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Northumbria workshop tackles domestic abuse

Northumbria University, Newcastle, in partnership with the High Sheriff of Tyne & Wear Ruth Thompson OBE, has hosted a workshop exploring ways of reducing domestic abuse and increasing safety for women and children.

The Research & Practice Workshop was held at INNOVATE – Northumbria’s off-campus studio space at the Northern Design Centre in Gateshead. It focused on domestic abuse perpetrator programmes and explored their role in reducing domestic abuse. Prioritising the focus on perpetrators was a result of a Conference Northumbria held in September 2014, also in

partnership with the High Sheriff: Hearing the Voice of the Child - Creating Safe Spaces for Children and Young People Affected by Domestic Violence and Abuse.

The event, organised by Dr. Pamela Davies, Programme Director for Criminology at Northumbria, brought together stakeholders from across the region to hear a key note speech from the Northumbria Police and Crime Commissioner Vera Baird QC.

There were also contributions from Professor Nicole Westmarland who shared some of her main research findings from Project Mirabal, and from colleagues of the BIG Initiative- a multi-agency partnership between Barnardo's, Impact Family Services and Gentoo offering a programme for male perpetrators of domestic abuse.

As part of her final official duty as High Sheriff for Tyne & Wear, Ruth Thomson delivered a speech praising the efforts of all those involved in the research and welcoming their on-going support. Northumbria University Pro-Vice-Chancellor Lucy Winskell OBE, who succeeds Ruth in the year-long High Sheriff role, also addressed the audience and confirmed Northumbria's commitment going forward.

Dr. Davies said: "This was the first in a series of follow up events to the September 2014 Conference which will enable us to continue in our efforts to maximise opportunities to provide support and safe places for children and young people affected by domestic violence and abuse. It was also an opportunity to raise awareness of domestic abuse perpetrator programmes and the role in preventing abuse in families.

"Addressing domestic abuse can only succeed through a combined multi-agency, community approach, so I'd like to thank all those who took part and helped make this such a worthwhile event. We were able to identify emerging research and collaboration opportunities – particularly focused on the use of diversionary or early intervention measures, new ideas surfaced as did our invigorated commitment to make a difference through partnership working."

Lucy Winskell added: "Ruth's contribution as High Sheriff for Tyne & Wear in supporting and highlighting this hugely important issue has been immeasurable. It was perhaps timely therefore that I was able to use this

conference to confirm that the work Ruth has started will continue. The role of a modern High Sheriff's office is heavily focused on supporting and working with those who keep our communities safe and secure.

"I'm also delighted that we were able to host this event at our INNOVATE hub here at Northumbria. It's a place where under one roof we bring together world-leading innovation experts and highly energised students to work with businesses, public sector organisations and charities to create solutions to problems."

Ruth Thompson said: "Throughout my year as High Sheriff I have been very grateful for the generous support of Northumbria University which has enabled the opportunity to share research, with practical experience, among those who work in this difficult area- safeguarding men, women and children. Domestic abuse is pernicious and pervasive. I am very pleased that this support will continue to aid our understanding of which interventions effectively contribute to reducing domestic abuse and to making individuals safe and secure."

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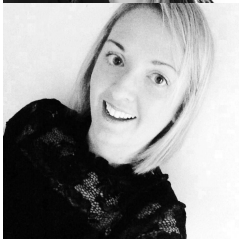


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