

FaithAction is a national network of faith-based and community organisations involved in social action and delivering public services. We are a part of the Health and Social Care Voluntary Sector Strategic Partner Programme which works to the Department of Health, Public Health England and NHS England. We work alongside health and care services, acting as a voice for the sector and helping to shape policy and strategy. For more information visit [www.faithaction.net](http://www.faithaction.net)

As part of our work on health we are exploring the potential of faith communities as a 'setting' for improving public health, including for tackling issues of domestic violence and abuse (DVA) and FGM. We are currently undertaking a project focused on how faith leaders have responded once they have become aware of domestic violence occurring in their congregations, and developing training materials to equip other leaders to deal with the issues. Below are just a few examples from individual faith groups talking about how they are addressing DVA and FGM.

### **Kahrmel Wellness**

Karhmel Wellness is a charity dedicated to helping adult and child survivors of DVA to rebuild and restore their lives. We host regular conferences for faith leaders and professionals from local government, health and other services, at which we teach and train on FGM. This is facilitated by a specialist midwife. Pictures of her delivering her session are at <http://kahrmelwellness.com/gallery-2/>. You can find her presentations if you scroll down at the bottom of the pages of each of our previous conferences at <http://kahrmelwellness.com/events/>.

In addition we interwork with our local midwifery services that help victims of FGM. We receive referrals as well as give consultation on cases they receive, as many of them have the co-existence of FGM and DVA. FGM is a type of DVA, and other forms of DVA can be subtypes of abuse in FGM cases. For example, a pregnant woman who has been mutilated might also be a victim of forced marriage and sexual abuse. When the baby is born her husband might expect her to be 're-stitched' the FGM way.

### **Oxford Pastors Forum**

Bishop-Elect Memory Tapfumaneyi is the Pastor of NLCC (New Life Covenant Church Oxford). He started the Oxford Pastors Forum which has been raising awareness on DVA, child abuse and FGM in Oxford. He works with the Bishop of Oxford in a variety of community projects as well as with multi-faith leaders, and is on the Strategic Advisory Board of Thames Valley Police.

The Oxford Pastors Forum hosted a major event in October 2014 for raising awareness of DVA, child abuse and FGM. They are also driving for church leaders to work with statutory services, and they are developing a community safeguarding hub where faith leaders will have regular communication with the community.

As well as raising awareness regarding FGM, the Forum is also advising on how to tackle the problem. It works in conjunction with a local doctor to achieve this.

<http://www.newlife-uk.org/contact.html>

### **Pastor Marjorie Esomowe**

Marjorie Esomowe is Co-Pastor of Triumphant Church, an international church based in London. Pastor Marj also runs a charity affiliated to her church called Wisdom for Women, which does a lot of work in the community as well as organising conferences and retreats for Christian women.

Pastor Marj has been speaking out against FGM and all forms of DVA and other injustices against women. She mainly uses media as she has her own TV programme on a Christian channel. She says she really wants to focus on changing the attitudes of Christians and society as a whole on the injustices that women bear.

She featured in an NSPCC video, which you can find at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=04qAO5ZzZdY>. She first appears at 3.12min.

Her other videos on DVA are available at

<http://kahrmelwellness.com/2014/08/09/wisdom-for-women/> and

<http://www.wisdomforwomeninternational.org/contact-us/>.