

Say **no** to fear



Sefton Celebrates “Women's Day”

Sefton recently celebrated Women's Day by the release of balloons calling for an end to domestic and sexual violence against women.

The balloons were released by some very brave children from Valewood Primary School in Crosby, who dodged the bad weather, with the help of the Mayor and representatives from many of the key agencies.

Saving Lives. Reducing Harm. Protecting the public.

An Action Plan for Tackling Violence 2008-11

This plan is the first of its kind to focus solely on crimes involving serious violence. It sets out what the government, together with police and local agencies, will do over the next three years to cut homicide, knife crime, gun and gang-related crime and sexual and domestic violence.

<http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/violentstreet/violentstreet008.htm>

Responding to Domestic Abuse: A Handbook for Health Professionals

This resource manual aims to provide health care professionals with a better knowledge and understanding of domestic violence and how it may be evident amongst their patients. Contained within the handbook is an action plan following recommendations by the Domestic Abuse and Pregnancy Advisory Group set up during 2005.

The action plan includes information on how health services can meet the needs of pregnant women who may be experiencing abuse and has informed this handbook helping to shape future policy.

http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_4126161



Introduction of CIA Form to Family Courts

When parents separate, divorce, or have never lived together, they are encouraged to reach their own agreements about where and with whom their children will live, what the arrangements for contact will be and how they will make important decisions about their children's lives.

Where agreements cannot be made, including where domestic violence raises issues about safety and well-being, parents can use the family courts to help them make satisfactory arrangements.

Section 8 of the Children Act 1989 makes provision for a range of orders related to the care of children for

which parents may apply.

Maintaining contact with the non-resident parent (most usually the father) has been recognised as an important policy and practice objective.

However, there has also been increasing awareness of the negative impact on children of domestic violence, before and

after parental separation, and of the safety needs of the resident parent (most usually the mother).

The introduction of the C1A supplemental Information form is one of a number of recent reforms to improve safety in private and public law concerning children. The evaluation of the C1A form was commissioned under the Ministry of Justice's (formerly the Department for Constitutional Affairs) *'Protecting the Vulnerable'* strand of their five-year strategy. A full copy of the evaluation can be found at: <http://www.justice.gov.uk/docs/do m-violence-formc1a.pdf>



Women 's Aid Survivors' Handbook

Women's Aid is the key national charity working to end domestic violence against women and children.

Women 's Aid works with and supports a network of over 500 domestic and sexual violence services across the UK.

The Survivor's Handbook provides practical support and information for women experiencing domestic violence, with simple guidance on every aspect of seeking support. It is available in a range of community languages and is

invaluable support to victims and also agency workers who are trying to support them.

To view the handbook please go to:

<http://www.womensaid.org.uk/domestic-violence-survivors-handbook.asp?section=0001000100080001&itemTitle=The+Survivor%27s+Handbook>



Sefton Domestic and Sexual Violence Strategy

The Domestic and Sexual Violence Management Group is a sub group of the Safer and Stronger Communities Partnership, and with its own sub groups, has recently developed a Domestic and Sexual Violence Prevention Strategy for Sefton.

The strategy has 5 key priorities and will enable Sefton to meet national and local targets, and ensure that victims receive the support they need and deserve, and that perpetrators are held accountable for their behaviour.

To view the strategy and/or its appendices please click on the links below.

[Sefton Domestic and Sexual Violence Strategy](#)

[Appendix 3](#)

[Appendix 1](#)

[Appendix 4](#)

[Appendix 2](#)

[Appendix 5](#)

Health and mental health of Domestic and Sexual Violence and abuse



This document sets out a programme of work to equip services and professionals to identify and respond to the health and mental health needs of individuals affected by domestic violence, childhood sexual abuse, rape, oblique sexual assault and sexual exploitation including children, adolescents, and adults, both victims and abusers, male and female.

http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_4136610

Interventions to reduce violence and promote well-being of women who experience partner violence

This report forms part of a research initiative on synthesis and review of evidence in public health in relation to domestic violence.



This work, undertaken by Queen Mary's School of Medicine and Dentistry, received funding from the Department of Health Policy Research Programme.

The aim of the report was to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions relevant to health care for the reduction of violence or improvement of the physical and psychosocial well-being of women who have experienced or are experiencing partner violence.

