

# INSIDE: Blooming Strong



# TURNING THE PAGE



January 2016 • EDITION 2

## ROCKING ON IN ROMANIA



**I**n late October, the Action for Change partnership met again in Bucharest, Romania, for the third international event! The Romanian Women's Shadow Board members joined us to provide their thoughts, and to steer the pilots and the overall project based on their experiences and valuable insights.

This event focused on updating each other on where each country is with their pilots - focussing specifically on what's new, the progress, what's been difficult and how we would do things differently next time.

We are now into the 12th month of the two year project that is improving outcomes for survivors of domestic abuse that have had their children taken into care.

## WHO DO WE WORK WITH?

**A**ction for Change works with parents who have experienced care proceedings and are at risk of having another child removed or who are at risk of becoming pregnant and still living in Hammersmith & Fulham, Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster. Specifically, we work with:

- Parents post final hearing of permanent removal
- Pregnant women who have had a child removal and experienced domestic abuse - In order to utilise the pre-birth period and address concerns highlighted in previous removals.
- Care leavers who are pregnant and exposed to domestic abuse.

Some of our latest achievements include:

- Setting up a pilot to work with parents that have had their children removed
- Working with stakeholders and partner organisations to raise awareness of the project and improve referrals to the pilot.
- Undertaking a desktop literature review research into this area of work and producing a report
- Coordinating various events with the Women's Shadow Board across the 4 countries for the international week of Elimination of Violence Against Women and Girls.
- Holding awareness raising sessions across the 4 countries to various audiences.

### The four countries in Action for Change



HUNGARY



ITALY



ROMANIA



UNITED KINGDOM

Visit our website to find out more about what we've been up to or to access reports, practice tools that we are using and much, much more [www.actionforchange.eu](http://www.actionforchange.eu)



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# What's happening with our pilots?

**E**ach partner country has a slightly different focus for their local pilots and comparisons between countries generated ideas for further enhanced practice so far.

## UK update

'Action for Change' and 'Support for Change' merged into one programme as the aims and objectives were so similar. The UK team consists of multi-disciplinary practitioners using therapeutic interventions to engage with parents on a one-to-one basis to provide support and address the reasons for the removal of their child(ren). These reasons are varied but may include historic or current domestic violence, mental health, alcohol or substance misuse, and neglect. The common thread running across these parents is that they end up being subject to multiple care proceedings.

Our support covers three general areas:

- **Practical support** that may include sexual health and contraception, homelessness prevention especially in cases of domestic abuse, accessing support from external agencies.
- **Professional support** such as advising parents around contacts, coordinating network meetings
- **Emotional support** to ensure the wellbeing of the parent's mental and emotional health.

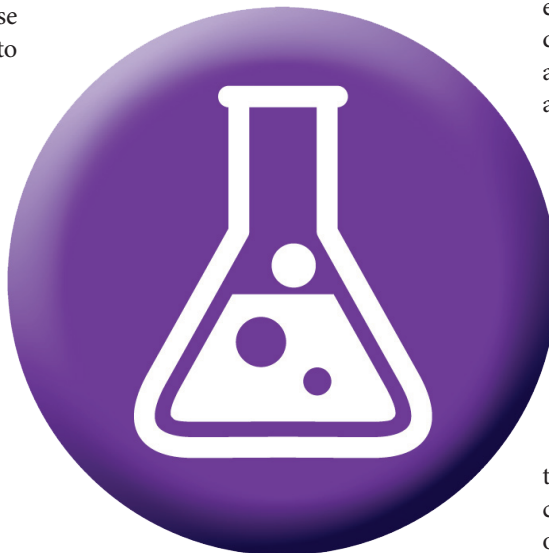
Some of the key interventions and approaches that Action for Change uses on a daily basis include:

- **Systemic** thoughts and practice, where in-depth exploration of the wider rationale for repeat removals is addressed.
- **Therapeutic** and evidence-based interventions, such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, Family Therapy, Addiction Psychology, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder approaches and VIG!
- **One-to-one** interventions in the community using flexible and innovative methods to engage and develop positive relationships.
- **Group work** activities such as 'Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities' tailored specifically for parents who have had their child(ren) removed from their care.

