

# STANDING together

against domestic violence

## SIX YEARS ON

**Six years of best practice in tackling Domestic Violence.**

Domestic Violence is a **pattern of controlling and abusive behaviour** held together by the threat and the use of violence.

Domestic Violence is **widespread**: an incident of domestic violence occurs in the UK **every 6 to 20 seconds**.

Domestic Violence **destroys families and damages children** now and in the future: in 90% of domestic violence assaults children are in the same or the next room. 89% of those assaulted 4 times or more, are women.

Domestic Violence kills: **at least two women are murdered** in the UK, by their current or former partner, **every week**.

**Standing Together against Domestic Violence** was developed after many years of multi-agency work by voluntary and statutory agencies in the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham.

The project has been inspired by the work of the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project in Duluth USA.

Standing Together **co-ordinates the ground breaking multi-agency response** to the crime of domestic violence in the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham.

Standing Together **influences national policy and practice** by initiating and driving innovation, providing safer options for women and holding perpetrators accountable.

**Standing Together shows that partnership works.**

*“If you have no voice. If you cannot speak, then who speaks for you? They did. I love them for that”.*

# The Objectives of Standing Together

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1. To increase the safety of domestic violence survivors in the short and longer term.
2. To increase the safety of children who live with domestic violence.
3. To hold abusers accountable for their actions.
4. To ensure that the onus of holding the abuser accountable lies with statutory and other agencies rather than with the survivor.
5. Whilst acknowledging that each agency maintains its independence, to ensure that all the agencies involved work in an integrated and coordinated way with each other to achieve these objectives.
6. To provide accountability to the public, to survivors, and to other agencies for the ways in which domestic violence is handled.
7. To test and develop effective policies, procedures and practical measures which can be integrated into the ongoing work of agencies during and after the Pilot.

The Objectives provide the framework for setting targets and monitoring and evaluating the Project.

## **Standing Together provides:**

- A co-ordinated response
- Good Practice by every participating agency
- Monitoring against agreed aims
- Inter agency accountability guided by protocols
- Tracking of offenders
- Advocacy for victims, crisis intervention & support
- Co-ordination of the Specialist Domestic Violence Court

Standing Together Partners include: the Police in two Boroughs, ADVANCE, the Advocacy Project, Crown Prosecution Service, West London Magistrates Court, Blackfriars Crown Court, London Probation, Domestic Violence Intervention Project, Women's Aid, Victim Support, the Community Law Centre, LBHF Social Services, Charing Cross Hospital, the Primary Care Trust.

*“For the last 15 years I have slept on the sofa in the living room. He used to set traps for me so that he would know if I had been in our bedroom and then beat me for doing so. Even though it has been 18 months since I took him to court and he has not been allowed back I still sleep on the sofa.”*

## Facts & Figures

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The impact of Standing Together's co-ordinated response continues to be reflected in the statistics.

The percentage of recorded crimes that involve an arrest has been steadily rising. Nearly half of recorded crimes resulted in arrest in 2004.

Charging rates in relation to arrests hit an all-time high in 2003–4, with nearly 40% of arrests resulting in a charge. The number of police charges for Domestic Violence related offences in Hammersmith & Fulham has risen by nearly 35% in the last year, 2003–4.

The number of cases arriving at the Specialist Domestic Violence Court has been steadily increasing over the years.

Conviction rates are also increasing; the total number of cases that resulted in conviction at the Specialist Domestic Violence Court has risen by over 60% during 2003-4. Furthermore, whole cases that resulted in withdrawal/dismissal/No Evidence Offered, as a percentage of cases arriving at the court during this year, show a decreasing trend. Should this trend continue in the next year, we could see that cases arriving at court become more likely to result in conviction than in withdrawal, dismissal or No Evidence Offered.

The incorporation of an Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme (IDAP) into sentencing from the Domestic Violence Court is also on the increase. IDAP is the group offenders programme that aims to change and challenge abusive men. Last year more than a third of convictions at the Domestic Violence Court contained an IDAP order.

Standing Together has been able to use their STATS case tracking system to calculate Repeat Victimisation of the same victim by the same perpetrator, measured over a whole year in that individual's history. The rate has dropped from an estimated 49% to a new base line of 40% and then to 32% over a 3 year period from 2001 to 2004.

*Note: Standing Together monitors cases of intimate partner abuse, rather than the Police or Crown Prosecution Service definition of family abuse.*

Contact Standing Together for detailed data or visit their website.

***“He controlled me so much that I did not know how to even use the video player. Even though he had broken my jaw I was thinking about taking him back because the children wanted to watch their favourite videos and I couldn't help them do it.”***

# The Projects

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## **1. The response to domestic violence incidents is co-ordinated by Standing Together from the first call to Hammersmith & Fulham Police through to court decision and sentencing.**

The response is backed by high quality help and support from ADVANCE, the Advocacy Project, and data sharing and case tracking by Standing Together.

Standing Together develops protocols, delivers training and monitors performance.

### **Standing Together has:**

- Launched a strong Operational Partnership with all the key agencies in 1998.
- Shared relevant case data to monitor those aims.
- Held each agency accountable through a signed Protocol.
- Delivered multi agency training for all officers in Hammersmith & Fulham Police Division.
- Improved the quality of evidence prepared by the Police for the Crown Prosecution Service.

- Increased the proportion of cases treated as a crime, charged and disposed.
- Embedded a systematic attention to safety and risk in each agency's response to perpetrators and survivors.
- Developed a Web-based computer tracking system to monitor effectiveness, identify risk, improve victim safety and to track offenders.

