

Break the Silence

Dundee Domestic Abuse Forum

(Working Together to Tackle Abuse)



Newsletter—Spring / Summer 2008

WELCOME to the first edition of the Dundee Domestic Abuse Forum newsletter.

The newsletter aims to:

- **Raise awareness & increase understanding of domestic abuse/ gender based violence.**
- **Publicise new information material/resources**
- **Promote good practice**
- **Provide a forum to exchange news/ information**
- **Provide a platform for women/children/young people to express their views.**

We welcome any comments or contributions.
Please contact us:
Email: ddaf@dundeecity.gov.uk
Tel: 01382 434569

The Dundee Domestic Abuse Forum would like to thank Perth and Kinross Domestic Abuse Forum for the use of their newsletter template. We look forward to working with them to produce the next newsletter for Autumn / Winter 2008.

More Information can be found on our website:
www.ddaf.co.uk

ADDRESSING THE MYTHS

Research published by the Scottish Government in 2007 revealed a highly worrying increase in the level of questioning on sexual history and character which complainers of rape and sexual offences have to face in court. The consultative document 'Redressing the Balance: Cross Examination in Rape and Sexual offence Trials' (Scottish Executive 2001) set out a summary of what they termed "**PERVASIVE MYTHS**" about sexual behaviour:

- MYTH:** Someone who has engaged in sexual behaviour with persons A and B is likely to agree to engage in sexual behaviour with person C
- MYTH:** Someone who is sexually promiscuous has less right than someone who is not to choose who they engage in sexual behaviour with.
- MYTH:** Someone who is sexually promiscuous is generally less trustworthy and therefore more likely to be lying
- MYTH:** Women have a tendency to "lead men on" and are therefore to blame when men fail to resist their physical impulses.
- MYTH:** When a woman says "no" she doesn't mean it, and
- MYTH:** False allegations of rape or sexual assault are more common than false allegations of other crimes

7 out of 10 women giving evidence in rape trials in Scotland will be asked about their sexual history or character. The European Convention on Human Rights states that 'no-one shall be subjected to inhuman or degrading treatment' (article 3) and that 'everyone has the

The (then) Scottish Executive went on to make a strong statement **rejecting** these myths:

"These prejudices are based on antiquated notions about sexual morality which have no place in a modern inclusive society. They are also both illogical and at odds with any system of morality which places a value on the individual's right to self-determination. If these myths and prejudices are propounded at trial, it leads to complainers being treated with a lack of respect and, in the worst cases, being subject to humiliation. It also leads to a distortion of the real issues and lessens the likelihood of a just conclusion being reached.

The Executive is therefore determined that such prejudices should not continue to find a home in the Scottish criminal justice system"

The Sexual Offences (Procedures and Evidence) (Scotland) Act 2002 attempted to tighten restrictions relating to the use of this type of evidence. It was introduced due to the perceived failure of existing legislation to adequately protect women from irrelevant and prejudicial questioning in rape trials. A key aim of the Act was to "ensure that questioning or evidence introduced is relevant to the issues of fact before the court, rather than calculated to demean or humiliate the complainer". Judges and sheriffs are required to consider appropriate protection of the complainer's dignity and privacy.

Research into the effectiveness of the new Act found that applications to introduce this type of evidence were made in 72% of cases. Only 7% of applications were rejected. In most cases, the Crown did not object to defence applications. This means that 7 out of 10 women in rape/attempted rape trials will be asked questions about their sexual history or character.

The findings of the research raise extremely serious questions about whether or not as a society we consider women in rape trials to be "fair game" without access to the most basic of human rights. In response to the research, Rape Crisis Scotland has launched a postcard campaign (details on back page) to raise awareness about the reality faced by many women in court, and to call for action to stop this type of evidence being led.

(Ref: Rape Crisis Newsletter Issue 7 2007-08)

The Dundee Domestic Abuse Forum is a multi-agency partnership which includes key partners from statutory and voluntary sectors across Dundee City. The forum works in partnership at a local level to promote and coordinate a range of activity aimed at tackling domestic abuse/violence against women within Dundee.

Dundee Domestic Abuse Forum : Working Together to Tackle Abuse



WRASAC Dundee (Women's Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre)



Women's Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre Dundee (WRASAC Dundee) is a women only organisation set up to offer free and confidential support to women, young women and girls who have been raped or sexually abused at anytime in their lives. The service covers the geographical area of Dundee City and Angus. The centre opened in 1984 and is run by women. Additional support and information is available to family, friends and partners of women who have experienced rape or sexual assault. WRASAC Dundee also provides support and offers training sessions to professionals/practitioners who are supporting women who have been raped or sexually abused.

