

learn to be safe • be safe to learn



Domestic violence prevention for schools

Executive Summary

Should you wish to see any of our resources or would like further information on this important work in schools, please contact the Social Inclusion Unit:

Social Inclusion Unit
CEA@Islington
Lough Road
N7 8RH
Tel: 020 7527 5744

Heather Vacciana
Home Safe: Domestic Violence Prevention Project Officer
Tel: 020 7527 5718
Email: heather.vacciana.cea@islington.gov.uk

Finn Mackay
Anti-Bullying Coordinator
Tel: 020 7527 5778
Email: finn.mackay.cea@islington.gov.uk

Cover image: 'Emma is Free', a painting depicting Emma Humphrey's victory at the Court of Appeal on 7th July 1995, by Lucy Edkins.



ISLINGTON

From Councillor Ursula Woolley,
Executive Member for Children & Young People,
London Borough of Islington

Home Safe: Domestic violence prevention project for schools

Welcome to this summary of Islington's Home Safe Domestic Violence Prevention Project for Schools. The project is a key component of Islington's Domestic Violence Strategy.

We know that making schools safe and welcoming places for all children and families is a high priority for everyone working in education and children's services.

Schools encourage good behaviour and provide role models of positive relationships between children, and between children and adults. Schools review and take action to ensure that the school environment is a safe one.

We know that children and young people's learning and happiness can be affected by their home situation. We also know the impact that neglect or abuse can have on children and young people. However our awareness and understanding of how domestic violence affects children and young people is not as developed as it needs to be. It is our duty to protect all children and safeguard their welfare. It is therefore important for all of us to improve our understanding of domestic violence, how common it is in our society and what we can do to support children and young people affected by this crime

This is why we introduced our Home Safe Project in 2004. Since then we have had in place a full time Project Officer to provide training on domestic violence awareness and child protection. The long-term aim of the project is to embed domestic violence prevention education into the curriculum. We have already made great strides towards this aim:

- Several of our primary and secondary schools have received training. Some primary schools have introduced prevention lessons and one secondary school is running a unit on gender based violence through its Citizenship curriculum.
- All schools have received step-by-step guidelines on responding to disclosures of domestic violence. These guidelines have been recognised as good practice and adopted nationally by 'Save The Children' in their publication on domestic violence "Safe Learning".

“If we had a concern about domestic violence our first port of call would be the Project Officer - it is reassuring to know that she is there and she is our signpost of where to go if we need help.”

Islington secondary school teacher

- We have produced an extensive information and resource pack for schools on how to prevent and respond to domestic violence, and how to introduce this issue into the curriculum. This publication enables the Council to meet one of its Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI 225). Interest has been expressed in the resource from other boroughs as well as nationally.
- Self-defence training for young women in Years 9 and 10 is being made available to all secondary schools.
- We have also worked in partnership with the National Youth Theatre in four secondary schools to deliver peer led drama work on violence in young people's relationships.

The Home Safe Project was recently presented with an Award of Distinction from the Mayor of London for its outstanding contribution to achieving the aims of the second London Domestic Violence Strategy in the Children & Young People's section.

The resources and training provided by Islington's Home Safe Project will help to strengthen our work in this area and enable us to build a safer community, now and in the future, for all of our children.

“It was an excellent training session on domestic violence with lots of information. It raised awareness for all of the staff. It helped to clarify matters - how to know who is the perpetrator, how to deal with the situation. There have been a large number of families who have been going through traumas and it has helped staff to be sensitive to children at school.”

Islington primary school teacher

Councillor Ursula Woolley
Executive Member for Children & Young People
London Borough of Islington

75% of all children on UK child protection registers are affected by domestic violence.

Dept of Health (2003)

At least 81% of domestic violence is carried out by men to women, who are also subject to most repeated offences, 89% of those experiencing repeated abuse from the same perpetrator are women.

Women's Aid research from British Crime Survey (2001)

In 40 - 66% of domestic violence cases, the same violent man is also abusing the children.

Edleson J (1999)

Where there is domestic violence there is a 1 in 2 chance there will be child abuse and vice-versa.

Hester M, Pearson C, & Harwin H (1999)

Domestic violence features in about half of all child homicides.

Sinclair R & Bullock R (2002)

One in four women in the UK will experience domestic violence at some point in their lives.

British Crime Survey (2001)

At least two women every week are murdered by a violent male partner or ex-partner in the UK.

