



Violence against women and girls

End of year report 2024-2025

What is violence against women and girls (VAWG)

VAWG is an umbrella term and includes crimes and behaviour such as rape and other sexual offences, domestic abuse, stalking, so-called honour based abuse (including female genital mutilation, forced marriage, and honour killings), as well as many others, including offences committed online.

We have adopted a Public Health Approach focusing on early intervention and prevention, supported across the Partnership and beyond to address the wider determinants of crime and community safety such as health, housing, social inequalities, skills and employment. We aspire to trauma awareness across our member organisations, acknowledging that trauma can be caused, overlooked, or amplified by our interactions with our residents.

The North East Lincolnshire VAWG task group has been established to raise awareness, engage with communities, provide education and training to groups, encourage provision of support and increase reporting. The task group meets bi monthly and works to an agreed action plan to ensure work streams are progressed.

Members include the Community Safety Partnership, the Humber and North Yorkshire Integrated Care Board, Humberside Police, North East Lincolnshire Council, representatives from education, Women's Aid, and Voluntary Sector organisations supporting local communities.



Engagement and focus groups

The focus for this year's VAWG work was engagement with women and girls. Going out and speaking to them where they are, where they work, where they shop, where they visit and where they study, to understand their feelings about safety and how they live their lives. These were informal but maintained an undertone of the seriousness of the subject being discussed.

It was difficult and thought provoking at times. We were challenged - why are you speaking to us about safety - teach boys and men not to attack and sexually assault us. These are valid points but, unfortunately, until all males change their behaviour, females are not afforded the freedom to change theirs.

Engaging women in discussions about safety is crucial for developing effective strategies that address their specific needs and concerns. This engagement work involves collaborative efforts between all members of communities and women's views must be at the centre of it.

We organised focus groups and workshops inviting women and girls (age 16 plus) to discuss safety issues they face in their everyday lives. These groups and workshops provided a platform for women to share their experiences, voice their concerns, and contribute to the development of safety initiatives. We had a range of prompts to use if the discussions weren't free flowing or got stilted.

Engagement work with women on community safety and crime reduction initiatives leads to more inclusive and effective safety measures. By actively involving women in the planning and implementation of safety strategies, communities can better address the unique challenges women face and create environments where they feel secure and respected.



Focus groups & engagement sessions

Franklin (transport) Town centre transport (women at bus stops)



Ensuring the safety of women on public transportation, including buses, is a critical issue that requires comprehensive strategies and community involvement. Recent consultations have focused on identifying key concerns and implementing effective measures to enhance safety for women.

By addressing these concerns through consultations and collaborative efforts, we can create a safer and more inclusive public transportation system for women.

Key points from the bus stop surveys

- Most of those spoken to were aged 50 or over
- Most only travel on buses during the day
- Most respondents felt safer in their own neighbourhood than they did in the town centre
- Most respondents commented about the appearance of Grimsby town centre; this included;
 - boarded up or empty shops,
 - lack of choice of shops
 - large amount of people begging,
 - people (mainly male) swearing and shouting to each other (this was deemed to cause anxiety and raise levels of fear/intimidation)
 - stained pavement
 - people walking through drinking from cans / appearing to be under the influence of substances
- All respondents stated they came into the town centre for a specific reason, never simply for a leisure activity. These included collecting an online order, visiting the bank, needing to visit a specific shop. None stayed longer than was necessary.

Results from Franklin surveys

- 85% of young males felt safe on the bus during the day compared to 69% of young women
- The main reason for feelings of safety were that the bus was busy when they alighted
- Concerns were raised over fellow bus passengers and this was the main reason that young people felt unsafe
- Most young people were happier catching the bus during the day than they were at nighttime
- More young people travel by bus than taxi
- 50% of young males felt safe in a taxi during the day compared with 37% of young females

Focus groups & engagement sessions

Uni Freshers GIFHE – female only classes

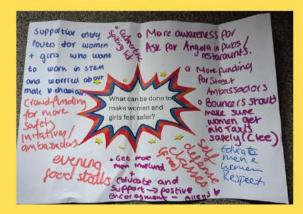
We invited students from both the Grimsby Institute and students from the University Centre to answer our question - What can do done to make women and girls feel safer?

