

Domestic Abuse Newsletter

Bracknell Forest and RBWM



March 2026

LOCAL NEWS

29 January

Ofsted rates children's services outstanding

Ofsted have once again rated Bracknell Forest Council's children's services Outstanding, praising the strong partnership approach, early help offer and the high-quality support provided to children and families.

Inspectors highlighted the comprehensive response to domestic abuse, noting that professionals support both victims and perpetrators to reduce harm and promote safety, and practitioners recognise children as victims in their own right and provide specialist therapeutic help. Read the [full report](#) on the Ofsted website.

24 March

[Man sentenced for the murder of his wife – Milton Keynes](#)

26 March

[Comprehensive day of action with partners to tackle VAWG in Berkshire East](#)

Annual Domestic Abuse Reports 2024-25

If you have not already read the annual domestic abuse reports for both Bracknell Forest and RBWM, they are now available. These reports highlight the breadth of partnership work taking place across our local areas to deliver on our domestic abuse strategies. The Bracknell Forest report is now published [online](#). The RBWM report can be requested directly from the [Domestic Abuse Strategic Lead](#). Thank you to all partners who contribute to this vital work.

Launch of Project Hope

Reducing the Risk (RtR) have launched Project Hope, a new 24/7 mental health text support service created in partnership with Shout.

Project Hope is available to victims, perpetrators, family members, and young people impacted by domestic abuse across the Thames Valley. Please help spread the word about this important service.

For more information, visit the [RtR website](#).

Cut It Out: domestic abuse awareness training

Cut It Out is a national domestic abuse awareness programme designed for public facing professionals. The training helps staff recognise the signs of domestic abuse, start safe and sensitive conversations, and direct those affected to appropriate support.

Specialised [eLearning sessions](#) are available for professionals in hair and beauty, hospitality, trades and fitness sectors; industries where trusted relationships and access to homes mean staff are well placed to spot early signs of abuse. Each course provides practical, trauma-informed guidance on how to recognise concerns and respond safely.

The Freedom Programme in Bracknell is changing

From April 2026, the VOICE programme (Victims Of Intimate Coercive Experience) will replace the Freedom Programme on Monday mornings in Bracknell Forest. The Freedom Programme will still be available online for women unable to attend in person.

The VOICE programme is a 12-week domestic abuse programme for adults; however they identify. It addresses domestic violence, coercive control and the behaviours that create the dynamic of intimate partner relationship abuse, including post separation abuse. The programme blends education and therapeutic support, helping participants recognise abusive behaviours, understand the impact of trauma and build capacity for self-regulation and self-care.

Further information about The VOICE programme can be found [here](#) and referrals to the Bracknell programme can be made via the [BFC Parenting referrals webpage](#).

Updates from the Dash Charity

Vacancy: Full time Outreach worker

The Dash Charity is recruiting for a full time Outreach Worker (Monday- Friday 9-5pm). For more information, please contact info@thedashcharity.org.uk

Domestic Abuse Multi-Agency Partnership Summit – 28 April

In partnership with Royal Holloway University, the Dash Charity is hosting an in-person Domestic Abuse Multi-Agency Partnership Summit on 28 April. The event will bring together professionals from public, private, academic and third sector organisations to foster meaningful dialogue, share emerging research and identify opportunities for collaboration. The event is currently fully booked but there is a waiting list for anyone interested in attending. Further details can be found on [Eventbrite](#).

Freedom Programme – restarting after Easter

Folling the Easter holidays, the Dash Charity will be restarting their three Freedom Programme groups: Monday daytime face to face, Tuesday evening virtual and Thursday morning virtual. For more information, please contact info@thedashcharity.org.uk

TRAINING

Introduction to Domestic Abuse

Gives participants an understanding of domestic abuse issues through increasing knowledge and understanding and how to respond supportively.

RBWM (click on the relevant date to book – account required)

[Monday 15 June 2026](#), 10:00 – 16:30 (face-to-face)

[Wednesday 16 September 2026](#), 09:00 – 13:00 (virtual)

[Wednesday 9 December 2026](#), 10:00 – 16:30 (face-to-face)

[Tuesday 23 March 2027](#), 09:00 – 13:00 (virtual)

Please note these dates are only for RBWM based practitioners.

