

CIC 34 – COMMUNITY INTEREST COMPANY REPORT (CONTINUATION PAGES)

COMPANY NAME: DOMESTIVE VIOLENCE UK CIC

COMPANY NUMBER: 07992480

YEAR ENDING: 31/03/2014

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PART 1 – GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE COMPANY'S ACTIVITIES AND IMPACT

DIRECT SUPPORT ACTIVITY (continued)

The year also saw the commencement of our supporting a local refuge through our "Voucher for Refuge" initiative. We are proud of this activity and, whilst we would dearly like to offer this level of support throughout the UK, the logistics and funding are currently considerably above the level of the organisation. However, by concentrating on a single refuge in our local community, we will benefit in two ways; (i) giving a service which supports part of our local community and (ii) developing a suitable model for future further roll-out.

ONLINE/ MOBILE ADVICE AND SUPPORT

During the year, we also updated our online and mobile directories allowing people to find their nearest specialist support organisation. We also updated our mobile applications allowing users to automatically dial national help lines, contact local support agencies and gain access to content supplied by NHS Choices.

We have continued to develop our website and online forums through investment in design, applications and visibility. Furthermore, we have improved the level of information available through this media by the addition of relevant information, articles, links and tools. In turn, this has seen the launch of the "Wellbeing Centre" (syndicating from NHS Choices), an online resource containing articles, interactive tools, videos, podcasts etc. the first of its kind in the UK.

Further to the above, we have updated our text directory service allowing more individuals more access to receive their nearest specialist support organisation via text through utilisation of the textmarketer.com API.

As well as our specific activities above, we have also continued to provide our youth-orientated website (TalkAboutDV), continue to provide *ad hoc* help and assistance through telephone and email and have continued with our successful blog and online magazine.

RAISING AWARENESS

During the year, we also sought to increase awareness by the launch of campaigns including the "Love Doesn't Hurt" campaign which, in addition to raising general awareness on the issues of domestic and emotional abuse seeks to inspire hope and signpost victims or survivors to specialist organisations.

The campaign has also succeeded in attracting two high profile ambassadors in Janette Manrara (professional dancer on Strictly Come Dancing) and Jennie Steele (presenter and journalist). The attracting of these ambassadors will considerably help promote awareness.

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In addition to general campaigns, we held an event with Interlude Dance Troupe at the Westfield London Shopping Centre on 14 February 2014 to raise general awareness. The event received positive feedback and was, all told, a great success.

Other awareness generating activity included representation at the British Plus Size Fashion Show, a large pub campaign at the Truscott Arms in Maida Vale and the preparation for an online campaign to coincide with the 2014 World Cup in Brazil (which incidentally, at the time of writing was a success).

In addition to exploring and carrying out “active” awareness campaigns, we have also developed a merchandise line to promote our core values to the wider audience. Our DVUK.org website has been developed as a vehicle to sell various items of merchandise. The items are sold at cost in the aim of raising awareness rather than in the interests of making a surplus/ profit.

ATTRACTING EXTERNAL SUPPORT & FUNDRAISING

From a funding perspective, the company continues to be funded, in the main, by a few regular donors. However, we did obtain a considerable gift within the year of £10,000 which has enabled the company to carry out some of its one-off and regular activities. The company is considering the move to charitable status (either by conversion or new registration) in an attempt to attract further funding and more high profile interest.

In addition, during the year, we set up the Hope Network which is a group of individuals and organisations supporting the work we do. This is in the form of both financial support and through the offering other services. It is envisaged that the Hope Network will continue to grow over the coming year and into the future.

Finally, we intend to continue promoting awareness in the hope that we can offer our service provision to the ever-increasing wider community. In so doing, we also hope to increase our donor base (regular, one-off or grants) to fund such an increase in activity.

