

Stronger Together by Standing Together

Crossing Pathways: Health & Domestic Abuse - Impact Update

An Introduction from our CEO

I am immensely proud of Standing Together's pioneering "Whole Health" approach, which recognises the need for and acts to affect a system-wide partnership change in the response to domestic abuse. Over the past 20 years, we have worked locally and nationally to coordinate a victim-survivor



centred response by health partners, bringing together knowledge and practice to ensure effective and sustainable change. This vital knowledge and experience informed our earlier Pathfinder 2020 recommendations which are included in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 Statutory Guidance. Building further upon these recommendations, we have been awarded a contract by the Home Office to understand and drive improvements in the health response to domestic abuse across England. As it enters its final year, I am pleased to celebrate this collaboration with our health partners and introduce this newsletter, which further aims to share best practice and embed a co-ordinated community approach to improve outcomes for victim-survivors, children and families. This project aligns with the work of the Domestic Abuse Commissioner (DAC) and NHS England's Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence programme. Working together with survivors, we will ensure that interventions are fair and inclusive and that the response centers around their experiences and needs.

Crossing Pathways: Our Aims

Building on Standing Together's Whole Health approach, this three-year project aims to improve domestic abuse interventions in healthcare settings to support a diverse patient population, in particular vulnerable groups who face the most barriers in disclosing abuse or accessing services, such as disabled women, minority ethnic groups, and migrant women and children. We are doing this by working innovatively with partnerships in Health and Domestic Abuse, ensuring interventions are fair and inclusive, to create sustainable change that transforms England's healthcare response to Domestic Abuse by ensuring a consistent and coordinated whole health system approach. To date this funding has enabled us to: -

1. Map the provision of health and domestic abuse services and processes throughout England.
2. Evidence gaps in provision and fund effective domestic abuse interventions.
3. Implement best practice regional networks with partners such as NHSE and NHS providers, Domestic Abuse, wider health services and VAWG (Violence Against Women and Girls) leads to improve knowledge, pathways and responses for victims/survivors within healthcare settings.
4. Support pilot initiatives across England through a grant funded approach.
5. Develop an active Survivor Voices led approach, ensuring that survivor voices are heard and held within the core of this project.

The project is funded by **The Home Office**.



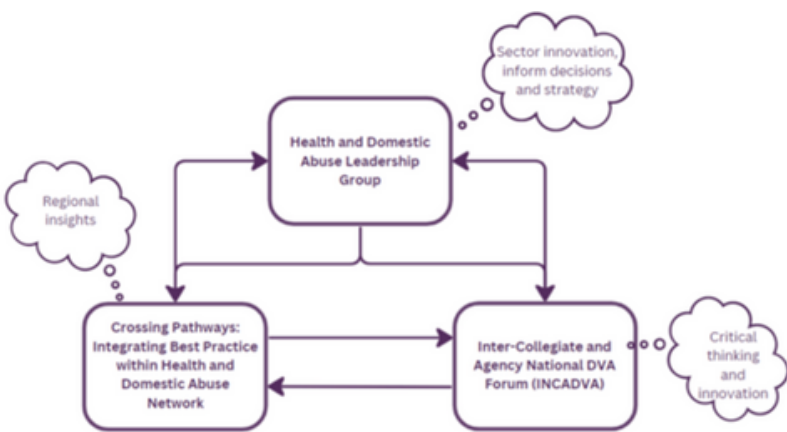
Home Office

Platforms for Change

The eight Crossing Pathways regional networks across England bring together a wide range of stakeholders which integrate into the established Inter-collegiate and Agency National DVA Forum (INCADVA) forum and the newly formed Health and Domestic Abuse leadership forum. This creates a responsive framework to drive system change by developing a health response, using the principles of the Co-ordinated Community Response (CCR) to domestic abuse, and applying this across strategic health and VAWG partners. The CCR focuses on multi-agency partnership working that creates a collaborative response that focuses on victims/survivors' experiences at every stage of support, emphasising the community's responsibility to keep them safe. Discover more CCR approach here:

In Search of Excellence Report -

<https://www.standingtogether.org.uk/blog-3/in-search-of-excellence>



The newly formed Health and Domestic Approach Leadership forum have already agreed key priorities and have outlined these in a joint letter to the new Government.