Key findings include evidence to suggest that advocacy, support groups, psychological and system-centred interventions have been beneficial.

Also highlighted is the usefulness of multi-agency case conferences. Go to:

http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_4126266

Forced Marriages (Civil Protection Act) 2007

The Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act 2007 (the Act) received Royal Assent in July 2007. The aim of the Act is to provide protection to those at risk of forced marriage and to provide recourse for those who have already been forced into marriage. The Act also sends out a strong signal that forced marriage is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

The Act itself provides the overall framework for the courts to make a Forced Marriage Protection Order. This gives the courts a wide discretion to deal flexibly and sensitively with the circumstances of each individual case, employing civil remedies that will offer protection to victims without criminalising members of their family.

The Government has announced its intention to implement the Act in Autumn 2008.

For further details log on to:

<http://www.info4local.gov.uk/documents/consultations/680692?version=1>

The Honour Network: a New National Helpline

A new national helpline for victims of forced marriage and honour-based violence is now up and running.

Called the '**Honour Network**', the dedicated helpline is run by the charity **Karma Nirvana**, which helps survivors of honour crimes and forced marriages. The phone line is staffed by survivors who understand what the victims are going through.

Anybody who feels they need help can call the helpline on **0800 5999 247**.

If anyone is afraid that they are going to be taken abroad and forced into marriage, they can also call the Forced Marriage Unit on **020 7008 0151**.

Karma Nirvana


No Recourse—No Duty to Care

Nationally, there is undoubtedly now a greater awareness of domestic violence and an apparent commitment towards addressing it.



There has been - *primarily through the Criminal Justice Process* – a much tougher stance on combating violence against women. The Domestic Violence Bill, and the associated introduction of new civil remedies, Specialist Domestic Violence Courts, MARAC processes and a requirement for statutory bodies to make improvements around their policies and practices are welcome developments.

However within this agenda the needs of BAMER women and children with no recourse to public funds continues to be ignored, and the ability to access safety for these women and children continues to be an issue of real concern.

This IMKAAN report explores the key issues for women with no recourse to public funds, and how local authorities and their partner agencies may make a difference.

1. The Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Bill received Royal Assent on 15th November 2004.

2. Multi-agency risk assessment conferences introduced to deal with high- risk cases of domestic violence through a co-ordinated multi-agency response

[Imkaan Report - No recourse - No duty to care](#)

Provision of specialist refuge services for BME women

Mergers may to some specialist domestic violence organisations present a positive move towards a stronger future, combining resources has in many cases improved service provision and increased cost effectiveness.

However, this paper from Imkaan contests, that for many refuges that provide services for BME women, mergers are more threatening and represent a challenge to identity, flexibility and autonomy, and they are in fact ‘takeovers’ as opposed to mergers.

This paper shows that merger is not the solution in all cases, and it highlights the benefits of providing specialist services for BME women rather than trying to merge these within other services.

[BAMBER - A right to exist](#)

Provision of specialist refuge services for BME women

The UK receives just 2 per cent of the world’s refugees, of whom 30 per cent are estimated to be women. They include women who have fled for their lives from the most war torn and politically unstable countries in the world.

The needs of refugee women are often marginalised and their voices not heard. This report explores women’s experiences of safety in the UK. To read the full report please go to:

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs07/hosb0207.pdf>

Refugee Women and access to support

Many women who are refugees and asylum seekers have been or are victims of violence and abuse.

They often have no recourse to public funds and find themselves unable to access services and support as a result.

Refugee Action produces a number of leaflets providing advice to asylum seekers and those working with asylum seekers in a wide range of languages.

<http://www.refugee-action.org.uk/information/downloads.aspx>

UK Action Plan on Tackling Human Trafficking

Trafficking in human beings is an abhorrent crime. Many describe it as modern-day slavery, where victims are

coerced, deceived or forced into the control of others who crudely and inhumanely seek to profit from their suffering.

Particularly at risk are women and children who are often trafficked for sexual exploitation.



This year, it is now just over 200 years since Parliament passed the Act to abolish the slave trade in the British Empire. It is therefore unbelievable that in this day and age people are still forced to live in slave like conditions as a result of the inhuman criminal practices perpetrated by 21st century traffickers.

The Action Plan contains deliverable measures in the areas of prevention, enforcement and prosecutions, and most importantly the protection and support of adult and child victims.

