

## INDEPENDENT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ADVOCACY SERVICES

### Background

This is a joint initiative between City Parochial Foundation (CPF) and the Henry Smith Charity (HS) to build on recent activity in the domestic violence field, such as the establishment of Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy Services and Specialist Domestic Violence Courts, and to strengthen the impact of these developments in four London boroughs. Each of the four projects is working within a different context – a police station, an accident and emergency unit, a community centre, and with black and minority ethnic communities – and all have appointed Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVAs) to work with high risk victims of domestic abuse.

CPF and HS were awarded a special award in 2006 by the then Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, in recognition of our contribution to furthering the aims of the London Domestic Violence Strategy.

### Aim

To strengthen and improve the quality of Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy Services in order to improve the safety and lives of victims of domestic violence.

### Objectives

- To create a more skilled domestic violence workforce.
- To prioritise work which identifies and supports high-risk victims.
- To develop models of best practice in developing independent advocacy at a local level in up to four London boroughs.
- To strengthen partnerships at a local level, particularly between established domestic violence organisations, statutory agencies and small black and minority ethnic women's groups.
- To contribute towards building an evidence base for assessing the cost-benefit analysis of IDVAS and to evaluate the merits of this model of provision.
- To inform the wider policy debate on support for victims of domestic violence by engaging with both local and national government, the Crown Prosecution Service, Metropolitan Police and other statutory and voluntary sector providers.

**Timescale:** Grants agreed October 2006. Funded work to be undertaken between December 2006 and November 2009.

**Amount allocated:** £900,000 (£600,000 CPF & £300,000 HS), which has increased to £1.6 million with match funding secured from statutory sources.

# Special Initiative: IDVA

## Organisations Funded

1. **The Nia Project** ([www.niaproject.info](http://www.niaproject.info)) - £230,000 to establish an IDVA service in Hackney with a particular focus on the needs of black and minority ethnic women, especially Eastern European, Somali, Turkish-speaking and Vietnamese.
2. **Domestic Violence Support Services** - £180,000 to strengthen its advocacy service, based in a police station in Barnet.
3. **Newham Action Against Domestic Violence** ([www.naadv.org.uk](http://www.naadv.org.uk)) - £158,000 to develop its advocacy service, based in a community centre.
4. **Victim Support Lambeth, ([www.vslambeth.org.uk](http://www.vslambeth.org.uk)) in partnership with Lambeth Women's Aid and the GAIA Centre** - £210,000 to develop an IDVA service in the Accident and Emergency Department of Guy's and St Thomas' Hospital.

In addition, £30,000 has been allocated towards a training programme for small, especially black and minority ethnic women's groups.

## Evaluation

An external evaluation is being undertaken by Professor Liz Kelly and Dr Maddy Coy of the Child & Women Abuse Studies Unit at London Metropolitan University. The evaluation was commissioned in April 2007 and will be completed in November/December 2009. An interim report on the establishment of the IDVA schemes was produced in January 2008. Further interim reports will be produced in June 2008 and January 2009.

## Advisory Group members

Ingrid Posen (Chair) and Maggie Baxter (CPF)  
Marilyn Gallyer and Amelia Fitzalan Howard (HS)  
Davina James-Hanman (Greater London Domestic Violence Project)  
Gilly Green (Comic Relief)  
Representatives of the four projects.

**CPF Lead Officer:** Sioned Churchill, supported by Rachael Takens-Milne.

## Learning to date:

- The pace of development of schemes - one project was established very quickly and then had to regroup in terms of staffing, while others have developed at a slow and gradual pace.
- Posts can be constructed in such specialised terms that it can be hard to find applicants. This raises a wider question about how services can be best developed for small local communities.
- The potential benefits of developing protocols, or memoranda of understandings that include remit and expectations, at an early stage between IDVA schemes and partner agencies.