



The Haven Wolverhampton

E Bulletin

Supporting women and children who are vulnerable to violence and abuse

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Issue 3 – July2010

Keeping you up to date with the latest news, events and developments at The Haven Wolverhampton

Welcome... to The Haven's July E-Bulletin.

In this issue we bring you a selection of case studies from the women and children of The Haven. Some are written by the women themselves, others by staff on their behalf. We also hear from some of the volunteers who work to support Haven staff in delivering quality support services to women and children affected by Domestic Violence and Homelessness. The names of the women and children have been changed to protect their identities.

Is there anything you would like to see in next issue of The Haven E-Bulletin?
If you have any feedback on this or previous issues please contact us on
publicity@havenrefuge.org.uk or call 01902 572173

Grace Lee, Public Relations Officer

Freedom from Domestic Violence Programme

When I first moved into The Haven refuge, I had trouble accepting that I really belonged there. To start with, I was not convinced that I had experienced Domestic Violence as I hadn't experienced physical abuse. As time went on I was able to analyse my relationship. It had not been one of love but an oppressive relationship where I was not viewed or treated as an equal.

After I left the refuge I was able to attend the Freedom from Domestic Violence Programme which truly opened my eyes. I recognised that my experiences of feeling imprisoned, having my confidence eroded and being denied the chance to try new things like learning how to cook/go back to college etc were experiences of emotional abuse. The programme highlighted behaviours which are acceptable in relationships. I am confident that when I do feel ready to begin a new relationship, I will be able to spot the warning signs of a potentially abusive relationship.

I firmly believe that more women should be able to access this amazing, inspirational and educational programme. It has been pivotal in recovery has helped me to move on. Other women will benefit from this programme and can use their knowledge to educate their mothers, aunts, sisters, cousins, daughters and friends about Domestic Violence.

Freedom from Domestic Violence Programme Participant

You have trouble staring you in the face

You have trouble staring you in the face. You find yourself crying. Sometimes the pain hurts so much. You can't even bear to be touched. You just want to be left alone -but then again you don't!!!! All you have left is to hold your head high and have a smile on your face. Carry on walking through life pace by pace.

Written by a resident

Financial Inclusion

May came to The Haven for financial support and assistance following Domestic Violence. At the time May came to The Haven she had over £12,000 in debts in the form of bank loans, credit cards, council tax and rent arrears from her previous property.

May became increasingly worried during her time with The Haven as she was forced to make a claim for welfare benefits following the breakdown of her marriage. Due to anxiety, May's hair and eyebrows were slowly falling out. May's worries were exacerbated when she learned that she was also expecting her fourth child. Her drop in income and inability to successfully return to work in the near future meant that May was unsure and anxious how she was ever going to be able to deal with her debts. Her low income which is barely adequate to cover living expenses meant she could not negotiate with bailiffs about her council tax arrears, or make affordable offers of repayment towards her other debts.

Following several assessments, it was recognised that a Debt Relief Order would assist in lifting May and her children out of the poverty trap. May was referred to a local CAB for specialist debt advice on the premise that she could enquire into applying for a Debt Relief Order. May successfully applied for a Debt Relief Order last month for which The Haven assisted her with the fee.

May said: "I feel my future is much brighter now, I had no idea how I was going to cope. Now I can get on with living!"

Melloney Brown, Financial Inclusion Coordinator

Children & Young People's Service

Tracey suffered Domestic Violence for many years. When she became fearful for her life and that of her children, she was referred to The Haven where accommodation was provided for herself, her 11 year old son Thomas and 5 year old daughter Kelly. When the family arrived at The Haven support was offered by Children's Support workers to ensure the transition from home to refuge was as easy and stress-free as possible.

During one to one sessions with Kelly she expressed verbally '*I must have done something wrong*'. Kelly's self blame led to feelings of guilt, worry and anxiety. During play sessions Kelly was given time and opportunity to talk in an unhurried manner. It is better to elaborate on what children say, rather than to correct their errors. This seemed to give Kelly confidence in her ability. Kelly was encouraged through creative activities such as sand play and children's hour to express herself in her own way. By giving lots of praise and encouragement to set achievable tasks Kelly has exhibited signs of increased confidence.

Thomas initially showed very little interest in play activities and sought to gain attention through hitting his younger sibling and mother, emulating behaviours exhibited by his father. By creating a safe environment and building a trusting relationship with Thomas, he felt able to open up and share his feelings about the abuse he had witnessed at home. Interactive workshops helped Thomas realise that the abuse was not his fault and that it wasn't normal healthy behaviour. Workshops were designed for Thomas and his mother which provided positive ways to re-build broken relationships and allowed Thomas to vent his emotions and express and understand his feelings. Thomas now becomes actively involved in outdoor activities and works with 'Action for Young People' which encourages positive male role models and allows him to work through his issues and experiences.

Emma Laws, Children's Support Worker

Volunteering

I have been highly interested in, and have followed, women's issues for a long time so for me – joining The Haven and becoming part of their volunteering project was a natural progression. Empowering and supporting women and children in vulnerable positions is something I have been keen to get involved in for a long time.

During my time at The Haven I have supported the launch of the children's mini bus appeal and helped to organise celebrations for International Women's Week.

The project has been incredibly rewarding and I have met a lot of wonderful people. Volunteering at The Haven has opened the door to a lot of opportunities and experiences I had not previously considered; for example I am due to start studying for an NOCN level 3 qualification in Domestic Violence Awareness. The project has helped me to realise that I would be happy to pursue a career in this field.

Laura Blyth, Involved Volunteer



Community Advocacy Support

Sarah called The Haven for guidance on how to deal with harassment from her ex-partner. Sarah had suffered abuse for the duration of the relationship and despite leaving, her partner continued to turn up at her property and make abusive phone calls.

Sarah was put in touch with a support worker from The Haven's Community Advocacy Support Team. Sarah stated that she did not wish to contact the police but instead was supported to contact a solicitor and seek protection through the Civil Courts. Sarah was granted with a 12 month non-molestation order which prevented the perpetrator contacting her or going to her property.

Sarah also discussed her housing options with her support worker. Not wanting to leave her property, Sarah's social worker liaised with the Sanctuary Scheme run by Wolverhampton City Council to help improve and increase the security of her existing property.

The Community Advocacy Support Team continue to work with Sarah to offer her emotional support and help build confidence in order to move forward.

Rebecca Fox, Community Advocacy Support Team Coordinator



Words from Women

"I feel that the future is much brighter now."

May (Financial Inclusion Client)



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