What We've Found Out

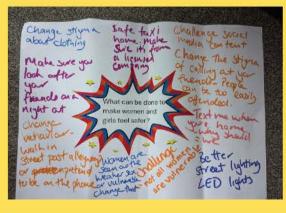
- Most women and girls seem despondent and are accepting that poor male behaviour is just 'the norm' now
- Less resilience with younger women (under 30). Many places are avoided (such as Freeman Street, town centre). Incidents have occurred in areas around NEL regarding men and that has meant that the area is no longer visited.
- Concerns over the appearance of Grimsby Town Centre, not a leisure destination and atmosphere is detrimental













Engagement at Franklin

Thrive Monday



On Blue Monday in January we visited Franklin College to take part in their event Thrive Monday.

This event is in aim of promoting positive physical and mental wellbeing to the students on what is said to be the most depressing day of the year.

We took the opportunity to hand out personal safety key rings and ask students about who has access to their mobile phones.

We spoke to approx. 70 young people across lunchtime and asked who has access to their mobile phone and whether they had given authority for this, and were happy with the arrangements.

A third of respondents stated their mum or dad would answer their phone if it rang, another third said no one would answer it, and the final third were split between friends, partner or siblings.

Most respondents said family and friends have no other access to their phone, but they would give their pin or unlock the phone if asked.

It was rare for a young person to give someone else unfettered access to their phone without them being nearby. And everyone stated they were happy with these arrangements.

Keeping Safe Day

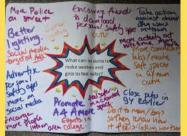


In September officers attended Franklin for Keeping Safe Day.

Keeping Safe Day aims to promote safety in all aspects – whether it be healthy relationships, raising awareness of sexual, crime and drug-related exploitation, physical/sexual/mental health and well being, staying safe online, drug and alcohol misuse and so much more.

We handed out personal safety key rings and asked students to put answers on our question sheets. The question was "What can be done to make women and girls to feel safer?" See a selection of the responses below...









Engagement

Christmas farmers Market

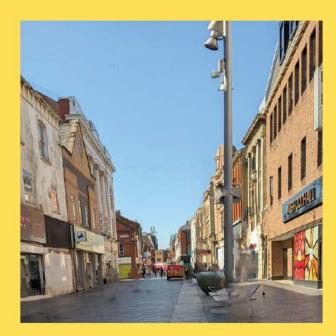
Victoria Street Retailers



We made visits to all the retailers in Grimsby town centre in April 2024 to remind them of their duty of care to customers and staff. This was in response to an incident that had occurred in the town centre.

We gave them posters promoting the Safer Street Ambassadors, explaining who they were, the hours they worked and how to contact them.

We also ensured they are all aware of Ask for Angela and how the scheme works, asking that it was briefed to staff at team meetings.





We asked shoppers to tell us what was naughty and nice about Grimsby Town centre. We spoke to approx. 90 people over two hours. Ages ranged from approx. 10 years old up to shoppers in their 70's or 80's.

We receive twice as many negative comments as positive. We received 135 naughty or negative comments compared to 65 nice or positive comments.

Most shoppers, 54%, grumbled about the appearance of the town centre. Complaints were mainly about empty shops or lack of shops with 29% of comments from shoppers wanting more filled units both in and out of Freshney Place. Shoppers disliked the apparent derelict appearance of Victoria Street during the regeneration work. Shoppers would like to see more events, activities or leisure offer with 8% of them saying there is nothing good in the town centre.

The next biggest gripe was antisocial behaviour with 24% of comments from shoppers (ASB). Shoppers complained about both adult and youth ASB, beggars, cyclists riding through Victoria Street and people taking drugs or street drinking and behaving poorly. Shoppers were especially hesitant to walk along Victoria Street if they witnessed or experienced ASB recently and wanted more action to be taken against perpetrators.

Bystander Intervention Training

















This year officers from the Community Safety Partnership delivered multiple Bystander Intervention awareness sessions to Grimsby Institute, HETA and Franklin College.

The sessions were designed to be delivered to students over 16 years of age and this year alone nearly 1,500 students have benefited from the sessions.

The sessions were created in Slido which is an interactive presentation tool that combines slides, polls and videos. The students learnt about the effects of street harassment and how they could intervene in a safe way whatever their level of confidence or ability, and depending what they have witnessed.

