

### **Message from the Chief Executive**

As a friend of Standing Together I wanted to thank you for being a supporter of our work. I also wanted to describe how we are faring in such a difficult financial climate. The past year has seen us having much success, as you can see from this and other newsletters. We are relatively secure for this financial year because of our prudent approach to our finances and because we have managed to generate income from a broad spectrum of sources.

Next year, especially if one ever reads a newspaper or watches the news, is likely to be very daunting. Partly the problem lies in the fact that domestic violence is still not recognised as a fundamental determinant of social wellbeing. This means it is not mainstreamed as a role in a way that insists agencies in the statutory sector commit funds and activities towards the issue. Often Children's Services and Health play a peripheral part in these partnerships for example. We are also unclear about the policies of the new coalition Government on domestic violence and related issues.

If domestic violence is on the margins of the core activities of Local Authorities and Health it will be much easier to slice those budgets dedicated to this issue. Only time will tell, but we feel that a modern and effective approach to domestic violence is just beginning to be embedded in the way partnerships work, and any change now may significantly harm that progress. This of course means that those victims and children who are safer, and those perpetrators who have been held to account, will not be the signal for the change of culture in our society that we have been seeking. We will continue to witness the tragedy of families suffering awfully at the hands of the abuser and the long term effects this has on all those involved.

Anything you can do to ensure this does not happen, perhaps only in small ways, may make all the difference.

With best wishes.

Anthony Wills  
Chief Executive

## Home Office Project

### **Working with the Home Office to Develop Domestic Violence Partnerships**

For those who have read our newsletter before you will know that our driving principle is the coordinated community response (CCR) to domestic violence. In a nutshell this means two things. Firstly that partners focus their response to domestic violence and ensure that these responses are effective. Secondly that they work with all other agencies who will come into contact with victims, their children or perpetrators, to stop those people falling through the gaps of any response.

Relatively easy to describe but much more difficult to achieve! There still exists a concern about the level of priority given to domestic violence within local partnerships (with some outstanding exceptions) and their ability to turn strategy into action and realise a CCR. The Home Office have also had a policy on this approach but have struggled to find a means of implementation within a local context.

Standing Together have now been asked by the Home Office to use their experience to solve this problem. Using our vast local, national and international experience we have been asked to write the definitive guide to domestic violence partnerships using the CCR model. To do this we are visiting 10 differently sized and structured partnerships across England to add their experience to ours. This phase concludes in July when we will set to the task of producing the manual. We are hoping for publication in the Autumn.

This is tremendous opportunity and compliment for Standing Together. As the first exponent of the CCR in the UK, we have long wanted to demonstrate its value and help to improve the lives of victims. This gives us the opportunity to do exactly that. We will let you know more in future editions of this newsletter.

# Local Partnership 2010

We are now fast approaching the end of our current three year borough wide action plan to address domestic violence. In the last few years STADV have been the key drivers in restructuring the Domestic Violence Partnership (DVP) and enabling the effective achievement of key projects and outcomes within the borough. Membership of the DVP includes voluntary, community and statutory sector agencies working together to address key local priorities including a Specialist Domestic Violence Court (SDVC), Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferencing (MARAC) and Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVA) service. STADV are also commissioned by Hammersmith and Fulham to deliver the domestic violence coordination functions attached to the borough action plan and represent this work at London and national level.

Despite a changing policy context and growing economic pressures STADV continue to enable the delivery and development of coordinated and integrated working to address domestic violence in its broadest sense. This includes elements of the broader Home Office definition which includes forced marriage, so called Honour based violence, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and family violence.

In the last year we have widened our work to implement specific projects that address housing, children and issues related to health. In response to the growing national recognition of the need for integrated working to address the whole continuum of gender based violence, STADV were commissioned to conduct a sexual violence mapping report to better understand the nature and extent of sexual violence in the borough. Sexual violence of course is a key, if hugely unreported, factor in domestic violence relationships.

Last year's annual conference attracted 100 participants and we expect this year to attract even more partners. Domestic violence specialist services such as ADVANCE IDVA service, Refuge Eastern European Women's Outreach Service, DVIP Perpetrator project and Westside Floating Support Service are an integral part of the partnership and bring valuable expertise and insight in both delivering services and supporting coordination.

