



Women's Aid is a movement You're part of it



The Women's Aid movement is one of the most important achievements of feminism in this country. The struggle over decades, led by survivors of domestic abuse themselves, to establish the network of specialist services that now saves countless lives, continues to this day. This is not just a struggle for funding: it is also a struggle for understanding, for recognition, for women to be heard and believed.

That's why Women's Aid can never be just a federation of organisations. It is a movement, determined to strive for the profound social and cultural change that is needed if men's violence against women is to end.

We support survivors directly, and by listening to their voices we can understand where to use our influence to improve the way they are treated. We stand alongside survivors to fight for services that genuinely understand and respond to the needs of women.

Our work through our specialist services goes hand in hand with campaigning and raising awareness. Neither aspect of our work can be effective without the other.

That's how our movement has achieved great things in 2016/17 and will do so for years to come.

Our movement was born of the resolve of inspirational women to put an end to domestic violence. Join us.

Polly Neate Chief Executive





It's been a year of intense focus on charities and the need for us to be accountable to our supporters and donors. At Women's Aid we take accountability very seriously. We are proud of the amount we achieve at a time when funding is harder to come by than ever. And we are proud that we don't waste a penny.

But accountability means something more to us than just money — important though that is. Accountability to our founding values of equality, diversity, empowerment and transformation must run through everything we do. We believe this Impact Report shows that those values are not just words, but are the driving force of Women's Aid.

Equally important is our accountability to the women and children we exist to serve. Survivors inform our campaigns and we fight for the services that survivors tell us they want: services that provide independent, specialist support, and that are focused on understanding and meeting individual needs — whether a woman wants to be safe in her own home, whether she has to flee for her safety, or whether she chooses to build a new life in a new place.

Last but by no means least, accountability for Women's Aid means listening to the local organisations that make up our federation and movement. While they are still under threat — and they are — we will continue to fight for their survival.

As Trustees of Women's Aid, we are proud of our achievements in 2016/17. We would like to thank our outgoing Chief Executive Polly Neate for all she has done for Women's Aid, and we welcome her successor Katie Ghose to lead our values-driven, survivor-led work into the future.

Femi Otitoju and Beverley Pass Co-Chairs of the Board of Trustees





WITH YOU FROM THE VERY FIRST STEP, WHENEVER YOU ARE READY TO TAKE IT

Getting the response right

It sounds so obvious. Yet time and again we hear women tell us that when they first spoke about abuse they were brushed off, or people didn't know what to say. And when help does become available women aren't always consulted about how to stop the abuse, despite the fact that nobody knows the perpetrator better than they do.

In 2016 we began our pilots for **Change that Lasts**, a new model we have been developing with partners and survivors to improve responses to domestic abuse at every level within a community. The model is split into three main elements: **ask me, Trusted Professional**, and **Expert Support**.

"I was anxious starting the training as I did have [experience of] domestic abuse, but I actually felt a burden lifted from me after years of quiet... I now feel able to help others."

- The ask me pilots have begun in East Sussex, Powys and London. We are recruiting and training networks of
 ask me ambassadors to start conversations, raise awareness and respond helpfully to disclosures of domestic
 abuse. When survivors talk to ambassadors they will be believed and given the information they need to take the
 next step.
- The **Trusted Professional** scheme, rolling out later this year, works with practitioners who survivors might already be in contact with. This might be social workers, nurses, housing officers and others. Our training helps them to spot signs of abuse, respond effectively to disclosures, and open up pathways to support.
- Our **Expert Support** pilot will begin in early 2018, building on the expertise developed over decades by our federation of local services. It will focus on understanding the impacts of trauma, and strengthening a survivor's mental capacity to deal with complex issues and regain control.

Change that Lasts runs through everything we do at Women's Aid. We are ensuring that every survivor gets support at any point on her journey to escape abuse. This project is possible thanks to funding from:













Lankelly Chase





The first port of call

Women's Aid continues to provide life-saving services to women and their children, and is always there to help take the first step.