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PART 2 – CONSULTATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS

SERVICE USERS (continued)

Our event for the “Love Doesn’t Hurt Campaign) in February 2014 at the Westfield London Shopping Centre attracted a good number of our service users proving to be an enjoyable day out, raising awareness and attracting interest. However, the event also provided us with a unique opportunity to meet face-to-face with some of our service users and receive direct feedback on our progress so far. As a direct result and given the fantastic opportunity to hear some valuable feedback, we are looking to hold similar events in the near future.

Further to the above, we have also listened to our feedback and have increased our listings of specialist support organisations, have updated our website, have further developed our mobile apps, have created the Wellbeing Centre and have updated our text directory. We listen to our stakeholders and as a result continually look to improve and increase our offering with resulting and considerable positive feedback.

In addition to our UK-wide support framework, we have started supporting the residents of a local refuge. This has been well received and feedback has been positive. As a CIC, it is important that, whilst we offer support, advice and counselling to the wider UK audience, we consider our locality and provide a specialist level of support to local causes.

AMBASSADORS & REPRESENTATIVES

As part of our actions to raise awareness, we have appointed two additional high profile ambassadors during the financial year. These are Janette Manrara (professional dancer on Strictly Come Dancing) and Jennie Steele (presenter and journalist). In addition to the usual communication and required approvals, we have had numerous discussions about how these individuals can help raise awareness and carry out activities. Some of the ideas which have been mooted for future promotions include a professional dance class session, regular tweeting and re-tweeting by the ambassadors and wearing of our merchandise for their own press campaigns. Indeed, Jennie Steele has also become the face of our online store in modelling our merchandise on the DVUK.org website.

We have further listened to the feedback and suggestions of our stakeholders in identifying a core issue regarding young people who are affected by domestic and emotional abuse. These young people can often be the forgotten victims of such maltreatment yet can also be the survivors who experience the longest term suffering. As a result, we have appointed a youth representative with the key aim of engaging and educating young people as well as coordinating much needed therapy and support.

We intend to further use the talents and profiles of our ambassadors and representatives in the coming financial year to reach out further, promote improved awareness and assist with the rehabilitation of all users of our services.

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DONORS & MEMBERS

As a direct result of our awareness campaigns, we have seen an impact on our donor base. Such donors are the lifeblood of the organisation and assist hugely in financing and carrying out our activities. However, some of our donors have expressed the wish to do more in raising awareness which has formed part of our decision to provide merchandise.

In addition to the regular donors, we were extremely thankful in the year to receive a £10,000 unrestricted donation in the year which allowed us to; finance the Westfield event, finance the initial purchase of our merchandise stock and partly finance our ongoing support and advice activities.

As a partial result of our increasing voluntary donor base, we are considering the appropriateness of registering a charity to take advantage of Gift Aid claiming (and similar tax breaks) and appeal to a wider donor base who may be deterred from donating through not understanding the activities and constraints of a Community Interest Company.

THE HOPE NETWORK

As has been mentioned previously, our Hope Network was developed to bring together individuals and organisations who wish to support the work we do. We seek to integrate all members of the network as closely as possible to pursue the same overall goals. Clearly, such a network does not exist without clear and regular communication and hence, in addition to sending out our quarterly magazine we send regular emails and have equally regular telephone/ face-to-face conversations.

We believe that the Hope Network is one of the most positive resources we have and that by enlisting the support of the network (both financially and otherwise), we stand a higher chance of success than were we to take a more singular approach.

PROFESSIONAL PROVIDERS

Perhaps one of our key measures of success is that relating to the feedback of our professional counsellors. It is they who deal with the day-to-day service provision and it is hence they who can advise whether the service is of benefit to the users or whether there are situations in which talking therapies need to be combined with other approaches.

By working with the providers, we are able to coordinate and streamline the provision effectively and efficiently. Clearly, we would like to offer unlimited sessions to unlimited individuals but, we have clear budgetary constraints. Our liaisons with the professional providers allow us to fulfil our promise within our funding parameters.
