

# **White Ribbon Campaign Towns Programme**

The White Ribbon Town Award is for Councils wishing to demonstrate their commitment to the aims of the White Ribbon Campaign (WRC): addressing and altering social norms that lead to violent behaviour against women, involving men in prevention activities, increasing awareness on the issue, providing services aimed at reducing the incidence of domestic violence.

Most importantly, the White Ribbon Council should mobilise the entire local community under the goal of ending violence against women.

Councils will be asked to meet specific criteria in order to hold the nationally recognised title of the White Ribbon Town.

## **Advisory notes**

### **General**

The Council should express a commitment to involving men in ending violence against women (VAW) and produce a preliminary action plan on how this commitment will be achieved. The action plan should involve all areas of Council's activity and set out specific and measurable goals. The action plan should also allocate an appropriate budget. The WRC team can provide suggestions and feedback on early drafts of the plan.

The Council should appoint a senior officer responsible for leading the development and implementation of WRC activities and liaising with WRC-UK.

Each year the Council should conduct an audit of anti-VAW goals set out in the original action plan and renew the plan according to its findings.

### **Raising awareness**

Increasing and maintaining public awareness on issues related to VAW plays a major part in the WRC activities

White Ribbon Day held annually on the 25<sup>th</sup> November (United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women) is one major opportunity to raise awareness and involve the entire local community in the activities aimed at asserting the unacceptability of

VAW. The Council should organise, encourage and support local initiatives that commemorate and mark this day. The range of activities can include “Walk a mile in her shoes!”, “These hands are not for hurting!” Please visit WRC’s website for a description of over 30 appropriate activities and advice on how to develop them.

It is important that the awareness should be maintained all year round. In particular, emphasis should be given at transmitting the anti-VAW message to the local male population through material aimed specifically at male audiences. Some of this material can be obtained from WRC-UK, yet it is highly recommended that the Council should incorporate this message into its own informational and promotional material (e.g. posters, brochures, newsletters).

It is also important to involve the local business community and other community groups e.g. faith communities. This increases the sense of community ownership of the project helping to sustain the overall awareness and support. This could also provide additional funds for local WRC initiatives.

In addition, it would be very useful to conduct a survey of community attitudes towards violence against women as such a breakdown enables the development of the most effective policies tailored to particular needs. A special focus on attitudes and practices within different local ethnic communities would be highly advantageous. WRC office can provide assistance with this.

### **Information and Training**

Since council’s employees have first-hand access to local individuals, it is very important that all the relevant members of staff receive domestic violence awareness training. However, WRC-UK advocates a wider understanding of ‘relevant members of staff’. All face to face service providers should be trained.

It is vital that all the members of the community have access to information and advice on domestic violence and VAW in general. The Council should ensure easy access to such information which must be available on the Council’s website and should also be disseminated together with publications, newsletters, etc.

### **Support services**

The Council should ensure the availability of support services for men who want to change their violent behaviour towards their partners and other family members. It is also important

that perpetrator programmes should be accessible not only for men mandated to attend by the courts as part of a probation order or with a recommendation from the family court but also as self-referrals. Men with violent past or suspected violent behaviour should be actively encouraged to sign up for these programmes voluntarily.

Furthermore, the council should provide support and counselling to children who witness violent behaviour in their families so that they can build healthy and respectful relationships in the future.

### **Community Outreach**

Promoting WRC initiatives and expanding the reach of the campaign should be undertaken by involving and cooperating with local services, including:

- Libraries - could organise meetings, discussions, other activities; display information; provide access to useful online resources, etc.
- Schools - could organise children and family orientated activities that promote positive male role models and counter gender stereotyping. They could include theme-days; competitions; VAW prevention planning group involving students, parents and staff; etc. Please visit WRC website for more resources and ideas.
- Sport clubs and gyms – can display male targeted visual material; promote positive male roles by organising meetings, competitions, etc. In addition, the Council should encourage local sports clubs to sign up for the White Ribbon Charter and sponsor special sport events – e.g. White Ribbon cup.
- Housing – working with local district housing offices brings the campaign into communities.

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Once the Council has submitted the WRT questionnaire, the WRC-UK will contact the relevant officer to discuss the progress towards achieving the White Ribbon Town status.

Upon approval the Council will receive the White Ribbon Town certificate which entitles the Council to the right to use the WRC logo and receive full support from WRC staff. In

addition, White Ribbon Town councils will be invited to attend the annual White Ribbon Towns conference.

The award is reviewed on annual basis.

*For any additional information and advice, please contact the WRC-UK at [info@whiteribboncampaign.co.uk](mailto:info@whiteribboncampaign.co.uk)*