On the phone

The Freephone 24-hour National Domestic Violence Helpline, run in partnership with Refuge, is a gateway to almost 500 Violence Against Women and Girls services across the country, and provides a vital service to survivors.

The helpline team will support any woman calling at whatever stage she is at, whether she is voicing her concerns for the very first time, or whether she is recovering from trauma. We will help.

The helpline not only plays a vital role for survivors but for professionals, relatives and friends of survivors.

Online

The Survivors' Forum is a crucial digital resource, throwing a lifeline to women in abusive relationships, and giving space for recovery. It allows women to share their personal experiences of domestic abuse, and offer peer-to-peer support within a safe community. The Forum is moderated by trained Women's Aid staff, who ensure women are kept safe and are provided with information they need.

Due to its digital platform we can reach a wider range of women, including those with complex needs who may be particularly vulnerable. It plays a pivotal role in giving women the confidence to find safety and independence.

We couldn't provide these services without our funders and supporters. Thank you.

"I love this forum, I love that I have an army of women behind me to hold my hand through the dark times and share in the good. We are strong women. We all deserve better."

The year in numbers*



The helpline was contacted **86,125** times, including 7,435 by email.



Around **14,800 women** and children were supported by the helpline team to access refuge accommodation.



Almost 14,720 professionals, relatives and friends of survivors were given information to enable them to better support survivors.



The Survivors' Forum has over **2,000 active users**.

* From 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017

Working with, and for, local services

Women's Aid is a federation with the collective expertise and knowledge to change laws and policy nationally. Our combined strength impacts locally on commissioning and funding decisions, and ensures the best interests of survivors and their children are at the heart of service provision.

The **Sustainability Partnership Team**, funded by the Lloyds Bank Foundation for England and Wales, is a partnership between Imkaan and Women's Aid. It supports services whose funding and resourcing is under threat. This could be through bidding for contracts, or helping them to evidence their quality. The team has supported **87 specialist domestic abuse organisations**, including **24 organisations with unique specialisms** in working with BME, LGBT and disabled survivors.

In November 2016, our SOS campaign secured funding of £20m from the government. The team responded urgently to support **19 bids totalling over £4.5m, which were all successful.** We also supported services in bids to the Home Office Transformation Fund, the Police Transformation Fund and the Tampon Tax Fund.

Our movement began in response to survivors' needs not being met, and our services bring specialist value. We worked with **75 local commissioners** to develop their expertise in commissioning quality domestic violence services.

The big picture

Every year we send a survey to all the domestic abuse services in the country. The results of the Women's Aid Annual Survey 2016 were published this year:



Community-based services accepted **61,491** referrals (92 respondents).



Over half of the 19,854 referrals to refuge services were declined (124 respondents).



About **half** of services said their biggest challenge was **funding cuts** and **uncertainties** (121 respondents).

Protecting services from welfare reform

Over the past year, Women's Aid has opposed damaging welfare reforms - including a change to housing benefit that would have forced two thirds of refuges to close down. In September 2016, following our campaigning with **The Sun**, **local members**, and **650 campaign champions**, the government agreed to exempt refuges from this reform. Social housing landlords are also being forced to reduce their rents by 1% every year, which would push refuges into even greater financial difficulty. Our campaign ensured refuges were exempted from this policy.



Providing the tools to give the very best service

National Quality Standards

We continue to work with members to help them evidence their quality. The Women's Aid National Quality Mark was awarded to **18 new applicants**, and four were referred to the sustainability team for further support and service improvement to enable them to meet the standards. A further 17 organisations are currently being supported through the process.







On Track: support, mapping and evidence in a package built by you

On Track was launched in April 2016 following rigorous consultation and piloting with survivors, services and academics. We were asked for a single, integrated solution for case management and outcome reporting, and we have delivered. The system is reliable, easy to use and can be adapted to suit services' monitoring needs.

