAIGN

#### 'End the Fear' was the first Greater Manchester-wide domestic abuse public campaign.

For the first time ever agencies from across Greater Manchester have worked together to run a campaign to urge victims of domestic abuse, their friends and families as well as those committing the abuse to seek help and advice over the World Cup period. Independent Choices played a key role in the partnership campaign during the World Cup tournament in June - July 2010.

The Campaign was supported by all ten boroughs of Greater Manchester as well as Greater Manchester Police, Greater Manchester Public Health Network, and a range of voluntary organisations.

Figures show that calls to the Greater Manchester Domestic Abuse Helpline rose by 187 during June, which included England's three-week World Cup campaign, compared to the number of calls received the previous month. The helpline received 448 calls in May, while in June, with England matches against USA, Algeria, Slovenia and Germany, 635 people contacted the helpline.

Greater Manchester Police recorded 353 incidents of domestic abuse on the day England went out of the World Cup after a 4-1 defeat by Germany.

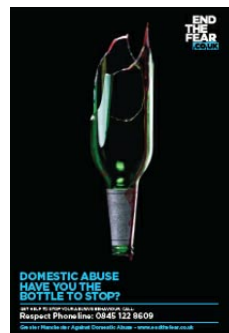
Apart from New Year's Day, it's the highest number of domestic abuse incidents recorded in a day so far this year and is 15.7 per cent higher than the same day in June last year.

Rowetta - of X Factor and Happy Mondays fame helped to launch the campaign on 7th June by unveiling a window display on Market Street in the city centre, which showed the images to be used throughout the campaign. Rowetta has escaped an abusive relationship and said: "There are a number of peaks in domestic abuse throughout the year. Evidence shows that the combination of a major sporting event and good weather leads to a significant rise in domestic abuse. I've been in a violent relationship and know how hard it can be to get out.

This campaign aims to make sure that anyone suffering knows how to get the support they need to leave an abusive relationship and start re-building their lives."

The campaign received over 40 pieces of high profile media as well and being

displayed on buses and on the public screens in Manchester city centre. The campaign also involved the redesign of the [www.endthefear.co.uk](http://www.endthefear.co.uk) website that now covers all of Greater Manchester domestic abuse services. The posters of the campaign can be found on this site.



# We welcome you to actively support Independent Choices



## Fundraising

As we hear on the news, the North West is going to one of the hardest hit regions in the recession and women are going to be amongst the worst hit. In the North West, the rate of women's unemployment has increased at almost double the rate of male unemployment since the start of the downturn'. (TUC 2009). We have 7% female unemployment in the region. We envisage the needs for our services to go up effecting the demand on the Helpline services. We too will be affected by the cuts and so we are stepping up our fundraising efforts at this vital time. We believe however a little can go a long way!

Independent Choices as part of our update on the website now called [www.wdchoices.org.uk](http://www.wdchoices.org.uk), have also included a fundraising page which enables direct fundraising through - Virgin money giving website (VMG).

Alternatively you can visit the VMG site yourself and if you're feeling motivated to support us then start a fundraising page of your own for Independent Choices just go to [www.virginmoneygiving.com](http://www.virginmoneygiving.com), search for Charity:- Independent Choices and follow the link.

All efforts and funds are useful to us, if you have an idea and would like to discuss this further please email [finance@independentchoices.org.uk](mailto:finance@independentchoices.org.uk) or call **0161 636 7535**. We are very interested to hear from you.

## Become a Member

In August we carried out a Membership drive to encourage support of individuals interested in seeing our vision and objectives fulfilled to become members of Independent Choices. Membership forms can be obtained by emailing [chair@independentchoices.org.uk](mailto:chair@independentchoices.org.uk).

## Join the Board of Trustees

From our panel of members we are looking to select new Board of Trustees members. In particular we are looking to welcome people with skills in the areas of Finance, Law, Business, Human Resources and Local Community Engagement. All applicants must demonstrate an interest in our vision and aims, bringing a commitment to make a difference.

## In November 2010 we are launching a new Helpline Placement Programme

We are inviting domestic abuse practitioners in the region to gain some experience of domestic abuse helpline work and listening skills and to commit to 46 hours of work at the Helpline during November 2010 - March 2011. The programme will provide interagency experience and support us post-Christmas as this is a busy period for our services. If successful we will look to roll out the programme again later in 2011. For an information pack email: [helpline@independentchoices.org.uk](mailto:helpline@independentchoices.org.uk) or call **0161 636 7525** and speak to Karen.

## Training and consultancy available

Independent Choices can provide training and consultancy to your agency. We have competitive rates with a sliding scale and can be flexible to design bespoke training on request. Training can be full day or half day and also carried out within team meetings.

Areas of training include: Introduction to Domestic Abuse, Domestic Abuse Awareness, Domestic Abuse Crisis Service and Helpline Good Practise. Different types and forms of domestic abuse, training for professionals working with domestic abuse, domestic abuse services in Greater Manchester - a local response.

Training volunteers to work with domestic abuse, Forced Marriages, No Recourse to Public Funds, working with BME women in DA situations, harm reduction and DA, Good Boundaries with women. We will also provide consultancy and team building work within women's organisations and teams.

