

REPORT TO CABINET

Open		Would any decisions proposed :			
Any especially affected Wards	Operational	Be entirely within Cabinet's powers to decide		YES	
		Need to be recommendations to Council		NO	
		Is it a Key Decision		NO	
Lead Member: Cllr Jo Rust E-mail: cllr.jo.rust@west-norfolk.gov.uk		Other Cabinet Members consulted: Cllr Alistair Beales			
		Other Members consulted: Cllr Alexandra Ware Cllr David Sayers			
Lead Officer: Becky Box, Assistant Director Central Services E-mail: becky.box@west-norfolk.gov.uk Direct Dial: 01553 616502		Other Officers consulted: Charlotte Marriott, Corporate Policy Officer			
Financial Implications YES/NO	Policy/ Personnel Implications YES/NO	Statutory Implications YES/NO	Equal Impact Assessment YES/NO If YES: Pre-screening/ Full Assessment	Risk Management Implications YES/NO	Environmental Considerations YES/NO

Date of meeting: 10 December 2024

WHITE RIBBON UK ACCREDITATION

Summary

The White Ribbon is the globally recognised symbol for the campaign to end men's violence against women and girls. White Ribbon UK campaigns to prevent violence against women and girls by addressing the root causes of men's violence against women: harmful attitudes, behaviours and systems around rigid gender norms and harmful expressions of masculinity that perpetuate gender inequality and gender-based violence.

In 2023, the Council signed the Norfolk Police and Crime Commissioners 'HEAR pledge', which is based on the White Ribbon campaign and aims to break the silence around domestic abuse and provide help and support in the workplace. White Ribbon accreditation is a commitment made by workplaces to work towards transformational change in their staff culture, systems and communities to make work a safe place for everyone. Obtaining White Ribbon UK accreditation would strengthen the Council's current commitment to ending violence against women and girls.

Recommendation

Cabinet Resolves:

1. To commit the Council to achieving White Ribbon UK accreditation
2. To allocate the budget required to support the achievement and ongoing commitment to accreditation.

Reason for Decision

White Ribbon UK accreditation would build on the Council's existing commitment to preventing

domestic abuse by enabling the Council to:

- Demonstrate commitment to preventing harassment, abuse and violence against women and girls.
- Create safer communities and a safer work environment.
- Meet legislative duties, such as those defined within the Equality Act 2010 and Domestic Abuse Act 2021.
- Support the Government priority to end violence against women and girls (VAWG), as outlined in the [‘Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy’](#), July 2021.

1 Background

- 1.1 The Montreal massacre was a mass shooting that occurred on December 6, 1989, in Montreal, Canada. Fourteen women were murdered, and another ten women and four men were injured. This was a targeted attack against women, in the name of ‘fighting feminism’. In response to the massacre, the White Ribbon Campaign was started by activists and politicians, in 1991 and is now one of the largest men's anti-violence programs in the world.
- 1.2 White Ribbon is the UK’s leading charity engaging men and boys to end violence against women and girls. The charity’s aim is to prevent violence against women and girls by addressing its root causes. They work with men and boys to change long-established, and harmful, attitudes, systems and behaviours around rigid gender norms and masculinity that perpetuate inequality and violence. The campaign’s work is preventative; they want to stop violence *before* it starts.
- 1.3 The HEAR pledge is a countywide initiative led by the Norfolk Police and Crime Commissioner which aims to raise awareness and educate employers about domestic abuse. The pledge is based on the principles of the White Ribbon campaign. By signing, employers pledge to break the silence around domestic abuse and provide help and support in the workplace. The pledge includes a commitment to support White Ribbon Day (which occurs on 25th November each year). Having worked toward the requirements of the HEAR pledge the Council formally signed in 2023.
- 1.4 There is substantial evidence to support the need to take action to end gender based violence:
 - 70% of women in the UK say they have experienced sexual harassment in public (*APPG for UN Women, 2021*)
 - 3 in 5 women have experienced sexual harassment, bullying or verbal abuse in the workplace (*Trade Unions Congress, 2023*)
 - 15% of women in England have experienced online violence (*Professor Olga Jurasz, The Open University, 2024*)
 - Nearly a quarter of girls in mixed sex schools said they had experiences of unwanted sexual touching in school (*EVAW, 2023*)
 - 1.4 million women experienced domestic abuse in the year ending March 2023 (*ONS, 2023*)
 - 63% of men agree that men in society aren’t doing enough to ensure the safety of women and girls (*YouGov, 2021*)

