

DA Awareness Day 2026

Feedback Report

March 2026

Introduction

On Tuesday 10th March, Oasis Charity held their first Domestic Abuse Awareness Day for over two years. The aim of this community session was to increase awareness and understanding of domestic abuse and coercive control. The team set out to communicate just how detrimental these experiences are and cast light on the challenges that many survivors and their families continue to face. The session began by exploring what coercive control looks like beyond physical abuse. There was also focus on how domestic abuse affects adults' and children's emotional and psychological wellbeing, both while living with the abuser and after separation. The final objective was to express why awareness matters in shaping safer outcomes for our local families.

Overall, there were 60 people in attendance on the day. Organisations from across the local area were invited including schools, magistrates, local partner agencies and the police. This total number also included nine Oasis clients, seven members of staff and three volunteers.

This report details just how powerful the event was from the perspective of both the invited guests and our clients who were able to share their experiences. It was clear to see how the presentation moved the entire room and the atmosphere from that morning has been captured in the feedback we have since received. As a charity, we felt we successfully achieved our objectives for the event and gave our clients the platform to have their voices heard. It is our hope that this important conversation continues to increase awareness of domestic abuse within our local community.

Voices of Clients from Initial Survey

In order to understand how our clients have been impacted by domestic abuse and give them a voice in the day's event, we first decided to send out a survey. The primary focus of this survey was to collect experiences of domestic abuse and how this has impacted each part of our client's lives. This tied in with our aims for the session, highlighting the real experiences of coercive control and daily repercussions this can have on families. We asked our clients to consider how control has affected both themselves and their children, as well as offering them a platform to share messages with schools, magistrates, social services and family.

There were clear patterns in the data we collected, most clearly in the challenges surrounding co-parenting with an abusive ex-partner. Clients highlighted that co-parenting means there are still avenues for coercion and control to continue. Many clients described this experience as emotionally draining, anxiety inducing and feeling a lessened sense of security. The overarching message from our clients was that each agency should be mindful in situations where there has been abuse and consider how information should be shared between parents. The following pages contain experiences our clients wanted to share.



Education System Hear My Voice:

To really understand the pressure of single parents struggling to keep it all together. To try and maintain structure when someone is going against you. It is hard just to get the children to school calmly.

Parent

Please recognise that in situations where there has been abuse, communication between parents is not always safe or straightforward. Policies that assume parents can easily attend meetings together or share information can sometimes increase stress or conflict.

Parent

You have a responsibility to tell social services what you witness. Staying neutral is not in the best interests of a child.

Parent

It is hard to be in emergency accommodation. Change is incredibly hard and being placed miles away from family and friends made it even harder.

Child

Legal System Hear My Voice:

Our statements were a very watered down version of the events ... we were effectively gagged.

Parent

I want courts to understand that abuse can continue after separation through systems and processes. Delaying maintenance, sending messages through children or repeatedly raising past issues can all become ways of maintaining pressure or control.

Parent

I had to endure sitting in the public gallery with his family who physically knocked into me, kicked my water bottle down the stairs and swore at me. A security guard had to sit with myself and my father.

Parent

Every child has a voice and should not be forced into going somewhere or spending time with someone they don't want to.

Parent



Social Services Hear My Voice:

Do not accept what one parent says as the truth even if they seem genuine and convincing. Look for signs that a child may be too scared to say their truth in front of a parent.

Parent

When I had my first huge meltdown I was at school, police and an ambulance had to be called and I was hospitalised overnight with my mum and my sister. We had to wait overnight for a CAMHS emergency worker to come and visit us. We told all our stories and we were promised the support we needed, but this never happened. To this day I have not had any proper help from CAMHS. We have met over ten social workers who all promised to help and then they just disappeared. Each time I have to retell my story. It's exhausting and so triggering.

Child

Listen and gain more understanding of the behaviour patterns of the abusers. Please protect the children at all costs because they are traumatised.

Parent

When abuse is not acknowledged, it can feel as though the survivor's lived experience is dismissed and that the narrative of the abusive parent is given more weight. This can be very disempowering and can affect the trust in services that are meant to support families.

Parent

Friends and Family Hear My Voice:

You will never know how bad it was. The 'survivor' will likely never share everything. Believe them, be kind.

Parent

One of the most helpful things family and friends can do is listen and believe the experience being shared, even when the situation is complicated or difficult to understand from the outside. Abuse and control don't always end when the relationship ends. Ongoing co-parenting can mean the situation continues in different ways and having people who understand that makes a big difference.

Parent

To other young people in this situation I would say to talk and not bottle up you emotions like I have in the past. I had thoughts of ending my life as I felt so low and thought it was the best option for me. It's been really hard to lose everything and some days it is just too much.

