

DRAFT PROPOSAL FOR THE DELIVERY OF TRAINING AND SUPPORT TO LOCAL COMMUNITY 'AMBASSADORS' USING THE WOMEN'S AID 'ASK ME' MODEL IN OSWESTRY

West Mercia Women's Aid is the leading regional organisation providing specialist emotional and practical services for those whose lives have been affected by domestic abuse. We ensure that victims are safe, have information and choice in how they can live their lives, and feel supported in their recovery from abuse. We actively challenge gender bullying and the social acceptance of the abuse of women and girls.

Women are over-represented as the victims of domestic abuse and violence, and the majority of our services are delivered by women and in women-only spaces. However, we recognise that men can also experience abuse in their intimate partner relationships and WMWA provides male victims with advice and support that recognises the challenges that they face.

WMWA works in partnership with other local and regional agencies to promote the protection of women and children, and we offer specialist training for a wide range of professionals and communities. We are committed to ensuring that services are co-ordinated and make a real difference for the people that need them, and we work closely with Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service to ensure that every individual that needs support in Shropshire has access to the right service, at the right time.

WMWA will support anyone affected by domestic abuse as long as we can safely meet their needs. We work closely with other agencies to ensure that support services are accessible and appropriate to all communities of heritage, faith, ability and identity.

'Ask Me' in Oswestry

Community development approaches to growing prevention, early intervention and support are not new, and have evidenced success in addressing issues such as substance misuse and access to learning. Working alongside communities to support them in identifying the key issues that affect people locally and increase vulnerability, is key to then helping them to acquire the resources that they need to build resilience, whilst also offering the opportunity for local voices to influence and shape the response of local services.

Our objective would be to initiate and support work that is focussed on empowering individuals and groups in 'communities of place' in Oswestry, whilst recognising that there may also be some groups of 'characteristic – women's groups, LGBTQ groups, and groups of faith and/or culture – who would be keen to become part of the project and with whom we would be especially keen to partner. We are aware that there are wards of significant disadvantage in Oswestry and would be concerned to focus on engaging local people in the areas of Castle and Victoria where investment in local social capital is will be particularly important. We are also alert to the relative poverty of some communities in Oswestry and would ensure that the experience of becoming an 'Ambassador' delivers in terms of learning and increased confidence for those who would want to transfer their new skills into future employment.

Sue Coleman

CEO – West Mercia Women's Aid

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