

Statement of Support for Women's Aid's mission and values

Our values are:

Feminist, Survivor-Centred, Inclusive, Empowering, Resilient

Our vision is:

A world where every woman's right to equality and freedom from violence is unquestioned.

Our purpose is to:

User our expertise, knowledge and influence to raise the status of women to a level where violence against them is no longer legitimised or tolerated.

We are aiming for the following impacts:

Women are believed, know it is not their fault, their experiences have been understood and responded to and they feel safer and better able to make their own choices

Gender based intimate partner violence is understood and is seen as unacceptable and actively opposed at all levels

More women and their children receive support when they need it

Women's Aid Definition of Domestic Violence:

Women's Aid defines domestic abuse as an incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening, degrading and violent behaviour, including sexual violence, by a partner or ex-partner. It is very common. In the vast majority of cases, it is experienced by women and is perpetrated by men.

Domestic abuse can include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Coercive control (a pattern of intimidation, degradation, isolation and control with the use or threat of physical or sexual violence)
- Psychological and/or emotional abuse
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Financial abuse

- Harassment
- Stalking
- Online or digital abuse

Domestic abuse is a gendered crime which is deeply rooted in the societal inequality between women and men. It takes place 'because she is a woman and happens disproportionately to women.' Women are more likely than men to experience multiple incidents of abuse, different types of domestic abuse (intimate partner violence, sexual assault and stalking) and in particular sexual violence. Any woman can experience domestic abuse regardless of race, ethnic or religious group, sexuality, class, or disabled status, but some women who experience other forms of oppression and discrimination may face further barriers to disclosing abuse and finding help.

Domestic abuse exists as part of violence against women and girls; which also includes different forms of family violence such as forced marriage, female genital mutilation and so called "honour crimes" that are perpetrated primarily by family members, often with multiple perpetrators.

Terms of reference for Women's Aid Membership

Women's Aid Full Members are dedicated to supporting women and child survivors of domestic violence and working in partnership with other dedicated providers of services to women and child survivors, including Women's Aid Federation of England (Women's Aid), fostering feminist leadership and advocating for collaboration and solidarity. All members will:

1. Provide high-quality support to the survivors of domestic abuse which reflects their needs and helps them to feel safe, respected, and empowered. This means enabling women to define their own needs and priorities and to be involved in all decisions that impact on them and their children, if they have any.
2. Ensure that our work and practice reflect the voices of survivors.
3. Promote an understanding of domestic violence as a gendered form of violence rooted in women's inequality, and characterised by patterns of coercive control. This means that members' governing documents and publicity materials must reflect this

4. Have a commitment to provision led by and for women. This means that members must only employ women to provide support to female survivors and their governance should be all female in order to deliver feminist leadership.
5. Recognise the multiple and intersecting inequalities faced by women with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 and have a commitment to promoting anti-oppressive approaches in our own organisations and other agencies. This means actively ensuring that your organisation welcomes all female survivors and their children, has a staff team and trustees that reflects their protected characteristics, are highly trained and skilled in meeting those needs and advocating for their human rights
6. Work in partnership with integrity, and engage on equal terms, with other dedicated specialist women's organisations and Women's Aid, valuing and supporting each other's specialisms and offering integrated local pathways between our complementary services. This means working with integrity with other members, particularly small specialist and BME members, and respecting their unique contribution to the sector. It also means not competing against them or undermining their independence.
7. Recognise children and young people as service users in their own right and give them dedicated support and a voice in service planning. This means treating children and young people as survivors too.
8. Support campaigns to end violence against women and girls and ensure they focus on survivor-identified priorities
9. Promote positive and diverse gender roles, challenging the sexualisation of girls and oppressive norms of gender identity
10. Value and protect women-only spaces as supportive of women's journeys to stability, resilience and autonomy. This means that survivors should always be supported by a female member of staff.
11. Recognise that the experiences and needs of male victims differ from those of female victims and should be met in specialist men's services located separately from services for women.

*In a spirit of promoting improving practice for the benefit of survivors of abuse, Women's Aid will work with organisations found to have breached the terms of membership to address the concerns around practice. Women's Aid also reserves the right to refuse or cancel the membership of any member where there is evidence of non-compliance with the requirements of membership.