In October 2010 we are starting a new joint training commitment with DAWES (Domestic Abuse Women's Employment Service) that operates through GMPERS. This training will be targeted towards employers and relates to women at work affected by domestic abuse. For more info email: [admin@independentchoices.org.uk](mailto:admin@independentchoices.org.uk)

## NATIONAL DOMESTIC ABUSE INTERAGENCY NETWORKING

### In August we were interested to visit to Rights of Women in London

We also visited Respect in London who run the Respect male perpetrators line (122 calls from Greater Manchester in 2009). Respect also runs the Male Helpline for male victims of domestic abuse (95 calls from Greater Manchester in 2009). (Respect envisage these calls will rise with increased services in 2010). We discussed with

Respect about the training and services that they offer and asked their advice and support for greater links to regional working. Respect have already been advising other groups and offer comprehensive training and were very amenable to be a support into the future.

This work built on our experience and talks with the National Women's Domestic Abuse Helpline late last year at WAFE (Women's Aid Federation England) and we continue to maintain strong links on a monthly basis.

# The 16 Days of Activism



## Against Gender Violence

**(25th Nov - 10th Dec) is an international campaign originating from the first Women's Global Leadership Institute sponsored by the Center for Women's Global Leadership in 1991.**

Participants chose the dates, November 25th which is International Day Against Violence Against Women and December 10th - International Human Rights Day, in order

to symbolically link violence against women and human rights and to emphasize that such violence is a violation of human rights. This 16-day period also highlights other significant dates including:

**November 29th** - International Women Human Rights Defenders Day,  
**December 1st** - World AIDS Day,  
**December 6th** - which marks the Anniversary of the Montreal Massacre.



The 16 Days Campaign has been used as an organising strategy by individuals and groups around the world to call for the elimination of all forms of violence against women. In 2010 the international theme is Structures of Violence: Defining the Intersections of Militarism and Violence Against Women, more information can be found at [www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/16days/home.html](http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/16days/home.html)

More information will be out in October about 16 days of action work across Greater Manchester during 2010.

### WOMEN'S SAFETY SERVICE UPDATE



WSS is a service contracted by Greater Manchester Probation Trust to provide an advice and support service to women when their partners or ex-partners have been convicted of an offence in the context of domestic abuse and have been sentenced to attend the Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme (IDAP).

The Women's Safety Service also supports women when their partners or ex-partners are attending the Healthy Relationships Programme in prison.

The team continued their attendance at MARAC, MAPPA and Local Review Meetings for IDAP cases. We have a strong multi agency approach and regularly make referrals to around 80 community agencies across the 10 boroughs. In 2009 the WSS worked on safety planning with 442 women across Greater Manchester.

#### A snapshot of work done in a recent period by WSS cases supported during April - August 2010

|              |            |
|--------------|------------|
| Bolton       | 19         |
| Bury         | 11         |
| Manchester   | 29         |
| Oldham       | 10         |
| Rochdale     | 15         |
| Salford      | 23         |
| Stockport    | 21         |
| Tameside     | 7          |
| Trafford     | 10         |
| Wigan        | 18         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>163</b> |

### OPENING THE SHUTTERS

## International women's day

During March 2010 we started a project called 'Opening the Shutters'. The aim of the project, which is ongoing, is to celebrate, through art and images, the 'story' of women who have survived domestic abuse.

To examine through art, the moment of 'change' for women who have experiences of domestic abuse. The initial work was done with the help of a small grant from Manchester City Council. We engaged a community artist, Beate, to carry out sessions of one to one work with women who have used or engaged with our services. The hope was to create with these women 6 - 7 pieces of Art, primarily Photography or creative writing to use on our website and in order to inspire other women. The images/writing could also be used for possible in future publicity. We hope to share the progress of this project at a small event on 1st December 2010 and within International Women's Day next year... watch this space!



**99%**  
 said **"YES"**

**99% said "YES" to services for women by women...** For International Women's Day 2010 we attended the Manchester Town Hall event and carried out a survey of 100 women. Of this survey 96% said they would use domestic abuse services if they needed to and 99% said they would advise a friend to use them, if needed. We asked about whether people see a need for women's services delivered by women and 99% said "yes". The two main reasons (total 62%) were that women can empathise/understand and it is easier to talk to a woman. 61% when asked what new services that would like to see, asked for more education in schools, with children and with men. Next year sees the 100th anniversary of International Women's Day. We are interested in your ideas and events; please let us know what you are planning by emailing [admin@independentchoices.org.uk](mailto:admin@independentchoices.org.uk).