The programme covered the problem, types of harassment, and impacts of harassment and presented possible solutions in the form of the five D plan which includes Distract, Delegate, Direct, Delay and Document. Also discussed were what to do if harassment happens to you and how to practice resilience in the aftermath.







Societal expectations at Franklin













We visited Franklin students in their Aspire sessions to explore societal norms and online influencers. We asked them about what it meant to be masculine and feminine, what are men and women expected to be, and what femininity and masculinity look like.

The sessions were largely group work and discussion based to engage the students and get conversations going. We've found that the best way to achieve self realisation and behaviour change is through peer groups so we wanted to facilitate as much discussion as possible.

The students mostly felt that women are expected to have children, be maternal and caring, be family orientated. They are expected to be dependent on men, be submissive and vulnerable, cook and clean and be a domestic goddess.

Men they thought should be strong, have muscles, be powerful, be alpha beings, be unemotional, tall and hard working. We discussed why they thought that men and women should be like that and did they agree. How do they change and challenge the stereotype. How do they make a difference.

We also asked the groups about their role models and discussed healthy and unhealthy aspects of online personas.

Banter









Banter and the misappropriation of the term is coming up more and more when working with young people, especially females. Sexualised language and harmful and hurtful comments are being excused as banter by young males. Banter is often characterized by playful and witty exchanges and provided a good subject to explore in sessions with the students at Franklin. Over the course of the week the sessions was delivered to over 700 students.

Banter can help individuals develop essential social skills, such as:

- Communication: Engaging in banter requires quick thinking and effective verbal communication.
- Empathy: Understanding the boundaries of playful teasing helps build empathy and respect for others' feelings.
- Conflict Resolution: Learning to navigate banter can teach individuals how to handle disagreements and misunderstandings in a light-hearted manner.

It also has benefits such as developing emotional intelligence such as self awareness and social awareness, cultural understanding such as cultual norms and language skills, and cognitive benefits such as problem solving and being creative.

Overall, banter, when used appropriately, can be a valuable tool in a young adults development but some behaviours such as cat calling or using derogatory terms towards others is excused as banter. This was explored in the sessions with group activites investigating when to use banter, what's appropriate and what to do if it goes too far.

The sessions prompted really good discussions with the students leading to deeper understanding and engagement with the topic. Thanks to James Steer from Public Health who jointly delivered the sessions on selected days.

Safer Street Ambassadors



The Safer Streets Ambassadors are part of the Community Safety Partnership, with funding received from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner to tackle violence against women and girls in Grimsby town centre.

The ambassadors help to increase feelings of safety and create a welcoming atmosphere within the town centre, reducing incidents of violence against women and girls (VAWG) increasing confidence in visiting the town centre at night.

They provide a reassuring, highly visible presence and early intervention in key locations within the town centre. The ambassadors also respond to requests for assistance from CCTV operators, licensees or businesses within the town centre to help assist anyone who may feel vulnerable, focusing on women and girls to increase their feelings of safety.

From April 2024 – March 2025 they have dealt with 380 incidents, spoken to over 4,500 people, supported 182 males and 226 females whilst on patrol. They have been out in all weathers and racked up a total of 2,722 hours; pretty impressive!

The ambassadors have been involved in a variety of incidents. These include multiple occasions where they have given first aid whilst waiting for an ambulance to arrive, walking vulnerable people to taxis, train station or bus stops, providing a timely intervention when a couple of young females were followed into Grimsby Town Centre by a predatory male, and then ensuring young females where safeguarded, dealing with intoxicated people and making sure they get licensed taxi's home, alerting police to missing young people, providing reassurance to victims of domestic abuse in licensed premises in the town centre and assisting police to deal with difficult and challenging incidents including self harm and threatened attempted suicide.



Available from Thursday 4pm to midnight, Friday

Community Safety Partner

and Saturday 4pm to 1am

Farm o



Stalking Campaign







Officers from the Community Safety Partnership worked with the North East Lincolnshire Council communications team to create a campaign aimed at raising awareness of stalking and harassment and promoting the support available. Officers visited Women's Aid to gain lived experience accounts from women who had experienced harassment or stalking behaviour. The women who featured in the campaign are all being supported by Women's Aid. Here's what they had to say:

Jane told us that her ex-husband drove past her house at all times of the day and night. She said that if it wasn't him driving past, it was a take-away or a taxi turning up to her house late at night that he had ordered. "It feels like little things each time and when you tell someone an isolated experience they may not think it's that much of a big deal, but when this is happening every single day, it starts to become a problem. I can't even prove it's undeniably my ex ringing the taxis and ordering the take aways, but there wouldn't be anyone else who would do this to me."