STADV have trained over 400 staff in the last year, and we continue to support the improvement of the overall delivery of multi agency working through effective protocols and procedures for a range of interventions including MARAC, SDVC, Health pilot sites and Housing services & providers. Our ongoing work with partners has improved data collection by specific services and we continue to monitor and track overall performance of the partnership via the strategic and delivery groups.

STADV have representation at the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB), the LSCB Operational Group and the LSCB Training Sub group. In addition STADV Chair the Children's Third Sector Partnership (C3SP) Board and are committed to working with voluntary sector networks (including the C3S Network) and agencies to strengthen relationships and practice that improves responses.

## Domestic Violence Coordinators Network (DVCN)

The DVCN is now well into its first year, with over 100 members from across the UK. It hosted its second event - *Involving Health in Domestic Violence Partnerships* - on the 10<sup>th</sup> June at the Friends meeting House, Euston.

Over 50 members attended and heard from Medina Johnson and Annie Howell, from IRIS, who discussed how their project has engaged with health around a response to domestic violence and abuse; Sue Thompson, from Bradford and Airedale Community Health Services, and Lisa Hilder, from Bradford Teaching Hospitals Foundation Trust, who explained how they persuaded health services in Bradford to agree to a Health and Violence against Women Strategy; Mark Coulter from Hull NHS, explained how Hull have been so effective at embedding domestic violence partnerships in their local health setting. In the afternoon Trish Harrison from WORTH Services chaired a discussion with members about local practice in their areas, and the issues they faced when trying to persuade health services to become involved in local Domestic Violent Partnerships.

The event was a huge success with 100% of delegates rating the conference Good or Excellent.

# Why Does She Drop Charges?

“Why Does She Drop Charges” is the title of a new European project in which Standing Together will be funded by the European Union’s Daphne Programme to share its expertise with four European cities.

The cities are Bologna in Italy, who are leading this Project, Barcelona in Spain, Catania in Sicily and Cluj Napoca in Romania. The partnerships in each city will include the judiciary, criminal justice agencies and women’s shelters. Over the next two years Standing Together will deliver two days training in each city and develop a good practice manual or guidance for translation. There will be an academic lead in each country and research will be conducted in each city. Professor Marianne Hester from Bristol University will be the British lead. Standing Together worked with her in China in the past and look forward to working with her again. Part of our role will be to keep the European project updated on legal and practice changes in the U.K. at their conferences and project meetings.

This will be an interesting and demanding programme for Standing Together and we look forward to sharing what we have learnt about the development of the coordinated response to domestic violence with these cities of Europe and sharing what we learn in Europe with our networks in the U.K.

## Fundraising

The Standing Together team have raised enough to cover our existing costs until 31/03/2011, which is a very good position for a 3rd Sector organisation to be in the current economic climate. The full annual report and accounts to 31/03/2010 are being audited now and if any Friend would like a full copy we would be happy to send one to you.

### 112 - 2010

The 112 took place on the 8th May, and despite the weather was a great success, with 34 riders taking part, helping to £5323.70, and awareness of, domestic violence. Fancy taking part next year? Put Saturday, 7th May 2011 in your diary now!

### The Metropolitan Police

Standing Together were very grateful to be chosen as the Course Charity by the latest intake of Metropolitan Police Recruits. Through lots of hard work, the course raised a fantastic £3693.64, which will make a significant difference to our charity.

## The Standing Together Team

Our staff team:

- Anthony Wills - Chief Executive
- Beryl Foster – Operations Manager
- Cath Kane – Partnership Manager
- Peta Sissons – Training and Information Officer
- Tanya Allen – Data, Research and Tracking Officer
- Briony Redman – MARAC Coordinator
- Rebecca Vagi – Housing Coordinator
- Laura Burtenshaw – Office Manager and MARAC Administrator
- Shasca Foster – Finance, Administration and Data Input
- Jenny Bowes – Projects Officer

A new member of staff joined our team in January:

### **Venetia Boon – Children and Health Coordinator**

Venetia is a Cardiff graduate who has been gradually working her way back to her roots in the South East after a brief detour to Bristol. Past roles have included time spent at Bristol Children and Young People's Services, Bristol Royal Infirmary, Age Concern and other charitable organisations. Most recently she has been working for the mental health organisation, Time to Change, as the Portfolio Coordinator & Administrator. Previous work has included significant levels of partnership working with charitable and statutory partners which she hopes will stand her in good stead with the Domestic Violence Strategic Partnership work.