VIOLENCE reduction unit

www.actiononviolence.org.uk

Violence is preventable, not inevitable.

All the latest news from the Violence Reduction Unit

Winter 2011

Advent calendar highlights horror of domestic abuse

An advent calendar highlighting the horror of domestic abuse in Scotland formed part of the domestic abuse phase of our annual Anti-Violence campaign, which ran from December 2010 – January 2011.

The calendar, which was hosted on the VRU website (www.actionon violence.com), revealed a shocking stat or fact about the scale of domestic abuse in Scotland every day up to December 25. Chief Inspector Graham Goulden, campaign lead for the VRU, said:

"Sadly, Christmas and New Year are peak periods for domestic abuse. We wanted to highlight this and raise awareness of the fact that, for many victims, domestic abuse isn't just a one-off event, it's something that happens day in, day out."

The anti-violence campaign advent calendar

Among the stats revealed by the calendar were:

- On average it will take 35 incidents of abus before a victim reports to the police
- 28% of victims said their partner had prevented them from seeing friends and relatives.
- Where children were present, the majority (77%) saw or heard what happened, and almost one in five (19%) of those who saw or heard what happened became involved while two per cent were hurt or injured during the incident.

The calendar also highlighted how police and government are helping to clampdown on domestic abuse, with one fact mentioning how police no longer need a statement to make an arrest for domestic abuse while another highlighted the recent change in the law which created a new offence of "engaging in threatening or abusive behaviour", giving victims greater protection.

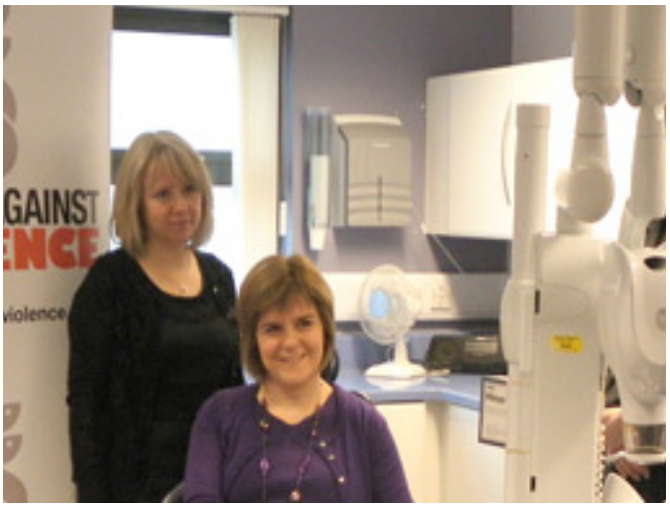
No excuse

Ch Insp Goulden said:

"Domestic abuse does not prejudice on grounds of gender, age or class. It can happen to anyone, anywhere. We know from past experience there will be people out there for whom this Christmas will not be a happy time. Often it will not just be the victim that suffers either – children living in households where there is domestic abuse are at risk, too. This kind of behaviour devastates families, and will not be tolerated in 21st century Scotland.

"Perpetrators should know that the police no longer need a statement to make an arrest – if we have evidence of violence or threatening behaviour, we'll arrest you immediately. If you've left the scene, we'll come looking for you. We will tackle domestic abuse wherever and whenever it occurs. There is no excuse for this despicable behaviour"

MAV trains dentists to help stop domestic abuse



Christine Goodall & Deputy First Minister Nicola Sturgeon

Dentists are to be trained to encourage patients to report domestic abuse incidents, thanks to VRU charity partner Medics Against Violence (MAV).

The initiative, which was launched at the North West Kilmarnock Area Centre by MAV founder Dr Christine Goodall and Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing Nicola Sturgeon, will see dentists trained to spot the signs of abuse and encourage victims to report to the police or support services.

Dr Goodall said:

"Victims of domestic abuse often suffer injuries to their teeth, face and neck, so dentists are often the first healthcare professionals they will see."We felt it was time to take advantage of this "golden moment" to intervene and help. On average it takes around 35 incidents of abuse before a victim feels able to tell the police or a support service. This is about helping, encouraging and supporting victims to be able to make that call whenever they are ready."

NHS Ayrshire and Arran is the first health board area to take up the initiative, with others already expressing an interest. Over 90 dentists and dental care professionals signed up for the training session, which comprises a short film and a series of short inputs from MAV and the Violence Reduction Unit. May Hendry, Dental Practice Advisor from NHS Ayrshire and Arran said:

"Dentists are in an ideal position to detect injuries caused by domestic abuse as they not only work in close proximity to the patient but they often build up a rapport with the patient over many years."

Welcoming the initiative, the Cabinet Secretary said:

"Domestic abuse can affect anyone regardless of their gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, ethnic background or social class.

