

REPORT TO: Safer Policy Performance Board

DATE: 19 November 2024

REPORTING OFFICER: Executive Director - Environment & Regeneration

PORTFOLIO: Community Safety

SUBJECT: White Ribbon Update

WARD(S) Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To update the Board on the approach to White Ribbon.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Board receives the report and endorses the approach.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The Council received and approved a motion at full Council in October 2023 protecting women and girls from domestic abuse which included an action to ***'take steps to prepare an Action Plan to submit the Council as a candidate for White Ribbon accreditation, so that the Council can proactively engage in a range of actions to tackle the causes, and effects of domestic abuse, and to promote support for victims, and to challenge the behaviour of perpetrators.'***

3.2 The Domestic Abuse service co-ordinated activity for the week including 25th November last year. This is the date for a worldwide day of celebration for White Ribbon which is also the United Nations Day for Elimination of Violence Against Women.

3.3 In 2023 Halton's approach to White Ribbon included lighting the Mersey Gateway and Silver Jubilee Bridge, a social media campaign and a multi-agency event on domestic abuse.

3.4 To apply for White Ribbon accreditation a Steering Group must be established requiring Champions and Ambassadors register with White Ribbon committing to a suite of pledges, becoming advocates and changemakers in raising awareness and tackling violence. A steering group for Halton has been established, this is led by the Executive Director Environment and Regeneration with Elected Member representation, Children's, Adult's, and Community Safety Officers.

3.5 Halton's White Ribbon Steering Group has developed and endorsed an action plan for delivery over the 16 days of action which includes:

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- lighting the bridge for a week
- a social media campaign
- developing a workforce network of Champions
- circulating resources for White Ribbon to staff, Members & partners
- a series of lunch & learn sessions over two weeks.
- TED talk sessions on misogyny
- 7 themed 7 minute briefings to be circulated on Safeguarding Boards websites.

An updated and confirmed action plan will be presented at the meeting.

3.6 Halton's approach to White Ribbon and wider service offer recognises domestic abuse is not only or limited to males being the perpetrator of harm. A distinction in the Council's approach with this year's campaign is recognising working with those that harm to change behaviours and outcomes.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Domestic Abuse Act 2021

4.2 Halton Domestic Abuse Strategy

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Accreditation to White Ribbon incurs an annual cost of £660 with a minimum commitment of three years, a total cost of £1,914 as a discount is applied.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence

To increase awareness and positive approaches to tackling domestic abuse removing barriers for victims and families in accessing services and being empowered to move forward.

6.2 Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy

Domestic abuse affects 1 in 3 women and 1 in 5 men. With UK employment rate hovering at around 75%, that means that as many as 1.5 million employees will have experienced domestic abuse within the past 12 months. This is estimated to cost the UK economy close to £2bn annually, with output lost due to reduced productivity; unplanned time off; lost wages; sick pay.

6.3 Supporting Children, Young People and Families
Domestic abuse negatively impacts families and children's, a distressing time in their lives often through traumatic experience. White Ribbon supports a whole system understanding and approach, standing together in taking a stand against perpetrator behaviour and supporting victims.

6.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need
White Ribbon raises awareness and understanding domestic abuse and tackling it in all its forms. Taking positive action to protect victims and children from further harm and providing access to supportive measures to reduce the number domestic incidents, reducing the risk of further abuse.

6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future
None to report.

6.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community
This area of work supports people at a time when they are most in need. It is not only a statutory duty, there is recognition the support provided will impact on the trajectory of victims and children in having fulfilling life experiences.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 Halton experiences high levels of domestic abuse, White Ribbon provides a mechanism to raise awareness, a key factor in understanding and acknowledging the issue and working towards changing behaviours and improving victims experiences.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 White Ribbon is a universal approach to raising awareness of domestic abuse. The Council's wider work in this area recognises risks for cohorts of the community who may be marginalised.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 None to report.

10.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Council, October 2023, Agenda Item 13 and minutes COU39.