

## Tower Hamlets 16 Days of Activism (2019)

On 25 November, the council's Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) team launched their 16 days of activism against gender based violence in partnership with Karma Nirvana, a national charity supporting victims of honour-based abuse and forced marriage.

The purpose was to challenge honour-based abuse and forced marriage by promoting community resilience.

The launch event was attended by over 60 people and heard moving accounts from survivors of honour based abuse and forced marriage. A key theme arising from the event was that everyone should see safeguarding as their business.

If you require support for honour based abuse or forced marriage you can call the **Karma Nirvana Helpline** on 08005999247.



### Over the 16 days, key activities included:

#### 26 November 2019 VAWG Champions Network

VAWG Champions from several organisations such as Bart's Sexual Health service, ELFT Mental Health team, East London Mosque, Look Ahead, Salvation Army, Housing Options and Community Centres met to discuss what work they had been doing to promote awareness about VAWG. Partners had been holding awareness stalls and offering staff training to help raise awareness.

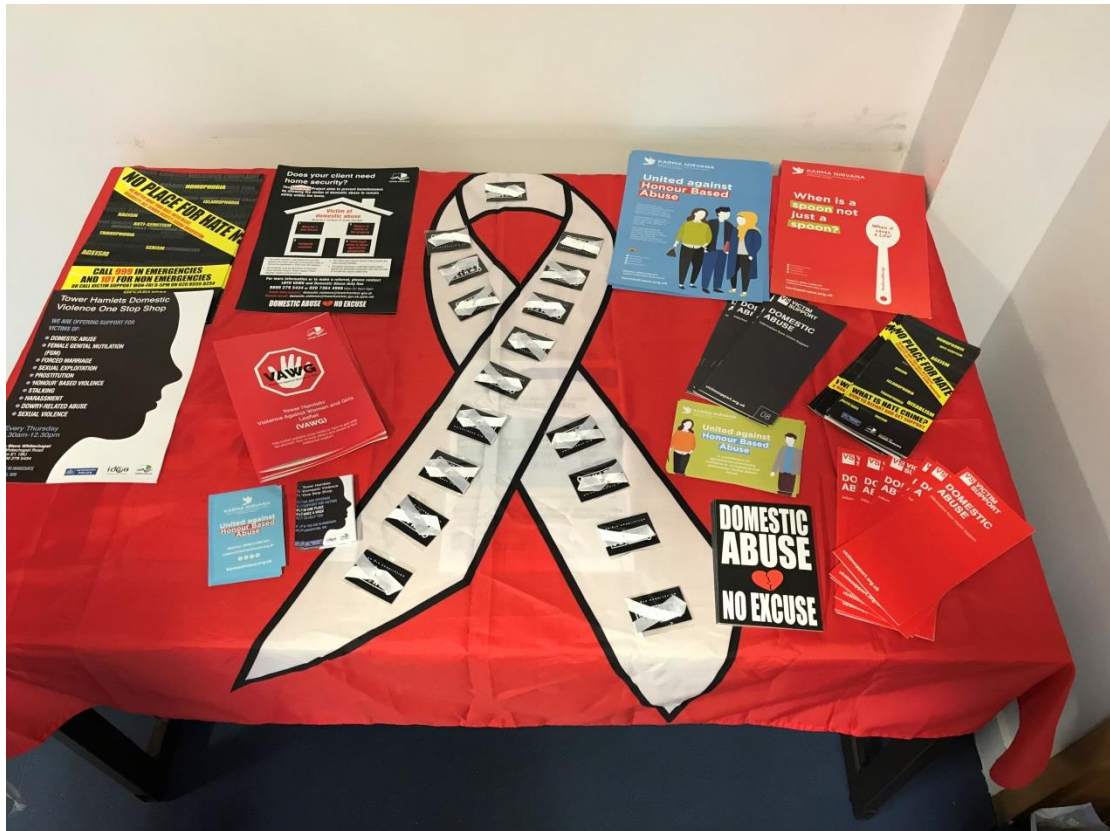
VAWG awareness; we heard about awareness stalls, staff training and plans to deliver VAWG community champion training to service users in their organisation.

## 26 November and 3 December

A stall was held in the reception of Albert Jacobs House promoting the White Ribbon Campaign – a global campaign to end male violence against women and girls.

White ribbons were handed out and we encouraged staff to sign a pledge to 'Never commit, excuse or remain silent about male violence against women'.

