

A Dash of News

The Dash Charity Winter Update 2023/24



Our impact in 2023

We supported hundreds of individuals and families experiencing domestic abuse across Windsor & Maidenhead, South Bucks and Slough.

Here is some of the impact we made in 2023:



40 women and 36 children were given a place of safety in our refuge homes



102 children and young people were referred to our specialist 1:1 support



89 local people at high risk from domestic abuse supported by our IDVAs



255 local clients were supported by our outreach team



916 young people engaged via our Healthy Relationships Workshops



415 adults successfully signposted to other services



896 calls and referrals were made to our helpdesk



95-100% of clients reported improved safety post support from The Dash Charity.





Looking back, moving forward

We had a strong year making a significant difference for victims and survivors of domestic abuse in 2023. I'm so proud of all my team of frontline and support staff, who worked tirelessly with our referral partners and volunteers to support hundreds of individuals and families experiencing domestic abuse across Windsor & Maidenhead, Slough and South Buckinghamshire.

40 women and 36 children were given a place of safety in one of our refuges, whilst 896 referrals and enquiries were made to our Helpdesk service for support. 95-100% of our clients reported improved safety at the time of finishing their support from Dash, with 89 of our clients having been assessed as at particularly high risk of domestic abuse before they received support from one of our trained IDVAs (Independent Domestic Violence Advocate).

Our prevention and education support programmes saw us engage and work with over 1,000 children and young people via our specialist 1-to-1 support and our Healthy Relationships programme in schools. We led local campaigns, equipped professionals with the training they need to address domestic abuse through their workplace, and used our local knowledge and experience to tackle hidden abuse within harder to reach communities.

Although there is much to be proud of, I know we cannot afford to be complacent as we continue to take on the challenges being faced by domestic abuse survivors in 2024. I look forward to sharing with you The Dash Charity's new two-year strategic plan when it is published this spring, with details of how we intend to take our fight forward to break the cycle of domestic abuse, so that people in our local communities can feel stronger and safer.

Over the next two years, we will set out to develop and deliver new services, from peer mentoring for survivors, to strengthening and extending our healthy relationships programme with children and young people, along with tackling the cost of living crisis as it impacts our clients.

I am grateful for all the support we received in 2023. We would frankly not have been able to make a difference to so many local people and families were it not for the funders we brought on board. We successfully retained the domestic abuse advocacy and outreach contract in Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead, and continue to receive funding from Slough Borough Council that helps keep our refuges open.

Our ability to change lives locally has relied upon a number of existing Dash funders, from Children in Need and National Lottery Awards for All, to Berkshire Community Foundation and the Sunninghill Trust. We also welcomed several new funders

for our services, including new roles that are being supported by the Blagrave Trust and The King Cullimore Trust. Funding support via the Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner meant we were able to bring in two new outreach workers, supporting our more diverse local communities in Slough.



Craft Coop Windsor's White Ribbon Day tree to support Dash
Corporate support, from small businesses to larger organisations, has meant so much to Dash over the past 12 months. As the chosen beneficiary partner for Craft Coop, Stoke Park and Alnylam, to name just a few, we were able to reach more people and benefit from better relationships that strengthen our services. The generosity of Freemasons across Berkshire and Buckinghamshire, Windsor Rotary Club and the local Soroptomists group show that our communities are there for our clients all year round.

If you would like to hear more about our work, or get involved in resourcing or delivering any of our programmes, please don't hesitate to get in touch.



Nicola Miller, CEO
The Dash Charity



Dash Communi-tea Appeal

For many survivors, support with domestic abuse begins in the safe space of a public coffee shop, with one of our trained advocates, being listened to and believed.

At Dash, we receive nearly 1,000 referrals and enquiries for support every year and, last winter, our trained outreach workers supported more than 150 clients between October and March alone.

Public spaces, such as coffee shops, make a discreet option for a survivor to meet with us, where it can feel more comfortable to open up to someone.

So, this winter, Our Dash Communi-tea Appeal has been helping serve up support with every cup of tea, coffee or hot chocolate. With your help, and starting with the cost of that first cuppa, we can make sure everyone gets our support who needs it.

Donate £5 to the Dash Communi-Tea Appeal and your money funds much more than a hot drink. It fuels specialist advice and guidance to local people suffering any kind of abuse at the hands of a partner, ex-partner or family member.



Buying a brew begins specialist support to adults and children experiencing mental health issues, modern slavery, immigration, trafficking, homelessness and complex needs associated with domestic abuse, empowering them to live a life beyond crisis and ensuring their voices are heard.

