



Report to Policy Committee

Author/Lead Officer of Report: Sam Martin

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Report of: *Tom Smith (Head of Operational Services)*

Report to: *Strategy and Resources Committee*

Date of Decision: *18th October 2023*

Subject: *White Ribbon Accreditation and Action Plan*

Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been undertaken?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
If YES, what EIA reference number has it been given? 2388				
Has appropriate consultation taken place?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has a Climate Impact Assessment (CIA) been undertaken?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Purpose of Report:

The report sets out the background to the White Ribbon campaign and the Council's involvement in the campaign to date.

This report sets out the Council's proposed Action Plan for activities to promote the national White Ribbon Campaign which aims to end violence against women and girls. The Action Plan will be submitted to the White Ribbon Campaign to secure the accreditation of Sheffield City Council as an organisation and confirm the whole Council commitment to taking action to end violence against women and girls.

Recommendations:

The Strategy & Resources Committee approves the Council's White Ribbon Action Plan to be submitted to White Ribbon UK for the purposes of seeking White Ribbon accreditation.

Background Papers: White Ribbon Action Plan – Attached as Appendix

Lead Officer to complete:-		
1	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed, where required.	Finance: <i>Anna Beeby</i>
		Legal: <i>Richard Marik</i>
		Equalities & Consultation: <i>Ed Sexton</i>
		Climate: <i>Sam Martin</i>
	<i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i>	
2	SLB member who approved submission:	<i>Kate Joseph (Chief Executive)</i>
3	Committee Chair consulted:	<i>Tom Hunt</i>
4	I confirm that all necessary approval has been obtained in respect of the implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist and that the report has been approved for submission to the Committee by the SLB member indicated at 2. In addition, any additional forms have been completed and signed off as required at 1.	
	Lead Officer Name: <i>Tom Smith</i>	Job Title: <i>Director of Operational Services</i>
	Date: 9 th October 2023	

1. PROPOSAL

Background

- 1.1 White Ribbon UK is a leading national charity whose aim is to engage with men and boys to end violence against women. White Ribbon UK run national campaigns including White Ribbon Day on 25th November where thousands of people take action and raise awareness to prevent violence before it starts. The mission of White Ribbon UK is for all men to make the White Ribbon Promise to never commit, excuse or remain silent about male violence against women.
- 1.2 Individual people can sign up directly and make the White Ribbon Promise at www.whiteribbon.org.uk. Men can sign up as ambassadors, and women members can also sign up as champions supporting the cause. Organisations can also sign up to be part of the White Ribbon Campaign which involves raising awareness to prevent violence against women before it starts.
- 1.3 The White Ribbon Campaign, and similar campaigns, are important because 1 in 3 women are estimated to experience domestic abuse at some point in their lives. 120-150 women each year in the UK are killed by men (including 18 domestic homicides in Sheffield since 2011). Women and girls experience harassment and name calling, and studies have shown that most violence and harassment is not reported to the police or other support agencies.
- 1.4 Following a Full Council Motion on 18th November 2021, the Council became a White Ribbon registered local authority in November 2022. By registering, the Council committed to supporting the White Ribbon Campaign and to developing a clear Action Plan that would secure full accreditation as an organisation over 2 years.
- 1.5 A steering group of officers from across the Council was set up, chaired by the Director of Operational Services to oversee the development of the plan. Initial registration with White Ribbon was secured in November 2022 in time for White Ribbon Day. On White Ribbon Day, Council staff were encouraged to wear White Ribbons and a range of internal communications was delivered through different channels, including the Whole Council staff events, press releases and videos.

White Ribbon Accreditation

- 1.6 White Ribbon accreditation is a nationally recognised programme for organisations who are committed to improving their workplace culture, progressing gender equality, and ending violence against women and girls.
- 1.7 There are four criteria for becoming White Ribbon Accredited; Strategic

Leadership, Changing Culture, Raising Awareness and Engaging with Men and Boys. White Ribbon UK works with organisations to develop a three-year action plan that will set out how they are working to support employees and make lasting change.

