



Women's Aid Impact Report 2018-2019



A message from our board

Femi Otitoju and Mary Mason
Co-Chairs of the Board of Trustees



We've come a long way in 45 years. Women's Aid was born when the few refuges in existence — homes that pioneering women opened up to others in need — joined together to coordinate resources and action. A national network bloomed in small offices full of posters, paperwork and a burning passion to give women justice.

Operationally, Women's Aid today is far removed from its origins. As the charity sector has changed, so have we. We have had to adapt, learn new ways to campaign, and face new challenges. We are nothing if not resilient.

And yet at our core, nothing has changed.

We are driven by the same passion that brought us here. We remain committed to challenging all the inequalities in our society that allow violence against women to flourish.

This is why we are so proud of our achievements this year. We have listened to members. We know that they want a robust legal framework that supports women and children, and the resources to back it up. Our campaigning is achieving that.

We have listened to survivors. We know they want a society that understands them as individuals and that can support their whole range of needs. Our education and awareness programmes are giving them that.

All our work is underpinned by Change That Lasts, our model for a future where women and children get the right response from anyone, anywhere and at any time.

At present the frontline of service delivery is being attacked by funding cuts, homogenisation and a focus on last minute intervention. Yet ours is a feminist frontline, and we meet it with the passion of survivors in our hearts.

Of course we couldn't do it without our dedicated trustees, volunteers and staff — thank you.

OUR VISION

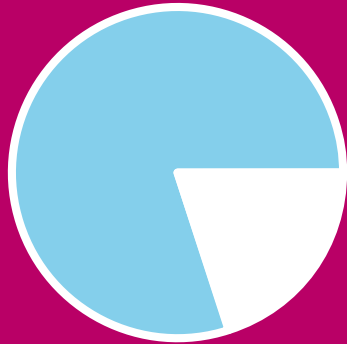
A world where every
woman's right to equality
and freedom from violence is
unquestioned.

A year in numbers

We spend **88p** in every **£1** on charitable activities

88p

on the work we do to end domestic abuse



12p

on fundraising

37,772

survivor journeys recorded on On Track, our national case management system



↑ 13

new organisations added to On Track with a comprehensive training programme

1,445



average topics and replies per month on our peer support Survivors' Forum

12,732



emails received by the helpline team (Freephone 24 Hour National Domestic Helpline run in partnership with Refuge)

60

new Domestic Abuse Prevention Advocates (DAPAs) trained



108,918

calls handled by the helpline (Freephone 24 Hour National Domestic Helpline run in partnership with Refuge)

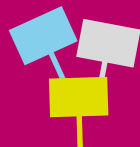


44

member services supported with sustainability issues



212



mentions in parliament in 34 separate Commons debates and 18 separate Lords debates

5,142



mentions of Women's Aid in the media, across television, print and online

18



new member organisations have achieved the Women's Aid National Quality Mark

Local services save lives

Our patron Julie Walters has been a vocal campaigner to save local refuge services from funding cuts.

“Women’s Aid is a lifesaving federation of frontline domestic abuse services, supporting women and children at the most challenging times of their lives. Local services are supported by our national network and we are truly stronger together. It is often not safe for survivors to get help in their local area where the abuser lives, and women and children every day are relying on this network to stay alive.

Refuges are so much more than a roof over your head, with specialist support and experience to meet women’s needs and start rebuilding lives. And local domestic abuse services are much more than just refuges, with outreach support in communities, local helplines and Change That Lasts projects all over the country.

Thank you to everyone who supports Women’s Aid. The power of us together, as a network of services united to support survivors of domestic abuse, is formidable. Together we help save lives every day.



Julie Walters attends the International Women’s Day fashion show generously hosted by D&D to celebrate #InspiringSurvivors.

Supporting **our members**

As a federation, we have been at the forefront of campaigns to raise awareness of domestic abuse and make provision in law and public policy. We make the case for specialist services for women and their children, and give advice and support when it's needed.

“Women’s Aid stepped in with a package of support and expertise that enabled us to sustain all services, and set the charity on a completely different track. Thank you, we couldn’t have done it without you.”
Becky Rogerson,
Wearside Women In Need

REGIONAL AND NATIONAL NETWORKS

Regional network meetings help us connect with our members, so that we can learn what they need from us.

