

WE SPEAK UP

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We Speak Up: Portrait exhibition reveals the men who are speaking up for women and girls

The We Speak Up campaign, launched by White Ribbon UK, is centred on a portrait exhibition featuring men from all walks of life who – as White Ribbon UK Ambassadors – have committed to speaking up for women and girls.

The public exhibition of all the portraits will be on display in Milton Keynes on White Ribbon Day, 25th November. The project is sponsored by London Northwestern Railway (LNR), the train operator that manages Milton Keynes

Central station.

Each portrait will be accompanied by a video from each of the men featured, explaining why they speak up for women and girls and why they believe it's time more men should do the same.

White Ribbon UK is a national charity working with men and boys to challenge harmful gender stereotypes and behaviours. When men speak up in their everyday lives against misogyny, it stops a culture that normalises sexism and can lead to violence against women and girls.

From a firefighter to an apprentice and a family lawyer, these men are diverse in background, but they are united in one thing – they choose to speak up.

1 in 4 women will be the victim of sexual assault or attempted assault in their lifetime*, and White Ribbon UK is calling on men to support women and girls by refusing to stay silent whenever they see or hear sexism, harassment or misogyny.

White Ribbon UK Ambassador, Jordan Coombes who is featured in the portraits project, said: “I want my son to grow into a man who stands alongside women, who challenges abuse and inequality. I want my daughter to grow up in a world where she feels safe, empowered and heard; a world where speaking out is met with support, not dismissal.”

Cara Higgs, LNR Community Strategy Manager, said: “As a White Ribbon accredited organisation, we are committed to keeping our communities safe and connected. We hope that by sponsoring this exhibition, we can help to raise awareness of White Ribbon and encourage men to speak up for women and girls. Together, we're helping to create safer journeys and a safer society free of abuse and violence.”

The portraits were created by London-based photographer Claudia Janke using a traditional instant box camera. The analogue and deliberately slow process of this camera requires an intimate collaboration between photographer and sitter, reflecting the patience, commitment and shared effort needed to bring about genuine and transformative social change.

Speaking about the project, Claudia said: "After two decades working on projects highlighting violence against women and girls, I created this project to call men in as allies. Through this work, I finally met men willing to step up, who understood that it starts with them and that it is their responsibility to be part of the change. Hearing their motivations and seeing their commitment was moving and powerful."

Explaining the importance of the campaign, Lynne Elliot, CEO of White Ribbon UK, said: "We see lots of men from all backgrounds using their voices to speak up for women and girls in everyday situations. It's so important that speaking up becomes the norm so that we can challenge and change the culture that enables violence against women and girls. Every time someone stays silent, they miss an opportunity to stand up for what's right."

Beginning on White Ribbon Day and continuing throughout the 16 Days of Activism, a new Ambassador along with their portrait and video will be shared each day on the White Ribbon Day *We Speak Up* website and White Ribbon UK social media channels.

*According to statistics reported by the National Audit Office in 2025.

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