- Violence against women and girls is estimated to cost the UK economy £28 billion a year.
- 1.5 The impact of gender based violence is also felt in the workplace:
- Around 60% of women who have experienced abuse missed at least 3 days of work a month.
 - 3 in 4 women have experienced harassment during work trips and more than 1/2 of women have changed their work trip plans because of safety concerns.
- 1.6 White Ribbon UK focuses on men's violence against women because the sad reality is that the majority of violence against women is perpetrated by men. Whether that is a partner, ex-partner, colleague, or stranger. White Ribbon UK recognises that not all men are violent, however, all men can help to end violence against women and girls by challenging harmful attitudes and behaviours.
- 1.7 The harm caused to victims and society by violence against women and girls in all its forms – including but not limited to harassment, stalking, rape, sexual assault, murder, honour-based abuse, coercive control – is immeasurable. While men and boys also suffer from many of these forms of abuse, they disproportionately affect women. **A woman is killed by a man every three days in the UK.** Domestic abuse makes up 18 per cent of all recorded crime in England and Wales. In the year ending March 2022, there were 194,683 sexual offences, of which 70,330 were rape. (source: National Police Chiefs' Council, Violence Against Women and Girls)
- 1.8 Accreditation
- 1.8.1 White Ribbon Accreditation is a nationally recognised programme to end violence against women and girls in the workplace, providing organisations with a framework to achieve transformational change in their staff culture, systems, and communities.
- 1.8.2 White Ribbon UK will provide an action plan template that sets a framework to build upon existing good practices and identify gaps to develop plans that support organisational transformation.
- 1.8.3 Action Plans are based around four key areas:
- **Strategic Leadership** - Making a firm organisational commitment, embedding gender equal practice into policies and procedures, establishing organisation wide training and development.
 - **Engaging Men and Boys** - Enabling staff, especially men, to act as leaders across an organisation; to challenge and change culture; understand allyship; and promote equality and respect.
 - **Changing Culture** - Embedding and nurturing attitudes to build a culture that is a positive and safe environment for women.
 - **Raising Awareness** - Developing organisational capability to identify what constitutes as violence, and advocate within the organisation, with partners and local communities, to end violence against women and girls in our society.

- 1.8.4 Accreditation is reviewed annually and renewed every three years building on what has already been achieved with a reviewed and developed action plan. Therefore this commitment is not simply a three-year project, but an ongoing commitment to prioritise and improve policies, procedures, and working practices

The accreditation cycle is as follows:

- Year One – apply for accreditation, develop and submit an action plan and complete questionnaire reviewing progress at the end of the year
- Year Two – continuing implementing objectives from the action plan, complete questionnaire reviewing progress at the end of year 2
- Year Three – implement year 3 objectives, reviewing outcomes, renew accreditation, revise and develop action plan for the next 3 years building on learning and success

- 1.8.5 White Ribbon UK accreditation is the next step to building upon the Council's commitment to ending gender based violence and the work already undertaken to support the HEAR Pledge. It would also provide a framework for the development of future work to respond to domestic violence.

2 Options Considered

2.1 Option 1 – No change – continue with commitment to the requirements of the HEAR Pledge and continue to raise awareness internally, continue to promote White Ribbon Day and deliver Domestic Abuse training to identified staff.

2.2 Option 2 - Commit to accreditation – build on existing work and good practice, strengthen our commitment to ending violence against women and girls, build a culture that is positive and safe for women and advocate with local partners and communities to end violence against women in our society.

3 Policy Implications

3.1 Accreditation would have policy implications across the Council. A key strand of accreditation is strategic leadership - making a firm organisational commitment, embedding gender equal practice into policies and procedures.

3.3 Accreditation will further embed current key policies and procedures across the Council, strengthening existing work and building upon good practice to ensure we continue to meet our legislative duties under the Equality Act 2010 and Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

4 Financial Implications

- 4.1 There is a financial cost to becoming White Ribbon accredited, which is calculated based on the net revenue budget of the organisation. Based on the Council's net revenue budget of c.£28m, the cost will be £330 per annum plus VAT. The cost due can be paid in three annual instalments of £330 + VAT per annum for a total of £990 + VAT or if all three years are paid together there is a small saving and the amount payable will be £957 + VAT.
- 4.2 In addition there will be a cost for training and other recourses/materials that may be needed to support accreditation.
- 4.3 It is requested that an initial budget of £3,000 is created for the Corporate Policy team to cover the cost of accreditation for the initial three years and to undertake the initial work required. Thereafter an ongoing budget of £1,000 per annum will be required to maintain accreditation.
- 4.4 It is expected that there will be additional financial costs as we develop and progress our action plan. If these costs cannot be met within existing budgets a further report will be prepared for Cabinet requesting additional funding.