We also hold a **national conference** and **AGM** each year to share practice notes and focus on the big issues affecting us all. This year 260 delegates attended.

80

80 members joined us for 13 regional meetings last year.

SUSTAINABILITY MATTERS

Specialist services have been subject to cuts and funding difficulties in the face of austerity. We help them with sustainability issues around funding, contracts and procurement. **44 members received intensive support** with sustainability issues, including tendering.

£12m

Our help secured contracts for members worth £12 million.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARDS

The Women’s Aid National Quality Standards provide a set of criteria against which our members can evidence their quality. We support them throughout the process, and this year have awarded **18 members** the quality mark, bringing the total to 56.

MCHLG approved

The standards have been used by the government for the last three rounds of national funding.



NATIONAL PROCUREMENT PROJECT

We are thrilled to be starting our national procurement service for the federation, using economies of scale to benefit small independent services. Members told us they were at a disadvantage when tendering for contracts, because larger, less specialised providers were able to shave costs off infrastructure, such as IT systems, back office functions and utilities providers. This project comes as a response to that, and will roll out from summer 2019 thanks to the **Oak Foundation**.

Building the **big picture**

We've developed cutting edge tools to help our members run their services, and to build the largest UK dataset of survivors' needs and service provision.

ON TRACK

Our case management system provides an integrated solution for domestic abuse services to accurately monitor their caseload and report on their outcomes effectively. The data also provides a national picture of the impact of frontline services. We added and trained **13 new organisations** this year.

73

On Track is now used by 73 organisations.

37.7k

37,772 survivor journeys were recorded last year.

ROUTES TO SUPPORT

Routes to Support, the online directory of domestic abuse services, continues to provide up to date information on refuge vacancies and 363 services across the UK. It enables referrals to be made quickly and confidentially, helping women to escape abuse and find a place of safety.

Routes to Support is run in partnership by Scottish Women's Aid, Welsh Women's Aid, Women's Aid Federation of England and Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland.

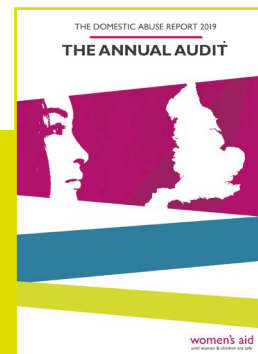
FEMICIDE CENSUS

The Femicide Census is a database detailing the deaths of over 1,000 women killed by men in England and Wales since 2009. It provides detailed analysis to build a picture of men's fatal violence against women. The latest Femicide Census report was published in December 2018, and revealed that 139 women were killed by men in 2017, and 40% of cases featured 'overkilling', where the force used was greater than that required to kill.

The Femicide Census was developed by Karen Ingala Smith and Women's Aid working in partnership, with support from Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer LLP and Deloitte LLP.

We bring together our sources of data in our annual report series, ***The Domestic Abuse Report: The Annual Audit***. It provides a comprehensive overview of service provision and the needs of women and children.

➔ **Read more: www.womensaid.org.uk/the-domestic-abuse-report**



Together we get results...

SECURING FUTURE FUNDING

Our campaigning successfully **overturned the government's proposal to remove housing benefit** from supported housing, including refuges, which threatened to dismantle our national network of life-saving services.

56 meetings

We have held 21 meetings with ministers, and 35 with civil servants to press the priorities of our members and survivors.

AN ALTERNATIVE FUNDING MODEL

We worked with our members, Refuge and Imkaan, to develop a **new model for funding support costs in refuges**. Our model has had a direct influence on the MCHLG's proposed new statutory duty for service provision, which is currently under consultation.

£55m

We have secured **£55m investment from the government for members from 2014-2020**.

WELFARE REFORMS

Our positive dialogue with government has ensured we can channel the voices of survivors into policymaking decisions.

Universal credit is deeply problematic for survivors, but following our campaigning the government has now decided to **pay it to the main caregiver** and consider **further changes to payments** to protect those escaping domestic abuse.



Over **170,000** people finally signed our petition calling on the government to urgently halt planned changes to refuge funding.

...and what **we learn, we share**

Our National Training Centre gives direct access to our federation's 45 years of expertise. We advise and train professionals across the country.

PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

Our qualifications are creating a network of highly skilled domestic abuse workers across the country who respond effectively to the needs to survivors.