Each chapter of the Plan also contains measures to address trafficking for forced labour as well as trafficking for sexual exploitation.

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/human-traffick-action-plan?view=Binary>

Stolen Smiles:

Summary report on consequences of women and adolescents trafficked in Europe

To date, there has been little quantitative evidence about the physical and psychological health needs of women who have been trafficked in Europe. This study gathered statistical evidence on the health needs of women who had recently escaped from a trafficking situation. Log on to: <http://www.lshtm.ac.uk/hpu/docs/StolenSmiles.pdf>

Women Not for Sale: Report on Advertising Women

All over the UK, including in Sefton, the trade in women for sex is all apparent. Sometimes its on the streets, but sometimes its more hidden in the pages of local, sometimes free, newspapers.

This report assesses the scale and nature of the problem of women, and services supplied by women, being advertised in local newspapers.

It focuses on women who have been trafficked from other countries.

Some of the findings include:

- Advertising women, either discreetly or overtly, for sex or sexual services in the regional press is commonplace
- This activity accounts for approximately £44m of advertising revenue

To read the report please go to:

www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk/publications/Women_Not_For_Sale.pdf

2004/05 British Crime Survey: Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault and stalking

The report presents the key findings from the 2004-05 British Crime Survey self-completion module focusing on partner abuse, family abuse, sexual assault and stalking; collectively referred to as intimate violence.

The report examines the extent of intimate violence since age 16 and in the last year, multiple victimisation, the victim-offender relationship and the demographic, socio-economic and lifestyle factors associated with risk of victimisation.

The report updates the previous findings from the 2001 British Crime Survey published in March 2004.

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs06/rdsolr1206.pdf>



Cross Government Action Plan on Sexual Violence and Abuse

Sexual violence and abuse have a devastating impact on victims, their families and friends, and wider society.

Addressing these crimes and the harm they cause is a priority for the Government, and fits within agendas on public health, reducing crime and the fear of crime,

bringing offenders to justice, safeguarding children and vulnerable adults, education and gender equality.

The Action Plan brings together the measures underway and planned to deliver on the key objectives on sexual violence and abuse:

- *To maximise prevention of sexual violence and abuse*
- *To increase access to support and health services for victims of sexual violence and abuse*
- *To improve the criminal justice response to sexual violence and abuse*

To read the full plan please go to:

www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/sexualoffences/finalsvaap.pdf

Sefton Domestic Violence MARAC

Sefton holds a domestic violence MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference) monthly to share information and agree action plans to manage high and very high risk cases of domestic violence.

All key statutory and voluntary agencies have nominated representatives that attend the MARAC on their behalf.

However, any professional can refer a case to the MARAC by completing the referral form and completing the MARAC risk assessment tool.

Professionals may also attend the MARAC to present their case with the permission of the Chair. In most cases the nominated representative will present cases on the behalf of their agency.

To refer a case then please contact the referral form and risk assessment form below.

If you require and your colleagues would like training on the MARAC process then please contact caroline.rowsell@sefton.gov.uk

[Sefton 's Marac referral form](#)

Domestic Violence Enforcement Campaign

Sefton BCU was successful in receiving a small grant from the Home Office to fund a specialist domestic violence car and specialist officers to support operational police officers at the scene of a domestic violence incident where an arrest was made.

The specialist officers supported the operational officers to ensure that the

best evidence, including photographs, was collected to support the case proceeding through to a successful prosecution.

The initiative also resulted in operational officers extending their knowledge base and skills which should result in more effective policing of domestic violence in the future.

The improved police response also made CPS decision-making much easier. Victims received support the following day from the IDSV team, and reported that they felt the police response to them had greatly improved and that they felt more supported.

The campaign also funded an internal media

campaign aimed at victims of domestic violence who are members of the Polish community.



Victim Pathway to Support Victims of Domestic Violence

Sefton BCU is currently piloting, on behalf of Merseyside Police, a victim pathway to support victims of domestic violence from the point of callout to the first appearance in court.

Victims are referred directly to the **Independent Domestic and Sexual Violence Advocacy Team** within 24 hours of callout.

All victims then receive a thorough need and risk assessment and are given access to welfare benefits and the provision of Sanctuary Scheme along with support for giving evidence in court.

The IDSV team works very closely with the Witness Service. Victims are already referred to other specialist and

statutory services, dependent on individual need and circumstances.