Already 34 specialist services are using On Track, with more in the process of signing up. On Track users will contribute anonymously to a national data-set, giving our sector an evidence base for "what works", which will support a national network of learning.

"On Track is an easy to use, comprehensive system that helps you understand your service and show how lives have changed."

Jo Gough, RISE, member service in Brighton, Hove & Sussex

"Both the support to secure the National Quality Standards and the impact monitoring of On Track have provided us with a leap forward when evidencing our quality and impact."

Member service feedback

routestosupport

Routes to Support (previously UKRefuges-Online) is an online system giving 460 domestic and sexual abuse services secure access to contact and vacancy information to assist with referrals.

The project is delivered in partnership with Women's Aid Federation of Northern Ireland, Scottish Women's Aid and Welsh Women's Aid.

98.4% of users in England strongly agreed that Routes to Support improves accessibility to services for women and children experiencing domestic abuse.

"I can't really imagine how it would be possible to do my job or most direct service jobs within the sector without these essential resources."

Leading the way with survivor-focused training



This year the Women's Aid National Training Centre set up the

National Survivors' Participation
Panel, funded by the Women's
Foundation. This group of strong and
dedicated women from a range of areas
and backgrounds ensure that:

- · survivors' voices are heard and believed
- survivors are able to influence policy and practice within the voluntary and statutory sectors
- survivors inform local and national government thinking and responses.

Welcome to our newest Domestic Abuse Prevention Advocates

We were delighted to train 40 new Domestic Abuse Prevention Advocates (DAPAs), taking the total to 350. DAPAs can be formally registered on the Women's Aid Register of Qualified Practitioners. They gain a wide-ranging and in-depth skillset from our expert training, which they take to a variety of roles including refuge worker, IDVA, outreach, and children's worker.



Family courts

District and Circuit Judges: Following our Child First Campaign, our team has contributed to **Family Judge Training**, and we have been invited to deliver additional training at the **Judicial College**.

Ministry of Justice and Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Services (HMCTS): We conducted a review of domestic abuse training for family courts staff, and developed new resources.

Improving police responses

We supported **Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC)** with the inspection of forces. Survivor focus groups were run in four force areas, forming part of the 2017 report.

We also supported the **College of Policing** to deliver its Domestic Abuse Matters programme in several areas.

We delivered our *Domestic Abuse: Everybody's Business* training to **3,000** police personnel in **Devon and Cornwall,** and **900** in **Dorset.**

Workplace training

Kering Foundation continued to train its corporate partners in the UK. **Bristol City Council** and **Somerset Council** also worked with us to train **163** staff.

Bespoke training partnerships

We have provided bespoke training to six teams within a variety of large organisations, from health and A&E, to teams working exclusively with young people. To learn more about how we can work with you contact **training@womensaid.org.uk**.



WE'RE MAKING
SURE EVERY CHILD
IS PROTECTED
NOW, AND HAS
THE TOOLS THEY
NEED TO GROW
INTO AN ADULT
FREE FROM
VIOLENCE

The voice of youth

Reflecting the voices of children and young people is a hugely important aspect of our work.

Our Young People's Advisory

Panel is a group of young people who are closely involved in the development of future campaigns.

We have begun to develop a partnership with the Young

Women's Trust to strengthen our work in this area and widen networking opportunities for those on our panel.

Fighting for justice, for women and children

The **Child First** campaign began in early 2016 with our report, *Nineteen Child Homicides*. It highlighted the tragic stories of 19 children and two women in 12 families who were killed due to to unsafe child contact arrangements over a 10-year period.

One year on, the Child First campaign has driven the issue of safe child contact onto the political agenda. We have campaigned for the best interests of the child to always be at the heart of contact decisions. We've achieved a lot this year, but there is still much to be done to uphold children's rights. **Your support makes this campaign**

Claire Throssell's two sons Jack and Paul were killed by their father during an unsupervised contact visit in 2014.