Domestic Abuse Prevention Advocates (DAPAs) are registered workers filling a range of roles such as IDVAs, outreach workers, refuge workers and children's workers.

60
DAPAs

60 new Domestic Abuse Prevention Advocates were registered this year, making 500 in total.

IMPROVING RESPONSES

Our work beyond domestic abuse specialists is a key part of helping survivors get the support they need early on.

Manchester Fire Service

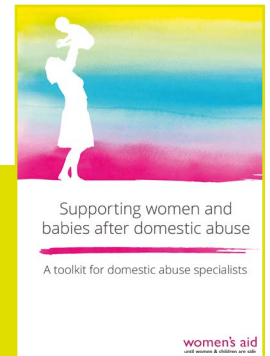
100 staff trained, including firefighters and call handlers

Kering Foundation

Training to HR teams and managers on workplace policies and procedures

Safeguarding training to 40 social care workers

Isles of Scilly Adult Social Workers



In 2019 we published ***Supporting women and babies after domestic abuse***. This toolkit for early years gives domestic abuse specialists the tools and skills to support pregnant women and women with babies and toddlers. Thanks to Sylvia Adams Foundation for funding this vital work.

➔ **Read more: www.womensaid.org.uk/children-young-people**

**Department
of Work and
Pensions**

270 Job Centre
managers
trained

45 Personal
Support Unit
volunteers
trained

Family Courts

**East Midland
Trains**

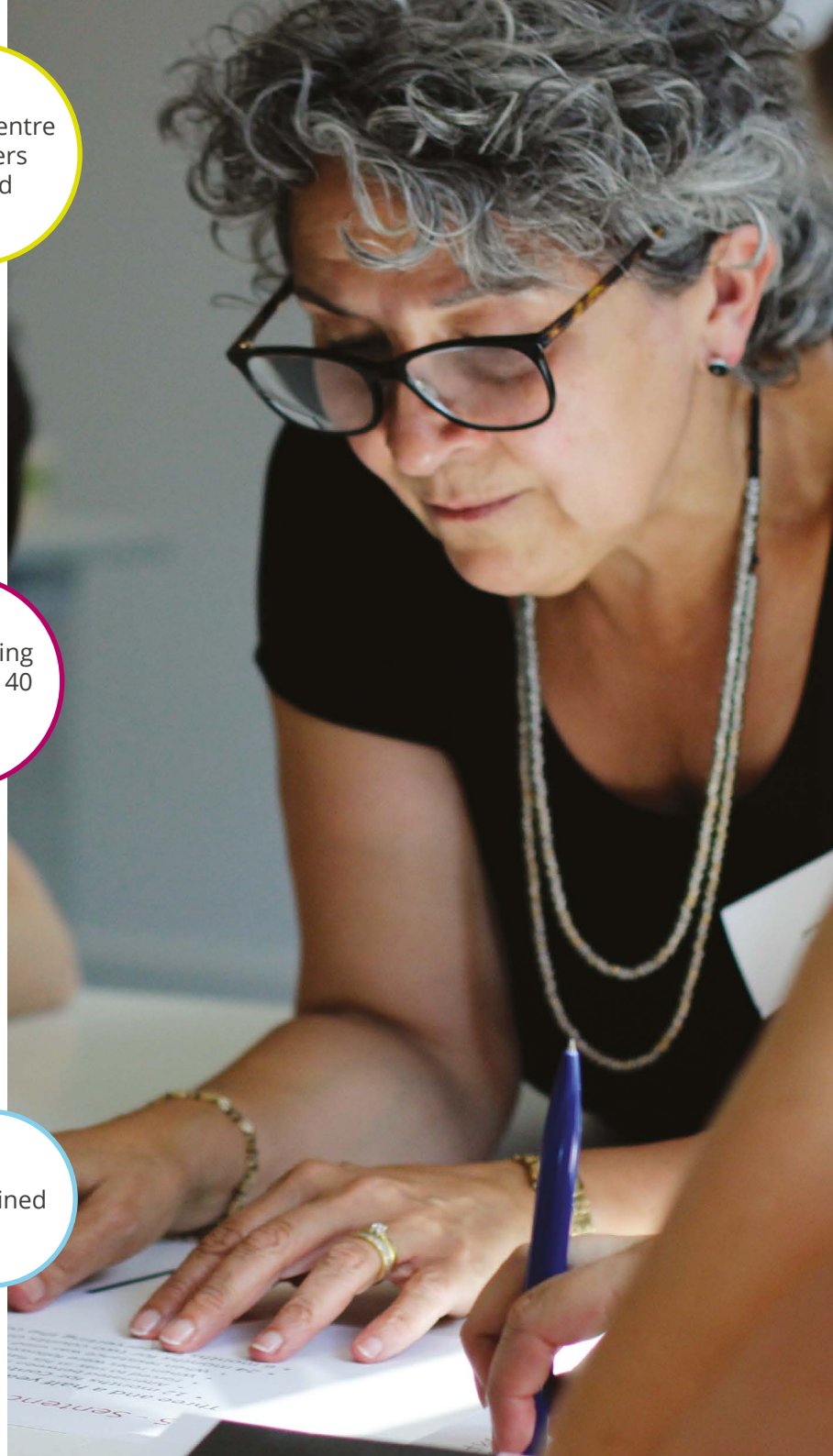
Safeguarding
training to 40
staff

100 staff
trained

**Sovereign
Housing
Association**

**Continuing
Professional
Development**

70 trained



Survivors' voices at the heart of decision-making

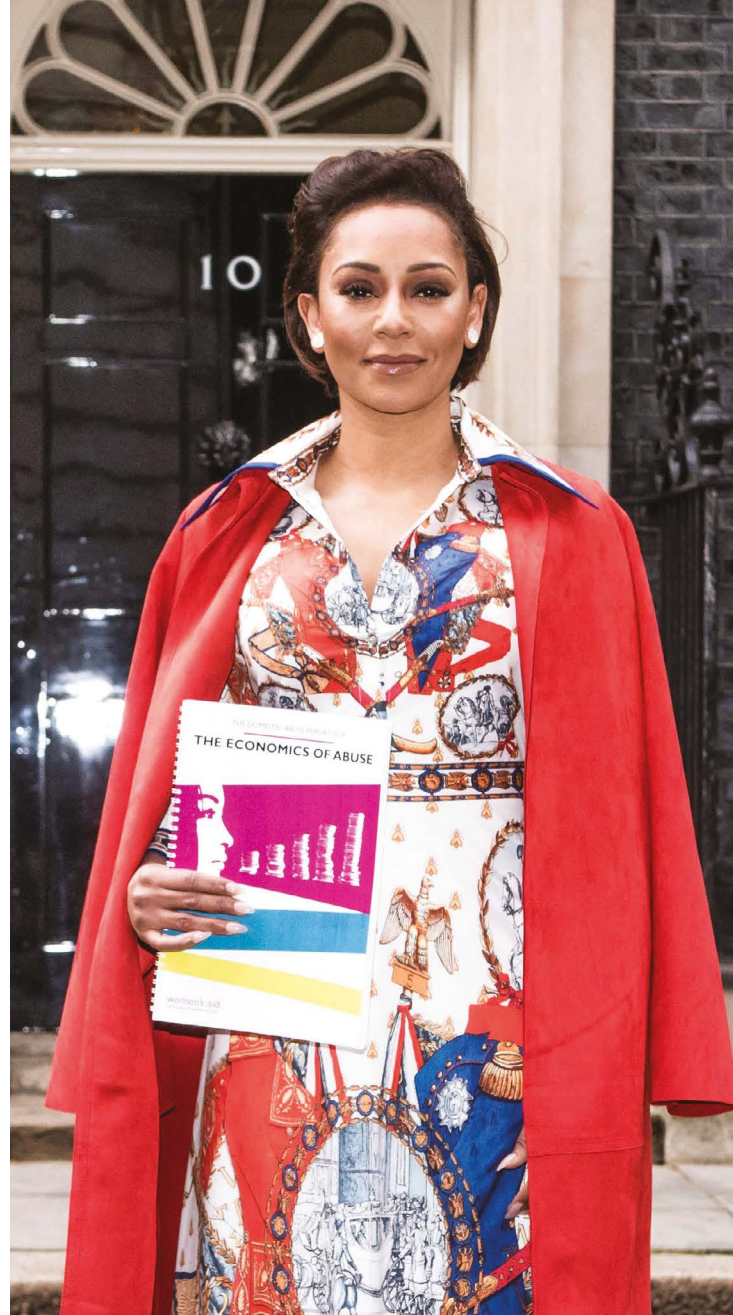
Our newest patron, Melanie Brown, is helping to amplify the voices of fellow survivors, and shape policies that can change the course of their lives.

