

# The Wish Centre Behaviour Change Programme Newsletter – Issue 17



*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 July 2024

- The CARA Project is due to go live from the 5<sup>th</sup> of August. This is a police referral only programme.
- 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.





## 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

Registered Charity No: 1116444 - Company No: 5834929

## **Domestic Abuse in the Media**

### **National Police Chiefs Council declares violence against women a “National Emergency.”**



Violent crimes against women and girls in England and Wales have risen by nearly 40% in recent years, according to a report by the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) and the College of Policing. The number of recorded crimes increased from 789,703 in 2018-19 to 1,080,157 in 2022-23. Deputy Chief Constable Maggie Blyth called this a “national emergency.”

The report found that nearly 3,000 such crimes are recorded daily, with one in 12 women affected each year. In 2022-23, these offenses accounted for 20% of all crimes. Blyth said *“Violence against women and girls is a national emergency. We need the support and direction of government to intervene and address the current problems within the criminal justice system and lead the way on a whole-system approach to violence against women and girls. We aspire to a position where an effective criminal justice response to violence against women and girls is the last resort.”*

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

### **Domestic abuse survivor finds her voice through poetry.**



Mackenzie Rose found solace in poetry after enduring domestic abuse. Turning her pain into art, she began writing to process her trauma and heal. Her poems, raw and poignant, give voice to her struggles and resilience, resonating with many who have faced similar experiences. Through her work, Mackenzie not only heals herself but also offers hope and solidarity to others in their journey towards recovery. Shortly after turning 28, Mackenzie Rose was attacked at home, leading to an eight-day hospital stay and a feeding tube. The attack damaged her vocal cords and oesophagus, limiting her speech and causing PTSD. Despite this, poetry gave her a voice. A Ph.D. student at Virginia Tech, Rose writes poetry to process her trauma and aims to teach educators how to support trauma survivors. She pondered in her poem “Nine Lives: A Question” if her beloved cats had gifted her one of their lives.

*“I recognize that I’m alive and I have so much good that I’m going to do with that,”* Rose said. *“But at the same time, I still have that darkness. But that doesn’t make me a bad person or an incomplete person, or a person who is unable to do certain things.”*

## Domestic Abuse in the Media

### Rural domestic abuse convictions remain 'woefully low.'



Victims of domestic abuse in the countryside are still being let down by a “woeful” number of convictions, according to former North Yorkshire police and crime commissioner Julia Mulligan. Five years after a critical report on rural police forces, she says the latest figures from the BBC show no significant improvement for victims and survivors. In 2019, the response from seven rural forces was found to be “largely inadequate.”

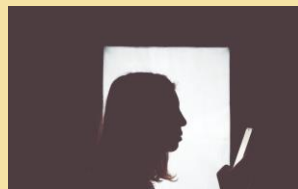
In 2019, the “Captive and Controlled” report examined police responses to domestic abuse in seven rural areas and found them “largely inadequate.” Victims in the countryside, often more isolated, experience abuse 25% longer than in urban areas. Five years later, BBC-obtained data shows a 15% increase in reported offences, with over 107,900 incidents from April 2023 to March 2024. However, only 3,312 successful convictions were recorded in the first nine months of that period, highlighting a persistent gap between reported cases and convictions.

Mulligan said “*Conviction rates are woeful. This is of concern for all victims, but those suffering in rural communities are on average subject to abuse for longer.*”

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) say they can only prosecute domestic abuse cases that are referred to them by the police. In the nine months up to December 2023, 5,546 domestic abuse suspects had been referred from the seven forces to the CPS; 60% of those cases resulted in successful convictions. “*When a case is referred by officers to us for a charging decision, the data shows most will result in a prosecution and conviction,*” the spokesperson said. “*We know the overall number of prosecutions is still too low and have been working constructively with police to improve the investigation, prosecution and handling of domestic abuse.*”

## News From Around the World – GREECE

### Government extends coverage of 'Panic Button' app for domestic violence victims.



Greece's government announced that the “Panic Button” app will now be available to all adult domestic violence victims nationwide. Previously, the app was only accessible to female victims in Athens and Thessaloniki through police stations and advisory centres. Since March 2023, it has enabled victims to discreetly alert police. The extension was confirmed in a Joint Ministerial Decision on Monday. Minister of Citizens Protection Michalis Chrysochoidis emphasized that expanding the app's coverage was a top priority to enhance citizen protection and address domestic violence.

## **Featured Article**

### **Violence against women and girls has been declared a national emergency - what took so long?**

**By Mischa Anouk Smith**







The National Police Chiefs' Council has declared violence against women and girls a national emergency.

A new report published by The National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) reveals the extent and extremity of violence against women and girls in the UK. The findings have led to the issue being declared a "national emergency," and while the details make for troubling reading, for many, it doesn't come as a surprise.

