

## LOCAL NEWS

### White Ribbon campaign vigil



Thank you to everyone who attended the White Ribbon campaign vigil at The Lexicon, Bracknell on Saturday, 9 December 2023.

The vigil, organised by Bracknell Forest Council, along with local charities

Berkshire Women's Aid and Kaleidoscopic UK, was an opportunity to raise awareness of the White Ribbon Campaign and the 16 days of activism to challenge violence against women and girls. It was also a chance to reflect and remember those that have been lost due to gender-based violence.

It was great to see so many of you show support and help to raise awareness to put a stop to domestic abuse.



### White Ribbon campaign training calendar

Over the 16 days of activism in November/December 2023, 16 domestic abuse related training sessions were delivered with 246 delegates attending from across Berkshire.

Sessions included: Intersectionality and cultural competency; Domestic Abuse and suspected victim suicides; Cost of living: impact on domestic abuse; Domestic Abuse, mental health and alcohol; National Centre for Domestic Violence; Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme; Stalking Awareness; Honour Based Abuse and Forced Marriage; Domestic Abuse and Older People; Spiritual Abuse; The psychology behind the BRAVE intervention; MARAC & DASH; Child and Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse (CAPVA); Coercive Control; Domestic Abuse and post separation abuse; Introduction to the impact of domestic abuse on children.

A big thank you to everyone who offered their time to deliver a session and to all the delegates who attended.

### Launch of Stay Ok website

Stay Ok is an easy read [website](#) for people with learning disabilities and autism living in the Thames Valley.



We believe it is the first of its kind in the country.



It is designed to provide information and guidance on staying safe whilst at home, and out and about in the community covering a range of topics such as healthy relationships, exploitation and grooming, online safety and hate crime.

Statistics show that people with learning disabilities are more likely to be victims of these crimes yet there is a lack of easy read information available to them. To keep the website interesting there are also quizzes, videos and games all designed to keep people safe. The website is split into two sections, one which is completely easy read and the other is a resources toolkit for parents, carers and professionals.

The website was designed by Buckinghamshire Council in partnership with Talkback. Talkback is a local charity that supports people aged 16 or older with a learning disability and or autism. Focus groups from Talkback were used to test and choose all aspects of the website down to the name and the colour palette. The funding was provided by the Thames Valley Domestic Abuse Coordinators.

### Updates from the Dash Charity and BWA

**The Dash Charity** are starting their virtual Freedom Programme again on a Wednesday night, from April. For further information or to make a referral, contact the Dash Charity via 01753 549865 or [referrals@thedashcharity.org.uk](mailto:referrals@thedashcharity.org.uk)

**BWA** have some free sign-up codes for Reading Half Marathon on Sunday 14 April. If anyone is interested in running and fundraising for BWA, please contact [fundraising@bwaid.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@bwaid.org.uk)

A message from Alix, BWA CEO: "If you are not a runner, you can be always be a supporter... I am not a runner at all but I wanted to make the effort to push myself and train for my first (and possibly only) Reading Half Marathon. I must be mad! It is a real challenge but I am keen to raise as much for BWA as possible. If you are able to support me (and my nephew Ben who is kindly helping his old Aunt out

and running it with me), please visit my [JustGiving webpage](#), I would be incredibly grateful. Thank you!"



It was a great **Quiz night** at the Bracknell Rugby Club on 16 February supported by Councillors, the Deputy

Mayor and many teams from Bracknell Forest Council so thank you to everyone who attended; and of course to the Rugby Club for hosting. Thank you to the Bracknell Mayor for nominating BWA to be her Charity of the Year. The final total raised on the night was £1424.76! Thank you!

### Vacancies

**BWA** are currently recruiting for a Diverse Communities Outreach Worker (Reading, Bracknell & West Berkshire). Further details can be found on the [BWA website](#).

**Oxfordshire County Council** are recruiting for a Public Health Principal to lead a well-established team focusing primarily on the Domestic Abuse portfolio. More details about the role can be found on their [website](#).

### 25 January

[Three new services will be launching this April to support victims of crime in Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Milton Keynes, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley has confirmed](#)

### 28 February

[Joanna Simpson: Wife killer loses bid for release from prison](#)

---

## TRAINING

### Introduction to domestic abuse

Gives participants an understanding of domestic abuse issues through increasing knowledge and understanding and how to respond supportively.