A hot beverage helps our survivors access free legal help, obtain injunctions, arrange for them to have screens and video-links if giving evidence at court and we will support them on the day.

That first cappuccino means we can keep speaking up for people and advocating on their behalf with housing teams, police, social care. We can provide safety devices to help our survivors feel safer in their own home and help source donations of anything they need to make their life a little easier or a little brighter whilst they are trying to stay safe.

Because safer lives start over every cup.



From Admin to Activist

We marked White Ribbon Day 2023 by publishing our mini-toolkit 'From Admin to Activist': a short and simple guide available to anyone involved with managing or moderating a local online community where people comment and share their views.

It's to help you begin the move from online admin to tech abuse advocate, by tackling toxic and abusive behaviours and gender-based violence wherever you oversee online communities.

Visit our website to download [From Admin to Activist](#) for free

Getting involved

We have volunteering opportunities for people to get involved on a regular or ad hoc basis - we'd love to have you in our team!



Helpline volunteers:

Full training provided, shifts during the day - a vital support role! Our Helpline team ensures clients get the help they need first time. They provide the confidential, emotional support that clients need, as well as the practical help.

Support Group Co-Facilitator:

Our in-person and virtual support groups are daytime or evenings, run by trained professionals, supported by trained volunteers.

Fundraising & Events:

Whether it's collecting donations in buckets at events or helping run stalls at local community fairs, fundraising and events are a way for anybody to get involved with Dash - no previous experience necessary.

Admin & Office Support:

We're a friendly team based in Maidenhead and working remotely across East Berks & South Bucks - if you have a few hours to spare behind the scenes, we'd love to welcome you to Dash!

Refuge Volunteer:

The Dash Charity runs three safe houses for women and children which are located across East Berkshire.

For further details, please email info@thedashcharity.org.uk.

BREATHE and bubbles

Thank you to our patron Sara Davison for the support she continued to bring as she championed our work last year.

Her specialist Master Practitioner Coaches support many Dash clients moving forward from abuse.

And thanks to generous contributions from Sara and her coaches, we have been able to purchase a 'bubble wall' for one of our therapeutic spaces.

This will help to create and encourage a calm and engaging environment in which to engage children and young people who have experienced domestic abuse on our new BREATHE project.

Following a successful pilot, the BREATHE programme will continue in 2024 supporting those children and young people 8-13yrs impacted by unhealthy, conflicting and abusive behaviours in parent/carer relationships. This will continue to be co-delivered by The DASH Charity and Achieving for Children.



A black eye is not a fashion accessory

In the autumn, we wrote in Metro about the dangers of normalising domestic abuse in the name of fashion.

"A black eye is not a designer handbag. A black eye is not empowering. It makes me shiver to think what message these images are sending to young people. That it's fashionable, aspirational, even desirable to be beaten and hurt at the hands of a partner."

[Read the full article here.](#)



Putting an end to the cutting season

Last summer, we collaborated with NS Training & Consultancy Services and Practice Index for a new campaign to highlight the risks of FGM to girls and women, and the requirements for mandatory reporting when young girls are taken abroad to undergo the practice.

The 'cutting season' refers to the time period during summer months when children are out of school and girls might be flown abroad for FGM.

Did you know that in the UK, an estimated 137,000 girls and women are living with the consequences of FGM and an estimated 60,000 girls under the age of 15 are at risk?

Did you know?



Our Older Persons IDVA has been to all the local GP surgeries with posters and carried out mini training sessions to all staff members.

This enabled reception staff and the safeguarding lead in one surgery to recognise that an older lady may be experiencing domestic abuse. With consent, they spoke to the client and arranged for our IDVA to go to the surgery and meet the client.

The case was assessed as high risk and all safety measures and support put in place.

Work for Dash!

Looking for your next career challenge in 2024? Apply to join our team!

Children's Play Co-ordinator

Hours: 15 hours per week (2 full days including school holidays)

Salary: £9,586 per annum

Location: Slough (based on-site at women's refuge)

The successful candidate will work within our Refuge to provide a dedicated service for children and their families who have been affected by domestic abuse. The service will be open to all children and young people aged 0-18.

Refuge IDVA

Hours: full-time, fixed-term contract

Salary: £25,000 per annum

Location: Slough (based on-site at women's refuge)

The successful candidate will deliver high quality support services. They will be the nominated case worker for clients residing between the Dash Charity refuges. They will advise and support clients with their housing options, working closely with the Local Authorities, Housing Associations, or relevant Landlords to ensure good housing outcomes are achieved.

Deadline: Interviewing for these roles on an ongoing basis.

Full details on our website [here](#)

