

Peace Offerings: February 2026

An important milestone for women and girls

UN DAYS OF ACTION

8th March 2026: International Women's Day

22nd March: World Water Day

7th April 2026: World Health Day

24th April 2026: International Girls in ICT Day

15th May 2026: International Day of Families

On 18th December 2025, the government published 'Freedom from violence and abuse: a cross-government strategy' which sets out a vision and actions for meeting its ambition to halve violence against women and girls (VAWG) within a decade.

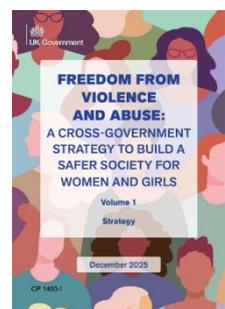
The strategy focuses on 3 key areas:

1. Prevention and early intervention. The focus here is on ending dangerous attitudes and stopping an escalation of harmful behaviours. There is a specific emphasis on protecting young people, and actions will include supporting schools to challenge misogyny and ensuring harmful online content cannot be accessed.
2. The relentless pursuit of perpetrators. Every agency and institution will be responsible for understanding identifying and responding to VAWG, and VAWG will be treated in the same way as any other serious crime.
3. Support for victims and survivors. The strategy recognises that every individual's experience is different. There will be reforms to the courts to improve and enhance access to justice, and a more coherent, joined up approach to ensure support is consistent and easier to access.

The strategy has been welcomed by many women's groups because it emphasizes long term prevention and plans which could end the post code lottery of support that currently exists. However, as Women's Aid points out, there will need to be robust implementation of the plans and accountability on the ground for their success. The proposals contained in the strategy will also place an additional strain on frontline services, so it is vital that they are able to implement them effectively. Read more about this at:

<https://www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk/governments-landmark-vawg-strategy-published/>

<https://womensaid.org.uk/womens-aid-responds-to-governments-violence-against-women-and-girls-strategy/>



Sisters' stories

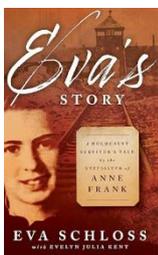
I recently attended an online event organised by the Fawcett Society about how to campaign effectively. The session was led by Kajal Odedra, former director of Change.org in the UK



and now the director in the USA. Kajal is the daughter of immigrants from India and Uganda, and she grew up in Derbyshire where her parents ran a small shop. Her experience of prejudice and racism during her childhood taught her two things: not all people are treated fairly, and it is not easy to have your voice heard. This led to her lifelong commitment to working for change. Based on her experience, Kajal argued strongly that campaigning on issues relating to women and girls is more important than ever. The rise of misogyny, especially on the internet and social media, and the normalization of attitudes prejudicial to women and girls means that rights are at risk of being dismantled. She emphasized the need to protect the progress made in women's rights and warned against taking rights for granted; they can always be taken away. Kajal shared with the attendees some very practical advice on how to campaign effectively, and I have attached a summary of this on the next page. It may be useful as we continue to advocate for women and girls locally, nationally and internationally.

Eva Schloss, 1929-2026

Holocaust Memorial Day on 27th January reminded us of the many people who have used their experiences to challenge prejudice in all forms. One such woman was Eva Schloss who died aged 96 on 3rd January 2026. Eva Schloss and her mother survived Auschwitz, but she did not speak publicly about this until 1980. In 1990, she co-founded The Ann Frank Trust, which was set up to empower young people aged 9 to 15 to challenge all forms of prejudice. In 2024, Eva said: "We must never forget the terrible consequences of treating people as "other". We need to respect everybody's races and religions. We need to live together with our differences. The only way to achieve this is through education, and the younger we start the better." Eva Schloss's advice on how to promote this respect was simple: make friends with people who are different from you and realise we are all the same.



How to campaign

How to campaign is as important as what we campaign for.

1. Choose a clear focus: we can't campaign on everything. What issues are we passionate about, what makes us really cross? Those issues are usually the ones where we want to see change.
2. Think about where our power lies and how to use it. Do we have contacts/networks we can use? Can anyone volunteer time/transport or offer practical help? What skills lie in our group and how can we best use them? Allocate our resources (i.e. people) to make the best use of their skills. If someone is good at comms, use them for that. If people are confident in approaching and talking to the public, get them on the streets. Don't just give people random tasks.
3. Target the right decision makers. Think carefully about who you need to influence rather than adopting a more random approach.
4. Focus on the local; we are more likely to see tangible change as there is more chance of connecting with the people who can make change happen.
5. Persuasion is important: listen to what people who might not support the campaign have to say. Discuss with them and present different perspectives, 'tell them the story', and bring them on board. Evidence suggests women are good at this.
6. Be resilient: don't give up even when told our goal is unrealistic or impossible. People who tell us this may have a vested interest in what we are trying to change.
7. Solidarity: work together, in own group, or with a number of groups across an area. There is strength in numbers: mobilise other people to join the campaign.

8. Think long term: what do we want to achieve and be prepared for setbacks. Progress to change isn't linear.

9. Avoid distraction: for example, a public figure makes an announcement which is controversial or shocking. This focuses interest on the person, especially in the media, which rewards spectacle, not substance. The media frenzy which focuses on the person and the statement distracts us from the real issue. Keep focused on the real issue and stay rooted in our beliefs.

10. Ask for support from other groups and ask for financial help. If you don't ask, you'll not get.

Remember, we can never assume rights: they can always be taken away.