This is echoed in Emma's story, who couldn't understand how her ex-boyfriend seemed to know where she was at all times. Emma explained he seemed to turn up wherever she was, she had turned off all location sharing on both her phone and her children's phones. She had mechanics check her car for trackers and regularly changed her routine. But he still managed to figure out where she was. Emma took her phone to the provider who was able to go through each app. This found a false parcel tracking link that had been emailed to Emma and had downloaded a hidden app that shared her location. With the hidden app deleted, Emma found that her ex was no longer showing up whenever she left the house. Emma said "Women's Aid have been amazing, I couldn't have done this without them. There were times when I felt like I was going crazy, I feel so much safer now and it's all thanks to Women's Aid believing me.

As part of the communications campaign a dedicated website and was formulated on the North East Lincolnshire Council website for people to gain support and advice and You Tube videos were created to further raise awareness. Details below.

Stalking Victims - Tracey's story https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4fnMxOMtHJA

Stalking Victims - Henrietta's story https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VqB620QtGVU

Stalking Victims - Jane's story https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=76fk9FAmGDY

https://www.nelincs.gov.uk/keeping-our-area-clean-and-safe/stalking-and-harassment/

It's Not Okay Campaign







To further raise awareness regarding bystander interventions and to link to other existing and ongoing work streams in February and March 2025 we decided to go big.

One of the series of our bystander interventions was enlarged to go onto a billboard and placed onto the side of buses. The campaign gives people ideas of easy interventions if they witness someone receiving unwanted attention showing that everyone can do something.

The campaign is on a billboard on Cleethorpe Road, Grimsby and on multiple Stagecoach buses throughout the borough.

The billboard poster will be on display for two weeks with projected impact of 285,000 impressions.

The posters on the buses will be in place for four weeks with projected impact of nearly 470,000 impressions.

(Note impressions are how many times it will be seen)



Domestic Abuse Campaigns

It is generally accepted that incidents of domestic abuse are under-reported. Locally, it takes an average of two to five years for victims to seek support, while some never do. To help address this, awareness raising around the impact of domestic abuse and support services available continues.

NELC uses its social media platforms to raise awareness of domestic abuse by developing or supporting local, regional, and national campaigns as well as one-off posts. In 2024/25 this included:

- Summer / Football Season DA Campaign (June 2024) – part of a national Women's Aid campaign
- '16 Days of Action' White Ribbon Campaign and the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and Girls (25th November to 10th December 2025)
- Love Shouldn't' Hurt Campaign (Valentine's Day 2025), part of #YouAreNotAlone – sharing of partnership messages on behalf of the OPCC
- No More Week (2nd 8th March 2025) part of a national campaign
- Miscellaneous and one-off posts such as awareness raising over the festive season in December 2024 and celebrating the launch of the new NEL DA Services Hub on 1st November 2024.

A draft Domestic Abuse Strategic Communications plan has been developed to manage the awareness raising and communications going forward on a rolling basis.





Did you know one in 3 women and one in 7 men will experience domestic or sexual abuse in their lifetimes?

We are joining No More Week to say no more to domestic abuse. NO MORE

If you are experiencing domestic abuse and are in immediate danger, please ring 999 to get immediate help.

For support and advice ring domestic abuse services on 01472 326296 or visit the new hub, 15 Wellowgate, Grimsby (DN32 0RA)

For more information on m https://www.nomore.org/no-more-week-2025/





As part of the campaign, employees at North East Lincolnshire Council gathered donations, including costnetics, perlumes, shower gels, body iprays and more to give to the women at the borough's Women's Aid refuse.

It you have been affected by domestic abuse and vant support and abuse, sall the Domestic Abuse Sensics on 01472.375737 or visit their newhols at 15 Wellowgate. Gentity, DN32 0N Read more about the 16 Days of Action (ii) https://www.nellocs.gov.uk/council-collects-iter for_/



Safetives – a leading UK Comment Abuve Chavity say that 1 in 4 sucrem in contact with mental health services are leafly to the experiment of dements above when they are seen by a perclessional. If you are reportening doments above it is important to keep yourself emotionally safe as well as physically safe.

