Fighting domestic violence

By ILONA MARCHETTA

There is light at the end of what has been a long and uphill tunnel for women's service workers in Liverpool.

Representatives from the Joan Harrison Support Services for Women, the Liverpool Women's Resource Centre and the Liverpool Women's Health Centre said they were more than happy to have been notified of two grants coming their way.

The workers, who regularly find themselves struggling under an enormous workload with little funding, said they were also celebrating another small victory.

The projects will be funded for three years.

"We often begin wonderful programs which we feel will make a real difference but have to abandon them when funding ends," said one service worker who wished to remain anonymous.

"Short-term funding seems pointless but we can really do something with three years."

The grants will contribute towards two programs targeting domestic violence – which the workers said was prevalent in Liverpool.

"We've never let up on domestic violence issues, eventually someone had to give in," the worker said.

"One of the projects is a prevention project and one of them is focused on intervention by employing another case worker," another representative said.

"We're scratching the service to provide what we already do and while a new worker is never going to be enough, it's certainly an improvement on the current situation."

The preventative program is a peer education program aimed at women aged 16-24.

Several young women will be recruited and trained to run education programs in schools and youth establishments.

"It's about teaching women to avoid abusive relationships and also guiding their friends in terms of helping each other," the representative said.

The program will aim to dispel myths about healthy and unhealthy relationships.

"We find women come in with distorted views about what love is," another representative said.