



*Statue of Millicent Fawcett by Gillian Wearing, 2018*

### **International Women's Day**

*What is it...?*

International Women's Day is a global day celebrating the historical, cultural, and political achievements of women. This day is observed in support of the actions taken against gender inequality worldwide.

*When is it...?*

International Women's Day is recognised annually on the 8th of March.

*Why is it important...?*

There have been significant gender equality milestones reached in modern history in the UK. This includes the colossal efforts of the Suffragette movement playing a major role in fighting for women's right to vote, in 1967 the historic Abortion Act was passed, more recently, in 2021 the tax on tampons was abolished in aid of supporting period poverty.

The fight for gender equality however is not at a standstill, more efforts are necessary to redress the balance of women's rights in society. A major concern on women's rights today is the threat of gender-based violence experienced even when doing everyday tasks such as walking home. Much of this violence is driven by misogyny leading women and girls to have to consider what they wear or how they go about said activities in order to stay safe.

Recently, disturbing reports have appeared across Britain about a new danger to young women, that of needle spiking. In February 2022, over 1,300 reports of needle spiking had been made to police over the previous 6 months, yet not a single case reported ended in a prosecution. It is clear that more must be done to support women and girls to provide gender equality in the UK, and even more must be done worldwide.

### *What can I do to support women...?*

**Raise your voice!** The inequalities faced by women today are alarming. Globally, 1 in 3 women experience violence in their lifetime. Closer to home, two women a week are devastatingly killed by a current or former partner in England and Wales alone. Beyond the shocking statistics of violence, women also face disadvantage socioeconomically, working longer hours for lower pay. Politically only 1 in 4 parliamentarians globally are women. It is important to raise our voices about these issues to fight for change. We can also raise our voice to share information about events, to call out sexist or misogynistic comments, and to help amplify the voices of women working in organisations that support women's rights.

**Write to your local MP!** One means of driving change is to write to your locally elected MP who can debate issues on your behalf in parliament. Some areas to consider writing to your MP about in relation to gender equality include asking your MP to make misogyny a hate crime, asking them to toughen existing sentences for perpetrators of rape and stalking, and to create new specific offences for street sexual harassment.

**Donate to a worthy cause!** There are countless women's charities in the UK that rely upon donations to fund services for women and girls in need (see list below), that push for gender equality. If you have the means of doing so, donating to a cause can be a powerful way of supporting women and girls and making positive change.

**Volunteer!** If money is not on your side but time is, consider volunteering for a women's service or charity. Volunteering is a great opportunity to learn more about women's rights and to directly contribute to change.

**Learn!** Consider reading something by a female author, listening to a podcast led by women, or watching documentaries or dramatisations of real-life stories centred on the voices of women. Learning can be a way to challenge stereotypes or enhance knowledge about a cause you are interested in. If you find something you are interested in, talk about it and share with others, keep the conversation going. Another simple way of learning is by asking the women in your life, 'what can I do to better support you as a woman' and listen to their responses.

### *What support is out there for women...?*

#### **Regional charities:**

~ [Wearside Women in Need](#), Sunderland – providing 24/7 helpline, outreach and IDVA service. Office number 0191 416 3550. Helpline number 0800 066 5555.

~ [Rape and Sexual Abuse Counselling Centre](#) – providing free and confidential face to face counselling and telephone support to survivors of rape, sexual abuse and domestic abuse in Darlington and County Durham.

~ [Rape Crisis Tyneside and Northumberland](#) – provides services to women and girls aged 13+ that live/work/study in Tyneside and Northumberland who have experienced any form of sexual assault in their lifetime. Services include counselling, advocacy, helpline, specialised information, ISVA services, email support – all free, safe and professional.

~ [My Sister's Place](#) – charity based in Middlesbrough to support women aged 16+ who have or are experiencing domestic abuse.

~ [Angelou Centre](#) – providing a range of women-only services for black and minoritized women across the North East, including training and development, ending violence against women and girls, wellbeing and support (including counselling and IDVA services).

- ~ [West End Women and Girls Centre](#) –centre in Newcastle that build and empower women and girls through group work giving women opportunities to meet, have fun, learn skills, look at issues relevant to their lives and build confidence in a safe and supportive environment.
- ~ [The Millin Charity](#) – Newcastle & Gateshead based charity providing services to women, to help them to set up their own businesses, gain employability skills, and access training.
- ~ [Smart Works](#) – providing interview training and clothing to help women of low income in the UK to get jobs and gain financial independence. Nearest centre is in Newcastle serving women in the NE from Berwick to Middlesbrough.
- ~ [Shout Up](#) – Newcastle programme working with bars, pubs, clubs to make nightlife sexual harassment free.
- ~ [Victims First](#) – supporting victims and witnesses to cope with and recover from the impact of crime that has occurred in the Tyne and Wear and Northumberland area.
- ~ [Halo Project](#) – specialist women’s charity based in Middlesbrough. Supporting survivors of female genital mutilation, ‘honour-based’ violence, and forced marriage.
- ~ [Children North East Young People Services](#) – providing services for young people in Newcastle and Gateshead including drop ins, peer mentoring, sexual health, counselling, support for young victims of crime and disabled young people.
- ~ [Young Women’s Outreach Project](#) – project based in Gateshead, providing support, education, advice and guidance for young women and young mothers aged 11-19.
- ~ [Love Amelia](#) – charity in Sunderland & South Tyneside, offering a bank of baby items (aged 0-4) for families in need of essential items so their children are safe, happy and thrive.
- ~ [This Girl Can](#) – charity to support women and girls to be more active in the North East.
- ~ [Women’s Health in South Tyneside](#) – charity offering support services for mental, physical and emotional health of women aged 16+ across South Tyneside. Services include counselling, creche, support groups, information and advice, library, listening ear service etc.

National charities:

- ~ [Refuge](#) – UK charity providing specialist support to women and children experiencing DV.
- ~ [Women’s Aid](#) – UK charity offering 24/7 domestic abuse helpline, as well as education, and public information on domestic abuse.
- ~ [Girls Out Loud](#) – supporting girls to build their confidence, self-belief, and resilience.
- ~ [Bloody Good Period](#) – UK charity aimed at fighting period poverty.
- ~ [Imkaan](#) – fighting against the violence of women of colour, working to improve policy on issues that affect women of colour i.e. DV, forced marriage, and ‘honour-based’ violence.
- ~ [Galop](#) – National LGBTQIA+ anti-abuse charity.
- ~ [National Stalking Helpline](#) – practical information and support on risk, safety planning, and legislation to victims of stalking, their friends, family and professionals working with victims.
- ~ [Karma Nirvana](#) – UK charity which run an ‘honour-based’ abuse helpline, provide training for professionals, gather information to inform policies and services, campaign for change.
- ~ [Rights of Women](#) – legal advice on laws such as family, criminal, asylum, and immigration.