For support with your mental health contact Navigo on 01472 256256 option 3 or by texting ORANIZ to 5255.



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If you need help and support call Women's Act on 01472 375257, or if you are in members danger ring 995.



Domestic Abuse hub



The hub is located at 15 Wellowgate, Grimsby, DN32 ORA

Women's Aid North East Lincolnshire opened a new Domestic Abuse Service Hub in Grimsby, a facility designed to offer support to anyone experiencing controlling or abusive behaviour, including support for male victims.

Officially opened on the 1st November 2024, the hub provides an inclusive and multi-agency environment where individuals in need can find compassionate support and essential resources. It brings together a range of services, that compliment and build on our women only spaces delivered from other venues in the town. Support ranges from one-to-one support (in person), telephone support, group work, domestic abuse support drop-in sessions, solicitor / legal drop-ins, advice on housing, drug / alcohol support, and much more – creating a comprehensive network of services for victims and survivors of domestic abuse.

Current services across NE Lincolnshire include:

- Group Support Programmes
 - Freedom and Own My Life Programmes empowering individuals with tools for safety and recovery after abuse (women only)
 - Survivors Group a supportive community for survivors of domestic abuse (women only)
 - Family Support Group support for families impacted by domestic abuse
- Domestic Abuse Drop-In Sessions Open to all who need support, these drop-ins provide a safe and welcoming space for individuals to access help
- Outreach Support Workers Trained professionals providing hands-on support for those experiencing domestic abuse
- Solicitor Drop-Ins Free legal consultations available
- Housing Support and Refuge Services Assisting with safe emergency and general housing solutions

Contact Information:

- Phone for support: 01472 575757 (Option 1)
- The hub is located at 15 Wellowgate, Grimsby, DN32 ORA
- Email: support@womensaidnel.org
- Website: www.womensaidnel.org

Womens Empowerment & Networking Event

Our first Women's Empowerment and Networking Event in February 2025 was a great success and a sell out. It was a half day filled with inspiration, learning, and meaningful connections.

We'd like to thank all the speakers who presented and all those who attended. We'd also like to thank all the staff who worked to put the event together.

Here are some highlights and reflections from the event.

- We had nine different speaker organisations
 presenting on a variety of topics such as male
 allyship and positive masculinity, the stalking
 advocacy service and women in policing. The
 speakers were engaging and captivated the
 audience with their presentations and insights.
- The event offered numerous networking sessions, allowing attendees to connect with like-minded women. Many new friendships and professional relationships were formed, fostering a supportive community
- Thought-Provoking Discussions. The engaging conversations provided valuable insights and encouraged attendees to share their own perspectives.





We are grateful for the positive feedback received from attendees. Many thought the event was well organised, appreciated the variety of the presentations, and the opportunity to network with inspiring, like minded women.









Reclaim These Streets Walk





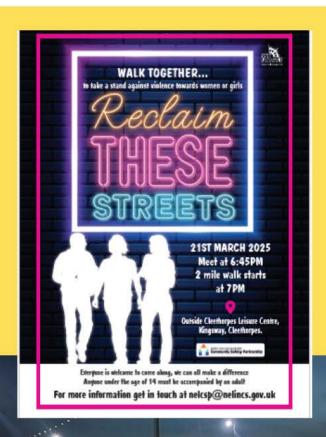








Reclaim These Streets Walk



In recent times, the movement to reclaim public spaces has gained momentum, with communities coming together to express their voices and demand change.

Reclaim These Streets is more than just a slogan; it's a call to action. It encourages individuals to take ownership of their surroundings and use them as platforms for meaningful expression. We walked together to take a stand against violence towards women and girls.

It's estimated that over 200 people of all ages and genders attended to participate in the two mile walk from Cleethorpes Leisure Centre in March 2025. We started at the leisure centre and walked towards the Pier, into Cleethorpes Town Centre, through the Pier Gardens and back to the Leisure Centre. Whilst it was cold it stayed dry and there was a buoyant atmosphere as we all walked along waving our glow sticks.

Thank you to those who helped to organise the walk, the stewards who volunteered their time and all those who attended to make the event such a success.