## Romania update

Romania's pilot supports families by getting involved with them at an earlier stage in order to prevent the risk of having their children removed. The pilot focuses primarily on assisting women who are victims of domestic violence by offering them shelter, and by supporting them to develop social and financial skills that will enable them to take back their children; furthermore, pilot staff work alongside support services to provide support to the victims.

CFCECAS have done a lot of work considering several different ways to work with clients. Their focus has been improving the rates of willingness of women to want to change their



outcome. Their biggest challenge has been creating a service that is unique to what is already offered by the social services in Romania. There is a lot of bureaucracy before a person is considered a 'victim' of domestic violence and CFCECAS is aiming to change this attitude. Available support services are only offered short term. CFCECAS will also be directing clients to additional support services.

CFCECAS is developing training sessions for staff to enhance their skills in engaging with clients. This is a real positive as there is a gap in professional supervision, personal development and domestic violence related skills. They will develop practitioners in the field to become mentors and facilitators so that the learning is passed on to future teams.

## Hungary update

Hungary has set up a pilot that focuses on empowering women, enabling them to have better control over their lives. Pilot staff will work closely with psychologists, legal aid lawyers, and the Child Protection Methodological Services of Budapest. This group will accept referrals from services that work with abused women, women who are victims of domestic violence, and shelter homes for women who have experienced abuse.

G-LED is working in partnership with the authorities and a Mother's Refuge for this project. They have previously worked with these services with great success. The pilot practitioner has begun working with survivors of domestic violence. Independent experts and lawyers with experience in domestic violence cases have been included as part of the pilot, as well as social workers and psychologists.

G-LED's pilot is focussing on awareness raising, changing attitudes to domestic violence, and providing professional support to social workers who often deal with complex cases.

## Italy update

Italy is working with women hosted by a temporary residential community for female victims of domestic violence. The aim of the pilot is to help improve the relationship between the mother and child(ren) with a focus on the well-being of the child, and prevent the removal of the child from the mother.

Borgorete's pilot has been set up in Perugia and began in November 2015. They are working with a minimum of 10 clients and also provide staff training. A psychologist works with the clients and 2 social workers provide supervision.

The main challenge Borgorete faces is their collaboration with the delivery partner. There is a strong culture amongst domestic violence support centres that tend to be structured in their approaches and methodology and less willing to trial evidence based practice and ways of working.

Borgorete will target the lack of parental training and professional supervision and provide these as best practice. The Women's Shadow Board will take a key role in evaluating the effectiveness of the pilot, and monitoring and evaluation sessions are being undertaken by the Women's Shadow Board members in conjunction with supervisors.

# WOMEN'S SHADOW BOARD

**A**t the Romania event, partners agreed to align their Women's Shadow Board activities with each other. The following are activities carried out by the UK members:

The 25th of November was the United Nation's 'International Day of the Elimination of Violence against Women and Girls' (eVAWG), which was followed by 16 days of activism leading up to the International Day of Human Rights on 10th December. To mark these days, the UK Women's Shadow Board was involved in a number of events locally:

## Blooming Strong - 25th November



At this time of the year, women are often portrayed as the victims of various types of abuse and gender based violence. Blooming Strong is an event which aims to turn that around, and highlight and celebrate the strength that women show through survival. Two Women's Shadow Board members assisted in handing out flowers to women in Lyric Square to celebrate that strength – discussing eVAWG issues with the women they approached. A third Women's Shadow Board member documented the day by taking photographs, using the skills they gained from the training at the Hungary workshop!



## eVAWG Conference - 30th November

As part of the local eVAWG conference, the Women's Shadow Board took part in the facilitation of an Action for Change workshop and produced pre-recorded testimonials to share with the participants in order to increase understanding of the issues faced by women who have had children removed and who also experience domestic abuse. The Women's Shadow Board were also able to attend the rest of the conference which included presentations about local domestic violence initiatives in hospitals, and an introduction to the new coercive control legislation.

Feedback from one of the Women's Shadow Board members was that she valued the opportunity to attend, especially as she was approached by the Director of Children's Services in Hammersmith & Fulham and was able to share her story directly with him and share her ideas about improvements that she feels could be made.

## #orangeyourneighbourhood 1st December

Orange is the colour of the United Nation 16 days of activism, and in aid of raising awareness of violence against women, the whole world turned orange...