The short and long-term effects of rape and sexual abuse can be extremely traumatic and are different for each woman and girl and can include feeling guilty, to blame, ashamed, dirty, angry, unlovable. Women sometimes try to cope with what has happened by drinking, using drugs and/or self-harming (cutting, burning themselves for example). One of the key steps that a woman can take towards the healing process is to confide in someone who they trust and will believe them. This is often a very difficult step to take and so the centre offers support via telephone, email and letter, as well as face to face. Through this support WRASAC Dundee strives to enable women to make informed decisions, gain back control over their lives and come to terms with their experience.

WRASAC Dundee also works with women in the community to raise awareness of personal safety and to offer women some practical advice about keeping safe. The centre can give advice to individual women and also runs community based workshops.

The conviction rate for rape in Scotland is now under 4%, with only 3.9% of rapes reported to the police leading to a conviction.

The majority of women seeking support from Rape Crisis Scotland have been raped by someone known to them

Impact & Consequences

Women can experience a range of psychological, emotional and physical symptoms as a result of rape/sexual abuse.

Fear	Depression	Eating Problems
Loneliness	Anxiety	Suicidal Thoughts
Guilt/blame	Self harm	Flashbacks

Survivors can often hide these feelings well. It is not uncommon for women to feel a compulsion to carry on with everyday life, this often being an automatic coping strategy. However, many women will be experiencing hidden emotions and each individual will cope with these in their own way.

Responding to Rape/Sexual abuse disclosure

Should a woman disclose to you there are many ways in which you can offer support. First and foremost it is important to understand that **NO ONE** asks to be raped/abused and it takes a lot of courage for women to disclose what has happened to them.

In addition to this:

- **Listen:** Be patient with her and recognise how difficult it may be for her to start talking about her experience. Remember that many women are told to keep silent by the abuser and so breaking this cycle is extremely difficult.
- **Believe:** It is crucial that you believe what you are being told. It is very rare that someone lies about being raped or sexually abused. Why would they?
- **Respect:** She may be showing a lot of emotion : crying, anger etc. Respect these feelings and let her express them — they are part of the healing process.
- **Remember:** the blame lies with the abuser at all times—never question her ability to stop the abuse. It has taken a lot of courage for her to speak to you and this should be recognised.

Q: When is a woman likely to be asked when she lost her virginity and how many sexual partners she's had?



- When she's applying for a new job
- When she's approached by a market researcher while out shopping
- In front of a courtroom of strangers when she's giving evidence about being raped

A: The most personal details of a woman's life are routinely scrutinised in the course of a rape trial. The accused is never obliged to take the stand. Who's really on trial?

Anyone looking for support can contact WRASAC Dundee via the helpline on 01382 201 291.

Monday 12pm - 2pm,
Tuesday 10am - 12pm,
Wednesday and Friday 7pm - 9pm,
Thursday 2pm-4pm

(Out with these times an answering machine will be in place and any messages will be responded to as soon as possible).

Women can also write to WRASAC Dundee, PO Box 83, Dundee, DD1 4YZ or email us at wrasac@btconnect.com

We recognise how difficult it can be to talk about rape & sexual abuse and want women to know that we are here to listen and support in a setting.

For further information about WRASAC Dundee go to www.wrasacdundee.org

If you want to access support as a professional, request a training input or arrange a community workshop please call (01382) 205556 or e-mail wrasac@btconnect.com

News Updates

Community Alarms Pilot Scheme

A pilot project led by Dundee City Council Social Work Department commenced in February 2008 and any person living in the Dundee City Council area, who has been identified as being at risk from Domestic Violence, can now have a Community Alarm installed in their home whether or not they have a telephone line. Installation can be carried out within a couple of hours of Dundee City Council Community Alarms Unit receiving a request.

When the alarm is activated the Community Alarms Unit is immediately alerted and within 30 seconds of the alarm activation Tayside Police Control Centre will have been notified. Police Officers will attend at the victim's address as a matter of priority. Audio recording takes place as soon as the alarm is activated until attending Police Officers inform Community Alarms via their Force Control Centre that the recording can be discontinued. Copies of these recordings can be used by Police for evidential purposes, however, the main purpose of the alarms is to increase the safety of victims and provide them with additional support.