5 Personnel Implications

- 5.1 Work to achieve the accreditation and the associated action plan will be managed by the Corporate Policy team, with input from other key Officers across different service areas.
- 5.2 There may be a requirement for additional capacity within the Corporate Policy team to support this work. In the short term it may be possible to support the work through the provision of a T Level industry placement opportunity.
- 5.3 Currently, the exact amount of work required to achieve accreditation is unknown. Once the action plan has been developed and the extent of the work required is known additional capacity will be sought from within existing resources across the Council.

6 Environmental Considerations

- 6.1 None

7 Statutory Considerations

- 7.1 White Ribbon accreditation would support the Council's duties as defined within The Equality Act 2010 which seeks to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity for all. It would also support the Public Sector Equality Duty, which places a requirement on all authorities to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic.
- 7.2 Accreditation would also support the Council's responsibilities as defined with the

Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

- 7.3 As an employer, the Council also have duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992 to ensure, as far as reasonably practical, the safety and welfare of our employees.

8 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

- 8.1 Pre-screening form attached.

9 Risk Management Implications

- 9.1 None identified at this stage. A project risk assessment will be undertaken, if it is agreed we will work towards accreditation.

10 Declarations of Interest / Dispensations Granted

- 10.1 None

11 Background Papers

(Definition : Unpublished work relied on to a material extent in preparing the report that disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the report is based. A copy of all background papers must be supplied to Democratic Services with the report for publishing with the agenda)

Stage 1 - Pre-Screening Equality Impact Assessment

For equalities profile information please visit [Norfolk Insight - Demographics and Statistics - Data Observatory](#)

Name of policy/service/function	White Ribbon Accreditation				
Is this a new or existing policy/service/function? <i>(tick as appropriate)</i>	New	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Existing	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Brief summary/description of the main aims of the policy/service/function being screened. Please state if this policy/service is rigidly constrained by statutory obligations, and identify relevant legislation.	White Ribbon Accreditation is a nationally recognised programme to end violence against women and girls in the workplace, providing organisations with a framework to achieve transformational change in their staff culture, systems, and communities.				
Who has been consulted as part of the development of the policy/service/function? – new only <i>(identify stakeholders consulted with)</i>	Motion to full council October 2024 Cllr Jo Rust, Cllr Alistair Beales, Cllr David Sayers and Cllr Alexandra Ware				
Question	Answer				
<p>1. Is there any reason to believe that the policy/service/function could have a specific impact on people from one or more of the following groups, for example, because they have particular needs, experiences, issues or priorities or in terms of ability to access the service?</p> <p>Please tick the relevant box for each group.</p> <p>NB. Equality neutral means no negative impact on any group.</p> <p><i>If potential adverse impacts are identified, then a full Equality Impact Assessment (Stage 2) will be required.</i></p>		Positive	Negative	Neutral	Unsure
	Age			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	Disability			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	Sex	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
	Gender Re-assignment			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	Marriage/civil partnership	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
	Pregnancy & maternity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
	Race			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	Religion or belief			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	Sexual orientation			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	Armed forces community			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	Care leavers			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Other (eg low income, caring responsibilities)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				

Question	Answer	Comments	
2. Is the proposed policy/service likely to affect relations between certain equality communities or to damage relations between the equality communities and the Council, for example because it is seen as favouring a particular community or denying opportunities to another?	No		
3. Could this policy/service be perceived as impacting on communities differently?	No		
4. Is the policy/service specifically designed to tackle evidence of disadvantage or potential discrimination?	Yes	White Ribbon accreditation will ensure the embedding of gender equal practice into policies and procedures across the council.	
5. Are any impacts identified above minor and if so, can these be eliminated or reduced by minor actions? If yes, please agree actions with a member of the Corporate Equalities Working Group and list agreed actions in the comments section	Yes/No	Actions:	
		Actions agreed by EWG member:	
<p>If 'yes' to questions 2 - 4 a full impact assessment will be required unless comments are provided to explain why this is not felt necessary:</p> <p>As this is specifically aimed at tackling violence against women and girls and will further support the embedding of gender equal practice into policies and procedures, it is felt that a full EIA is not required.</p> <p>Decision agreed by EWG member:<i>C. Marriott</i>.....</p>			
Assessment completed by: Name	Becky Box		
Job title	Assistant Director Central Services		
Date completed	22/10/24		
Reviewed by EWG member	<i>C. Marriott</i>	Date	23/10/24

√ Please tick to confirm completed EIA Pre-screening Form has been shared with Corporate Policy (corporate.policy@west-norfolk.gov.uk)