

# The Wish Centre Behaviour Change Programme Newsletter – Issue 18



*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 August 2024

- MTC and GTC referrals from Lancashire are extremely low and we are really wanting to figure out why. If you have any concerns or problems with making a referral or need any assistance, please drop me an email at [Andrew.mcauliffe@thewishcentre.org](mailto:Andrew.mcauliffe@thewishcentre.org) as it is super important that our service is utilised.
- We have a more intensive training session coming up relating to Primary Aggressors. This will be an in-person session and is scheduled for the end of November/early December. There will be a session for each area. Venues to be announced. Please drop me an email to register your interest.




## 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. Please send any Section 7 and Finding of Facts reports alongside the referral.*
- *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**

### **News From Around the World - Afghanistan**

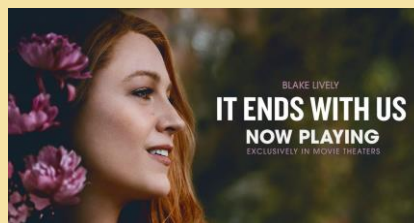
**Hundreds of femicide cases recorded in Afghanistan since the Taliban's return are just the 'tip of the iceberg.'**



Hundreds of femicide cases recorded in Afghanistan since the Taliban takeover are just the 'tip of the iceberg,' with over half linked to regime officials. An analysis by Afghan Witness, which tracked 332 cases since August 2021, found widespread gender-based violence, including 115 sexual violence incidents. Due to media restrictions and repression, the true scale is likely far higher. In the three years since regaining power, the Taliban have imposed severe restrictions on women and girls, barring them from education, work, and public life, leading to what some call a "gender apartheid."

A UN survey last December found that 76% of Afghan women and girls who responded classed their mental health since the Taliban seized power as "bad" or "very bad", reporting insomnia, depression, anxiety, loss of appetite and headaches as a result of their trauma.

#### **"It Ends with Us" under fire for glamorising Domestic Abuse**



The film adaptation of Colleen Hoover's bestselling novel *It Ends with Us*, starring Blake Lively and Justin Baldoni, is facing backlash for allegedly glamorising domestic abuse. The story, based on Hoover's parents' relationship, follows Lily Bloom, who falls in love with neurosurgeon Ryle Kincaid, only for their relationship to turn abusive.

Critics argue that the film's promotional materials downplay the seriousness of the abuse, presenting it as a typical romance. Some fans and advocates have expressed concern that the movie's marketing trivialises the issue, potentially triggering survivors and normalising harmful behaviours.

Based on promotional materials for the film, however, some critics say the message about abuse might not come across to viewers. "*The trailer does a disservice to the fact that this could really raise awareness,*" said activist and domestic violence survivor Ashley Bendiksen. "*But it seems to just be glossing over what the movie's actually about.*"

## Domestic Abuse in the Media

**Cashless businesses can be dangerous for abuse victims, experts warn.**



Experts are warning that transitioning to a cashless society could significantly impact women who are victims of domestic abuse, making it harder for them to leave or avoid detection by their abusers. Francesca Ferrier, economic empowerment partnership manager at domestic violence support charity Refuge warns - *"The move towards a cashless society is putting lives at risk. Economic abuse plays a huge part in a perpetrator's ability to control and monitor their partner, so the shift away from cash towards digital-first banking enables perpetrators to monitor the spending of their partners more closely."*

A move towards contactless and card payments has been very noticeable in recent years. Some 54 bank branches are closing every single month, free-to-use cash machines have declined by almost a quarter since 2018. After the Covid pandemic, more than one in 20 small businesses are not taking cash at all. Overall, new research shows that Brits don't want to move to a society where cash is not an option at all.

*"More and more women are being impacted by economic abuse. It can be extremely difficult for women to leave a domestically abusive relationship for fear of their safety and how they will survive. Cash is easier for women in these situations to access and allows them the freedom to buy the things that they need,"* explains Heidi Riedel, CEO of Woman's Trust, a mental health charity for women who have experienced domestic abuse.

*"Time and again we have heard from many women that they don't even have access to their own bank accounts, making cash even more vital. Refuge has long campaigned for the Government to bring forward legislation that would make accessing cash easier for survivors,"* adds Ferrier.