In the last month alone, we have seen the harrowing murders of Carol and her two daughters, Louise and Hannah, a 38% spike in domestic abuse following the Euros, and the news that in England and Wales, one woman a week is killed by a current or ex-partner. Worse still, according to the latest Femicide Census, a woman is killed by a man every three days in the UK.

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This is not new information. Women’s charities have long been calling the growing violence women and girls face a national emergency. Domestic abuse makes up 18 per cent of all recorded crimes in England and Wales. Despite this, prosecution rates remain worryingly low.

In fact, despite a 37% increase in violent crimes against women and girls in the last five years, prosecution rates have fallen. Conviction rates are also on the decline. In the year ending March 2023, there were 39,198 convictions compared to 40,647 convictions the previous year.







The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 introduced new measures and legislation designed to protect women better. The Act saw the introduction of what is largely known as the “revenge porn” offence, as well as widening what constitutes domestic abuse. Under this Act, controlling or coercive behaviour is acknowledged as domestic abuse.

Before The Domestic Abuse Act 2021—and therefore the expanded acknowledgement of what constitutes abuse—there were already 2.3 million recorded victims of domestic abuse a year between the ages of 16 and 74 (two-thirds of whom were women). Many in the sector say that since the Act, there has been a huge backlog of cases, excruciatingly long wait times, and limited access to justice.

Add to this a lack of domestic abuse training for police and judges, and this week’s assertion that the UK is in the throes of a sexist violence emergency seems shamefully delayed.

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*"We fundamentally believe that the lack of progress in areas key to solving violence against women and girls, from funding through to improving conviction rates and protecting survivors, is due to political decisions and not economic ones."* Women's Aid head of media, Teresa Parker, told me earlier this summer ahead of the organisation's rally outside parliament.

So, why is violence against women and girls only now being recognised for what it is—a national, society-wide emergency?

For one, according to a report by the Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales, 10% fewer domestic abuse crimes have been recorded in new statistics after police "were instructed to deliberately count fewer crimes". The same report, released in January of this year, states that there has also been a considerable decrease (42%) in the number of malicious communication offences recorded by the police as they are no longer required to count malicious communications and public order offences in certain circumstances, according to new counting rules.







The new rules, which were introduced in June 2023, state that the Home Office told police to only count one crime each time a victim comes forward. Sharon Bryan, Head of Partnerships and Development at the National Centre for Domestic Violence, tells me that a woman will be assaulted approximately 35 times before getting help.

With this estimation in mind, it's even more concerning to think that each time a woman bravely reports an assault to the police, it will still be listed under the first offence. In all likelihood, it will have been at least the 35th time she has been abused.

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Domestic abuse made up almost one in six crimes reported to the police in the year ending September 2023, according to ONS, yet those with knowledge of the sector say that domestic abuse training for police is woefully lacking. *"Fear is a key factor in why women don't come forward about domestic abuse. When they do, they fear they won't be believed or that they won't be safe,"* says Nicola Miller, CEO of Dash Charity.





The new report states that 1 in 12 women are victims of sexist crimes every year, but police estimate less than 24% of incidents are reported. What's more, offenders are getting younger, say police. Gen Z men and boys see feminism as more of a negative than any other generation. To combat growing misogyny among young men and boys, the College of Policing will be creating a central hub to assist police forces with specialist knowledge and training. The government has also said it will introduce 80 new specialist rape courts and make misogyny a hate crime.

Access to support and justice is crucial in combatting violence against women and girls. We will likely never know the actual, almost incomprehensible scope of violence against women and girls, but acknowledging the danger feels like green shoots. Unfortunately, for too many women who have lost their lives to male violence, it is already too late.



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



### **What has been the main thing you have learnt from attending the Make the Change Programme?**

By attending the programme, I have gained insight into how my behaviour affected my relationships and how my actions have been seen by other people.

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

Upon reflection of my previous relationships, I can recognise when and how my thoughts, beliefs and actions have been abusive, and I accept responsibility for my actions.

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

Definitely since learning from the programme I am now able to understand my feelings and can regulate my moods more positively than previously.

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

Upon reflection I feel regret for the way my attitude and actions impacted upon their mental health and on how my thoughts and actions have impacted negatively in my previous relationships.

### **Can you identify any of your belief systems that have been challenged on the programme?**

Yes, beliefs that I have grown up with from being around negative people.

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

The 3 chairs activity.



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

Yes, since starting the programme I have learnt that other people perspectives can be completely different to what I think they are and that the way I act can impact their perspectives feelings and actions.

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





I hope in the future to have a relationship built on trust and be able to positively embrace people without holding onto negative memories and feelings from past experiences.

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

An understanding and supportive one when I am not in a good place, I am able to reflect on the things I have learnt from the programme and better manage my emotions and actions.

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