# Women's Domestic Abuse Helpline Update

The Helpline service remains busy with a wide variety of contacts from women, their friends and agencies. We deal with quite complex cases especially those around issues of NRPF (92 incoming contacts regarding women with NRPF so far this year); we actively remain involved with Safety 4 Sisters, which researches issues around NRPF and aims to secure support for such women contact [S4Sisters@googlemail.com](mailto:S4Sisters@googlemail.com) for more information. Since April we have been monitoring the age of incoming contacts to the Helpline; of the 2050 incoming contacts (April to mid-September) the age is known in 270 cases. Over 40% are in the 16-24 age group (see table). Independent Choices are currently looking for funding in order to increase our work with young women and we are looking to do this in partnership. We already have strong links with Young People Support Foundation (YPSF) and Manchester Women's Aid.

| Known ages April - Sept 2010 |     |
|------------------------------|-----|
| 16 - 24 inclusive            | 119 |
| 25 - 29 inclusive            | 47  |
| 30 - 39 inclusive            | 34  |
| 40 - 49 inclusive            | 49  |
| 50 - 64 inclusive            | 17  |
| Over 65                      | 4   |
| Total                        | 270 |

## 367 calls in six months regarding Economic abuse

**Independent Choices, thanks to a grant from the Targeted Support Fund, carried out an Economic Abuse project for six months during September 2009 - March 2010.**

One of the greatest achievements of this was to undertake awareness training with our volunteers around economic abuse and its effects on women. This with a database update and enhanced safety plan advice meant that for the first time we are now full responding to economic abuse. The helpline services are now recording this need as distinct from other forms of domestic abuse. In six months alone we saw 367 calls directly involving economic abuse. The Women's Safety Service staff also benefited from the project and has similarly enhanced their economic abuse focus.

Economic abuse was the theme of a seminar we ran on International Women's Day in March 2010 and was well attended by 38 workers from 21 agencies from the Greater Manchester area. The event looked at what constitutes economic abuse, which includes:

- Interfering with education and employment
- Controlling access to economic resources
- Refusing to contribute to household/family costs
- Generating economic costs and issues with joint finances ie: mortgages.

Refuge, 2008 found that 89% of respondents to their survey reported economic abuse as part of their experience of domestic abuse. An American Poll (Allstate Foundation, May 2009) showed that 70 % of respondents failed to see economic abuse as connected to domestic abuse. "Many people associate domestic violence with physical cuts and bruises, but bruises on your credit score and being cut off from access to money create lasting scars that make it hard, if not impossible, for abuse victims to recover," said Jennifer Kuhn, manager of the Economics Against Abuse Program at The Allstate Foundation. "For victims of domestic violence, economic abuse is much more personal - and dangerous."

**From this project we would call for more work, research and awareness around this often hidden or ignored aspect of domestic abuse.**

**We are always interested to hear what you think about our services. Please email [admin@independentchoices.org](mailto:admin@independentchoices.org) or call us on 0161 636 7535.**

### WHAT DO INDEPENDENT CHOICES DO?

WORKING DIRECTLY WITH DOMESTIC ABUSE SINCE 1978. SUPPORTING OVER 7,000 CONTACTS A YEAR. KEEPING AT THE EDGE OF THE ISSUES. WORKING TO SUPPORT WOMEN IN DOMESTIC ABUSE SITUATIONS WHO ALSO HAVE ISSUES WITH MENTAL HEALTH, ECONOMIC ABUSE, FORCED MARRIED, NO RECOURSE TO PUBLIC FUNDS, ADDICTIONS, YOUNG PEOPLE. DELIVERING TWO SPECIALISED SERVICES AND EMPLOYING NINE STAFF. WE WORK ACROSS GREATER MANCHESTER AS A REGION SO THAT ALL WOMEN HAVE CHOICES AND THE RIGHT TO SUPPORT. **Further details can be found on our website [www.wdchoices.org.uk](http://www.wdchoices.org.uk).**



# Independent Choices newsline

# Manchester City Homeless Protocol

Since 2009 we have been working with MCC homeless families, IDVA service and Manchester Women's Aid in developing a joint Homeless Protocol. The aim of the protocol is to ensure that people who are experiencing domestic abuse are given accurate advice and support in getting safe. The Helpline's commitment to the protocol is to inform women of options that may be available to them, and maintaining the focus on the safety of the woman and her children. These options include legal and criminal remedies, homeless application or accessing safe temporary accommodation.

## Staff profile

**Farheen Anwar** Community Helpline Language Service (CHLS) Supervisor

I have been the CHLS Supervisor for nearly five years. I started off as a frontline volunteer in 2004 and was given in-depth training as part of the induction programme which was very intense and comprehensive.

I am constantly on a learning curve as it is pivotal that the organisation gives accurate advice and signposts to specialist agencies. Women from Black, Minority, Ethnic, and Refugee (BMER) groups can sometimes have extended barriers such as; languages, immigration issues, No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF), escaping forced marriages, experiencing racism and social exclusion. I keep up-to-date on all relevant issues and help monitor any emerging trends.

Part of my role is to deliver the Helpline service in Urdu or Punjabi for women who choose to speak in those languages or want to talk to someone who understands cultural and religious issues arising from their experience. I also take an active role in recruiting and training new volunteers, who come from all diverse backgrounds, raise awareness and publicity of the CHLS and empower women.

I find my role very rewarding as it challenges me in many different ways, as the saying goes "no two calls are the same." I gain deep satisfaction knowing I have in some way empowered a woman or possibly helped save her life.