The pilot has already identified some gaps within the criminal justice systems, and this has led to changes in policy, procedures and practice. The pilot will be rolled out across Merseyside later in 2008.

Specialist Domestic Violence Courts

There are now more than 60 Specialist Domestic Violence Courts across England and Wales, including in Sefton and other Merseyside boroughs. This research, commissioned by the Home Office, evaluates their effectiveness.



<http://www.info4local.gov.uk/documents/publications/28629?version=1>

Domestic Violence Mini Site

This site is aimed at practitioners who want information on what the government is doing to address all aspects of domestic violence and abuse, and information about what they can do in their field, to improve their responses to it. It also includes key links to other useful websites.

<http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/dv/dv01.htm>

<http://www.info4local.gov.uk/documents/publications/28629?version=1>

IDSVA Team: New Appointment

Although women are very reluctant to report sexual violence to any agency, especially the police, over 50% of women in contact with the Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy Team have reported serious and repeated sexual violence being perpetrated against them.

This level of disclosure has led the Health and Social Care department, who manage this service, to enter into a partnership agreement with RASA the Merseyside Rape and Sexual Assault service.

An Independent Sexual Violence Advocate has been seconded into the team to support women over the age of 16, who disclose sexual violence either as domestic violence victims, or in any other circumstances including sexual assault by strangers. This worker is also working very closely with the existing advocates to ensure that they develop the skills and knowledge to provide a holistic service to all victims of sexual assault.

The team are, therefore, now known as the **Independent Domestic and Sexual Violence Advocacy Team**.

Sefton is the first in Merseyside to take this approach.

This additional service also means that Sefton will be able to work fully in partnership with the Merseyside Sexual Assault Referral Centre which is due to open in June 2008.

The IDSV Team is based within Marsh Lane Police Station in the Public Protection Unit, however this team is managed by the Health & Social Care Department. The team provide support to all high risk victims of domestic and sexual violence who may be referred to MARAC, to all victims whose case may be going to court, and also to victims of domestic violence who require additional security measures to enable them to remain safely in their own homes.

Contact the team telephone: **0151 934 5142 / 5143**

Text 999 Emergency Callout Pilot

During consultation with service users who are victims of domestic violence women asked why they couldn't use other methods to contact the police in an emergency other than the traditional dialling of 999. Women gave examples of times where they had been unable to do so because it would have alerted the perpetrator



that they were calling for help, and put them at greater risk of harm and injury.

Women asked why they couldn't text the police because this could be done silently and lessen the risk of the

perpetrator being aware that they were seeking help.

As a result of this feedback the police in Sefton are now piloting an emergency text

service for victims of domestic violence. This service is utilising an existing text number for people who are hearing impaired. Victims can contact the police by text in an emergency and will receive exactly the same service as if they had dialled 999.

The service is being piloted with all service users who are in contact with the IDSVA team for a 3 month period beginning mid March 2008.

Sexual Offences Mini-Site

This site is aimed at practitioners who want information on what the government is doing to address all aspects of sexual violence and abuse, and information about what they can do in their field, to improve their response to this terrible crime. It also includes key links to other useful websites

<http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/sexualoffences/sexual01.htm>

The Hideout — Web support

The Hideout is a website aimed at children and young people who have or are experiencing domestic violence. It provides support in a range of ways from explaining what domestic violence is, through to exploring feelings, to helping a friend who is living with abuse.

<http://www.thehideout.org.uk/>

Homicides, Firearm Offences and Intimate Violence

Chapter 3 in this Home Office Statistical Bulletin presents findings from the 2004/05, 2005/06 and 2006/07 British Crime Survey, focusing on intimate violence and the nature of partner abuse and serious sexual assault.

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs07/hosb0207.pdf>

Reclaim the Night March

The Fawcett group in Sefton held a Reclaim the Night March on 14 June 2008, which started at Southport Town Hall. For further information please contact Tony Griffin on 928 2233 ext 310.

Abuse, Rape & DV Aid and Resource Collection

This American website is a useful source of information and literature for domestic violence in gay and lesbian relationships.

<http://www.aardvarc.org/dv/gay.shtml>

Anything to add....

If you have information that you think would be useful to share on any topic related to domestic and sexual violence then please send it to us, and we will consider publishing it in our next newsletter.

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