“This year, I am proud to have joined Women’s Aid as a patron. I know only too well that domestic abuse happens to women from all walks of life.

Despite earning good money and having a successful career in music and entertainment, when I built up the courage to leave my abuser I had just \$936 to my name. Without access to money — no matter how much you have on paper — you feel trapped and alone, especially if you have been isolated from your friends and family.

The government needs to hear the voices of women who have lived in fear from abuse. We need a strong domestic abuse bill that will protect survivors, and for the government to provide the funding needed for lifesaving services, like the refuge I visited in my hometown of Leeds in November.

I am not just honoured but I am also deeply humbled by the support I have received from Women’s Aid, and it is my mission to make a difference to the lives of others through my role. My story is your story and I want to make sure it is not over yet.



Melanie Brown presents *The Domestic Abuse Report 2019: The Economics of Abuse* to 10 Downing Street, to campaign for better support and protection for survivors.

A domestic abuse bill for survivors

After years of campaigning for greater legal protection for survivors the government responded with its landmark domestic abuse bill, the draft of which was published on 21st January 2019. We have are working tirelessly to bring MPs, survivors and services together to ensure this bill will deliver.

SURVIVOR CONSULTATION

When the government announced its consultation on the bill we went straight to those whose voices matter most. **184** survivors from our network of **Campaign Champions**, online **Survivors' Forum**, and **National Survivors' Participation Panel: Liberating Voices** completed an online survey.

DEVELOPING PUBLIC POLICY

The voices of survivors and members are heard in our responses to government consultations and calls for evidence from parliamentary select committees. In addition, we are the **secretariat** for the **All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Domestic Violence and Abuse**, amplifying the voices of survivors and members to shape policy.

212
mentions

We were mentioned **212** times in parliament, in **34** Commons debates, and in **18** Lords debates.

“

There needs to be greater awareness of how domestic abuse and honour-based violence affects disabled women, as well as the additional barriers disabled women face when escaping the abuse. The bill must deliver mandatory training for all professionals who are working with disabled women.”

Campaigner Saliha Rashid, who spoke at our Public Policy Conference in 2019



Law In The Making is an innovative project funded by the **Legal Education Foundation**, bringing together a diverse group of survivors to learn about democracy, and offering opportunities to engage with MPs.

➔ Find out more:
[www.womensaid.org.uk/
law-in-the-making](http://www.womensaid.org.uk/law-in-the-making)

Child First

Survivors told us that child contact remains one of their biggest concerns. Our Child First campaign has been immensely successful, and has had direct influence on practice and policy:

- On January 21st the government introduced a **ban on abusers cross-examining victims in the family courts** in the new draft domestic abuse bill.
- **Cafcass** has substantially **revised its Child Impact Assessment** in light of our concerns about domestic abuse and parental alienation.
- On 21st May 2019, the **government announced an expert review** of how the **family courts** protect children and parents in cases of domestic abuse. Women's Aid, as the only domestic abuse charity on the panel, will ensure that women's and children's voices are heard.

160,000 CHILD VICTIMS

In September 2018, Women's Aid and creative agency Engine teamed up to create an **award-winning cinema ad** shining a light on the hidden victims of domestic abuse.

Despite the statistics, there has been a 16% reduction in the provision of dedicated children and young people's domestic abuse services since 2010 (*Survival and Beyond, Women's Aid 2018*).

This is why we continue to raise awareness and campaign for the value of children's services to be recognised.

➔ Watch here: www.womensaid.org.uk/hiddenvictims



Changing hearts and minds

Understanding respectful relationships and challenging deep-rooted misogynist behaviour is key to ending domestic abuse.

LOVE RESPECT

Our digital service for younger women took a step forward, receiving funding to go live in summer 2019. We hope it will be a much needed resource to help young women to identify abuse and take steps to leave unhealthy relationships.

ONLINE TOOL FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

We worked with **The Mix** to launch a new tool to help young people identify abuse in August 2018, using research from Love Respect and offering expert advice to them on the nuances of domestic abuse.

**2k
sessions**

There were **2,000 sessions** in the **first week** of launch alone and there have been over **100,000 messages** exchanged since then.

