



Ending
domestic
abuse

SafeLives' Newsletter

Autumn

Edition 2024





Welcome...

Welcome to your SafeLives Autumn 2024 Newsletter.

In this edition, we share a glimpse into some of SafeLives' new projects, vital work that simply would not have been possible without your support and generosity. You can read all about how we are inviting victims and survivors of domestic abuse to share their experiences through our Echo project and our report on how domestic abuse affects the visually impaired community, the first of its kind.

This Autumn newsletter will also share inspirational stories from some of our amazing supporters as well as opportunities for you to get involved in continuing to support our work.

So, cozy up, make yourselves a hot drink and take a look inside!

Project Echo

Putting the Voices of Survivors at the heart of the response to domestic abuse

Hearing, truly listening to and promoting survivor voice is at the heart of everything we do here at SafeLives and so we were overjoyed to launch an exciting new project earlier this year, in partnership with The National Lottery Community Fund, called Echo.



By being given the opportunity to share their thoughts and feedback about current domestic abuse services in their local areas and sharing realistically what is working and what is not working, survivors across Bolton, Leicestershire and Sheffield will have the opportunity and be supported to drive positive changes in their local domestic abuse services.

Within Echo, SafeLives are collaborating with local charities.

- In Bolton these are local domestic abuse charities Fortalice and Endeavour.
- In Leicestershire we are working with local charity Living without Abuse.
- And in Sheffield we are working with Sheffield Mind and local domestic abuse charity Haven.

What does Echo involve?

Survivors are getting involved with Echo in lots of ways! From sharing feedback through surveys and interviews, to joining workshops and group sessions to come up with new ideas that work. This project is all about including voices from all communities – both adults and children. It gives survivors the chance to share their honest thoughts about local domestic abuse services and tell us what is and isn't working.

Echo is helping to create change and make sure that adult and child victims of domestic abuse get the response they deserve so they can become safer, sooner.

If you are a local survivor wishing to get involved in project Echo, please click the button below or if you would like more information email echoproject@safelives.org.uk



Project Echo is helping us to listen to children and adult survivors in Bolton, Leicestershire and Sheffield in a really safe and supportive way. We want to hear what they think could have made them safer, sooner. By doing this, we can make sure everyone gets the right help, at the right time, by improving the services for families in these areas.

Register your interest





New Q&A corner!



This edition's Q&A session is with Gemma Gall, Domestic Abuse Court Advocacy Accreditation Lead. Gemma's role is about working to improve the experiences of victims and survivors of domestic abuse going through the criminal court process in Scotland. Here is Gemma talking all about DACA (Domestic Abuse Court Advocacy):

Hi Gemma, can you tell us a bit about the project and what inspired it?

Hello! It's great to be here. Well, the project came about because victims of domestic abuse have told us over and over again about how difficult navigating the criminal justice system is. When we spoke to survivors, they described it as "like walking blindfolded through a minefield". Victims also told us that domestic abuse court advocacy is vital in helping them to navigate and understand the justice process.

So, in 2022, the Scottish Government funded SafeLives, in partnership with ASSIST, to look into the court advocacy support available in Scotland and to come up with national standards to work towards. There are many aims of the project including for people to feel safer and more empowered when going through the court process and for professionals to also feel more confident when it comes to supporting victims. But the most important aim is that all individuals in Scotland have the opportunity to access accredited domestic abuse criminal court advocacy support when they need it.

What makes the court advocacy standards you mentioned unique and groundbreaking?

The Domestic Abuse Court Advocacy Standards for Scotland have been developed over a year with over 50 people with lived experience of domestic abuse and/or the criminal justice process – plus over 300 practitioners! They are the first standards of their kind in the world.

What kind of impact do you hope these standards will have for victims and survivors?

We hope that these standards will act as a way to explain domestic abuse court advocacy and for everyone to know what to expect as standard from the support they receive.

For victims, knowing that there is a consistent, good-quality domestic abuse court advocacy service can be the difference between reporting or not reporting abuse.

For professionals the standards will help support the partnership working that is vital to support victims at every point in their criminal justice journey. This will also increase the confidence of other professionals in the role of domestic abuse court advocacy workers.

How have survivors and professionals responded to the development of these standards so far?

We asked 360 people to give their feedback on the standards. This included sharing 3 words they would use to describe the standards. The most popular words included:

"Potentially lifesaving"

"Empowering"

"Safe"

"Accessible"

"Practical"

"Client-focused"

We launched the standards on International Women's Day with a keynote speech from the Minister for Victims and Community Safety, Siobhian Brown. During the event, we also heard from Helen, an Authentic Voice Panel Member, on her lived experience of domestic abuse.

During the launch we asked attendees what the standards meant to them. Responses followed similar themes of hopes for consistency in the support available and increased safety for victims. One respondent said the standards meant we were "one step towards eradicating the postcode lottery faced by victims across Scotland".

A video of the standards launch is available [here](#).