Action Plan

- 1.8 Cross-Council activity has been undertaken to develop our approach, and in order to secure accreditation, an action plan needs to be agreed and submitted to White Ribbon UK which will commit the Council to continue working towards ending violence against women and girls.
- 1.9 As part of its bid to for secure full White Ribbon accreditation, the Council must develop and submit a 3-year action plan to the National White Ribbon Campaign team for approval by November 2023. The plan will demonstrate further actions the Council will take to widen the engagement and awareness of the Campaign across the Council and with wider partners in the City.
- 1.10 The action plan will aim to deepen the Council's commitment as an organisation, including actions such as developing the role of White Ribbon ambassadors, reviewing reporting and disciplinary processes, continuing to develop services for perpetrators to change their behaviour, updating HR policies and procedures and staff training.
- 1.11 The draft Council White Ribbon action plan (attached as an Appendix to this report) outlines how the Council will, over the next 3 years, work towards ending violence against women and girls. The plan is focused on 4 main overarching areas of activity:
- Strategic leadership
 - Engaging men and boys
 - Changing culture
 - Raising Awareness
- 1.12 It is proposed that the Council's action plan shall include:
- HR policy/general policies which adequately cover men's violence against women and domestic abuse are shared and understood.
 - A staff training strategy including aspects of men's violence against women (sexual violence, coercive control, consent, and domestic abuse).
 - All Council policies and programmes to be aligned with the Home Office Violence Against Women and Girls National Statement of Expectations
 - White Ribbon accreditation is built into the commissioning process as a social value indicator.
 - A joint strategic approach to ending men's violence against women
 - Ensuring that there is adequate support and housing services for

women and children experiencing/fleeing domestic abuse.

- Senior leadership show commitment to ongoing learning and reflection that continuously improve policies, procedures and practices, and where reasonable, ensure that addressing violence against women and girls is integrated into monitoring and evaluation.

- 1.13 The implementation of the action plan will be overseen by the Officer Steering Group who will oversee and monitor the effectiveness and delivery of the plan. This group will monitor the delivery of the strands of work, and report and link to the Council's Strategic Equalities and Inclusion Board. Update reports will also be brought to relevant Committee meetings as required.
- 1.14 It is proposed in the action plan to establish a Member Reference Group which will give cross-Council and Cross-Committee opportunities for members of all parties to contribute to and steer the development and delivery of the actions in the plan.
- 1.15 Delivering the White Ribbon action plan is a whole Council commitment. Every member of staff, manager, director and Council Member in the organisation has a role to play, and the plan cannot be delivered by one person or service alone. The action plan involves HR, Communications, training, strategic leadership, and individual action. Although it can stand alone as an initiative, our commitment to the White Ribbon Campaign forms an important part of a wider partnership strategy which the Council takes the lead on around Domestic and Sexual Abuse. For example, the Council commissions existing Women's Refuge and Safe Accommodation, and a Community Helpline and Support Service for victims of Domestic Abuse.
- 1.16 The Council does a lot of work with partners like the police, NHS and voluntary groups, to support victims of abuse. However, the Council also needs to change attitudes and behaviours of men and boys if it is going to change the culture through which abuse and violence grows.

2. HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE ?

- 2.1 The decision will contribute to Sheffield's goal of healthy lives for all. The Council plays a significant role in the social and cultural life of the City of Sheffield and is a major employer too. In signing up to the White Ribbon Campaign the Council has recognised that everyone, but especially men and boys, can play a part in challenging and ending violence against women and girls. As well as individuals taking the pledge and joining the campaign there are lots of ways the Council can support this through our policies and procedures, how we talk and share views and ideas in our services and with our staff and customers, and by actively tackling discrimination and abuse.
- 2.2 The White Ribbon action plan outlines how Sheffield City Council will, over the next 3 years, work towards ending violence against women and

girls. The plan is focused on 4 main overarching areas of activity:

- Strategic leadership
- Engaging men and boys
- Changing culture
- Raising Awareness

2.3 Implementing the plan involves all services across the Council. Oversight and monitoring of the delivery of the actions in the plan will be held by an Officer Steering Group. A wide range of officers and services are responsible for delivering different aspects of the plan and regular reports will be brought to the Committee for noting and approval as necessary.

3. HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?

3.1 The initial decision to support the White Ribbon Campaign was taken at Full Council on 18th November 2021. This decision was confirmed at a meeting of the Strategy and Leadership Board on the 16th May 2022. Initial registration the Council as a White Ribbon Local Authority was in November 2022.

3.2 Consultation on the action plan has been via service Senior Leadership Team meetings, Member Briefings and Directorate Leadership Team meetings throughout the summer of 2023.