COSMOPOLITAN

Our continued partnership with Cosmopolitan magazine has led to extensive coverage of Women's Aid online, helping young women to recognise abuse and get help.

LOVE ISLAND 2018: WOMEN'S AID ISSUES WARNING ABOUT ADAM'S 'UNACCEPTABLE' BEHAVIOUR

The domestic abuse charity has called on viewers to speak out against emotional abuse

Olivia Petter @oliviapetter1

Thursday 21 June 2018 12:08 | 4 comments |



CALLING IT OUT

TV and social media have an enormous impact on attitudes towards women. We call out abuse where it is being normalised, especially on influential programmes like *The Only Way Is Essex* and *Love Island*.

Our warnings about controlling behaviour on **Love Island** prompted a national conversation about gaslighting and **868 mentions in the media**.

Gaslighting was shortlisted by the **Oxford Dictionary** as one of the 'Words of 2018', citing Women's Aid's media work as the reason behind its increased prominence.

Standing **together**

Survivors' voices are amplified by our social communities and supporters. We will not be silenced until every survivor knows they are not alone.

SURVIVOR RECEPTION

To celebrate the amazing achievements of our survivor spokeswomen, in February we hosted an afternoon tea at Facebook's London headquarters. Without the input of survivors, our work would not have the same impact and we would not be able to reach so many women with information on how to get help and support.



SOCIAL COMMUNITIES

Our online platforms are the place to go for conversation, comments and campaigns. We share our stories every day, with photos of our key moments, and value the close relationships we have with our supporters through social media.

Our **highest performing posts on Facebook** reached up to **419,000 people**.

49k

We have over **49,000** followers on **Facebook...**

111k

...over **111,000** followers on **Twitter...**

9k

...and over **9,000** followers on **Instagram.**



By March 2019 we had **870 Campaign Champions** signed up, and supported them with a new toolkit.

#NOTALONE

During our traditional key campaigning period, 16 Days of Action, we spread a message of strength and solidarity with the help of celebrity supporters, Rebecca Humphries (pictured), Part-Time Working Mummy Rachaele Hambleton, Faye Ripley and our patron Melanie Brown.

Our #NotAlone short film, where we read out powerful statements from survivors, reached **40k people** during the 16 Days.



CAKE SALES FOR GOOD

Ahmadiyya Muslim Women's Association raised an amazing £9,000 over two months of fundraising events including their delicious cake sales!



TOP OF THE WORLD

Nadia Stephenson trekked to **Everest Base Camp** to raise money for Women's Aid. The hike took two weeks and Base Camp sits at an altitude of 5,364 metres above sea level. Nadia has raised an incredible £2,207 to date.

"I just want to raise money for a worthwhile cause and keep people talking about gender-based violence."



SELF DEFENCE

Julian Johnson has been holding self-defence classes every few months for the last two years, raising over £1k so far.



Services for survivors

SURVIVORS' FORUM

The Survivors' Forum is a welcoming, supportive community, where women share advice with others who can identify through their own experiences. It not only helps women to survive, but it also gives space for recovery so they can thrive.

1.3k

On average around 1,300 survivors are active on the forum every month.

HELPLINE

The Freephone 24 Hour National Domestic Violence Helpline, run in partnership with Refuge, continues to provide a vital service to survivors, professionals and families. With access to Women's Aid's Routes to Support directory, it connects callers to almost **368** services across the country.

**108,918
calls**

The helpline handled 108,918 calls from 1st April 2018 - 31st March 2019.

GROWING OUR SERVICES

For many people it's hard to pluck up the courage to call us. As more people go online to look for advice, we decided to pilot an online chat service to try and reach more people, which is going live soon.

“

“This is the only place where I can meet women who understand me. I can talk freely about my suffering and receive the emotional support that I need so much.”

“

“Thank you for creating a space where I can get support and therapy. You don't know how many times this forum has saved me. Thank you, thank you, thank you a million times.”

No woman turned away

THE PROJECT

Since 2015, Women's Aid has been commissioned by the **Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government** to run the **No Woman Turned Away (NwTA)** project, providing specialist support for women facing difficulties accessing a refuge space.

This year we reported on the experiences of the 267 women supported between January 2017 and January 2018, and revealed a widespread systemic failure from statutory agencies such as housing, social care and the police.