Child

I struggle to talk to people because I feel low, sad and scared. I have lost a lot of confidence and self esteem.

Child



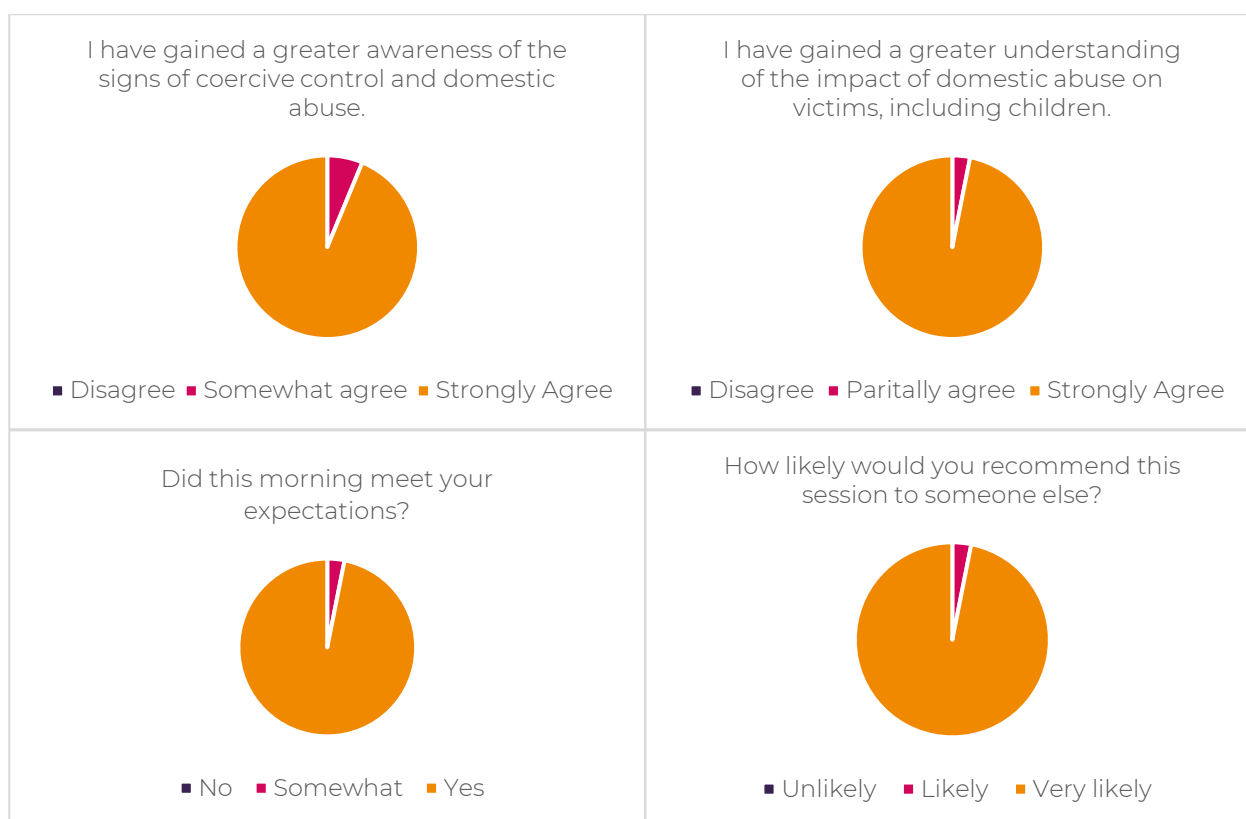
Feedback from Attendees

The session was widely described as powerful, emotional and impactful with the first-hand accounts from survivors, including children, leaving a lasting impression. Attendees were deeply moved by the bravery of those sharing their experiences, which highlighted the true impact of domestic abuse, particularly on voices often unheard.

All respondents reported an increase in their understanding of domestic abuse. In particular, the introductory quiz effectively highlighted the scale of abuse, surprising many attendees and raising awareness of the issue early in the session.

Participants felt both personally and professionally changed, with the session giving them more confidence to raise awareness of domestic abuse, support survivors, and take action. There was also a strong call for improved professional responses, including better multi-agency collaboration and more informed decision-making.

Overall, the session was seen as memorable, insightful, and a catalyst for change.



In words – from attendees:

Thank you for such an interesting and thought-provoking session. All the attending colleagues I spoke to were very appreciative of the efforts to hold this event and were keen to share their learnings with other colleagues. Thank you again and keep up your excellent work.

I thought the session was excellent and provided a unique insight into the experiences of survivors. To hear this first hand from the adults and children in such a frank and personal way was truly



humbling. Please pass on my thanks to the facilitators and particularly to the survivors. The support Oasis provide in this area is outstanding.