For more information please contact Audrey Craft (audrey.craft@tayside.pnn.police.uk or 01382 591912

New Development Worker - Children and Young People Affected by Violence Against Women

The Dundee Domestic Abuse Forum has been awarded new funding under the Violence Against Women Fund to employ a Children and Young Person's Development Worker for the next 3 years. The worker will be based within the existing Forum Support Team and will support the work of the Forum's Children and Young People's Working Group. The new worker will also help all the Forum's members to locate the needs / experiences of children and young people within the Violence Against Women Framework which the Forum is currently moving to adopt. In addition the Development worker will work to involve children and young people in the work of the Forum and will have a role in supporting individual organisations to develop their own work around children and young people experiencing domestic abuse. It is hoped that the worker will be in post by the Summer.

For more information please contact Kathryn Sharp (kathryn.sharp@dundeecity.gov.uk or 01382 434569)

New Support Service for Families of Domestic Abuse Perpetrators

The three Social Work, Criminal Justice Services across Tayside have been successful in applying for funds to establish new services for women (and their children) whilst their partners / ex-partners are attending domestic abuse perpetrator programmes. The new workers will be funded by the Scottish Government Violence Against Women Fund and the project is being supported by the three local domestic abuse forums and domestic abuse services within the voluntary sector. The project will run for 3 years in the first instance.

The Safety Workers will provide arms-length information and support for families of men attend court mandated perpetrator programmes across Tayside. This will include the completion of risk assessments and comprehensive safety planning for families and will ensure the families' views are available to Criminal Justice Services during assessment and ongoing monitoring. In the final year of the project it is hoped that group work opportunities for women, children and young people will be established.

For more information please contact Kathryn Sharp (contact details above)

Violence Against Women Exhibition

During the Dundee Women's Festival, held during the first two weeks of March to coincide with International Women's Day, the Dundee Domestic Abuse Forum hosted a Violence Against Women Exhibition. The exhibition included a display international posters focusing on violence against women (provided by Colm Dempsey), the 104 Pairs of Shoes exhibit (provided by YWCA Scotland) and a range of creative writing and artwork from local service users (provided by Dundee Women's Aid and the Tayside Multiple and Complex Needs Initiative). The exhibition, which was held in the Lamb Gallery (University of Dundee) and Baxter Park Pavilion was seen by over 200 people over the weekend of the 8th March. Those people who attended commented on the powerful impact of the exhibitions and on their sadness that such violence is so prevalent around the world today.

More information about Colm Dempsey's 365 Posters on Violence Against Women can be found at www.dvposters365.net and about the YWCA's 104 Pairs of Shoes at www.ywcasotland.org/campaigns/104shoes.htm.

TRAINING & EVENTS CALENDER 2008

No Boundaries: Domestic Abuse and Substance Misuse

Perth Concert Hall, Thursday 17th July, 9:30am - 4:00pm

A conference examining the links between domestic abuse and substance misuse, and sharing learning from the Tayside Domestic Abuse and Substance Misuse Project. Guest speakers include: Stewart Maxwell (Minister for Communities), Dr. Sarah Galvani (University of Warwick) and Marai Larasi (Chief Executive, Nia Project)

For more information or to book a place visit www.ddaf.co.uk

Tayside Domestic Abuse Training Consortium - Spring 2008 Calendar

The TADATC will run a short programme of basic awareness and specialist training courses in May and June 2008.

Dundee Basic Awareness Courses will take place on 10th June (half day) and 18th June (full day). Further courses will run in Perth and Kinross and Angus with places available to practitioners based in Dundee.

Specialist courses will also be delivered across Tayside and will include Domestic Abuse and BME Women, Domestic Abuse and Older Women, Domestic Abuse and Migrant Workers, and Domestic Abuse, Mental Health and Suicide.

For more information or to book a place please visit www.hill-logan.co.uk

Training requests

There are a range of specialist agencies in Dundee that offer training to agencies / practitioners working with women who have experienced domestic abuse and other forms of violence against women. If you have any training requests you can contact the Tayside Domestic Abuse Training Consortium on 01382 434569 or by e-mailing kathryn.sharp@dundeecity.gov.uk.

Tackling Street Prostitution in Dundee

In January elected members approved Dundee Community Safety Partnerships (CSP) proposals to tackle street prostitution. The CSP have been awarded £200,000 under the Scottish Government 4 Cities Initiative to address 5 key factors:

- protecting affected communities.
- facilitating harm reduction.
- influencing public opinion.
- preventing vulnerable groups being involved.
- challenging attitudes which lead to the abuse of women physically and sexually through street prostitution

One of the key elements of the work which will be undertaken will be the setting up of a new street outreach team for women working in prostitution. The team will draw practitioners from a wide range of related services, such as harm reduction, homelessness and women's organisations, who will aim to build relationships with women working in Dundee and assist them to look at options for reducing harm and for exiting prostitution. A Prostitution Co-ordinator will be recruited to take forward this service development.