“

“For some women it's only one chance, it's their last chance to call a service — it might be their one and only chance — and the helpline takes it and then we [the NwTA team] can take it further.”

That moment when you are lying in bed and dont know you are crying until you realise your pillow is wet.....



USING ART FOR DEEPER UNDERSTANDING

As the project enters its third year, we continue to provide the No Woman Turned Away service. This year we have been working with survivors using art-based methods to express their emotions and journeys. The image above was drawn by one of our participants. The report of this year's work and a gallery of the survivors' artwork will be published in September 2019.

➔ Find out more about our 2018 report: www.womensaid.org.uk/nowhere-to-turn-2018

United against domestic abuse

We are planning for a future where all survivors get the right response to domestic abuse the first time they reach out, whoever they turn to, and wherever they are. Change That Lasts is our answer to that, and it's embedding across the UK, in communities, workplaces and services.

ASK ME

The Ask Me scheme makes Community Ambassadors out of ordinary people by equipping them with an understanding of domestic abuse and how to respond to survivors. With these new skills, ambassadors raise awareness of domestic abuse in their communities and encourage conversation.

403

403 ambassadors have been trained in Nottingham/ Nottinghamshire, Surrey, Sunderland, Waltham Forest, Powys, East Sussex and Brighton & Hove.

217

Community Ambassadors in our pilot sites instigated over **217 conversations** about domestic abuse.

TRUSTED PROFESSIONALS

The Trusted Professional scheme is for practitioners working in the public and voluntary sectors, who are likely to be in contact with survivors of domestic abuse. They receive training which builds on the trusting relationship already established with survivors and focuses on the non-physical, coercive and controlling signs of domestic abuse.

270

270 Trusted Professionals have now been **trained**.

96%

96% of professionals felt confident **recognising coercive control** after training, up from 43% before.



This year we have been further developing **Expert VOICES**, setting the gold standard for dedicated domestic abuse services to respond to survivors in 2020. We have **trebled** the member services we have worked with this year alone.

CHANGE THAT LASTS — SITES IN THE UK —

Change That Lasts sites are now operational all over the UK, thanks to local partners and our sister federations, **Scottish Women's Aid**, **Welsh Women's Aid**, and **Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland**.



“

“I am now able to guide other women to the right organisations and able to use the correct skills to listen to the person.”

“

“It's really going to change the way I deal with friends talking about their partners' controlling, abusive behaviours.”

“

“This has totally changed my attitude towards those suffering domestic abuse. I am so glad I signed up to this course.”

➔ Find out more:
[www.womensaid.org.uk/
about-change-that-lasts](http://www.womensaid.org.uk/about-change-that-lasts)



THANK YOU



TO OUR FUNDERS:

National Lottery
Community Fund
Refinery29

Chartered Institute of Housing

Avon

D&D

Etre Cecile

Dinny Hall

Wake Skincare

Aico

Kering Foundation

Bloom

Comic Relief

Oak Foundation

Lloyds Bank Foundation

Sylvia Adams Charitable Trust

The Henry Smith Charity

Big Potential

The Legal Education Foundation

Silicon Valley Community
Foundation

The City Bridge Trust

King Baudouin Foundation

The Persula Foundation

Jusaca Charitable Trust

Ian Mactaggart Trust

Eleanor Rathbone Charitable Trust

People's Postcode Trust

Department for Digital, Culture,
Media and Sport

Home Office

London Councils

Ministry of Housing, Communities
and Local Government

Waltham Forest Borough Council

Lincolnshire Police and Crime
Commissioner

We are also grateful to all of the other smaller trusts, corporates and organisations not listed above which are an integral part of our work.

TO THE SURVIVORS AND SUPPORTERS FEATURED ON THE COVER:

Clockwise from top left: **Alice Liveing**, Women's Aid Ambassador • Staff at Women's March London • **Melanie Brown**, Women's Aid Patron • **Rachaele Hambleton**, Supporter • **Claire Throssell**, Campaigner **Saliha Rashid**, Campaigner • **Julie Walters**, Women's Aid Patron; **David Challen**, Campaigner; **Melanie Brown**, Women's Aid Patron • **Luke and Ryan Hart**, Campaigners

0808 2000 247 Freephone 24 Hour National Domestic Violence Helpline
(run in partnership with Refuge)

Twitter: @womensaid || facebook.com/womensaid || www.womensaid.org.uk