### **Social workers lack training to tackle coercive abuse, BBC finds.**







Coercive and controlling behaviour (CCB) has been a criminal offense in the UK since 2015, recognised as a form of psychological abuse that isolates and harms victims, forming the foundation of all domestic abuse. Campaigners stress that understanding CCB is crucial. However, nine years after the law's introduction, a BBC investigation revealed that over a third of accredited university social work courses in England do not include specific training on coercive control. Among those that do, the training ranges from just one hour to up to 20 hours. The regulator, Social Work England, states that it inspects these courses to ensure they meet professional standards for safe practice. This is why the workshops The Wish Centre has been providing is of utmost importance.

More information on this can be found at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cn4970jdgg7o>

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## **Featured Article**

### **Coercive control in TV classic, “Bewitched”**







The classic TV show “Bewitched,” which aired from 1964 to 1972, is often remembered for its light-hearted portrayal of a suburban witch, Samantha Stephens, who uses her magical powers to navigate domestic life with her mortal husband, Darrin. However, when viewed through the lens of DA, the show takes on a more complex dimension.

At its core, “Bewitched” is a story about power dynamics within a marriage. Samantha's magical abilities represent a vast source of power, but Darrin consistently demands that she suppress her powers to conform to the expectations of a “normal” wife. This dynamic can be seen as a form of **coercive control**—a type of domestic abuse where one partner seeks to dominate the other by limiting their autonomy and freedom.

A partner should never isolate you from your family, friends, or support network, nor should they control your every action or demand that you sacrifice parts of yourself to stay in the relationship. This form of control is abusive, often employed by codependent and jealous partners to sever their significant other's ties to others, making the abuser their only source of

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support. Samantha is close to her mother, even if she annoys her, and Endora wants the best for her daughter – not to have her controlled by an insecure man who is manipulating her into giving up who she is. Treating this dynamic as a source of comedic entertainment is deeply problematic, as it not only trivialises but potentially enables abusive behaviour.



Darrin's insistence that Samantha refrain from using her powers reflects an underlying desire to control her, despite her superior abilities. This is evident in many episodes where Darrin reacts angrily or dismissively whenever Samantha resorts to magic, regardless of the benefits it might bring. The show's comedic tone often masks the seriousness of this dynamic, but it raises important questions about gender roles and the expectations placed on women in relationships.

In the 1960s, societal expectations for women were heavily influenced by traditional gender roles, which placed a strong emphasis on domesticity and submission. The ideal woman was often depicted as a devoted wife and mother, whose primary responsibilities were to care for the home, raise children, and support her husband. Popular culture, including television shows, advertisements, and magazines, reinforced the notion that a woman's fulfilment came from creating a comfortable and orderly household.

Women were expected to adhere to a strict code of femininity, which included being poised, polite, and well-groomed. Careers and higher education were often secondary to the goal of marriage, and those who pursued ambitions

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outside the home were sometimes viewed as defying their "natural" roles. The 1960s also saw the beginning of the feminist movement, which challenged these restrictive norms and advocated for greater gender equality. However, the decade remained largely defined by traditional expectations that limited women's opportunities and reinforced their dependency on men.





While "Bewitched" was groundbreaking in its portrayal of a strong, independent woman, it also reinforced the idea that women should prioritise their husbands' comfort and expectations over their own needs and abilities. Samantha's constant struggle to balance her identity as a witch with her role as a wife highlights the tensions that many women face when trying to reconcile personal empowerment with societal pressures.

In the context of domestic abuse, "Bewitched" serves as a reminder of how easily controlling behaviour can be normalised or overlooked in popular culture. It challenges viewers to consider the subtle ways in which power imbalances can manifest in relationships and the importance of recognising and addressing these dynamics, even when they are presented in a seemingly harmless or humorous context.



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**Featured Article**

**Why we need to engage with domestic abuse perpetrators.**





**by Chantal Hughes, CEO of Hampton Trust**



In the UK, millions of violence, abuse and harassment crimes against women and girls are recorded each year. Domestic abuse constitutes 15% of police-recorded crime with 1.6 million estimated female victims in the year ending March 2020. These figures do not accurately represent the enormity of the problem as significantly more offences never come to the attention of any service, remaining unreported and under the radar.

