

we Listen we Support we Empower





Our Purpose

The Wish Centre is often the first point of contact for people in Blackburn with Darwen who are experiencing abuse.

Our purpose is to support and protect women, men and children affected by domestic abuse.

The Wish Centre is also a specialist service, and offer support, in:

VICTIMS WITH COMPLEX NEEDS

MALE VICTIMS

HONOUR BASED VIOLENCE

FORCED MARRIAGE

YOUNG PEOPLE

WIDE RANGE OF DOMESTIC ABUSE PROGRAMMES



Message from the CEO

The Wish Centre (Blackburn & Darwen District Without Abuse) has been providing vital services to victims of domestic abuse for over 30 years. From small beginnings we have grown to the organisation we are today. We provide a variety of specialist services to women, men and children who have been affected by domestic abuse. We also support people who want to change their abusive behaviour.

Our team of dedicated staff members, volunteers and trustees work tirelessly to ensure we can provide the best quality support to all who come to us for help.

I am privileged to lead an organisation that listens, supports and empowers people to live life free from abuse. It is crucial that people from our community have a specialist service they can rely on when they need it. Our past record and achievements speaks for themselves. We have supported thousands of people over our 30 plus years, offered safe accommodation and developed responsive, community provision.

Here you will read about our services and how we have changed lives. Hearing from service users about the differences we make to their lives is testimony of the important role the Wish Centre has in our community.



A stylized, handwritten signature in white ink that reads "Shigufta Khan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line underneath.

Shigufta Khan
Chief Executive Officer



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the wish
centre

What is domestic violence?

Domestic abuse can involve a wide range of abusive behaviours including:

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Hitting, spitting, choking pinching, restraining, using objects to cause injury.

EMOTIONAL & PHYSICAL ABUSE

Name calling, mind games, isolation from family and friends, putting you down, demanding constant attention.

COERCIVE CONTROL

It is a pattern of behaviour which seeks to take away the victim's liberty or freedom, to strip away their sense of self by exerting power and control. This can include threats of violence, humiliation or intimidation. Denying and minimising abuse.

FINANCIAL ABUSE

Withholding and controlling money, not giving enough money for day to day expenditure, checking everything victim spends. Taking out loans & debts in the victim's name. Not letting the victim work or study.

SEXUAL ABUSE

Unwanted touching or fondling, sexual advances, refusing to practice safe sex, demanding sex, treating you like a sex object. Forcing you to engage in unwanted sexual acts.

STALKING & HARASSMENT

Stalking is a pattern of persistent and unwanted attention that makes you feel pestered, scared, anxious or harassed. This can include regularly unwanted gifts, making unwanted communication, damaging property, repeatedly following or spying on you and making threats. Stalking can also include cyber bullying.



Refuge Accommodation

The Wish Centre provide safe, emergency accommodation for women and children fleeing domestic abuse. We can also support men in finding refuge accommodation.

Our purpose built supported accommodation consists of both self-contained flats and houses and we can offer safe accommodation to 14 women and any dependent children. Our staff will offer empathy and support and a safe environment for you and your children. We will support you to find your new home and help you to resettle.

What do we offer:

- A safe environment for women and children
- Action planning, support and goal setting
- Aid and empower independent living
- Weekly house meetings and breakfast support groups
- Regular Coffee Mornings / house meetings
- BME Support
- Counselling
- Support to access welfare
- Support through the criminal/civil justice system
- Advocacy and liaison with other agencies
- Support with children and parenting issues
- Enclosed outdoor play area



Floating Support

The floating support service is for people in the community who have experienced domestic abuse in the past and are now living independently.

How the Floating Support Service can help:

- Helps people to understand the effects of domestic abuse and offer emotional support
- Offers access to our other services and specialist health services
- Support with welfare benefits and financial issues
- Helps to pursue ambitions, career and education
- Support through the civil and criminal justice system
- Establish and maintain tenancies
- Making sure people and children are safe

Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVA)

IDVAs support victims of domestic abuse who are at high risk of serious injury or harm. We will work with you to develop a safety plan, provide you with information and advice on both practical and emotional issues. We will provide an advocacy service to support you with reporting to the police, family courts and criminal courts, housing and health. We can provide this support directly to you either face-to-face, over the telephone or email.

Therapeutic Programmes

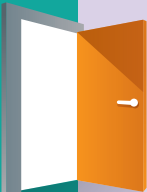
We offer a range of programmes to victims and their families to increase self-confidence and enhance their understanding of the effects of domestic abuse.

AIM (Awareness, Insight, Motivation)

Is a 12-week programme helping victims to understand the beliefs held by abusive partners and in so doing recognise which of these beliefs they have shared. Helps women to gain self-esteem and the confidence to improve the quality of their lives. The programme looks at the effects of domestic abuse on children and helps women to safety plan.

This programme can also be delivered to male victims on a 1:1 or in a men's group.

