

BCBN supporting the role of an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor's in London hospital's

CHARITY PARTNER

BENEFICIARIES



About BCBN

BCBN is a charitable, business-networking forum bringing together professionals, key government officials and heads of charities to facilitate community engagement. Since its inception BCBN has raised over £1million in funds for community causes and has attracted support from respected figures such as HRH The Prince of Wales; Former Deputy Prime Minister, Rt Hon Nick Clegg; Former Justice Secretary, Rt Hon Chris Grayling; Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London amongst others. BCBN's Grant Initiative aims to provide small grant awards to empower charities, strengthen citizenship and local community projects for the betterment of our society. For further details please visit www.bcbn.org.uk or [watch](#) BCBN's journey.

BCBN IDVA Support (2012-2017)

BCBN has been supporting the role of an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) since 2013 at Guys and St Thomas' Hospital, NHS Foundation Trust. To date, BCBN has raised £73,618 for the Reach Services, helping to sustain their life-changing work, in providing much-needed assistance to disadvantaged people in vulnerable relationships and social support to families in crisis, helping them to rebuild their lives.



The Reach Services at Guys & St Thomas' Hospital, NHS Trust suffered funding cuts by Victim Support in 2012 due to its own funding pressures, Reach Services was forced to severely curtail its service provision. BCBN has since been the funding partner for the role of an Accident & Emergency, hospital based, multi-lingual Domestic Abuse Advisor who has supported over 650 victims and their children over the past few years. More than 70% of Reach Service referrals are Non-UK born, from Muslim majority countries such as, Pakistani, Bangladesh and North Africa.

BCBN's funding has been *"crucial to the Reach Services as our patients come from a wide diversity of backgrounds and cultures and having a specialist member of staff who can communicate with them in their first language is particularly valuable in times of trauma and crisis"* – Amanda Pritchard, Chief Executive, Guys and St Thomas' Hospital.

“Projects like Reach are absolutely brilliant, a way in getting help to people when they most need it. It is brilliant that BCBN’s network supports the project which should be in every hospital across the UK” – Donna Covey CBE, Director, Against Violence and Abuse

This year, BCBN seeks to partner with [Advance Advocacy and Non-Violence Community Education \(Advance\)](#), an award winning UK charity working to tackle issues affecting vulnerable women and girls.

Domestic abuse (DA) is a significant health issue

- It affects 1 in 3 women and 1 in 7 men, and 75% of survivors suffer from physical or mental health consequences. (ONS, 2015; Home Office, 2001)
- The prevalence of domestic abuse amongst Nurses, Midwives and Health Care Assistants is three times higher than the general population. (Cavell Nurses Trust, 2017)
- Two women a week are killed in the UK as a direct result of domestic abuse
- Children growing up in an abusive home are at a higher risk of becoming involved in gangs or other criminal activities and the effects of domestic violence on children’s development and ability to engage with their schooling mean many are less likely to access further education.

Why the role of a hospital based IDVA is vital

- **Hospital IDVAs access harder to reach survivors of domestic abuse:** 41% of survivors were still in the relationship compared to 26% of those accessing support in the community.
- **Hospital IDVAs can make life-saving interventions:** reducing repeat victimisation and increase protection of children and vulnerable adults.¹ Earlier intervention by Hospital IDVAs resulted in the cessation of abuse for nearly a three-quarters of those supported.²
- **Hospital IDVAs support hospital staff who might be experiencing domestic abuse:** recent research has found that nurses, midwives, and healthcare assistants are three-times more likely to experience domestic abuse than the general population.³
- **IDVAs support busy hospital staff to respond to domestic abuse:** without a specialist service to which staff can immediately refer, such as a hospital-based IDVA service, often opportunities to support domestic abuse victims are ignored or ineffective.⁴ It has been found that being able to refer to a hospital-based IDVA makes professionals more likely to ask about domestic abuse.⁵

[Advance Advocacy and Non-Violence Community Education \(Advance\)](#) and Imperial College Healthcare Trust (ICHT)

Advance delivers services for those experiencing domestic violence to be safe and take back control of their lives, and those who have committed crime are supported to break the cycle of re-offending. We aim to enable all women and girls to lead safe and violence-free lives, so that they are able to actively engage with society.