<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=215782055420408&set=a.147911998874081.1073741828.100009658447741&type=3&theater>

Advance took part in the occasion with the #orangeyourneighbourhood - staff and clients tied orange ribbons around their neighbourhood with tags of information about domestic abuse. You can see some of the photos here: [insertlink](#)

## Balloon release - 7th December

On 7th December, Advance staff released 400 hundred balloons into the sky in Lyric Square - 100 out of the 400 balloons were coloured white to signify the 1 in 4 women who will experience abuse in their lifetime. The event was covered by the local press - [http://www.getwestlondon.co.uk/news/west-london-news/balloons-released-honour-brave-victims-10567226?utm\\_source=hootsuite](http://www.getwestlondon.co.uk/news/west-london-news/balloons-released-honour-brave-victims-10567226?utm_source=hootsuite)

## GET INVOLVED

If you would like to get involved with Action for Change, or just want to hear a bit more about what we are up to, we would love to hear from you!

- 020 8753 5024
- [actionforchange@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:actionforchange@rbkc.gov.uk)
- [www.actionforchange.eu](http://www.actionforchange.eu)
- Follow us @Action4ChangeDV on Twitter

# What's coming up?

- ITALY EVENT in March 2016
- INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY (8th March)  
Events by the Women's Shadow Board
- Progression of PILOTS

# WHAT IS ACTION FOR CHANGE?

**A**ction for Change is a European Union sponsored project that started in January 2015. The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea is working in partnership with six other organisations across four European countries, these being the UK, Romania, Italy and Hungary.

We want to know which services are most effective in helping women who, as a result of ongoing domestic violence, have had or are at risk of having at least one child removed from their care.

The focus of the project will be:

- To support women to break the cycle of violence and improve outcomes
- To understand which services work and those that are missing across the four countries, and identify which of these will improve the support currently available for women experiencing domestic violence
- To form recommendations around key missing services

At the end of the project, we will come together and share the learning between us to develop a toolkit for services in the UK, and across Europe.

## THE ACTION FOR CHANGE PARTNERS

### The Coordinating Partner

The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC) manages and coordinates the overall project. As part of the combined Children's Services department, Hammersmith & Fulham and Westminster City Council are associate partners that contribute to and benefit from Action for Change. Action for Change will be co-located with a Tri-Borough service called Support for Change to work with survivors of domestic abuse.

### Our UK Partners

ADVANCE is a charitable organisation that does great work in supporting women, children and young people affected by domestic and sexual violence. It has fifteen years of

experience in providing award-winning independent domestic violence advocacy and support to women and children in West London. Advance is the delivery partner for the UK and will set up and manage the pilot project in the UK. It has experience in facilitating participation of vulnerable women and will coordinate overall involvement of the Women's Shadow Board at an international level.

The Learning and Work Institute are an independent research and development organisation dedicated to promoting lifelong learning, full employment and inclusion through tackling disadvantage and promoting social justice. It is the UK's research partner and also leads on developing the international research and evaluation framework.

### Our Romanian Partner

CFCECAS is a national NGO in Romania that has strengths in research, developing innovative

projects and training for social services. Its focus is upon developing partnerships with local and central authorities to improve services for vulnerable groups of people. It is delivering the research and evaluation in Romania, as well as working closely with authorities to deliver their pilot project. The project will also build these organisations' capacity to deliver services and European Union projects.

### Our Hungarian Partner

G-Led is a newly established research and training organisation in Hungary that aims to empower people to tackle injustices. Its focus is gender violence and equality and its experts have contributed to a Daphne project on Empowering Women. Its Associate Partner will be Hid Social and Child Protection Services of Budapest XIII. G-Led will deliver the research and evaluation in Hungary, as well as work

collaboratively with Hid Social and Children Protection Services to deliver their pilot project.

### Our Italian Partners

Borgorete is an organisation that works in protection and care services, that includes support victims of violence in Italy. It operates on behalf of local health and social authorities in Perugia. Borgorete has previously worked with RBKC on other EU projects, ranging from crime prevention to the prevention of human trafficking. Borgorete will be the delivery partner in Italy and will work collaboratively with protection and care services to deliver its pilot project.

CESIE is the research partner for Italy and will work alongside Borgorete in order to deliver the research and evaluation of the Italian pilot project. CESIE has strengths in research and considerable dissemination potential, and has a strong history of working effectively and successfully on EU projects.