## **2. Advocacy for survivors**

Standing Together has shown that practical and immediate help from the point of crisis is essential in making victims safer. This is what makes the difference when combined with positive action by the criminal justice agencies.

### **Standing Together has:**

- Helped to set up ADVANCE to meet the gap in service provision in the Borough for a high quality, 24-hour advocacy service for victims referred by police or emergency health sites.
- Standing Together has increased referrals to ADVANCE, mainly from the Police, from 161 in 1998/9 to an average of 550 every year since 2000/01.

***“Dealing with perpetrators who commit domestic violence requires a robust approach which aims to help offenders see that this behaviour is totally unacceptable. The efforts of Standing Together support this approach.”***  
***Chief Superintendent Heather Valentine, Chair of Steering Committee***

# The Projects

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## 3. The Specialist Domestic Violence Court.

The Court sits once a week, for hearings and for trials, at West London Magistrates Court. It serves the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham and the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea.

### Standing Together has:

- Developed and launched the first Domestic Violence Court in London and the first in the country to hear trials in October 2002.
- Convened the Court Management Group to address operational issues as they arise.
- Trained Magistrates, District Judges and other Court staff in the dynamics of domestic violence and in best practice.
- Encouraged the sentencing of men found guilty of domestic violence offences to an IDAP programme.
- Observed the Court in action weekly, monitoring compliance.
- Carried out annual multi-agency reviews of the Court's work.

- Set up a network of Victim/Witness Support Agencies across both Boroughs.
- Begun to build the coordinated approach with Kensington & Chelsea partners.

## 4. Consultation with Survivors of Domestic Violence is essential to ensure that the voices of survivors informs the process of change.

Standing Together uses a range of methods to do this including consultation groups, telephone surveys, questionnaires, feedback from those served by Standing Together initiatives and linking survivors to consultations carried out by Government.

### Standing Together has:

- Asked about their experience of the police, health, solicitors, Courts.
- Consulted with specific local groups from The Horn of Africa, Arabic speaking women, the Filipino community.
- Published their responses, with their approval, in a series of reports.
- Fed back their detailed suggestions to relevant agencies.

*"I couldn't have done it without ADVANCE they kept me focused and able to go to court. It was such a positive experience."*

# The Projects

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## 5. The Health Project, 2001–2004

...aims to increase the profile of domestic violence as an important health issue and change the practice of health professionals at Charing Cross Hospital Accident & Emergency Department and two Walk-In Health Centres.

### Standing Together has:

- Brought three emergency health services into the coordinated response.
- Developed protocols on screening, documentation and referral for specialist support from ADVANCE, the Advocacy Project.
- Trained nurses and doctors in domestic violence awareness and in implementing the protocols.
- Increased referrals of survivors from these health sites to ADVANCE every year.
- Provided resource material for staff and information for patients.

## 6. Sharing Practice

Standing Together is committed to sharing what we learn to further the development

of other co-ordinated responses nationally.

### Standing Together has:

- Documented, reported and shared high quality information.
- Linked with national organisations and acted as a leading organisation in promoting the development of advocacy services linked to coordinated responses.
- Been a founder member of CRARG (Co-ordinated Response & Advocacy Resource Group formed in 2003).
- Set up a web site to make Standing Together easily accessible.
- Provided comment for local and national press on domestic violence related matters and speakers at national conferences.
- Standing Together is recognised as a model of good practice and is regularly asked to comment on government policies, to join national consultative groups and to host visits from international guests and Government Ministers.

*“They came to the A&E and convinced me that I was not responsible for ending up there”.*

# About Standing Together

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## Standing Together will continue to:

- Embed Good Practice
- Consult Survivors
- Develop New Projects
- Share its Practice
- Measure the Results

## With your help Standing Together could also:

- Develop closer working with Social Services Department on Child Protection.
- Extend our Multi Agency Risk Assessment.
- Work with partners agencies to monitor compliance with Court orders, particularly in relation to programmes for violent men.
- Bring the County Courts into the co-ordinated response.
- Set up new projects with Queen Charlotte's Maternity Hospital.
- Offer Safety Auditing to other Agencies.
- Participate in the work of the London Criminal Justice Board.

- Monitor the use of the proposed Domestic Violence Crime & Victim Legislation.

## Very Many Thanks are due to all those who have funded the project from 1998 to 2004:

- The National Lottery Charities Board
- The City Parochial Foundation
- Camelot
- The Rausing Trust
- The Henry Smith Charity
- Dr Edwards & Bishop Kings Fulham Charity
- The Poor Box Fund
- Charing Cross Hospital Amenities Committee
- Regenis, the Regeneration Partnership in LBHF
- Home Office Crime Prevention Programme
- Public Service Agreement, LBHF
- Hammersmith & Fulham Metropolitan Police
- Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership
- Association of London Government

## ...and with support in kind:

- LBHF Community Safety Unit; H & F Met Police; Charing Cross Hospital

*"I stood my ground. No I am not moving, why should I move, I know all my neighbours, I've got a nice street."*

# About Standing Together

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The Standing Together Trust was formed in 2001 to carry forward and develop the pioneering work of the Standing Together Partnership begun in 1998. The Trust provides management and develops the strategy within which the operational work can flourish.

The Objectives of the Standing Together Charitable Trust are:

To promote for the public benefit the provision of services directed towards the prevention of domestic violence and to meet the needs of survivors of domestic violence and their families.

## Trustees

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Company Registration Number: 4283131  
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*“If I had known about your project I would have left him 25 years ago.”*