¹ ⁽¹⁾ Coy, M. and Kelly, L. (2012) Islands in the Stream: An evaluation of four London independent domestic violence advocacy schemes, Child and Woman Abuse Studies Unit: London.

² Safelives (2015), Getting it right the first time: policy report

³ Cavell Nurses Trust (2017) Skint, shaken yet still caring. Cavell Nurses Trusts: Worcestershire

⁴ Ramsey, J. et al. (2002). ‘Should health professionals screen women for domestic violence? Systematic Review’. *BMJ*. Aug 10;325(7359):314

⁵ Safelives (2016)

The charity works in partnership with agencies such as health, police, social care etc. to effectively respond together to domestic abuse. In partnership with our sister charity, Standing Together Against Domestic Violence (STADV), Advance has supported Imperial College Healthcare Trust (ICHT) to develop a robust response to DA. STADV have trained over 4,000 staff, since which the identification of DA has increased, all sexual health and maternity patients are now asked about DA, and policies and procedures have been developed.

The missing piece: Specialist Domestic Abuse support

Marie* had been married to Daniel* for years



A pregnant Marie was admitted to hospital, after Daniel had physically assaulted her, and her neighbour had called the police



A midwife at St Mary's hospital referred Marie to the Maternity Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA).



The IDVA was able to immediately visit Marie on the Maternity Ward, to work with her to complete a safety plan and define what immediate steps Marie could take to ensure her and her children's safety including housing options, financial advice and securing injunctions etc.



"The fact that for first time someone [IDVA] believed me, and was able to listen and willing to listen, and then act on what I was saying. It's thanks to her [IDVA] that I have been able to access services which I would have never thought possible."

*names have been changed, and the quote was not made by the same woman, to protect identities

The missing piece in the hospital's response is on-site specialist domestic abuse support. This project aims to meet this need by funding a hospital based Health Triage Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA) who will support patients, relatives, and NHS staff experiencing domestic abuse.

An IDVA provides vital independent support to survivors of domestic abuse by assessing the risks, providing information on their rights and options, and linking them in with other services such as counselling, immigration advice etc. Hospital IDVAs are more likely to support survivors from harder to reach communities, or who have mental health or substance misuse problems, than community IDVAs. Their presence in hospitals also increases staff confidence and ability to ask about domestic abuse, and refer survivors for support.

The IDVA will focus their work in A&E, Sexual Health and Maternity departments where the highest number of domestic abuse cases are seen.

Progress will be proactively monitored throughout the project to ensure issues and challenges are managed as they arise, successes are highlighted and replicated and that the project achieves its objectives.

Reinstating IDVA services: Critical Need

There is currently a large unmet need for this specialist support at ICHT. Between 2016-2017, 700 domestic abuse cases were identified in maternity and sexual health. However, only 33 referrals were made to the Advance's core IDVA service. From 2012-2015 IDVAs were based in A&E and maternity at ICHT and referrals increased by 520% with over 567 referrals made. Since this funding was lost, referrals made by maternity alone have decreased by 470% in one year.

Through BCBN's funding partnership we will be able to reinstate this essential service and ensure that survivors have access to specialist support. The project will see 110 referrals made to the IDVA each year. All survivors accessing the service will be given the opportunity to feedback on the service. ICHT and Advance are committed to developing a sustainable programme to tackle domestic abuse, ensuring that we support the hospital to develop a response that can continue beyond the life of the project.

BCBN intends to fund a Health Triage Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA) at ICHT to work alongside hospital staff to identify and support 220 survivors of domestic abuse over two years. This will increase survivors' safety, health and wellbeing. Advance will ensure that survivors of domestic abuse get the support they need and deserve.