**RBWM** (click on the relevant date to book – account required)

[Tuesday 11 June 2024](#), 09:30 – 13:00 (virtual)

[Wednesday 11 September 2024](#), 10:00 – 16:30 (face-to-face)

[Monday 9 December 2024](#), 09:30 – 13:00 (virtual)

[Thursday 13 March 2025](#), 10:00 – 16:30 (face-to-face)

Virtual sessions via MS Teams

Face-to-face sessions to be held at Windsor Family Hub, 65 Alma Rd, Windsor, SL4 3HD

### Bracknell Forest

Monday 20 May 2024, 10:00-16:30 (face-to-face)

Monday 12 August 2024, 09:30-13:00 (virtual)

Tuesday 26 November 2024, 10:00-16:30 (face-to-face)

Thursday 6 February 2025, 09:30-13:00 (virtual)

Virtual sessions via MS Teams.

Face-to-face sessions to be held at The Willows Family Hub (Children's Centre), Priestwood Youth Centre, Priestwood Court Road, Bracknell, Berkshire RG42 1TU.

*BFC employees apply via iWorks, external staff please email [organisational.development@bracknell-forest.gov.uk](mailto:organisational.development@bracknell-forest.gov.uk)*

### MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference) and DASH (Domestic Abuse, Stalking, Harassment and Honour Based Violence)

Gives participants increased confidence and skills in relation to responding to victims of domestic abuse. Including an understanding of high-risk factors for serious harm and homicide, how to use the DASH risk identification checklist and make appropriate referrals into and engage effectively with the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC).

**RBWM** (click on the relevant date to book – account required)

[Monday 29 April 2024](#), 10:00 – 16:30 (face-to-face)

[Wednesday 17 July 2024](#), 09:30 – 13:00 (virtual)

[Thursday 17 October 2024](#), 10:00 – 16:30 (face-to-face)

[Monday 13 January 2025](#), 09:30 – 13:00 (virtual)

Virtual sessions via MS Teams.

Face-to-face sessions to be held at Windsor Family Hub, 65 Alma Rd, Windsor, SL4 3HD.

### Bracknell Forest

Tuesday 18 June 2024, 09:30-13:00 (virtual)

Monday 23 September 2024, 10:00-16:30 (face-to-face)

Thursday 12 December 2024, 09:30-13:00 (virtual)

Tuesday 25 March 2025, 10:00-16:30 (face-to-face)

Virtual sessions via MS Teams.

Face-to-face sessions to be held at The Willows Family Hub (Children's Centre), Priestwood Youth Centre, Priestwood Court Road, Bracknell, Berkshire RG42 1TU.

*BFC employees apply via iWorks, external staff please email [organisational.development@bracknell-forest.gov.uk](mailto:organisational.development@bracknell-forest.gov.uk)*

---

## NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL NEWS

### 6 December

[Most victims of domestic homicide have contacted police or NHS, review shows](#)

### 12 December

[Man to stand trial after being charged with murdering his wife](#)

### 18 December

[Wife 'discovers her husband repeatedly raped her with household objects while she was passed out after finding hideous images on his computer'](#)

**19 December**

[Married couple found dead with gunshot wounds in village](#)

**19 December**

[Haverhill – Teenager sentenced for murder](#)

**19 December**

[Jonathan Majors found guilty of assault and harassment over domestic dispute](#)

**19 December**

[Sarah Henshaw: 'Monster' who killed ex-partner and dumped body jailed](#)

**21 December**

[Woman 'pushed over 100ft cliff to her death after turning down wedding proposal'](#)

**21 December**

[Iran executes child bride who killed abusive husband](#)

**21 December**

[Shocking footage of 'controlling' husband Varinder Singh strangling his estranged wife released by the CPS](#)

**27 December**

[Influencer shot dead by husband two days after getting restraining order](#)

**29 December**

[Scrapping short jail terms in England and Wales puts women at risk, says abuse watchdog](#)

**31 December**

[Thousands of women at risk as police reject over 10,000 background checks on potential abusers](#)