Reclaim These Streets Chalk Messages

How do we start a conversation with passers-by without pestering them to engage with us and create a powerful message to start the Reclaim These Streets Walk? With chalk art messages! Our vibrant, temporary messages transformed Kings Parade, Cleethorpes into a canvas for advocacy, solidarity, and hope.

Our messages were colourful and created an instant impact. Everyone who walked past stopped to look, most asked us what we were doing, some thanked us, many took photos to share with friends and family members. The messages sparked many conversations and we used the opportunity to signpost to support services. Details were chalked of Women's Aid, Blue Door and Victim Support.

Our chalk art messages hopefully captured the essence of community spirit for the Reclaim These Streets walk. It was a simple way to display a reminder that every voice matters and that change is possible when we stand together and actively participate.













Gym safety

At the VAWG Independent Advice Group (IAG) meeting a discussion was held regarding sexual harassment in gyms. It was agreed that this work stream would be included in the VAWG task group action plan to be further explored.

Sexual harassment in gyms is a serious issue that affects many women. From unwanted comments to inappropriate touching, these experiences can make a place meant for health and fitness feel unsafe and intimidating.

Speaking to women about their gym experiences at our focus groups gave us the following insights. Women received unwanted attention, inappropriate touching, unconsented photos being taken and felt intimidated to use certain equipment.

Women spoke about being stared at or receiving unsolicited comments about their bodies or workout routines. There were reports of men "accidentally" brushing against them or invading their personal space, standing uncomfortably close and some women felt intimidated by the presence of men who used their physicality to assert dominance.

Many women had said they had stopped going to the gym, changed the times they attended or ensured they only attended with someone else. Feeling fearful or apprehensive about working out can affect someone's mental health and self esteem. Constant harassment can negatively impact a person's body image.

Conversations were held with local gyms to ensure safeguards were in place and that each gym had a clear policy about how to deal with issues of harassment and ensuring they are enforced to create a safer environment.

One of the gyms spoken to tried to ensure that there was always a female member of staff within the gym to help foster feelings of safety and encouraging a supportive community to women feel more secure and less isolated.

We also distributed our poster campaign aimed to challenge male behaviours to be displayed within high footfall areas.











White Ribbon



USE, EXCUSE OR REMAIN SILENT ABOUT MEN'S VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Officers from the Community Safety Partnership are supporting North East Lincolnshire Council (NELC) work towards White Ribbon accreditation. The White Ribbon campaign is a global movement dedicated to ending gender-based violence and promoting respectful relationships. By joining White Ribbon, individuals and communities can take a stand against violence and contribute to creating safer environments for everyone.

It is vital than men take the lead in ending men's violence against women and girls and we are encouraging council staff, managers and Elected Members to sign up as male ambassadors and female champions. This involves educating themselves and others, challenging inappropriate behaviour where safe to do so, and promoting the values of White Ribbon in their work roles and out of work hobbies and activities.

Behind the scenes we are checking and amending our policies, developing training courses and briefings, ensuring people are appropriately supported when they report incidents of gender-based harassment or misogyny in the workplace, and creating a communications plan to raise awareness of each of these elements.

Harmful attitudes and behaviours towards women and girls will not be tolerated and we will continue to work hard to foster culture change, whilst ensuring the necessary administrative frameworks are in place to back this up. We are accountable to our female colleagues in this workstream and we will continue to address VAWG until women and girls feel safe, are safe, and are free from workplace inequality and harassment.



NEL Domestic Abuse Services



NEL Domestic Abuse Services rebranding

To coincide with the launch of the newly commissioned domestic abuse service provision in NEL, a new name and new logo and branding was developed in collaboration with the commissioned provider, partner agencies, and most importantly with individuals who have lived experience of domestic abuse. The final name, NEL Domestic Abuse Services, was chosen by victims of domestic abuse representing that the service is now more inclusive. The new logo, branding and colour ways have also been developed into a new leaflet advertising what the new service has to offer and how to access support locally. Leaflets are available to collect from the new partnership hub on Wellowgate.

16 Days of Action

As part of the 16 Days of Action for White Ribbon and the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and Girls, NELC's domestic abuse team put together a workplace collection within several Council buildings collecting donations of toiletries and essential items for the local Women's Aid refuge in the run up to Christmas 2024 and again in January 2025.