I have never attended a session like this before. I have attended many training courses however to hear from the adult and the child victims has a greater impact than any training ever could.

I am filled with awe at the strength of the survivors to stand in front of a room full of strangers and recount the horrors they have encountered.

The session was incredibly powerful and hard hitting. The women and children who shared their stories are so incredibly brave and should feel unbelievable pride in themselves. The team at Oasis are clearly doing some incredible work, what a wonderful group of people.

Thank you for the great work Oasis team! You are making a huge difference in people's lives.

Hearing the experiences of survivors was both exceptionally moving and also shocking but it succeeded in conveying the scale of the problem caused by domestic abuse.

What a powerful presentation with a variety of representations from the community and beyond. Huge thanks to the survivors including the children for sharing your stories with us. Incredibly brave, I'll never forget this awareness course as it has hit me hard.

It was encouraging to see a wide selection of professionals, particularly judges - acknowledge that more needs to be done to improve understanding and awareness, so that victims and survivors are no longer being failed by the system.

Following our session, attendees identified several key areas of change or reflection:

- Raise awareness of domestic abuse with professional and personal networks
- Continue to support Oasis in the work they do
- Ask more questions, be more curious and listen more intentionally to support and empower victims and survivors of domestic abuse whether in a school, court, professional or personal setting
- Inform colleagues by using the quiz from the presentation which highlights the scale of domestic abuse, particularly those working in DSL and Safeguarding roles within schools
- Signpost to Oasis – both to those in need of our support and to those who may be able to support us
- Try to form partnerships to facilitate a joined up and multi-agency approach where domestic abuse is suspected or involved
- Review their network's own systems and processes and how they can be improved
- "Consider granting Non-Mols and Restraining Orders" where appropriate

Feedback from Clients who attended

The response from clients who attended was one of overwhelming gratitude for being given a voice. Many of them expressed just how meaningful it was to be able to share their stories for the first time and feel truly listened to. They acknowledged how important it was to see different organisations from across the community represented and bring them together for this important conversation. Clients described feeling empowered, believed and 'so proud to be a part of such an amazing, life changing charity'.



Clients observed that hearing from survivors first-hand had a profound impact on all in attendance. Hearing the experiences from parents and their children humanised the statistics and the information presented over the course of the day. The event shone light on the challenges our clients have faced for years and many expressed how this conversation felt like a step forward in bringing about positive change for domestic abuse survivors.

In words – from clients who attended:

This event had a huge impact, the range of professionals there heard the voices from victims but also learnt more about...coercion and control.

The morning felt incredibly significant and purposeful. It was a rare and vital opportunity to bring together the various 'cogs' of the system - judges, police, DSLs, and councillors - into one room to confront the reality of domestic abuse. The atmosphere was one of deep reflection; it felt like the typical professional barriers were lowered, allowing for a more honest, human connection to the issues we discussed. Oasis Charity created a safe yet challenging space that fostered genuine engagement rather than just 'tick-box' participation.

I felt my voice was heard with a level of gravity that I haven't often experienced within the formal systems (courts or police). Speaking my truth directly to those who hold the power to change these processes was empowering. Watching the reaction of the attendees - seeing them moved by the human impact and the systemic failures I described - gave me a sense of empowerment. For the first time, it didn't feel like I was screaming into a void; it felt like my lived experience was being treated as the testimony it is.

For the professionals in attendance, hearing about the 'panic rooms,' the ongoing abuse even after the relationship ends, financial crippling of the legal system, and the lack of communication between forces provided a necessary wake-up call regarding the gaps in 'joined-up' working. It highlighted that 'protective' mothers are often being left to manage extreme risks alone. It challenged the attendees to look beyond their specific remit and see the 'administrative pass the parcel' for what it is: a danger to life. I hope it sparks a more urgent, collaborative approach to safeguarding in our local area.

I want to express my deepest gratitude for allowing my daughter the opportunity to speak as well. Seeing her find her own voice and be truly heard by a room of influential adults has been an incredibly healing and empowering milestone in her journey.

Judging from people's reactions at the end of the session, I hope we have lots of momentum to push forward and make the improvements needed.

In words – from child who spoke:

I felt I was finally being heard when I gave my speech. I'm still determined to work hard and become a lawyer and maybe a judge one day or get into politics. I just want to help others to help them get through situations that I've experienced and do some good in life. Because of your opportunity, I've looked at what else I can do too and have applied and been accepted to join Surrey County Council Youth Council and Cabinet. I am hoping to get into Youth Parliament in the next elections- they get to meet in the House of Commons.