



# IRISi NEWS

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## IRISi'S IMPACT REPORT 2024: LEADING HEALTHCARE'S RESPONSE TO GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

IRISi stands as the only organisation in the UK solely dedicated to driving a healthcare response to gender-based violence. Launched as part of our 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence campaign, our [Impact Report](#) highlights the profound strides we've made in the year ending March 2024, underscoring our pivotal role in building the bridge between healthcare providers and specialist services.

From equipping clinicians with life-saving skills to expanding our interventions to underserved areas, IRISi continues to lead the way in creating sustainable, evidence-based solutions for survivors of domestic abuse and sexual violence. As a result, an estimated 1.5 million women across England and Wales now have access to the IRIS Programme through their GP.

***Our Impact Report makes one thing clear: IRISi's evidence-based interventions work. However, securing sustainable funding remains a significant challenge. Supporting IRISi is an investment in scalable, cost-effective solutions that save lives. With consistent funding, we can continue expanding our reach and ensuring survivors receive the care they deserve.***

[Click here to read it in full](#)

## IRISi Network Day 2024: leading conversations and creating lasting impact



On September 17th, IRISi hosted its annual Network Day in Birmingham, bringing together healthcare professionals and advocate educators to strengthen responses to gender-based violence (GBV). The day featured insightful sessions on reproductive coercion and the intersectional inequalities that shape experiences of domestic abuse. The Vavengers highlighted their 'One Question' campaign on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C), while survivor Emma shared her powerful journey to safety. To close the event, IRISi CEO Medina Johnson reflected on IRISi's impact and expansion, emphasising the urgent need for sustainable funding for healthcare interventions. Thank you to everyone who joined us - 2025 will bring even more progress and collaboration!

[>>> Click here to read our blog post to see how the event unfolded!](#)

# Do you know the life-saving role healthcare plays in Domestic Abuse response? Here's the answer!



As part of the 16 Days of Activism campaign, IRISi hosted a Lunch & Learn session in December, offering an in-depth look at healthcare's role in addressing domestic abuse and sexual violence. The session covered:

- ➔ The scale and health impacts of abuse in the UK.
- ➔ The transformative power of the IRIS and ADVISE programmes.
- ➔ How these programmes align with the Women's Health Strategy and the Domestic Abuse Act.

>>> The recording is now available: [click here](#) to watch and share with your network!

## Free webinar: calling all dentists, hygienists and dental nurses!

IRISi will also be holding a free introductory webinar on February 12th, 2025, where we'll explore the crucial role of dental teams in responding to domestic abuse (DA) and sexual violence (SV). Gain essential initial insights into how you can start supporting patients affected by DA and SV.

>>> Limited spaces available – register now: [www.bit.ly/DA-Dentistry](http://www.bit.ly/DA-Dentistry)

## ..... Homerton Hospital event showcases the life-changing impact of domestic abuse and sexual violence support in sexual health clinics

On November 20th, Homerton Hospital in Hackney hosted a landmark event showcasing the life-changing impact of embedding domestic abuse and sexual violence support within healthcare. Bringing together Lib Peck, Director of London's Violence Reduction Unit (VRU), alongside IRISi, nia, and Advance Charity, the event underscored the critical role of healthcare professionals in early intervention and survivor support.



Lib Peck made a powerful statement on the urgency of this work: "Domestic abuse isn't inevitable, it's preventable. By embedding support within healthcare, we're helping survivors find safety before abuse escalates."

For over a decade, IRISi has pioneered a healthcare-led response to domestic abuse and sexual violence, training clinicians to recognise signs of abuse and refer patients to specialist services. With VRU support, the IRIS programme now operates in 21 London boroughs, while ADVISE has expanded into major sexual health clinics like Homerton Hospital and St. Mary's in Westminster.

The event reinforced the shared belief that violence against women and girls can be prevented through early intervention and coordinated care. With continued collaboration between clinicians, advocates, and policymakers, IRISi and its partners are setting a gold standard for systemic change. The goal remains clear: to make healthcare a place of safety, advocacy, and action, breaking the cycle of violence and ensuring survivors receive the support they deserve.

>>> To read the blog post, please [click here](#).

## WOULD YOU LIKE TO GIVE US A HAND?

Do you have anything to share about IRISi, IRIS or ADVISE - such as the impact of the intervention, suggestions or feedback? We would love to hear from you! Please email us at: [geisa.davo@irisi.org](mailto:geisa.davo@irisi.org).

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# HIGHLIGHTS

## Join our focus group on domestic abuse in School Nursing and CYP Services



IRISi, supported by the Violence Reduction Unit, is researching how school nurses and CYP services can better support young survivors of gender-based violence. Led by Haniya Chaudhary, the project seeks input from school nurses through focus groups to shape future healthcare responses. Interested participants can join this paid initiative by contacting [haniya.chaudhary@irisi.org](mailto:haniya.chaudhary@irisi.org).

## IT IS PAINFUL TO ADMIT, BUT WE ARE LOSING THE BATTLE - AND WE NEED YOUR HELP

By Medina Johnson, CEO of IRISi



Every four months, we take pride in reflecting on our work as we put this newsletter together. But this time, it was different. It was harder than ever. The number of urgent calls for action and funding we've had to make has made one thing painfully clear: the healthcare sector, the Violence Against Women and Girls sector, and, therefore, IRISi and our programmes are now in a dangerously difficult position. Over the past months, we've fought to keep vital services alive, but:

- The closure of the IRIS Programme in Gwent was a devastating loss. In just three years, the service enabled GPs to refer 1,187 survivors to specialist support. Now, these patients are left without a dedicated pathway to specialist support through general practice. ([click here](#) to read it).
- We welcomed Wales' first Women's Health Plan, but real change may take funding and time - and many survivors simply can't afford to wait ([click here](#) to read it).
- The NHS Sexual Misconduct Policy was good progress, but funding will again determine its success ([click here](#) to read it).
- And as we reviewed Labour's first budget, we welcomed increased public service spending but were alarmed by the lack of dedicated VAWG funding. Without targeted investment, essential services face severe underfunding, putting survivors at risk. The government must act now to ensure healthcare and support systems remain a lifeline for those in need ([click here](#) to read).
- And just this week, we learned that the UK Government is considering withdrawing central support for women's health hubs - critical to delivering the Women's Health Strategy, including its response to VAWG.

Domestic abuse is a national emergency. But from where we stand, we are losing the battle. We need action, funding, and support - and we can't do this alone.

[Please donate. Your help could save lives.](#)