

Local efforts to combat Domestic violence and domestic abuse by Sharon Tomlin

Chances are that most people will know of a person who has experienced domestic violence and domestic abuse during a lifetime. This is made more alarming from recent high profile cases in the media.

The United Nations define Domestic Abuse as '**Domestic abuse**, also called "domestic violence" or "intimate partner violence", can be defined as a pattern of behavior in any relationship that is used to gain or maintain power and control over an intimate partner. Abuse is physical, sexual, emotional, economic or psychological actions or threats of actions that influence another person. This includes any behaviors that frighten, intimidate, terrorize, manipulate, hurt, humiliate, blame, injure, or wound someone. Domestic abuse can happen to anyone of any race, age, sexual orientation, religion, or gender. It can occur within a range of relationships including couples who are married, living together or dating. Domestic violence affects people of all socioeconomic backgrounds and education levels.

Recently the Domestic Abuse Bill was introduced into the House of Commons as it received royal assent on the 29th April 2021 that will now put the Domestic Abuse Commissioner on statutory footing.

According to the figures from the London Mayor's borough volumes and trends on "Domestic and Sexual Violence" dashboard that supports the delivery and oversight of the Mayor's Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy, in the borough of Hammersmith and Fulham (H & F) the monthly trend from September 2020 - September 2021 recorded by the Metropolitan Police to be over 150 offences each month.

Local and national voluntary and community organisations offer a range of services to residents as well as and the ending of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham alongside other boroughs have made this a strategic priority.

Sobus supports the work of organisations with a focus on supporting people experiencing domestic violence and domestic abuse and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). One such local organisation, **Women Into Literature Development & Empowerment (WILDE) Foundation** support women from ethnic minoritised communities through education, training and empowerment. They alongside **Sistah Space** other agencies and personalities have worked towards bringing a petition to parliament – Valerie's Law - brought by Sistah space to make training mandatory for the police and government agencies that support black women and girls affected by domestic violence and abuse to have culturally appropriate training. Although they successfully received the required amount of signatures for the petition to be heard in parliament, this is now closed and the government have responded. They do not feel that neither new nor additional legislation is required at this time.

The conversation is ongoing. You take part by completing the survey created by H & F (see link - <https://lbhf.citizenspace.com/community-safety/3315bfec/> . It closes on 31st December 2021.

Useful Links

NHS: Domestic violence and abuse – Healthy Body:

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/getting-help-for-domestic-violence/>

H & F : Supporting domestic abuse victims during coronavirus:

<https://www.lbhf.gov.uk/crime/domestic-violence/supporting-domestic-abuse-victims-during-coronavirus-outbreak>

Other local organisations:

Women Into Literature Development & Empowerment (WILDE) Foundation:

<https://www.wildeinternationalnetwork.org.uk/>

Good Effort for Health and Wellbeing:

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

H & F: Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy:

<https://www.lbhf.gov.uk/crime/domestic-violence>

H & F: Survey – Violence Against Women and Girls Survey (closes 31st December 2021):

<https://lbhf.citizenspace.com/community-safety/3315bfec/>

H & F: Community Safety Unit:

<https://www.lbhf.gov.uk/crime/community-safety-unit>

GOV.UK: Domestic Abuse - How to get help:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/domestic-abuse-how-to-get-help#domestic-homicide-reviews-how-to-conduct-a-review>

London: Mayor`s Domestic and sexual Violence Dashboard:

<https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/mayors-office-policing-and-crime-mopac/data-and-statistics/domestic-and-sexual-violence-dashboard>

United Nations:

<https://www.un.org/en/coronavirus/what-is-domestic-abuse>