Virtual sessions via MS Teams, face-to-face sessions to be held at Windsor Family Hub, 65 Alma Road, Windsor, SL4 3HD.

Bracknell Forest

Thursday 21st May 2026, 10:00-16:30 (face-to-face)

Monday 17th August 2026, 09:00-13:00 (virtual)

Tuesday 17th November 2026, 10:00-16:30 (face-to-face)

Thursday 11th February 2027, 09:00-13:00 (virtual)

Virtual sessions via MS Teams, face-to-face sessions to be held at The Open Learning Centre, Rectory Road, Bracknell, RG12 7GR

BFC employees apply via iWorks, external staff please email learning.development@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference) and DASH (Domestic Abuse, Stalking, Harassment and Honour Based Violence)

Gives participants increased confidence and skills in relation to responding to victims of domestic abuse. Including an understanding of high-risk factors for serious harm and homicide, how to use the DASH risk identification checklist and make appropriate referrals into and engage effectively with the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC).

RBWM (click on the relevant date to book – account required)

[Thursday 30 April 2026](#), 10:00 – 16:30 (face-to-face)

[Tuesday 14 July 2026](#), 09:00 – 13:00 (virtual)

[Thursday 15 October 2026](#), 10:00 – 16:30 (face-to-face)

[Monday 18 January 2027](#), 09:00 – 13:00 (virtual)

Please note these dates are only for RBWM based practitioners.

Virtual sessions via MS Teams, face-to-face sessions to be held at Windsor Family Hub, 65 Alma Rd, Windsor, SL4 3HD.

Bracknell Forest

Monday 22nd June 2026, 09:00-13:00 (virtual)

Tuesday 22nd September 2026, 10:00-16:30 (face-to-face)

Wednesday 16th December 2026, 09:00-13:00 (virtual)

Tuesday 16th March 2027, 10:00-16:30 (face-to-face)

Virtual sessions via MS Teams, face-to-face sessions to be held at The Open Learning Centre, Rectory Road, Bracknell, RG12 7GR.

BFC employees apply via iWorks, external staff please email learning.development@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL NEWS

21 January

[Children not always recognised as domestic abuse victims in their own right, inspectorates warn](#)

23 January

[Seen, heard, and supported: why children need a whole family response to domestic abuse](#)

27 January

[Domestic abuser 'made woman's life a misery'](#)

27 January

['I didn't see domestic abuse signs until it was too late'](#)

29 January

[Cocaine addict given life for murder of his wife](#)

30 January

[Domestic abuse crimes fall but experts warn of systemic issues](#)

30 January

[Domestic abuse, pregnancy and parental leave: a hidden workplace risk](#)

30 January

[Police misconduct notices after lecturer's murder](#)

30 January

[Man jailed for murdering fellow Goldsmiths student](#)

2 February

[Mum killed in Spain 'did everything for her children'](#)

4 February

['Animal abuse law might have saved my daughter'](#)

4 February

[Domestic abuser jailed for partner's hotel murder](#)

5 February

[Children to get swifter justice thanks to renewed Victims' Code](#)

5 February

[Man jailed for murdering ex-partner after break-up](#)

12 February

[Queen 'horrified' by domestic abuse calls](#)

15 February

[Revealed: The true toll of female suicides with domestic abuse at their core](#)

19 February

[Tech firms will have to take down abusive images within 48 hours under new law to protect women and girls](#)

24 February

[Husband's 'physical and sexual violence' caused wife to kill herself, UK court told](#)

25 February

[Killer left partner to die after attacking her at home](#)

25 February

[New laws to protect victims of 'honour'-based abuse](#)

26 February

[Call reporting murder marked as hoax by police](#)

27 February

[Man, 61, denies murdering ex-partner](#)

28 February

['Violent and controlling bully' jailed after severing partner's spinal cord and paralysing her](#)

2 March

[Taliban allows men to beat their wives as long as they don't break bones or leave open wounds](#)

