

**SI Yorkshire Anti-Slavery Group**

**Loves me Loves me not**

In 2005, Sylvia Wilson, member of SI Bingley and Chair of Yorkshire Region PA Committee, held a PA Study Day in Richmond, the theme of which was modern day slavery. Out of this event was born the SI Yorkshire Anti-Slavery Sub Group (ASSG), re-named SI Yorkshire Anti-Slavery Group (ASG) in 2012, drawing its membership from clubs throughout the Region.

**What is modern day slavery?**

* Forced marriage
* Domestic abuse (DA)
* Grooming for sexual exploitation
* Female genital mutilation (FGM)
* People trafficking

**ASG achievements to date include …**

**2007**

Purple Ribbon Campaign, which raised funds to support victims of trafficking.

**2008**

* Stop the Traffick marchthrough York, to raise awareness about people trafficking.
* We received the International Soroptimist Award for our work on ‘Action on Modern Day Slavery’.
* We raised awareness of **sexual exploitation through forced prostitution** by way of a "Gents" toilet sticker that challenged perpetrators to make different decisions before actively engaging with **prostitutes.**

**2009, 2010 and 2011**

* We developed learning packs and Loves me Loves me not bookmarks to help young people build modern day slavery risk management skills.
* We worked with:
* UKHTC to raise awareness about human trafficking and grooming for sexual exploitation
* the Home Office and Equality and Human Rights Commission, raising awareness of domestic abuse and mapping gaps in the provision of services for victims
* the White Ribbon Campaign, which campaigns to involve men in opposing violence against women.
* We supported clubs across Yorkshire in markingInternational Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women throughawareness raising events.

**2012**

* We developed a relationship with a local Muslim community group with a view to raising awareness about women’s right to be free from domestic abuse.
* We held a regional event aboutforced marriagewith guest speaker Ann Cryer.
* We developed an awareness raising coaster in preparation for a suspected increase in violence against women, particularly sexual exploitation, before the 2012 Olympic games.
* We were invited to Hull University’s Fresher’s Fayre at its campus in Scarborough, to raise awareness about safe relationships.
* We presented our work on grooming to:
* Co-operative Membership Conferencesin Scarborough and York
* Co-operative Membership IWD event in Leeds
* Scarborough and Harrogate Domestic Abuse Forums.
* We met the need of a wider audience for freedom from domestic abuse and sexual exploitation by developing our Loves me Loves me not resources into fliers, posters and wallet sized cards.
* We supported West Yorkshire Probation Services in the development of domestic abuse resources for its clients.
* We participated in a TV documentary about the need for partnership working in the fight against grooming.
* We established a relationship with the NSPCC with a view to safeguarding young people against

sexual exploitation.

**2013**

* With the help of the NSPCC we developed a coaster with a clear message about the dangers of sexting, together with details of help available.
* We ran a very successful conference at the West Yorkshire Playhouse (WYP) in Leeds ‘Grooming for sexual exploitation – Together we can make a difference’, to promote partnership working between the various agencies involved in this work.
* We marked Anti-Slavery Day by hosting the sexual exploitation version of the UNGIFT box in Sheffield. The box was developed by Stop the Traffik in conjunction with UNGIFT to raise awareness about human trafficking. It is a kiosk that entices people inside with all sorts of promises, eg of free gifts, but on entering, members of the public are confronted with the realities of human trafficking. By echoing the experience of the (mostly) women who are trafficked to western Europe by enticements of a better life, we hoped to raise awareness in the general public of human trafficking, in particular of trafficking for sexual exploitation.
* We developed a teaching pack to support the use of the GIFT box. It includes PSHE lessons for

pupils in KS3 and KS4 and is based on resources provided by 'Stop the Traffik'.

**2014**

* We hosted another very successful conference, again at the WYP, focussing on safeguarding against child sexual exploitation. The Co-operative Membership provided funding for a USB stick for each delegate, onto which we downloaded safeguarding resources for use in various situations.
* We attended Freshers Fayres at 3 Universities at the start of the autumn term, where we raised awareness about sexual abuse in teen relationships and distributed the Loves me Loves me not resources.
* We were invited to distribute the bookmarks etc at an event held by Wakefield College and hope to extend this work in the future.
* We supplied bookmarks in 23 Co-operative pharmacies around N Yorkshire and beyond.

**2015**

* We were successful in two bids for funding: thanks to the North Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner (NYPCC) and LUSH Cosmetics we were able to get 23,000 bookmarks printed. And the region gave us the thumbs up by voting to give us half of the 2013/14 RCM surplus, for which we were very grateful. This means that the bank account will stay healthy for some time and we can continue printing. At the time of writing and since 2011 we have distributed **90,000** bookmarks across the region and beyond.
* In the autumn we saw our work being extended across the region by clubs and cluster groups taking the bookmarks into University and college Freshers’ Fairs, raising awareness about safe relationships and where to get help should a relationship turn sour. And SIYE’s Rita Leaman’s publication “Are you chasing rainbows?” made reference to the bookmarks on the basis that they say it all as regards emotional maturity/immaturity.
* In October we held our 3rd conference, this time at a venue in Leeds that could accommodate more delegates. The focus remained on safeguarding, with many delegates using the event to meet safeguarding training needs; but we wanted to encourage prevention rather than cure and so looked at gender stereotyping - why it is that boys and young men think it’s OK to abuse girls and young women, and why it is that girls and young women think it’s OK to be abused. In planning this conference we engaged with our partners and contacts, got Soroptimism “out there” and built on our reputation as a group that does what it says on the label.

**2016**

We are currently considering a theme for our 4th conference, which we hope will take place near to Anti-Slavery Day 2017. And as the start of a new term looms, we are getting geared up for the ever increasing number of freshers events that we have been invited to.

In addition to raising awareness and taking action, the ASG also advocates on behalf of victims of modern day slavery, through lobbying local and central governments, and police and health authorities. And members are now invited to APPG Domestic and Sexual Violence meetings at the House of Commons, which gives them a further opportunity to voice concerns.

Val Michie, August 2016

