



The Haven Wolverhampton

E Bulletin



Supporting women and children who are vulnerable to violence and abuse

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Issue 5 – September 2010

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

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

It's that time of year again when children and young people across the UK prepare to start back at School or College. Whilst this can be a daunting experience for any young person the experience can be all the more difficult for the 3-5 children in every classroom who are living with Domestic Violence.

Children are often described as the 'forgotten' victims of Domestic Violence. At least 750,000 children a year witness Domestic Violence and nearly three quarters of children on the 'at risk' register live in households where Domestic Violence occurs (*Dept. of Health, 2002*). Whilst some find respite in the school environment others suffer emotionally and physically from the fear of being bullied or falling behind with work.

In this issue we explore the effects of Domestic Violence on children and explore the support available to the 'forgotten victims'.

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 me on publicity@havenrefuge.org.uk or call 01902 572173



Grace Lee, Public Relations Officer



The forgotten victims

Domestic Violence is often regarded as a problem between adults. However, it is becoming increasingly apparent that more and more children in the UK are living with and suffering from the effects of witnessing and being directly involved in incidents of Domestic Violence.

In 90% of all Domestic Violence incidents children are present in the same or next room (Hughes 1992). It seems that children are not deceived by closed doors and are aware of the tension that can lead to violence in the home. Even if they are not physically harmed, children may suffer lasting emotional and psychological damage as a result of witnessing violence. These can include;

- **Emotional problems** – Crying / Anxiety / Confusion / Anger / Depression / Nightmares / Sleeping & Eating Disorders / Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
- **Behavioural problems** – Aggression / Getting into trouble at school / Becoming withdrawn / Isolating themselves
- **Physical problems** – Bed-wetting / Nervous ticks / Headaches / Stomach Aches

Children can experience both short and long term cognitive, behavioural and emotional effects as a result of witnessing Domestic Violence. Each child will respond differently to trauma and some may be resilient and not exhibit any negative effects.

For comprehensive information for children on Domestic Violence visit www.thehideout.org.uk

Teachers Wanted

For some children, living with Domestic Violence can affect their performance at School.

The Haven would like to hear from qualified primary and secondary school teachers who would be willing to dedicate a couple of hours a week to delivering homework clubs and catch-up sessions to children in refuge.

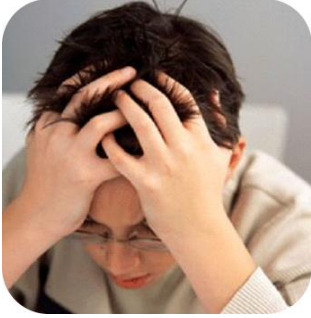
Alternatively if you would like to donate educational support items such as laptops, workbooks or stationery to be used as part of the homework clubs please get in touch.

For more information please call **01902 572140** or write to info@havenrefuge.org.uk

Domestic Violence in the Classroom

In the UK 3-5 children in every classroom are living with Domestic Violence (Aitkin, 2004). Watching, hearing or later learning of a parent or family member being harmed in the home can threaten a young person's sense of stability and security typically provided by their family.

Early identification of difficulties can lead to earlier and more effective support and intervention for young people and their families.



Students may display some of the following signs when living with Domestic Violence.

- Physical complaints – Headaches / Stomachaches
- Constant worry about possible danger to / safety of loved ones
- Low self esteem and lack of confidence in trying new things (including academic tasks)
- Difficulty paying attention in class, concentrating on work and learning new information
- Outbursts of anger directed towards teachers
- Bullying and aggression towards teachers or classmates
- Truancy

It is important to be aware that there may be a variety of reasons for the students behaviour. Problems may be explained by a number of other factors but it is crucial not to dismiss Domestic Violence as a possibility.

Should you suspect that a student or pupil is affected by Domestic Violence, speak to your Head teacher who should have appropriate procedures and measures put in place to deal with such incidences.

Support for young people affected by Domestic Violence

In 2007 the Labour government introduced the National database Contact Point following recommendation from Lord Laming's report after the death of Victoria Climbié. The Haven signed up to ContactPoint in November 2009 in order to be able to provide the best level of service to child victims of Domestic Violence. However in May 2010 the new Coalition government announced a plan to end ContactPoint and in August the ContactPoint database was switched off. We now wait in anticipation for the Monro Review due 2011 in the meantime the government will consider the feasibility of a new signposting service for professionals to help them to support and protect our most vulnerable children, who will move areas or access services in more than one area.

Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC)

The Children's Workforce Induction Programme was launched in January 2009 by the CWDC to ensure that all professionals working with children, young people (CYP) and their families had a common approach to supporting individual needs. Staff from The Haven have had the opportunity to participate in the e-training programme in a trial capacity. We hope to roll out the training to other members of staff who have responsibilities for working with young people and their families.

National e-CAF (NeCAF)

National eCAF is a secure IT system for practitioners to store, access and share information captured through a Common Assessment Framework (CAF). The Haven has signed up to NeCAF and will be working towards training and accreditation with external organisations.

Developing The Haven's Children & Young People's Support Service

Looking at the needs of children and young people whose mothers are not in refuge is a priority. Many women access The Haven's Community Team services which allow them to remain living independently. As a result the team indirectly supports a number of children and young people. Therefore the Children and Young People's service coordinator will be supporting the team to provide the best service to young people. The coordinator will also manage the implementation of the NeCAF in refuge and ensure that the CAF process becomes part of the organisations induction process. The service is also keen to encourage positive male role models amongst children and young people and will be looking to support the introduction of male children's workers and volunteers.

For more information on the support available at The Haven for children aged 0 – 16 who are affected by Domestic Violence visit

<http://www.havenrefuge.org.uk/GetHelp/Services/ChildrenService.htm>

Children & Young People's Support Service

The Haven recognises the devastating impact Domestic Violence can have on children and young people. Children learn behaviour from those around them and witnessing violence between parents or family members can sometimes result in children believing this is appropriate behaviour. Whilst there is no evidence to suggest children who have been around Domestic Violence will grow up to become perpetrators or victims, it is important to provide young people with the time and opportunity to address their understanding of what constitutes a healthy relationship.

Through funding from Children in Need The Haven is able to employ children's workers to provide therapeutic support to the young people who accompany their mothers to refuge. Children's workers organise a range of play opportunities and resources in order to skillfully promote learning and support social and emotional development. Children are encouraged to attend group workshops to help them understand what has happened to them and their mothers. They are also given the opportunity to meet with children's workers individually to discuss any concerns they may have. Children and young people are encouraged to develop at their own pace. The process is gradual, incremental, unhurried and produces real and lasting changes for the better.



The Haven has also been successful with an application to Comic Relief to provide support to young people who have taken on caring/emotional supportive roles of their mother and /or younger siblings as a result of Domestic Violence.

The 3 year project will help engage young people aged 11-25 years; encourage participation, provide information and an outlet to express themselves. The Project aims to improve a young person's overall well-being, emotional circumstances and ability to cope. The Project will also aim to help raise awareness of the needs of this vulnerable group who often fall through the gaps in early life.

We look forward to reporting on the progress of this project in early 2011

Molly's Story

Molly is 19. She has 3 sisters and lives with her parents. Her father drinks heavily and has been physically abusive towards her mother.

Since her father was made redundant Molly and her sisters have agreed to stay at home to protect their mother who works from home. Molly and her sisters would agree which subjects at school were not so important and worked out a shift pattern. They all hoped they would not draw the afternoon shift as their father's visits to the pub at lunchtimes resulted in lectures to the children which played on him being the victim. Molly and her sisters have often had to escape to friends' houses in the middle of the night and many evenings have been spent in the hospital waiting for their mother to get stitches.

Molly has missed a lot of school because of the time she has spent protecting her mother. She receives no external support and relies on her sisters for support. Molly has started to shut down and now switches off when her father begins to lecture.

The close relationship between the 4 sisters has led to them developing coping and resilience strategies. Molly recent discovered that her father beat her mother when she was 5 months pregnant with Molly.



Words from Children

"At first I felt disloyal to my dad who was very violent to me and my family, but now I see that other kids have had the same experiences as me and I can share things with others which helps me."



Contact Us



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<http://twitter.com/TheHavenWton>

In Next Month's Issue

We bring you the latest events taking place at The Haven for **Domestic Violence Awareness Month** including:

Bark in the Park – a 4 legged friendly sponsored walk in association with Sunnyside Kennels which aims to raise awareness of the link between Domestic Violence and Animal Abuse.

Walk a Mile in Women's Shoes – a one mile sponsored walk which encourages men to don a pair of women's shoes and take a stand against Domestic Violence.

For information on both events visit <http://www.havenrefuge.org.uk/NewsEvents/Events.htm>