For more information please contact Kathryn Sharp (kathryn.sharp@dundee.gov.uk or 01382 434569)

STAY SAFE - Women's Safety Leaflets

Dundee CSP has recently developed a series of leaflets about women's safety entitled Stay Safe. The series of leaflets, aimed at women, cover different aspects of safety and give top tips for staying safe in various every day situations. The leaflets fold into a credit card size and can be easily carried around in a wallet or handbag. Leaflets in the Stay Safe series are: At Home, Personal Safety when you are out, Technology, Travel and At Work.

For more information please contact Carole Jenkins (carole.jenkins@dundee.gov.uk or 01382 436339)

Resources

Good Practice Guidelines & Leaflet: working with women experiencing domestic abuse.

The full document is available to download from our website. A brief summary leaflet is also available please contact us for copies

Tayside Domestic Abuse Leaflet : we have a small credit card size information leaflet detailing key information & local phone numbers. Please contact us if you would like a supply of these to distribute.

Rape Crisis Scotland: Postcard campaign

For more information visit the website:

www.rapecrisisscotland.org.uk

Q: When is a woman likely to be asked whether or not her children all have the same father?

- a. When she's enrolling them at a new school
- b. When she's filling out an insurance claim
- c. In front of a courtroom of strangers when she's giving evidence about being raped

A: Attempts to smear the characters of women seeking justice for rape are commonplace. Women can face questions on anything from the use of sex toys to the age they started drinking. Who's really on trial?

Dundee Domestic Abuse Forum would like this newsletter to be as representative of services, women, children & young people as possible. If you have any news or views to share, or would like to suggest a topic for future issues of the newsletter then please contact us.

Safeguarding Children who may have been Trafficked Scottish Government Consultation

On 23 March 2007 the Home Secretary, on behalf of the UK Government, signed the Council of Europe Convention on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings. On the same day, the Home Office and the then Scottish Executive published the UK Action Plan on Tackling Human Trafficking. One of the key commitments in the action plan is to provide targeted guidance to meet the particular needs of children who may have been trafficked.

The UK Government published 'Safeguarding Children who may have been Trafficked' in December 2007. This guidance outlines the reasons for child trafficking, the methods used by traffickers, the roles and functions of relevant agencies, and procedures that practitioners should follow to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children suspected of being trafficked. This guidance has now been adapted for use in Scotland and the Scottish Government is seeking the views of consultees on 'Safeguarding children in Scotland who may have been Trafficked'.

You can find at full copy of the consultation document at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/04/08133832/0>. The closing date for responses is the 3rd July 2008.

CONTACT NUMBERS

24 hr National Domestic Abuse Helpline 0800 027 1234

Rape Crisis Scotland National Helpline 08088 010 302

Childline: 0800 11 11 11

The following Dundee services offer a wide range of support & information

Dundee Women's Aid :	Support:	01382 202 525
	Office:	01382 226 390
Womens Rape & Sexual Abuse Centre:		01382 201 291
Victim Support :		01382 305 707
Amina (Muslim Women Helpline):		0808 8010 301
Barnardos Domestic Abuse Initiative:		01382 596 866
Police Domestic Abuse Officer:		01382 591 912

HOUSING

Refuge Provision	Contact your local Women's Aid project
Homeless Advice	01382 432 001
Housing Out of Hours Service	0800 633 5843

LEGAL SERVICES

Citizens Advice Bureau	01382 307 494
Dundee Law Centre	01382 432 458

BENEFITS

Job Centre Plus	01382 373 000
Housing Benefits	0800 250 025
Child and Family Credit	08453 003 900

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Social Work Duty Team	01382 436 000
Child Protection Team	01382 668 538

SUBSTANCE MISUSE

Tayside Council on Alcohol	01382 223 965
Tayside Alcohol Problem Service	01382 424 523
Tayside Drug Problem Service	01382 424 544
Social Work Drug & Alcohol Team	01382 307 570

HEALTH

Mental Health Team	01382 346050
GUM Clinic	01382 425 542
NHS 24	08454 242 424

USEFUL WEBSITES

www.scottishwomensaid.co.uk
www.rapecrisisscotland.org.uk
www.dundewomensaid.co.uk
www.wrasacdundee.org.uk
www.womenssupportproject.co.uk