**31 December**

[Rohan Dennis charged over death of wife, fellow cyclist Melissa Hoskins](#)

**10 January**

[Clare's Law failings led to harm, say Wiltshire Police](#)

**12 January**

[Almost half of family courts to allow reporting in England and Wales](#)

**17 January**

['Violent' man who killed nursery worker and filmed her suffering may never be released from prison](#)

**21 January**

[Labour vows to install domestic abuse specialists in 999 call centres](#)

**22 January**

[Google engineer accused of beating wife to death before police found him bloodied with 'blank stare'](#)

**22 January**

[Queen Camilla makes unexpected speech during Swindon visit](#)

**28 January**

[Domestic abuse victim tells of ordeal of living with 7 brain injuries](#)

**30 January**

[TikTok killer's mother groomed my son in secret love affair before murdering him, says grieving father](#)

**31 January**

[British girl, 13, is dramatically saved from a forced marriage to her cousin in Pakistan](#)

**2 February**

[Alice Wood jailed for running over and killing Ryan Watson](#)

**7 February**

['We begged her to leave our son alone and find someone her own age, instead she killed him'](#)

**9 February**

[Domestic abuse victims given fresh support to escape abuse](#)

**9 February**

[Domestic abuse: Why I shared my mum's murder story on TikTok](#)

**14 February**

[Tougher sentences for 'rough sex' killers](#)

**14 February**

[Commissioner responds to new statutory aggravating factor for sexually violent homicides](#)

**14 February**

[Huddersfield: Family members jailed after abusing son's wife](#)

**15 February**

[Pangbourne: Teen hit by train after mum found stabbed – inquest](#)

**17 February**

[Jersey Police vans raise awareness of domestic abuse support](#)

**18 February**

[UK charities warn of 'devastating' council cuts to women's services](#)

**20 February**

[Domestic abuse charity 'goes into liquidation' - NCDV Magazine](#)

**22 February**

[Watchdog to probe police contact with abuse victim](#)

## 26 February

[Brute who pretended to be 'Prince Charming' broke his fiancée's ribs and dragged her by her hair in terrifying string of attacks before LAIGHING at her in court – as young mother lays bare her horrific injuries](#)

## 26 February

[Devon woman who fatally stabbed husband of 27 years says he was violent and controlling](#)

---

## NEW USEFUL PUBLICATIONS, RESEARCH & RESOURCES

### December 2023

[Domestic Homicide Oversight Mechanism: HALT study briefings](#)

The Domestic Abuse Commissioner commissioned researchers at the HALT study at Manchester Metropolitan University to conduct analysis of Domestic Homicide Reviews in relation to the following themes: criminal justice, health services, children's services, and adult social care.

### HALT Films

Three [films](#) with victim/survivors of domestic abuse and family members who were bereaved due to domestic homicide.

### 5 December

The Centre for Women's Justice have released a [30-minute film](#) that shares the experiences of several survivors who have been unfairly criminalised as a result of the abuse.

### 8 December

#### **We need to work together to prevent domestic abuse-related suicide**

Researchers Dr James Rowlands and Sarah Dangar wrote a [quest blog](#) for the Domestic Abuse Commissioner, highlighting the importance of learning from domestic abuse related suicides through the DHR process.

### 7 December

Killed Women published their report [You Were Told: A Voice for Killed Women](#), revealing the results of their national survey of bereaved families who have lost a female relative to male violence.

### 8 December

[The Role of Faith Leaders; Gate Openers or Gate Closers in Ending Violence against Women and Girls?](#)

### 14 December

[Support in domestic abuse safe accommodation: financial year 2022 to 2023](#)

### January 2024

The fourth [annual report](#) from the independent Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel. It looks at the child safeguarding system, based on serious child safeguarding incidents occurring between January 2022 and March 2023. It sets out patterns in practice for national government and local safeguarding partners to better protect vulnerable

children. The report reflects in some depth on six key themes, one of which is domestic abuse and harm to children.

### 3 January

[Domestic Abuse Protection Notices / Orders factsheet](#)  
DAPNs and DAPOs will pilot for two years from Spring 2024 in Gwent, Greater Manchester, the London Boroughs of Croydon, Sutton, and Bromley, and with the British Transport Police.

