

women's aid

until women & children are safe

Women's Aid Federation of England

PO Box 3245, Bristol, BS2 2EH

T: 0117 944 4411 F: 0117 924 1703

info@womensaid.org.uk

www.womensaid.org.uk

Rt Hon Yvette Cooper MP

Home Secretary

Home Office

2 Marsham Street

London, SW1P 4DF

1st August 2024

Dear Home Secretary,

We are writing to you as Women's Aid Federation, comprising of over 180 organisations service women and children affected by male violence, to set out our horror at the attack that took place in Southport on Monday 29th July. This has tragically resulted in the murder of three young girls - Elsie Dot Stancombe, Bebe King, and Alice Dasilva Aguiar. Our whole-hearted thoughts are with their families and those that knew them.

This incident is a horrific tragedy - it is disappointing that it is being viewed in isolation and not through a lens of violence against women and girls (VAWG). As with other incidents we have seen in recent years - whether it be the murders of Nicole Smallman, Bibaa Henry, Sarah Everard, Ellie Gould, or Alice Ruggles - the violence has always been a male problem.

This is further shown to be true through the misogynistic and violent messages we have received when our organisations have spoken out about this.

Less than a week ago, the National Police Chiefs Council's (NPCC's) report declared VAWG a national emergency. Our sector has long been raising the alarm bells about this national threat that has not been sufficiently prioritised, addressed through the right, meaningful action or accountability, or received the investment needed to address and end it.

Furthermore, while the findings of the NPCC into the scale of violence against women and girls in this country are alarming, it is important to remember that many survivors will not report their experiences to the police. The issue will, we know, be much larger than the data shows.

We are also horrified by the violence of far-right groups and their supporters that took place on Tuesday 30th July. These 'protests' and attacks on a Southport mosque are islamophobic, xenophobic and racist. We are concerned that further 'protests' are planned in Southport, but also wider towns and cities. This is terrifying for us as women, but also the women and children we provide support to.

Whilst we have welcomed the Government's mission to halve VAWG in a decade, we have waited too long for urgent action. This cannot wait any longer.

Patrons: Dame Julie Walters and Melanie Brown

Women's Aid is the national federation for local domestic abuse services supporting women and children across England.

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We call on the Government to step up its cross-government action on its VAWG mission through engagement with us and our sector, long-term investment in our services and prevention, and develop and deliver a new Ending VAWG strategy.

We hope you will meet with Women's Aid Federation urgently to discuss these issues, and look forward to hearing from you on your Government's plan of action.

Yours sincerely,

Women's Aid Federation of England (Women's Aid) - Farah Nazeer, CEO

Advance – Liz Mack, Chief Executive

Al Hasaniya Moroccan Women's Centre – Souad Talsi MBE, Founder and Interim CEO

Anawim Birmingham Centre for Women - Joy Doal MBE, CEO

Apna Haq – Zlakha Ahmed MBE, CEO

Ashiana Network – Shaminder Ubhi, Director

Aurora New Dawn – Dr Shonagh Dillon, CEO

Behind Closed Doors – Ruth Davany, CEO

Birmingham and Solihull Women's Aid – Maureen Connolly, CEO

Broxtowe Women's Project – Colette Byrne, CEO

Cambridge Women's Aid – Angie Stewart, CEO

CHADD – Anna Walsh, CEO

Changing Pathways – Tania Woodgate, CEO

Coventry Haven Women's Aid – Elaine Yates, CEO

Crossroads Derbyshire - Vicky Bunnage, CEO

East Surrey Domestic Abuse Services – Michelle Blunsom MBE, CEO

EVA Women's Aid – Richinda Taylor, CEO

Fylde Coast Women's Aid - Tina Hibbard, CEO

Gilgal – Sanja Kalik, Chief Executive

Halo Project – Yasmin Khan, Director

HARV Domestic Abuse Services - Amanda Elwen, Business Manager

HARV Housing - Amanda Elwen, Business Manager

Honour Thy Woman – Keasha Kellam, Founder

IMECE Women's Centre - Senay Dur, Director

Independent Choices Greater Manchester – Hayley Brewer, Manager

Independent Domestic Abuse Services (IDAS) - Sarah Hill, CEO

Jewish Women's Aid – Sam Clifford, CEO

Juno Women's Aid – Yasmin Rehman, CEO

Key Charity - Ursula Patten, Director

Kurdish and Middle Eastern Women's Organisation (KMEWO) - Sawsan Salim,
Director

Latin American Women's Aid – Angie Herrera, Director

Leeds Women's Aid – Nik Peasgood, Chief Executive

Lighthouse Women's Aid – Sally Winston, Chief Executive

Liverpool Domestic Abuse Service – Paula Nolan, CEO

Living without Abuse – Debbie Hughes, Chief Executive

MK-Act Domestic Abuse Intervention Services - Sue Burke, CEO

My Sister's Place – Lesley Storey, CEO

Next Chapter – Beverley Jones, Chief Executive

Nia – Jodie Woodward, Chief Executive

North Lincolnshire Women's Aid – Catherine Stephenson, Treasurer

North Surrey Domestic Abuse Service – Sarah McLeod, CEO

Nottinghamshire Women's Aid – Mandy Green, Head of Services

Oasis Domestic Abuse Service – Claire Williams, CEO

OPOKA CIO – Aneta Mackell, CEO

PALADIN National Stalking Advocacy Service - Amanda Elwen, Business Manager

Pennine Domestic Abuse Partnership – Kathryn Hinchliff, CEO

Peterborough Women's Aid – Mandy Geraghty, CEO

Positive Action in the Community – Be Free – Claire Bennett, CEO

Refuge4Pets – Mary Wakeham, CEO

Restore Women’s Aid – Katherine Ahluwalia, CEO

RISE – Jo Gough, CEO

Rising Sun Domestic Violence and Abuse Service – Fran Ellis, CEO

Roshni – Surwat Sohail, CEO

Safe in Sussex – Sharon Howard, CEO

Safety4Sisters – Jasmine Mohammad, Director

Sikh Women’s Aid – Sahdaish Pall BEM, CEO

SATEDA – Carey Philpott, CEO

Sheffield Women’s Aid – Hollie Venn, Chief Executive

Southall Black Sisters – Selma Taha, Executive Director

Stepping Stones Luton – Charlie Lockley, CEO

Stop Domestic Abuse – Claire Lambon, CEO

Sutton Women’s Centre – Emma Matthews, Chair of Trustees

The Dash Charity – Nicola Miller, Chief Executive

The Elm Foundation – Jennifer Calverley, CEO

The Emily Davidson Centre - Amanda Elwen, Business Manager

The First Step – Caroline Grant, CEO

The Haven Wolverhampton – Maryjane Squires, Interim CEO

The Liberty Centre – Lisa Larsen, CEO

The Vavengers – Sema Gornall, CEO

The Wish Centre – Shigufta Khan, CEO

Voices – Emily Denne, CEO

Welwyn Hatfield Women’s Refuge and Support Services – Denise Fenn, CEO

West Cornwall Women's Aid - Lizzie Matthews, CEO

West Mercia Women’s Aid – Sue Coleman, Chief Executive

Woman’s Trust – Heidi Riedel, CEO

Women of Grace UK – Valerie Lolomari, Founder

Women’s Aid in Luton – Gaby Price, CEO

WWiN – Laura Seebohm, Chief Executive