2 March

[Domestic abuser convicted of killing wife who jumped from bridge](#)

3 March

[UK parliament to debate whether all suicides linked to domestic abuse to be investigated as homicide.](#)

5 March

[Police told Kelly Wilkinson to 'cool off' and give estranged husband 'a break' days before he burned her to death, inquest hears](#)

5 March

[Economic abuse by a partner contributes to one death every 19 days, report finds](#)

7 March

[Government moves to protect children from abusive parent though new Courts and Tribunals Bill](#)

7 March

[Extra £9m to boost aid for female abuse survivors](#)

7 March

[Manslaughter charge after woman took own life](#)

10 March

[An 'epidemic' of violence: The women and girls killed by men last year](#)

12 March

[Femicide Census comment on Minister Jess Philip's reading of the names of women killed where the suspect is male \(2026\)](#)

12 March

['A few beatings won't kill you': judge rejects divorce request of woman abused by husband in Afghanistan](#)

17 March

[Children to get swifter justice as new family court approach expands nationally](#)

17 March

[Cutting jury trials risks 'undermining justice' for abused women and girls, Lammy warned](#)

19 March

[Indefinite leave to remain for children of domestic abuse victims – new changes to settlement application for children under Appendix VDA](#)

19 March

[Government pledges £5 million in court support for domestic abuse victims](#)

20 March

[Call for evidence launched into the impact of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#)

23 March

[Police warn 'there is no safe way to strangle'](#)

23 March

[YouTuber convicted of murdering pregnant partner in savage attack](#)

24 March

[Man accused over wife's suicide 'loved her dearly'](#)

25 March

[Serial killer-obsessed teen posted plans on Discord before murdering his mum](#)

25 March

[Woman found guilty of murdering her ex-partner](#)

26 March

[Woman helps others who experience domestic abuse](#)

26 March

[Katie Piper's ex-boyfriend loses his bid for freedom: Vile thug behind Loose Women's acid attack 'is not ready to be released' from prison](#)

27 March

[New study highlights hidden link between gambling and domestic abuse](#)

30 March

[Two-thirds of abuse survivors rejected from refuges due to shortages](#)

NEW USEFUL PUBLICATIONS, RESEARCH & RESOURCES

[Children, violence and vulnerability 2025 - Violence in relationships](#) – Youth Endowment Fund

The Youth Endowment Fund (YEF) surveyed nearly 11,000 children aged 13-17 in England and Wales to hear directly from them about their experiences of abuse.

Family Justice and Domestic Abuse Partnership

Rights of Women recently launched at an online event a new and free resources developed through their Partnership in Surrey. The new learning resources, include a family justice system map, which can be adapted for used in local areas. A recording of event and resources can be found [here](#).

[Domestic Abuse and safeguarding Roundtable Summary Report](#) – UK Covid-19 Inquiry

The Domestic abuse safeguarding roundtable engagement with organisations that support victims and survivors of domestic abuse to understand how lockdown measures and restrictions impacted access to support services and their ability to provide assistance to those that needed it the most.

R:pple – A digital suicide prevention tool, designed to discreetly intercept online searches related to suicide or self-harm and replace them with messages of hope and signposting to support services.

[WeMatter – Victim Support](#)

WeMatter is a video-based digital service designed to support children and young people aged 8-17 years old who have been affected by domestic abuse. The service is available across England and provides specialist, trauma-informed support to those impacted by abuse occurring within their parent or carer's relationship, or within the family home.

Colleagues from Victim Support attended both the Bracknell Forest and the RBWM March Domestic Abuse Forums to deliver a presentation about the WeMatter service. If you would like more information or to access the presentation materials, please contact the [Domestic Abuse Strategic Lead](#).

[The Annual Audit 2026](#) – Women's Aid

Women's Aid has published its Annual Audit 2026, offering a snapshot of domestic abuse provision and demand across England during 2024-25. The report highlights ongoing pressures on capacity, funding challenges, and the essential role specialist services play in supporting women and children.