For every victim and survivor of domestic abuse, there is a perpetrator. If we are to stand any chance of reducing the risk to adult victims and children and tackle the root cause of domestic abuse, it is imperative that we identify and engage those individuals perpetrating abuse and hold them to account. For far too long we have placed the burden of responsibility on victims to leave an abusive relationship. As professionals, we act without empathy in demanding a mother leave the relationship to protect her child, or else face the consequences.

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Following the Domestic Abuse Bill signed into law in April 2021, a national framework for policing violence against women and girls was published in December 2021 with the aim to create consistency across police forces. The first of its kind, the framework includes actions for the 'Relentless Pursuit of Perpetrators.' The Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Intervention Fund launched by the Home Office at the beginning of January, enabling Police and Crime Commissioners to increase the availability of domestic abuse perpetrator intervention schemes in their area, is welcome news as the commitment by the Government to tackle domestic abuse is followed by tangible action.





However, just like safeguarding the victim, the identifying and targeting of domestic abuse perpetrators must go beyond a criminal justice response. It is the responsibility of all frontline services. Unless we commit to a shared vision of addressing those causing harm, perpetrators will remain under the radar and victims will continue to suffer in silence.

We are familiar with phrases such as 'a multi-agency response to domestic abuse' and 'we must not work in silos when tackling domestic abuse.' During the last decade we have made significant progress in educating a range of professionals in the social, health, housing and education sectors to actively identify victims within services. Now it is our professional and moral duty to these victims to also actively identify and engage perpetrators.

Perpetrators are not easily identifiable, saving their abuse for behind closed doors. Domestic abuse has secrets attached to it and patterns of behaviour are far more nuanced than physical abuse. With the stigma fuelling the secret, an individual does not randomly identify as a domestic abuse perpetrator. As professionals we must therefore include a deeper understanding of personal relationships in our existing assessments and routine enquiries. Using a range of simple tools and strategies, professionals can evoke discussion and reflection on behaviour. If handled correctly, this approach can set the scene for disclosures and referrals to specialist perpetrator services. In the same way that pregnant women are asked about their relationship at midwife appointments and parents about their children when presenting at A&E, we want to see routine relationship enquiries and curious questioning across all services.

By training frontline professionals across sectors – including housing, health, policing and social care – interventions will be embedded within a wider community response in which all agencies share the responsibility of holding abusive behaviour in view and in which the chance of the right intervention being offered to the right people at the right time is increased significantly.

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Professionals already proactively question domestic abuse victims to reduce risk and increase safety – and Hampton Trust is ambitious in wanting to see services adopt the same approach for perpetrators. If all frontline professionals across sectors can develop competence and confidence in the identification and engagement of perpetrators, then this in turn will increase the safety for victims and help us break the cycle of domestic abuse.

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## **End of Programme Participation Feedback - AGC**



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

How to understand things from other people's viewpoints, especially the children. Including how it can affect the children when they are not even there at the time of the abuse.

### **Looking back, do you recognise your role in perpetrating abuse in relationships and do you accept responsibility for it?**

I do agree and can see the issues I caused.

### **Do you feel you have a better understanding and control of your own feelings?**

For now, yes. Since this I have not yet been in a relationship to put it to the test, but I do feel things have changed so am very hopeful it will be different in future.

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

Yes. It is also why I might now do things differently sometimes to consider their viewpoint, and how my actions may affect others.

### **What do you hope to achieve in future relationships?**

Everything but this.

### **What part are you going to play in having a non-abusive relationship in the future?**

If I feel like I'm ever going back the way I was to ask for help as I now realise there are consequences for other people as well and I don't want to return to that. So, to take a break or remove myself from the situation to avoid making poor choices.

### **How do you feel about the victim now you have completed the programme?**

I feel sorry for her due to what I have put her through especially because I have put her through what my father put me through when I was younger.

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**Can you identify any of your belief system that has been challenged on the programme?**





No as I knew it was wrong already.

**What was difficult for you on the programme?**

The video's knowing that this happens and especially the call as my kids are similar ages and knowing it was a real call.

***Please do continue to  
send referrals for  
GTC/MTC to  
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