Over **40,000** of you signed the Child First petition calling for safe child contact.



That's 40,000 of you standing alongside Claire when she handed the petition to Number 10 on the 23rd January.

"I can't put into words what it felt like to watch MPs from all political parties stand up in the House of Commons and speak about Jack and Paul, and the urgent need to change our family court system. The only time Jack's voice was heard was by the fireman who carried Jack out of the house, when he said: 'My dad did this and he did it on purpose.' I'm incredibly proud of the change Child First has made over the past year."

Timeline towards safer contact

15th Sept 2016

possible.

A three hour parliamentary debate takes place. Claire Throssell's MP, Angela Smith recounts Claire, Jack and Paul's story.

4th Jan 2017

An emergency review is announced to find the quickest way to ban perpetrators from directly cross-examining their victims

20th Jan 2017

A revised version of Practice Direction 12J is published, clarifying that there should never be a presumption of contact where one parent is known to be a perpetrator of domestic abuse.

23rd Feb 2017

The Prison and Courts Bill is announced, setting out provisions to ban cross-examination by perpetrators in the family courts. Sadly, the bill did not progress through parliament in time to become law before the election. We are calling for the new government to implement the ban as an urgent priority.

Support when children and young people need it

In November 2016, Women's Aid formalised our partnership with **Operation Encompass** to support children experiencing domestic abuse at the earliest possible point. When the police are called to an incident at a child's home, they must inform a 'key adult' at the child's school before 9am the next morning. Specialist support can be put in place for the child as quickly as possible. **Nineteen police forces** are already involved with the scheme, and we aim to sign up every single force in the country.

Our work in schools has continued through the ICAP Safer Futures project, building networks between schools and services. Since 2014 **663 professionals** working with young people have attended our workshops. Women's Aid Schools Advocates provide support materials, such as our updated Expect Respect Education Toolkit and online resources.



We were delighted that the government passed a law to make Relationships and Sex Education compulsory in all schools. Women's Aid, alongside others, has campaigned for this for years.

Women's Aid has been developing an online support service for 13-18 year olds girls. There is currently little specialist provision for young women of this age navigating their first relationships. Our service provides them with accessible, interactive information in a language and format they can relate to. It will also offer further support in an online messaging service.

Survivors are at the heart of our work, and our prototype, which is now live, was developed and built from what young people told us they need. Their input throughout testing will guide the finished product.

"I've been involved in this project since last March, and I wish I'd had a resource like this a few years ago. I remember wanting two things: a friendly, simple website for advice, and to know I wasn't alone. Love Respect provides both of these things. The project has helped me heal from my own experiences, and I have no doubt it will have a wider impact for lots more young women and girls too."

Sophie, survivor



OUR STRENGTH IS IN OUR NUMBERS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Champion, I'm proud to be part of a movement that makes change happen. We've protected refuges from a funding crisis. We ensure decision makers listen to what survivors need. I've lobbied my MP for change, and feel proud when

these efforts make a real difference to the lives of survivors. Attending

meetings in parliament enables me to keep up to date with the ever changing circumstances of domestic abuse. It's good to be involved, be heard and to give back to a system that helped me."

Paulette Furse, Women's Aid Campaign Champion

By March 2017 we had 650 Campaign **Champions** by our side - and more are joining every day!

Let's talk about coercive control



In December 2015 the coercive control law that Women's Aid campaigned for came into force. This marked a huge step forward for tackling domestic abuse. Coercive control — the destruction of a survivor's self-esteem and autonomy — is, after all, at the heart of domestic abuse.

And yet **changing** the law is just half the battle. If we want to see more reporting, then we need to make sure people understand what coercive control is. We also need to make sure that the criminal justice system is equipped to respond to it appropriately and secure convictions.

Our goal is to make sure everyone understands what coercive control is, and its devastating impact on survivors



Helen's story prompted hundreds of women to call the helpline, with a **17% increase in calls** at the height of the storyline.