[Working together to safeguard children 2026: summary of changes](#) – Department for Education

The Department for Education has released the 2026 update of '*Working Together to Safeguard Children*'. The guidance includes additional content on domestic abuse, strengthening how agencies recognise and respond to its impact on children and families.

PUBLISHED DOMESTIC ABUSE RELATED DEATH REVIEWS (DARDRs) OTHER SAFEGUARDING REVIEWS AND RESOURCES

National Domestic Homicide Review [library](#).

January 2026

Following the publication of the Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review into the death of Sara Sharif, a [7 minute briefing](#) has also been published by the Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership.

The learning highlights missed opportunities to safeguard Sara, who experienced harm within her home while educated at home. Reduced contact with professionals limited oversight and masked risks. Key learning themes include:

- The need to explore identity, family dynamics and lived experience thoroughly.
- Strengthening focus on risk within Family Justice processes.
- Recognising risks associated with elective home education.
- Ensuring culturally informed, anti-racist practice.
- Consistent, perpetrator focused responses to domestic abuse.
- Effective information sharing to identify cumulative harm.

Reflective questions within the briefing encourage practitioners to maintain curiosity, ensure visibility of the child, and consider whether risks have been fully recognised.

12 February

The independent Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel [published a national review](#) into the death of Baby Victoria Marten.

The review contains important learning for improving protection for all vulnerable unborn babies and infants under one following Baby Victoria's death. Chapter five of the report is specifically dedicated to findings about domestic abuse.

The report's findings explore working with parents who do not engage with practitioners, responding to concealed pregnancies and managing child protection risks associated with serious offenders and families who move frequently.

March 2026

Hidden risks, fatal consequences: Economic abuse in Domestic Homicide Reviews – Surviving Economic Abuse (SEA)

A new report from SEA highlights that economic abuse appears in over half of Domestic Homicide Reviews yet is still frequently overlooked. The analysis shows that a victim of economic abuse dies every 19 days, with perpetrators using financial control and employment sabotage to trap victims.

Domestic Abuse-Related Suicides: Support for Employers

A recent Employers' Initiative on Domestic Abuse (EIDA) Insight Hour webinar, *'When domestic abuse is fatal: The impacts of domestic abuse-related suicides on the workplace'*, is now [available to watch](#). The session highlights how employers can recognise and support staff affected by domestic abuse who may also be at risk of suicide.

A new [employer case study](#), based on a Domestic Abuse-Related Death Review (DARDR) explores a suicide that occurred in the workplace following familial and partner-perpetrated abuse, offering key learning and recommendations for organisations.

Kathryn Royal from Surviving Economic Abuse (SEA) has also published a [blog](#) on how economic abuse increases the risk of domestic homicides and suicides, including how perpetrators may use a victim's employment as a form of control.

TO WATCH...

ITVX – ['Killer in the House: the murder of Nicholas Billingham](#).

BBC – [Casualty, Learning Curve, Episode 4](#) - a storyline highlighting the experiences of a male victim of domestic abuse.

Channel 4 News – [Woman faces violent ex who left her paralysed after attack](#)

Femicide Census - [Minister Jess Philips reading the names of women killed where the suspect is male between International Women's Day 2025 and the International Women's Day Parliamentary debate 2026](#)

Netflix - [Inside the Manosphere](#)

BBC News - [Holly Newton's mother Micala Trussler raises domestic abuse awareness](#)

North Wales Police – [The Murder of Angela Shellis](#)

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY



Bracknell Forest Domestic Abuse Forum

3 June 2026, 10am-12pm
9 September 2026, 10am-12pm
2 December 2026, 10am-12pm

All via MS Teams

For more information, contact Joyce Barnett
joyce.barnett@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

RBWM Domestic Abuse Forum

10 June 2026, 1pm-3pm
15 September 2026, 10am-12pm
15 December 2026, 10am-12pm

All via MS Teams



For more information, contact Sophie Wing-King
Sophie.wing-king@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter, please email Sophie Wing-King (Domestic Abuse Strategic Lead, RBWM & Bracknell Forest)
Sophie.wing-king@bracknell-forest.gov.uk
with 'Remove' in the title box