Sustainable long-term funding for domestic abuse initiatives within health settings.

Ongoing training, learning and development for health professionals on domestic abuse alongside protected time to undertake this.



Building a coordinated community approach to health and domestic abuse through partnerships; health, domestic abuse agencies including "By and for" specialist organisational and wider multi agency stakeholders.

Clear method of data reporting, monitoring and sharing, including clinical coding.



Survivor Voices

This a poem is written by Standing Together's Survivor Voice Lead, Arlene Mensah. It captures authentic conversations of the collective experiences of the Survivor Network members, all of whom agree it is a creative and true representation of their voices.

We started this journey with echoes of, "we need to keep on keeping on until change happens."

She's kept her boots on, ready, at every opportunity to eradicate the issues victim survivors face in all spheres of society.

This isn't her first expedition, but she's resilient to keep on fighting no matter what it takes.

Every time we meet, they re-tell the story of where their boots were ripped, soaked, muddied, scorched, repaired, stolen and more.

These are their survival shoes.

We're only a few miles in but already you say, **"You make me feel that what we're doing can't be ignored."**

I won't allow it to be, because I carry your voices with me every day, as I step into each of your boots following the compass between worlds.

Here you say, **"I've had the opportunity to feel heard."**



Pilots for Change

Having found gaps in provision, Standing Together has awarded grant funding across England to 30 services to improve the healthcare response for vulnerable groups in key areas. These providers include by and for organisations. They are reaching victim-survivors accessing health services, and upskilling health care practitioners in responding to domestic abuse. Each service is contributing quantitative and qualitative data to support the evaluation of Crossing Pathways. Several providers have found the recruitment of key frontline staff has been a challenge, also reflected in the joint open letter to the previous Government in March by VAWG sector agencies, highlighting the recruitment challenges faced by the sector. [Click here](#) for letter -

<https://www.womensaid.org.uk/leading-violence-against-women-and-girls-organisations-issue-urgent-joint-letter-to-government-highlighting-the-ongoing-recruitment-and-retention-crisis-in-the-sector/>



Service Spotlight

Tackling Health Inequality - Roma Health IDVA – Staying Put – West Yorkshire – Bradford City

This programme launched in January, initially co-located in three GP surgeries which has now increased to five. The Roma HIDVA initially hosted a short drop-in session which has now been extended to a full day. Staying Put have provided inspiring case studies of how the Roma HIDVA has improved health inequalities for the local Gypsy Roma community. Monthly training is being delivered to professionals across the primary care network. To date, the Roma HIDVA has trained 228 professionals, as well as 224 instances of advice and information provided. Whilst physical spaces have been created in the surgeries, these are specific days which are inflexible, presenting an access barrier for some people needing to access support.

Be a part of the change “Join Now”

Find out more about this transformative project and join the ambitious and passionate network driving system change to improve health’s response to domestic abuse by emailing health@standingtogether.org.uk



Cancer and Domestic Abuse A Nuanced Intervention

Abusers can use cancer diagnosis, treatment and recovery to start or escalate the abuse they perpetrate on a victim-survivor. It can cause long-lasting physical and mental health harm to someone whose life is already threatened by their illness. Health professionals working in cancer care have a unique window of opportunity to intervene and make a difference.

Through a recent partnership collaboration with the University of Bristol, and Macmillan Cancer Support we have produced a new toolkit to support cancer professionals to identify and respond to signs of domestic abuse in patients with cancer and their carers. Find full information and download the toolkit at: <https://www.macmillan.org.uk/healthcareprofessionals/cancer-pathways/treatment>

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CANCER SUPPORT**

**STANDING
TOGETHER**
against domestic abuse

**CROSSING
PATHWAYS**
Integrating Best Practice within Health & Domestic Abuse