On radio: The Archers

The story of Rob's invisible grip tightening around Helen transfixed the nation, culminating in her stabbing him in April 2016. This year the storyline followed Helen's trial. Women's Aid worked closely with BBC Radio 4 to give listeners an immersive insight into the huge challenges survivors are faced with. We helped survivors share their stories with writers to ensure portrayals are sensitive and reflect real life.

The Archers Effect' rippled across the wider media and sparked huge national interest. When Helen's trial concluded Woman's Hour dedicated a special programme to it, and there was extensive coverage across every major media outlet. We attended a special BBC event at the Houses of Parliament with over 100 MPs, to talk about coercive control.

Bringing coercive control into focus

YOU'RE MINE NO MATTER WHAT

To mark the first anniversary of the legislation that criminalised coercive control, Women's Aid partnered with WCRS creative agency and 8 Outdoor to deliver an eye-catching campaign at locations across the country.

To see the effect of the billboard yourself move away from the image above, and then back again.

But how do you show the effects of coercive control on a billboard? In a first for UK advertising, WCRS used 'displacement effect', a visual technique that reveals two different headlines depending on your perspective. As you move closer, the message changes. The technique highlights the fact that although coercive control might be more difficult to see than physical violence it can be just as damaging.

Controlling what your partner wears, sees, eats or spends are all behaviours that can form part of a pattern that builds up to coercive control and strips away victims' self confidence.

The work was backed by 8 Outdoor, which donated media space on digital outdoor screens across the country.

It is only through donations such as these that we are able to run campaigns to raise awareness.

Training to tackle coercion

Since the new law was passed the **Women's Aid National Training Centre** has been delivering training on coercive control to those working with survivors.

The **Ministry of Justice** invited us to deliver professional development sessions for judges who operate in the family courts on the new legislation.





Protecting survivors' right to vote

When survivor **Mehala Osborne** fled to a refuge, she was horrified to learn her right to vote was taken away because she didn't meet the criteria for anonymous voting - vital to safeguard the location of the refuge. She launched the **Right to Vote** campaign and Women's Aid was determined to support her all the way.

The strict criteria for anonymous voting is excluding survivors from voting — specifically the need to provide evidence from the criminal justice system, when we know that fewer than half of domestic abuse survivors have involved the police. We made huge progress, with the **government committing to removing barriers to voting** ahead of the next general election, then expected in 2020. Disappointingly, the plans could not be implemented in time for the snap election, but be in no doubt that Mehala and Women's Aid will hold this government to the commitments made during the last.

"The importance of domestic abuse services and support are critical in saving lives. But they are more than that, they give back a voice, a person, a route back to yourself and your freedom in all senses. Without the amazing support workers I met, and all of Women's Aid and 38 degrees, the Right to Vote campaign would never have been the success it was. I am so proud of what we have achieved, but I am mostly grateful for being given a chance to escape abuse and find myself again."

Mehala Osborne

A legal duty to survivors

Women's Aid partnered with campaign group IC Change to call for the government to ratify the Istanbul Convention, an international treaty setting minimum standards for governments to meet when tackling abuse. These standards become law when the treaty is ratified. A Private Member's Bill successfully passed through parliament, receiving Royal Assent in April 2017. The government must now ratify the convention as soon as practically possible.



"We are a volunteer group of survivors, service workers and allies, campaigning for the ratification of the Istanbul

Convention in the UK. Many said this couldn't be done—but by working together in unity across the women's sector, and with the support of organisations like Women's Aid, we have made it happen."

Robyn Boosey, Rachel Nye and Becca Bunce IC Change



Femicide: an unspoken epidemic

Femicide — the killing of women because they are women — is a leading cause of premature death for women. But this shocking fact is not inevitable. For years women have been failed and their voices buried, and now we come armed with the evidence needed to end this.