Recovery Toolkit



Recovery Toolkit is a group programme for women who have experienced and are recovering from domestic abuse. The toolkit aims to give women knowledge to enable them to have a better understanding and ability to deal with their experiences. The Toolkit allows them to move forward in their lives, develop their own strengths, resources and coping strategies. The content of the weeks are developed to support women to develop strategies which will contribute to their own health and well-being on a long term basis.

Letting Off Steam

Using violence puts people at risk of serious harm and has consequences for the victim and the perpetrator. The aim of the programme is to increase safety by ensuring participants acknowledge the risk associated with violence and aggression and change attitudes and behaviour. The programme is delivered by experienced and qualified staff who have extensive knowledge of Domestic Abuse and programme delivery.

The principle of the programme is that we can't change the behaviour of other's only the way we react and reacting violently never makes a situation better whatever the provocation.

Perpetrator Work

As part of our integrated service, you will be offered the support of our dedicated worker before, throughout and following the end of the programme.

We also offer 2 behaviour change programmes Make the Change and Respect. Make the Change consists of 14 sessions and Respect consists of 20 sessions.

The programmes are behavioural change programmes as opposed to anger management for men who recognise that they have been or are using power and control to abuse their female partner or ex-partner and want to change this behaviour. This abuse is more widely known as domestic abuse.

Whilst we acknowledge that some women may also be abusers this programme is specifically for men who abuse women.

The key principles and aims of the programme are to promote the safety of women and children and prevent abuse and to work collaboratively with other agencies to manage risk constructively.

The programme is delivered by staff who have in depth knowledge of domestic abuse and extensive experience of delivering a perpetrator programme.



Moving On

Is a programme designed to help & support couples who wish to remain together, females will need to complete the AIM programme and males Make the Change.

Information For Schools, Colleges And Youth Workers

We offer a range of services to schools and colleges within Blackburn and Darwen with the aims of:

- Raising awareness of domestic abuse and the effects of domestic abuse
- Providing information about support services
- Educating about non-violent strategies to resolve conflict
- Educating about healthy relationship

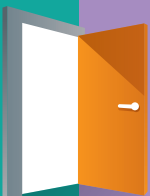
We deliver assemblies, presentations, workshops and programmes of work, which can be tailored to the needs of individual organisations and students.

Our work can include many issues related to domestic abuse, for example forced marriage, coercive control, healthy relationships, body image and cyber safety.



Volunteering

Volunteering is a fantastic way to gain experience and support your local community. Our volunteers & peer mentors have a diverse range of skills and support us to provide vital services for victims and their families. All our volunteers are offered comprehensive training, supervision, support and guidance.



Services and Support for Children and Young People at The Wish Centre

The Wish Centre offers a variety of programmes for children and young people. All of the courses are specifically beneficial to children and young people who have witnessed/ experienced domestic abuse in the past, however may also be suitable for those who may be vulnerable to abusive relationships, need support in building positive friendships and relationships, or want to learn more about positive relationships.

Programmes are run according to demand and are also subject to availability.

Helping Hands

Helping Hands is a fun packed programme for children aged 6-10. It addresses the challenging issues of personal space, awareness of acceptable and unacceptable behaviours, and safety planning. Three themes, called the Protective Behaviours, are reinforced throughout the programme:

- We all have the right to feel safe all the time.
- There is nothing so small or so awful we can't talk about it with someone.
- Others have the right to feel safe with us.

It is particularly useful for children who have experienced/witnessed domestic abuse but is also a suitable course for any children to learn about protective behaviours.

Young Person's Free from Abuse Programme

The Young Person's AIM programme is aimed at females aged 16+ who have experienced abuse within their own relationships. The course aims to develop an awareness and understanding of domestic abuse issues in a welcoming and supportive environment. The objectives of the programme are to enable participants to:

- Take control of their lives and keep themselves and others safe.
- Recognise the tactics and beliefs held by abusive partners and non-abuse partners.
- Recognise the impact of their life experiences on their own beliefs and attitudes.

Young Person's Recovery Toolkit (YPRT)

The YPRT is an opportunity for young people aged 11-16 to develop positive lifestyle and coping strategies. The programme includes activities to support young people in:

- Building self-esteem
- Recognising rights and responsibilities
- Developing coping strategies for difficult situations
- Practicing positive automatic thinking.

The course is especially beneficial for young people who have witnessed or experienced domestic abuse as it can help them to come to terms with their experiences.

Expect Respect

Expect Respect is a programme aimed at empowering young people aged 11-16 to expect respect in their relationships. Through a range of engaging activities and discussions, this programme aims to enable participants to:

- Learn about domestic abuse.
- Identify healthy and unhealthy relationships.
- Explore their own relationships.
- Build self-esteem, confidence and positive body image.
- Learn how to stay safe and how to get help.

The programme is very informal and usually incorporates a project, such as a craft or drama project, led by the group members. It will be of benefit to young people who may have witnessed/experienced domestic abuse at home or in their own relationships. It will also be of benefit to young people who may be vulnerable in their relationships - through displaying signs of low self-esteem.