"There are around 50,000 incidents of domestic abuse reported every year. But this is just the tip of the iceberg. Many cases will go unreported and undetected, which is why this initiative is so important."

You can find out more about MAV's new initiative on their website, www.medicsagainstviolence.org.

Stakeholder group set up for Injury Surveillance pilot

The VRU's Injury Surveillance pilot, which is being carried out in collaboration with NHS Lanarkshire, continues to go from strength to strength.

Plans are now underway to set up a special stakeholder group for the pilot. Representatives from organisations including NHS Lanarkshire, the police and local Community Safety Partnerships, as well as a host of others with influence on and interest in violence in the community, have been invited to attend the first meeting, which will be held at the end of January.

The group will be provided with weekly injury surveillance reports which they will use to target locations where violence is taking place.

Stakeholder meetings will be chaired by the Director of Public Health and Policy in Lanarkshire, Dr Harpreet Kohli.

For more information on the Injury Surveillance pilot, please contact Maighread Townsend on 0141 532 5893, 07918 724154 / maighread.townsend@vruscotland.pnn.police.uk or Geraldine Marsh on 01355 584511.

Let it snow, let it snow, let it snow

Dr Jackson Katz

Violence experts from around the world braved Scotland's sub zero temperatures in November and December to attend meetings with the VRU.

Around 40 senior policy markers and senior academics from Canada, Jamaica, Lithuania, Scotland and South Africa were due to attend the International Colloquium on Multisectoral Collaboration to Prevent Violence which was held at the Scottish Police College in Kincardine, Fife on 28 – 30 November. Due to the bad weather only a handful of the international delegates managed to get into the country before travelling became problematic.

Shared experience

The primary aim of the colloquium, part of a collaborative project led by the WHO Violence and Injury Prevention team and supported by the Scottish Government, was to share experiences and best practice in the field of violence prevention in order to stimulate country-level action

For those who did make the event, some positive outcomes were achieved, but it wasn't all policy and practice – members of the Jamaican and South African delegations, some of whom had never seen snow before, managed to squeeze in a snowball fight, with John Carnochan being on the receiving end of a couple!

In December, leading American gender abuse specialist Dr Jackson Katz also visited us. Jackson, who some of you may have seen at our domestic abuse conference earlier this year, was in the country to meet with the VRU, Scottish Government and a whole host of other partner agencies to discuss his Mentors In Violence Prevention (MVP) programme.

Bystander Approach

The MVP model is an approach to gender violence and bullying, designed to train both males and females to use their status to speak out against the issue of violence against women. The model utilizes a creative 'bystander' approach to gender violence. It focuses on young men not as perpetrators or potential perpetrators but as empowered bystanders who can confront abusive peers. It also focuses on women not as victims but as empowered bystanders and supportive friends.

Jackson managed to get into the country in between closures at Edinburgh airport, but sadly two events at which he was due to speak were cancelled as many attendees were unable to get into the city centre due to problems on the road network. However, many were able to re-arrange to attend a later meeting.

During his visit, Jackson also managed to squeeze in an interview with BBC Radio Scotland's Kaye Adams on her phone in show Call Kaye. His comments generated much debate and set the tone for future discussions around introducing programmes based on MVP into Scotland.

MAV have a ball – and raise over £9k

Medics Against Violence (MAV) raised over £9000 at their first annual fundraising event in November, a masquerade ball.

The event, which was held at the Radisson Hotel, Glasgow, featured an auction headed by local radio DJ Gavin Pearson, a silent auction and two raffles, one of which featured an i-Pad as the star prize.

Entertainment came in the form of a harpist, jugglers and a ceilidh band.

Revellers turned up in masks of all kinds, from

Venetian-styled, feather and sequin trimmed numbers to simple facepainting. Among the more unusual masks were a polar bear and a fox.

MAV, which became a charity in December 2009, now hope to make the ball an annual event, with planning already underway for 2001.

To see photos from the ball, visit the MAV website http://www.actiononviolence.org.uk

VRU on Facebook and Twitter

You can now keep up to date with all the latest VRU activity via Twitter and Facebook. Our feeds and posts will provide information not just about what we're up to, but also share any new and relevant research and news items we think are of interest.

You can find us on Facebook at
http://en-gb.facebook.com/pages/Glasgow/Action-On-Violence/104880052899719?v=wall or search for "action on violence". On Twitter, join us at @vruscotland.

Got something to tell us?

We're always interested in finding out what alliance members are up to – and sharing information, best practice and research is key to building strong violence prevention partnerships. If your organisation has some good practice or an event you'd like us to publicise in our newsletter, please contact us info@actiononviolence.org.uk. The newsletter will be published four times a year, in spring, summer, autumn and winter.