

White Ribbon Article

With over 40 women to date speaking out about sexual abuse experienced at the hands of Harvey Weinstein gender based violence has been a focus for the media over recent months. The #MeToo campaign took twitter by storm demonstrating the sheer number of women who have experienced sexual harassment and assault. As a result of this attention more victims are feeling able to speak out and ask for help, leading to a 21% rise in calls to US national sexual assault helpline. Whilst this may come as a surprise to many, in particular men, those working in gender based violence are acutely aware of the sheer volume and impact of male violence against women and girls.

- On average **two women are killed by their partner or ex-partner every week** in England and Wales. (Office for National Statistics, 2015)
- **Women are twice as likely as men to experience domestic abuse** (CSEW, 2015).
- **1 in 4 women will experience domestic abuse** in their lifetime (CSEW, 2016)
- **BWA received 6424 calls to our helpline and over 1000 referrals for outreach support**
- Violence against women and girls' offences make **up 20% of the Crown Prosecutions caseload**. (CPS VAWG report 2014/15).
- **Women are 5 times more likely to experience sexual assault** than men (CSEW, 2015).
- **Up to 700,000 women are stalked every year** (CSEW, 2012)
- Of all reported cases of **"Honour killing" in the UK in last 5 years the majority of victims were females** (Dyer, 2015).

The 25th November marks *International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women*, also known as *White Ribbon Day*. The first White Ribbon Campaign was launched in Canada by a group of men after the brutal mass shooting of 14 female students at the University of Montreal. The first White Ribbon Day in the UK was launched in 1998 and has grown stronger and bigger every year since then.

The White Ribbon Campaign UK is part of a worldwide movement led by men who know that there is never an excuse for violence against women and pledge to never condone it or stand by when they know it is happening.

Violence against women and girls affects everyone and anyone can make a stand to make a difference. You can help tackle the problem by

- Attending the Friends of BWA quiz night raising funds and having fun
- Taking the pledge at <http://www.whiteribboncampaign.co.uk/makepledge>

- Wear a White Ribbon and raise awareness
- Make a donation to Berkshire Women's Aid via our website
- Offer your time to volunteer by contacting BWA at info@bwaid.org.uk
- Call out threats, intimidation and harassment by men against women
- Take action whether you have 5 minutes, a few hours or more time visit <http://www.whiteribboncampaign.co.uk/getinvolved> for ideas
- Challenge those who make "jokes" about rape and "wife beating"
- Speak out against victim blaming

Anyone affected by these issues can access advice and support by calling Women's Aid's 24-hour helpline on 0808 2000 247 or visiting the website www.womensaid.org.uk

Or

Contact Berkshire Women's Aid (BWA) on 0118 950 4003 or info@bwaid.org.uk