3.3 The Council's proposal to become White Ribbon accredited and its progress on the action plan has been shared and discussed at various multi agency forums e.g. the Sheffield Safer Communities Partnership, Sheffield Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategic Board and also at forums involving members of the public e.g. the Sheffield Violence Against Women and Girls Forum.

3.4 Many of the actions in the plan will involve close working with stakeholders across the Council and with outside groups and organisations. As part of the delivery further consultation will take place as and when required.

3.5 It is proposed in the plan to establish a Member Reference Group which will give cross Council and Cross-Committee opportunities for members of all parties to contribute to and steer the development and delivery of the actions in the plan.

4. RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

4.1 Equality Implications

4.1.1 As a Council, signing up to, becoming accredited with the White Ribbon Campaign and delivering a comprehensive plan of action across the organisations will play an important role in changing cultural and societal

attitudes about violence against women and girls. This will over time improve the lives of women and girls by reducing violent, abuse and coercive behaviour perpetrated by men.

4.1.2 The White Ribbon action plan will positively impact on gender and sex. Men and boys are brothers, sons, fathers, partners and friends of women and girls, they also suffer from the impact of stereotypes around expected male behaviour and will also benefit from the work to end violence against women and girls.

4.1.3 We will endeavour to ensure that the plans are implemented in an intersectional way, recognising the experiences of women and girls in the workforce and the city who also experience racism, homophobia, transphobia and disability discrimination etc.

4.2 Financial and Commercial Implications

4.2.1 There are no direct financial implications. Any officer time spent on activities within the plan should be met from within existing resources.

4.3 Legal Implications

4.3.1 The Equality Act 2010 imposes a public sector equality duty (PSED) on the Council under which it must have due regard to the need to achieve the following objectives whilst carrying out its functions:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the EA 2010;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

4.3.2 The proposal to become White Ribbon accredited will go some way to discharging the Council's PSED.

4.3.3 The Localism Act 2011 also confers upon the Council a general power of competence which gives the Council the power to do anything an individual can do, provided it is not prohibited by other legislation. The Council can therefore rely on this power when applying for White Ribbon accreditation.

4.4 Climate Implications

4.4.1 There are no significant climate implications in this decision. Supporting the White Ribbon Campaign will form part of the activity across the Council that already takes place, such as communications, management meetings and conversations in 1:1 and performance development meetings with staff. In conducting campaign activity much of the activity

will be using online and remote channels such as social media. There may be some production of printed materials but this will be kept to a minimum. The campaign does involve promoting the wearing of a White Ribbon on White Ribbon day and there is a production cost to these items. In promoting the campaign people will be encouraged to purchase reusable ribbons to reduce production of single use items.

4.4 Other Implications

4.4.1 None.

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 White Ribbon is the only accreditation process focussing on violence against women and girls for local authorities. The alternatives were to do nothing or to develop our own framework.

5.2 Doing nothing is not an option given the increasing focus on ending violence against women and girls in recent years following high profile deaths, prominent agencies and organisations being found wanting in their responses, and scandals involving public personas. Having already signed up to be a White Ribbon registered organisation, the Council needs to develop and deliver a plan to meet this commitment and become White Ribbon accredited.

5.3 Developing our own framework would be more resource intensive and less effective when there is a ready made campaign that is supported by many local authorities and other organisations across the country and internationally.

6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Both men and women can use violence in their families, relationships or in the community. All violence is unacceptable. But the behaviour that leads to male violence against women is a specifically gendered problem rooted in discrimination and prejudice. White Ribbon is trying to deal with this specific problem.

6.2

- Around 6000 people seek support from domestic abuse services in Sheffield each year, and around 90% of them are women.
- The Independent Sexual Violence Advisor Service sees over 600 clients a year and 87% are women and girls.
- There have been 19 deaths in Sheffield since 2011 that have met the criteria for a statutory Domestic Homicide Review (including suicides) – 16 of these were women and in 17 of these deaths the abuser was a man.

6.3 We know that much violence against women and girls is not reported or disclosed to agencies and sadly for some it is part of everyday life,

something they just put up with. This could range from street harassment, or sexual harassment at work to rape. The problem does not stop with physical violence. It includes other forms of emotional violence and psychological – from sexist joking, to sexual harassment at work, to other domineering forms of behaviour. By remaining silent about these things, some men are allowed to poison our communities and working and learning environments.

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