Women's Aid has been working with Karen Ingala Smith, Chief Executive of nia, to develop **The Femicide Census**. The census analyses these murders to create a clear picture of men's fatal violence against women. So far we have analysed the 936 cases of femicide committed between 2009 and 2015 in England and Wales.

In December 2016, we published the first Femicide Census report: **Redefining an Isolated Incident.** It highlights significant patterns across all cases of femicide; most women who are killed are killed by a man known to them, and women are at significant risk at the point of separation from an abusive partner.



"I will never forget the day I read my aunt's Homicide Review report. It laid bare the million and one signs and cries for help that went overlooked, that were never shared between agencies. Those same cries for help are being sounded by hundreds of women every day. It is vital that they are recognised and

acted upon from the get-go.

The Femicide Census is truly ground-breaking; not only is it a crucial tool in the fight to save lives, but it also gives a face, a name, a reality to the women who have been failed. The tool has been created: now the country's agencies must use it to help prevent the murders of the wonderful women who make up our worlds."

> Onjali Rauf, niece of Mumtahina Jannat and founder of Making Herstory

Some key findings from the report:

64% of femicides between 2009 and 2015 were committed by partners/ex-partners.



women were pregnant when killed by their ex-partner



76% of women killed by their expartner or ex-husband were killed within the first year following separation.



106 women killed following a separation had a child, or children under the age of 18.



Next steps



- The government must ensure that specialist services have sustainable, long term funding.
- The police should include learning from the Femicide Census in training.
- · Women should not be written out of media reports, nor should they be defined by their relationship to men/families.

Thanks to Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer LLP, Deloitte LLP, and Edith Eligator for their support.





No more women turned away

At Women's Aid we know that every day women and their children are denied safe spaces in refuges. The reasons are many: unsuitable location; unable to accommodate her children; no access to mental health support; no appropriate language support; no recourse to public funds... The list goes on.



It is unacceptable that the most vulnerable women in our society — those who have the greatest need of our support — are being told they can not be helped.

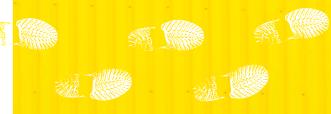
Last year the **No Woman Turned Away** (NWTA) project was commissioned by the Department for Communities and Local Government, to provide additional support to these women and to give more insight into the barriers they face.

Our report on the project makes shocking reading. Services are being squeezed and finding it harder to meet the complex needs of survivors. Women and children who cannot access refuge are being left in highly dangerous situations. This cannot be ignored.

Thanks to The Department for Communities and Local Government, we are pleased that this valuable project will continue for a further year.

"[Without the NWTA caseworker] I wouldn't be where I am, I would still be suffering in that place. I would still be living with my doorbell off and frightened to go outside..."

2LO2L NOT FOUND



404 women were supported by the NWTA caseworkers.

28 women gave up their search for a refuge space and **stayed with the perpetrator**.

45 women slept rough during this time. Of these women, seven had children with them and three were pregnant.

106 of the women had **mental health support needs**.

While searching for a refuge space, **70** women had to **call the police** to respond to a further incident and **22** were **physically injured by the perpetrator.**





SURVIVORS · CAMPAIGNERS · MEMBERS · SUPPORTERS AND FUNDERS:

The Big Lottery Fund **Comic Relief** The Lloyds Bank Foundation for England and Wales The Department for Communities and Local Government The Home Office LankellyChase Foundation **London Councils** The Kering Foundation The Roddick Foundation The City Bridge Trust Mayor's Office for Police and Crime The Sylvia Adams Charitable Trust The Esmée Fairbairn Foundation The Eveson Charitable Trust EF and MG Hall Charitable Trust **Helianthus Charitable Trust** Michael and Anna Wix Charitable Trust S and R Charitable Trust

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The Balney Charitable Trust

0808 2000 247

Freephone 24 Hour National Domestic Violence Helpline (run in partnership with Refuge)

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