Parachute Project

Parachute is a project for children and young people who are identified as needing help in managing conflict in their relationships. It is aimed at young people who may have already have a history of resorting to violence to try and solve conflict. They may have a history of frequent conflict at home, in their relationships, or at school. Parachute is designed to:

- Develop self-awareness and self-control.
- Promote positive social skills.
- Teach pro-social problem-solving skills.
- Increase confidence and self-esteem.
- Improve decision making.

The programme includes adaptations of exercises found in several empirically established programmes of work aimed at addressing domestic abuse, general offending behaviour and poor school performance. Elements of these programmes have been brought together and designed for use specifically with young people. Parachute is about offering young people an opportunity to learn about themselves and as a result, change their behaviour in the future. It is not about 'fixing them' or 'forcing' them to change. They will have to choose to use the skills they learn on the programme. The sessions will show them that there is another way to handle problems and conflict rather than resorting to abusive or violent behaviour.

IMAGE

A Creative group meeting every Monday evening 4pm to 5.30pm at the Wish Centre. The group aims to create an open and fun environment for young people where they will be able to take part in arts and crafts, music, writing, filmmaking, singing and a fun place to escape from everyday issues. The activities will be designed by consulting with young people, giving them a choice to set the direction for the group.

Young Person's IDVA

The Young Person's IDVA (Independent Domestic Violence Advocate) can provide one-to-one support to those aged 11+ who are experiencing abuse within their own relationship. Support is tailored to meet the needs of the individual dependent on their age and includes risk assessment, safety planning, emotional/practical support and referrals into any relevant services.

TESTIMONIAL

A Service User's Story...

Since the age of 16 I had been involved in a pretty bad relationship. There was a lot of physical and emotional abuse directed at me by my partner for over ten years. This resulted in various police visits. At the time I wasn't even aware of the level of abuse I suffered.

He would say horrible things to me just so that I would react. He would say that I am 'worthless', shatter my confidence, and separated me with my family and friends. He would phone up the ambulance saying that I needed help.

.....

The police put me in touch with The Wish Centre. We immediately applied for a restraining order. I went on counseling courses. The staff and volunteers made me feel welcome, but also educated me on what I had gone through. They supported me, they listened to me, they understood me, I felt at ease at last. It was the turning point in my life.

.....

I also realised that the people who work at The Wish Centre, or volunteer, want to because they feel passionately about the subject of domestic abuse. I have slowly regained my confidence. I want to help others.

.....

I think more needs to be talked about emotional abuse. We need to educate, especially by talking to young people.

.....

The Wish Centre has had a huge impact on my life. I am always talking about The Wish Centre to others. I genuinely want to support and help others, just as The Wish Centre did for me. There is still so much more to do.

What the Wish Centre Can do for people.

'I feel special coming to the Wish Centre because it is a place where they help you.'
K aged 10

'Helping Hands is incredible'
A aged 7

'Thank you for helping me getting through my beastly problems'
M aged 10

'I wish I could keep coming back to Helping Hands forever'
K aged 7

'I really enjoy talking to other people and how everyone is open with each other'
S aged 14

'I find it useful to know about domestic abuse and learn what a healthy relationship is'
H aged 13

'I find it useful to think about how I cope with being angry'
J aged 14

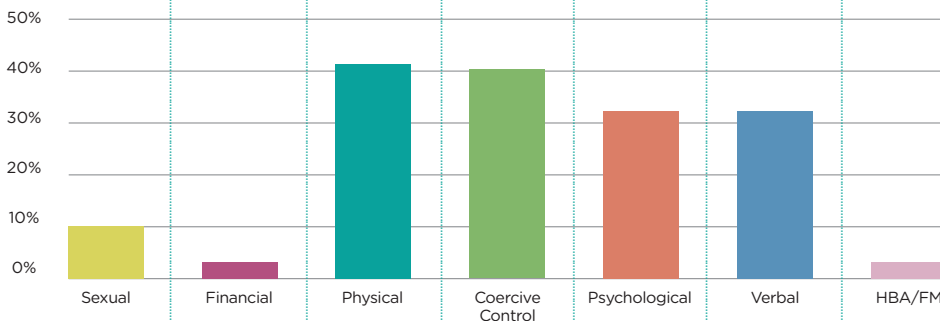
'I learnt to try and keep calm and tell an adult and don't build stuff up'
C aged 12

'I learnt what to do in a toxic relationship'
H aged 13

'I learnt to accept myself'
L aged 12

Who are our clients

Types of abuse experienced:



Refuge



Referrals received	233
Women accepted	58
Children accepted	92
Resettlement	38%

Client Well-being

On intake clients presented with:



Mental Health
37%



Drugs & Alcohol misuse
18%

On exit clients have told us:



Feel Safer
95%



Improved quality of life
88%



Confidence in accessing support
95%



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Opening Hours:
Monday - Thursday: 9am to 5pm
Friday: 9am to 4pm

thewishcentre.org

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