

20, Storksbill Lane
Southmoor
Ox13 5fq

12/10/20

Bus competition

My name is Fiona Bowler. I was trained as a domestic abuse champion in 2014 by an amazing local charity who are based in Oxford. After reading an article shared, I would like to nominate the charity 'Reducing the Risk of Domestic Abuse', who I believe deserves to be published on the side of your bus and here are my reasons.

Reducing the Risk and who are they and what do they do?

Reducing the Risk offer a whole range of services including some of the most intense support for some of Oxfordshire's most vulnerable families - offering outreach support from the independent domestic violence advisors, emergency funding for victims and for therapeutic support for children. They then offer training and support to help volunteers and professionals keep vulnerable people safe and most important they offer Champion training to professionals.

Not only does the charity offer ongoing support to members of society who are in need, but they are incredibly supportive of their volunteers and Champions. I have been a Champion for several years now and the support I have received both in a professional capacity and that of my private life has been second to none.

Due to the role I have in a professional capacity supporting Oxfordshire's most vulnerable in society, I will always contact this charity first should I have concerns or just in need of advice and no question is a silly question when it comes to such important work, protecting others.

The staff within the organisation go above and beyond their means to keep this amazing charity at work. Their commitment to keeping others safe is in incredible, saving many families and working on the best outcome for them all.

The support and services offered by this great charity cost **£300,000 a year**. A small proportion comes from statutory funding and they have a small but growing income from training. Most of the funding comes from Charitable trusts and donations so they remain independent and act as an advocate agency for victims of abuse. Due to their multi-agency approaches to tackle abuse in all forms, along with exploitation, their work is recognised nationally across the country helping to develop a coordinated approach to keeping people safe.

Across over 200 organisations **the charity has trained a staggering number of 2400 champions with just over 1000 of them being in Oxon**. These Champions range in profession from police, teachers, social workers, hospital staff, specialist services, housing officers the list is endless. By all training together this has a bigger

impact, the training offers a whole range of knowledge from the impact on victims including children, the prevalence, services available to both victims and professionals offering support but also services for the perpetrators as well as victims. During the training Champions learn how to assess and manage risk of serious harm, where to refer, what to say, how to keep people safe and how to reduce the risk (Hence the name of the charity). The training and networks were first developed in Oxfordshire and now are replicated across Bucks, Milton Keynes West Berkshire and Slough and as far as Torbay in Devon. The principles are the same across the country. Workers from different services and communities come together to learn about domestic abuse and how better to respond to victims and are then linked so they can work together to keep victims and children safe, and offer them all the services they need. Reducing the Risk staff update all the Champions regularly, organise Network meetings and are always available to give advice. Champions then support other staff and volunteers in the agency and community. The idea of the Champions is easy and yet the difference it can make is incredible, getting practitioners talking and learning new strategies while exchanging ideas off one another. The training is impactful, intense and informative showing that no one person has all the answers, but information shared helps to keep the impact of domestic abuse highlighted making a bigger impact on change.

The charity is now collaborating on training new staff in Children's Social Care who will lead on managing domestic abuse cases and now moving into educational settings highlighting the importance of healthy relationships and supporting work with traumatised children. The charity also helps deliver **a national programme of police training** called Domestic Abuse Matters and has developed more training in a few local police areas.

'WORKING TOGETHER TO TRANSFORM LIVES' is their mantra.

During the recent challenging times of the pandemic and lockdown this has had a huge impact on many families and the rise for support has increased by an incredible amount, with deaths almost doubling during some stages of lockdown. It can be recognised there is certainly a huge need for such a charity, but if you should find yourself or someone you may know who is in this kind of relationship and cannot find a way out then what a better way to highlight awareness of the charity in such challenging times for the country than the publicisation on the side of a bus travelling around Oxford city. This will help to highlight the fact for victims that there is support out there and they are not alone. Sadly domestic abuse and coercive control are real in many of societies families, these people are struggling day to day not knowing who to turn to or where to go for support, lets show the people of Oxford that there is help and support out there through such an amazing charity like reducing the risk. Let us show off this charity and the amazing work they do. Even **through the lockdown their training continued** online to keep the awareness alive, training people ready to go back out there to continue such great work and helping others.

I know there are many great charities out there who do great work in the community, but this charity really does deserve the recognition of what the charity does. It is not only about highlighting the charity but more important for me it is about getting the

information out there to the public, the vulnerable, people who need the support. Let us make change for them, give them the opportunity to take up the support by seeing the name and details on a bus while out shopping. This could be a great way to advertise such a charity, while out shopping or even in the company of their perpetrator the details are there for them to see without the suspicion of the controller. Something so simple could make a huge change in the life of a victim. Give them the opportunities they deserve, a life free from harm or even saving someone's life is the reality and a difference that can be met by your kind advertising.

Oxford bus company please help us with awareness, help support people who need it. Let us all work together.

Thank you so much for taking the time to read my submission, please help a great charity with awareness,

A hopeful champion

Fiona