How can our supporters get involved or help amplify this work?

We'd love for supporters to share the standards.

Thank you so much Gemma. Lastly, what keeps you motivated in leading this project?

Great question! Justice is so important to me; it's about fairness and making sure there are consequences when someone causes harm. Sadly, that doesn't feel like the reality for many victims and survivors right now. The DACA project is all about ensuring that victims and survivors across Scotland get consistent support from highly trained specialist domestic abuse court advocacy workers. My part in this is small, but as a movement, domestic abuse court advocacy has the potential to support more victims to find the justice they deserve.

Click below to meet the team in Scotland or get in touch via scotland@safelives.org.uk

Meet the team



The Unseen: Blind and Partially Sighted People's Experiences of Domestic Abuse

In 2022 we teamed up with the sight loss charity The Vision Foundation to learn more about the experiences of blind and partially sighted victims and survivors of domestic abuse. This revealed the shocking scale of domestic abuse experienced by the visually impaired community – that 1 in 12 visually impaired people in the UK have experienced domestic abuse.

1 in 12 visually impaired people in the UK are estimated to be victims or survivors of domestic abuse

The study was the first of its kind to look specifically at the impact of domestic abuse in the sight loss community. Our research found that many organisations and professionals who are in contact with people with a visual impairment lack the vital knowledge and experience needed to support blind and partially sighted victims and survivors. Too many people aren't getting the crucial help they need.

Based on the findings from our research with the Vision Foundation, we made it a priority to improve support for blind and partially sighted survivors. One of the key recommendations was to provide training to everyone who may come into contact with blind or partially sighted victims and survivors.

Over the past year, we've developed and delivered a new training programme for Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (Idvas) so they feel able to better support visually impaired survivors – and we created a toolkit for any professional to use to help them support and direct victims and survivors to the right services. We have also been working hard to make sure that all our training courses are accessible to blind and partially sighted professionals who want to train with us.

This has been a crucial step toward breaking down barriers and ensuring that everyone gets the help and support they deserve.

[Read the full report here](#)



Making it happen

Meet some of our supporters

Meet Jodie

A huge thank you from everyone here at SafeLives to Jodie who took part in the Leeds 10K in June and raised an incredible £169!

Jodie, we think you are amazing, thank you for your support and for raising awareness of our vital work!



Jodie



Kristie

An update on Kristie's Channel swim!

We featured Kristie and her English Channel swim in our Summer Newsletter in June. She is certainly making waves as she has raised over £3,000 for SafeLives. Kristie's swim has been moved to 2025 due to the weather conditions, we will keep you posted on her plans for 2025. Thank you Kristie!

[Just Giving](#)





And finally,

a little word from the editor: Are you feeling inspired?

Hello everyone! If you are feeling inspired to support our work by doing some fundraising, there are still opportunities to run for SafeLives in 2024, see the full list to the right as well as many more opportunities coming up in 2025.

But with the darker nights setting in, how about holding a bake sale for some of your friends or running a pub quiz in your local pub? There are many fun indoor options to raise vital funds for SafeLives and I can guide you every step of the way with resources, printables, graphics and more! I would love to hear from you if you have any other ideas – please get in touch anytime – Sophie.

Email me at: fundraising@safelives.org.uk



10-12 October, 2024
Three Peaks Challenge

6 October, 2024
Great Scottish
Half Marathon & 10k

22 September, 2024
Edinburgh
Women's 10k

20 October, 2024
Yorkshire 10 Miler

29 September, 2024
Sheffield 10k

13 October
Royal Parks Half
Marathon
(spaces are now full but please contact us for 2025)

4-6 July, 2025
Jurassic Coast

20 October
Great South Run

2024
Virtual Dog Jog 2024

2024
Big Fun Run Virtual
Challenge 2024

Looking for other ways to make a difference?

Join our Monthly Giving Circle [Click here to find out more!](#)

With a regular monthly donation you'll be making a consistent, meaningful and lasting contribution to our mission to end domestic abuse. Plus, it's convenient and flexible – you choose the amount that works best for you, and your donation will automatically be processed each month.

Raise a cuppa to eliminating violence [See our news on the day.](#)   

Why not hold a fundraising coffee morning or tea party on, or near, 25th November, International Day of Elimination of Violence against Women.

Make a one-off donation [Click here to make a one-off donation.](#)

With a one-off gift, you can make a big difference to those living with domestic abuse in the UK.

Skydiving [Apply here!](#)

Raise money for SafeLives whilst ticking something off your bucket list. Your skydive will be covered if your raise £395.

Your donation will help make sure that victims and survivors, and their families, are made safe and are given support to rebuild their lives.

Nobody should live in fear. It's not acceptable, not inevitable and together, we can make it stop.
Join #TeamSafeLives today!

Contact us:

fundraising@safelives.org.uk



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to register your interest in any of our events. A member of the team will then be in touch to send you a Fundraising Pack and a SafeLives t-shirt!