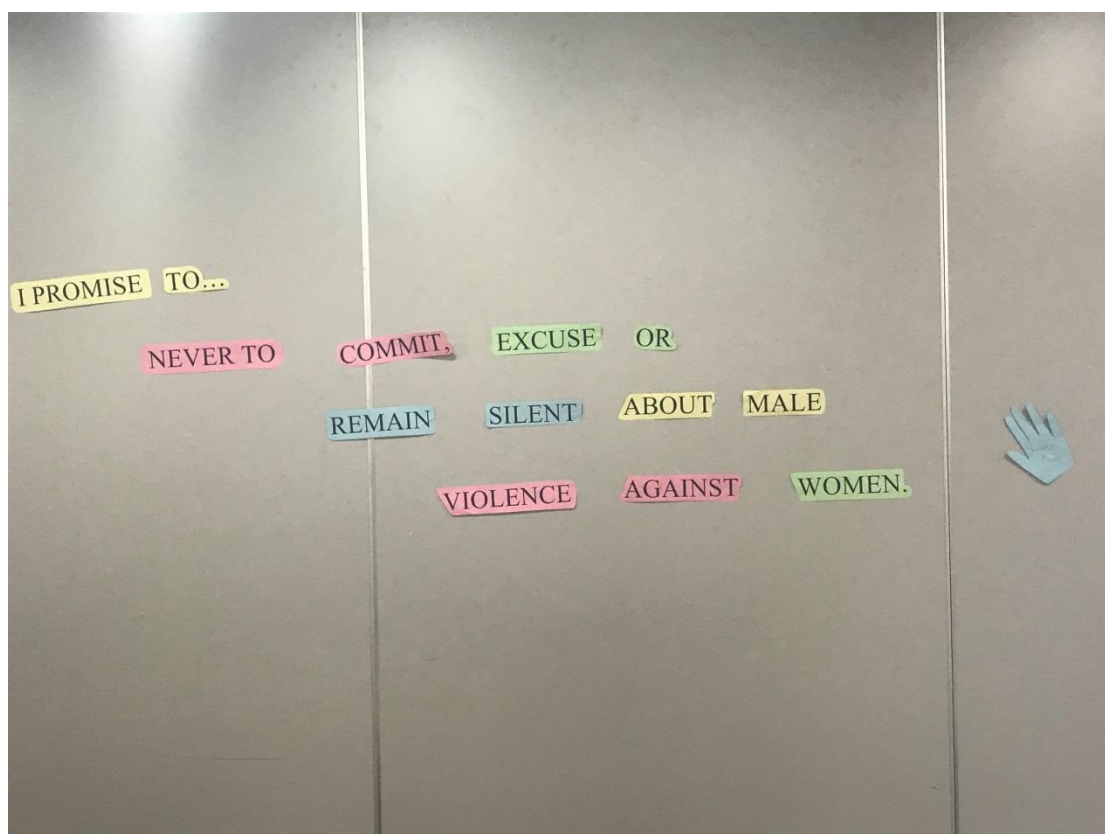
Literature on VAWG services was distributed and we engaged with around 50 people over the two days.



## **27 November at City Gateway English for Speakers of other Languages (ESOL) event**

The council supported an event at City Gateway attended by 22 Bangladeshi ESOL learners. At the event an 'around the room' quiz was completed where the signs and impact of domestic abused was discussed.

A hand tree session then took place to indicate that hands are not made for hurting.



## **27 November Queen Mary University - VAWG first aid**

25 staff from Queen Mary University London's welfare and counselling service came along to hear about VAWG and what they can do to help, along with what support is available from local and national services.

At the event there were a lot of disclosures from attendees and people told us they left feeling more equipped to offer support around VAWG and make referrals to specialist organisations.

## **28 November Blooming Strong Awards**

The Blooming Strong campaign celebrates the strength of women who have survived VAWG or supported someone who has. The Blooming Strong award (a flower) is given in recognition for overcoming the odds, or going the extra mile to support victims of VAWG.



## **Two Blooming Strong coffee mornings held at refuges in borough.**

In total 87 nominations were received for the awards and over 40 participants attended the ceremony at the council offices (Mulberry Place). Attendees were a mix of local officers, professionals and residents, who all came together to share stories and network.

Women were awarded with a flower and certificate by Denise Radley Corporate Director, Health, Adults and Community and Ann Corbett, Divisional Director for Community Safety.

Feedback said that the event was emotional and much needed.

## **28 November Wapping Football Club**

Parents from Wapping's under 14 football club wore a white ribbon and signed our pledge.



## **2 December DeafPlus Voluntary Organisation**

A presentation was held on domestic abuse awareness. Attendees were given information about support resources available nationally and within the borough.

## **2 December Thai Boxing Fighters Academy**

Members wore the white ribbon and vowed to never commit, excuse or remain silent about male violence against women



## **6 December East London Mosque**

Over 1000 people were in attendance at jummah prayer held at the East London Mosque. The imam delivered a speech about respecting women and one another.

## **6 December council office – stall held**

A stall was set up in reception promoting the White Ribbon Campaign and asking that members of the general public as well as staff sign the pledge. We gave out information and resources and engaged with over 100 people.

## **9 December St Paul's Way Trust Domestic Abuse Workshop**

This event explained more about domestic abuse and shared information about local support services. Parents who attended left with a greater understanding about domestic abuse and safety planning options.

## **VAWG Champion Training**

If you are a professional working or volunteering in Tower Hamlets and would be interested in free training on any of the VAWG topics (domestic abuse, sexual abuse, honour based abuse, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, child sexual exploitation, prostitution, stalking and harassment) please email [vawg@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:vawg@towerhamlets.gov.uk) for more information.

### **What is VAWG?**

Violence Against Women and Girls is defined as any act of violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, mental or economic harm to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.

VAWG includes: Domestic Abuse, Sexual Violence, Forced Marriage, 'Honour' Based Violence, Dowry-related abuse, Trafficking, Sexual Exploitation, Prostitution, Stalking & Harassment.

### **For help**

#### **Domestic Abuse One Stop Shop (DAOSS)**

Key members of staff from the council VAWG Team, Police, Housing Options, Victim Support Tower Hamlets, Floating Support services on rotation and a solicitor are present every Thursday from 9.30am – 12.30pm at the Idea Store Whitechapel, 321 Whitechapel Road, London E1 1BU.

Teams can provide advice, information and signpost victims of domestic abuse.

#### **The Tower Hamlets Multi Agency Risk Assessing Conference (MARAC)**

Key staff from the Police, Housing Options, Children's Services, Health, Probation, Victim Support, Drug and Alcohol Services, Mental Health and Education services meet every other Tuesday from 9.30 -12.30, to review and plan action in identified high risk cases.

The Panel has a priority focus on victim safety with links to child protection and multi-agency protection arrangements for violent and dangerous offenders.

For local support call **Victim Support** Tower Hamlets on 0207 364 2448  
Professionals can contact the **VAWG Team** on 0207 364 4986 or email: [domestic.violence@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:domestic.violence@towerhamlets.gov.uk)