Joint Home Office & Cabinet Office Report (1999)

In 90% of domestic violence incidents occurring in families with children, the children were either in the same or the next room when the violence took place. One third of children witnessing abuse try to protect their mother and are often abused themselves.

Stark E & Flitcraft A (1996)

The Islington Domestic Violence Strategy defines domestic violence as follows:

Domestic violence is essentially a pattern of behaviour which is characterised by the exercise of control and the misuse of power by one person, usually a man, over another, usually a woman, within the context of an intimate or family relationship. It can be manifested in a variety of ways, including but not restricted to, physical, sexual, emotional and financial abuse, and the imposition of social isolation and is most commonly a combination of them all. Women from all communities experience domestic violence. Women from every class, age, race and religion are abused, as are women with disabilities. Violence and abuse can (and does) occur in lesbian and gay relationships.

It is important to note that this definition of domestic violence also includes forced marriage, female genital mutilation and so-called "honour crimes" for example. While factors such as religion and culture may affect how a person responds to domestic violence and the form that abuse may take, religion or culture can never be an excuse for domestic violence.

In the training and materials which we provide to schools as part of this project, survivors of domestic violence are referred to as female and perpetrators as male, this is to reflect the fact that the overwhelming majority of perpetrators of this crime are male, and their victims female. However, as highlighted in the Islington definition, domestic violence can also affect men and several services in the borough provide support to both male and female victims. There are also specialist services available for Black women, and for lesbian, gay and transsexual survivors of domestic violence.

One in four women experience domestic violence – their children are the hidden figure in this statistic. In every school in Islington there will be children living with domestic violence, whose lives, learning and futures are being damaged as a result. Added to this is the fact that children and young people still express tolerance towards domestic violence. For example research from one study by Zero Tolerance in 1998 showed that one in five young men and one in ten young women thought it was acceptable for a man to hit his female partner. A more recent survey in 2005 by the teenage girl's magazine 'Sugar' in partnership with the NSPCC found that 1 in 6 girls reported being hit by their boyfriends and well over half said they would give a boyfriend another chance if he hit them. It is with these figures in mind that domestic violence prevention education in schools has been identified as an important area for development in the Greater London Domestic Violence Strategy.

Domestic violence is a serious child protection issue. Research shows that children & young people living with this crime can be affected emotionally and physically, as well as being at high risk of direct child abuse from the

“ The domestic violence awareness training was marvellous and provided an opportunity to discuss the effects on children, to share experiences and open up the debate. It also made everybody think personally about domestic violence. ”

Islington primary school teacher

perpetrator. If children and young people do not feel safe, they will not be able to learn and grow. Their education may be affected, which can have long-term negative effects on their achievement and economic wellbeing. The crime of domestic violence directly inhibits children and young people's achievement of the five outcomes in the Every Child Matters agenda. We should also not forget that domestic violence takes the lives of two women and one child every week in the UK. Preventing domestic violence is not just a concern for all of us across children's services, but is a community issue we all have a duty to address."



Solace Women's Aid (formerly Islington Women's Aid) Children's Worker visits a local Primary School to join in PSHE lesson on domestic violence prevention, June 2006.

Social Inclusion Unit

CEA@Islington

Lough Road

N7 8RH

Tel: 020 7527 5744

Home Safe: Domestic Violence Prevention Project Officer

heather.vacciana.cea@islington.gov.uk

Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator

finn.mackay.cea@islington.gov.uk

PSHCE & Healthy Schools Programme Manager

helen.cameron.cea@islington.gov.uk

42% of all female homicide victims are killed by their current or former partner, compared to 4% of male homicide victims.

Home Office, Homicide Statistics 2000-2001, see statistics from Women's Aid Federation - www.womensaid.org.uk

In London the Metropolitan Police attend at least 300 domestic violence incidents every day.

2nd London Domestic Violence Strategy (2006)

In 2004 - 2005 3365 incidents of domestic violence were reported to Islington Police

2nd Islington Domestic Violence Strategy (2006)

From January to August 2005 Islington Children & Families Assessment Service recorded 664 referrals because of domestic violence

2nd Islington Domestic Violence Strategy (2006)

2006 Award of Distinction



This certificate is awarded to

CEA Islington

in recognition of their outstanding and innovative work to further the aims of the London Domestic Violence Strategy and to make London a safer place.

Ken Livingstone, Mayor of London

presented at **City Hall** on **27 November 2006**

MAYOR OF LONDON