### February 2024

Sexual assault and sexual abuse [booklet](#) (and translated versions) with information for people seeking asylum in the UK, hosted by Migrant Help on their website. Developed as part of the work by the safeguarding subgroup of the National Asylum Seeker Health Steering Group and co-funded by NHSE South East and Home Office.

### February 2024

#### **New DHR reports from the Institute of Addressing Strangulation**

- The Institute for Addressing Strangulation have published [two new reports](#) as part of a series, analysing Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) with regard to themes of strangulation and suffocation.
- The series focuses on Fatal Suffocation (Report 1), Non-Fatal Strangulation (Report 2), and Fatal Strangulation (Report 3), with the potential to add additional perspectives and reports to the series in due course.

### 5 February

[Domestic homicide review legislation consultation: government response](#)

### 16 February

#### **Changes announced to a scheme that supports migrant victims and survivors**

- The government has made [significant changes](#) to the Destitution Domestic Violence Concession which has been supporting migrant survivors of domestic abuse for over a decade.
- The scheme, newly titled the Migrant Victims Domestic Abuse Concession (MVDAC), has been expanded to a wider cohort, but this cohort will not be able to access a route to settlement after support through the MVDAC, leaving a cliff edge in support.
- The Domestic Abuse Commissioner is calling for a comprehensive package of support for migrant victims, which would £2.3 billion in social gains over 10 years.
- Read the Commissioner's response [here](#).

### 20 February

[Delivery of support in domestic abuse safe accommodation: annual progress report 2022-23](#)

### 24 February

[First refuge for trans and non-binary people opens its doors Loving Me](#), a service established in 2022 by Trans + people, has now opened referrals for its first refuge.

## 28 February

Women's Aid have launched their [2024 Annual Audit](#), the latest edition of Women's Aid's yearly publication looking at the provision and uptake of domestic abuse services in England, alongside the experiences of women who use them.

Some of the key findings of the report include:

- Almost half of organisations told us they had been running an area of their domestic abuse service in 2022-23 without any dedicated funding.
- The most common type of service running without funding was therapeutic services (43.1%).
- 86.3% of organisations with refuge provision and 81.6% of services with community-based services did not receive any commissioned funding from an ICB.
- When asked about their challenges, organisations most commonly reported short-term contract lengths (33.7%), tenders not recognising quality (32.7%), and complex and unhelpful commissioning processes (32.7%).
- Organisations reported they were struggling to recruit for vacant roles at the salaries they can pay (57.7%), with some losing staff who needed to move to higher paid roles elsewhere (48.1%).

**SAVE THE DATE:** On 26 March, Women's Aid will be holding a webinar exploring the findings of the Annual Audit 2024 and discussing the implications for service delivery and commissioning. You can register to attend [here](#).

---

## TO WATCH...

YouTube - [How I Survived My Ex-Wife's Murder Plot](#)

Channel 4 – [The Jury: Murder Trial](#)

ITV - [The British Airways Killer](#)

Channel 4 - [The Push: Murder on the Cliff](#)

ITV Tonight – [Murdered At Home](#)

ITV - [TikTok: Murder Gone Viral \(episode 1\)](#)

---

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY



### Bracknell Forest Domestic Abuse Forum

14 March 2024, 10am-12pm

13 June 2024, 10am-12pm

11 September 2024, 10am-12pm

4 December 2024, 10am-12pm

*All via MS Teams*

For more information, contact Joyce Barnett

[joyce.barnett@bracknell-forest.gov.uk](mailto:joyce.barnett@bracknell-forest.gov.uk)

### RBWM Domestic Abuse Forum

4 March 2024, 10am – 12pm

3 June 2024, 10am – 12pm

12 September 2024, 1pm – 3pm

3 December 2024, 10am – 12pm

*All via MS Teams*



For more information, contact Sophie Wing-King

[Sophie.wing-king@bracknell-forest.gov.uk](mailto:Sophie.wing-king@bracknell-forest.gov.uk)

If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter, please email Sophie Wing-King (Domestic Abuse Strategic Lead, RBWM & Bracknell Forest) [Sophie.wing-king@bracknell-forest.gov.uk](mailto:Sophie.wing-king@bracknell-forest.gov.uk) with 'Remove' in the title box