

Annual Report
2008/2009



 scottish
women's aid
changing **attitudes** changing lives

Scottish Women's Aid is the lead organisation in Scotland working towards the prevention of domestic abuse. The organisation plays a vital role in campaigning and lobbying for effective responses to domestic abuse.

An important aspect of our work is ensuring that women, children and young people get the services they need, both from local Women's Aid groups and from the agencies they are likely to contact.

Our members are local Women's Aid groups which provide specialist services to women, children and young people. These include safe refuge accommodation, information and support.

Our mission statement

Scottish Women's Aid works to end violence against women by tackling its root cause, which is gender inequality. We do this by:

- Promoting women's equality and children's rights.
- Campaigning for responses that actively prevent violence against women.
- Working to ensure that services are available to women, children and young people with experience of domestic abuse.
- Providing services and advice to our members.

FOREWORD AND WELCOME

This is our 33rd annual report as the lead organisation in Scotland working to prevent domestic abuse.

It has been a busy year for the organisation with real progress in major policy areas, as well as positive changes within the organisation. There have also been challenges along the way and we have worked hard to address them and ensure that the prevention of domestic abuse and the provision of services for the women and children experiencing it remains a priority for policy makers and services providers alike.

As part of our ongoing drive to improve the ways in which we communicate we undertook a rebranding exercise, resulting in a new logo for SWA as well as a brand new website, with particular pages dedicated to children and young people as well as to our members. This presents us with a new way of reaching out to our groups, students, people who work with women and children experiencing domestic abuse and, of course, with the women and children themselves. This resource will be under constant review to ensure that our audience has access to our news, publications and other relevant documents.

One of those documents is our analysis of the Single Outcome Agreements determined by each local authority and the priority given to the prevention of domestic abuse and other forms of violence against women. This represented a major piece of work for SWA and we will be updating the analysis in the coming year.

On a national level, the Scottish Government published its National Domestic Abuse Delivery plan in June last year presenting a fresh opportunity in our ongoing work with the Scottish Government. The Delivery Plan detailed thirteen Priorities for Action under the key themes of protection, provision, primary prevention through education, and participation. The Plan presents a holistic approach to addressing domestic abuse and we will continue to work with the Scottish Government as part of the National Domestic Abuse Delivery Group on the implementation of the plan.



Amanda Jones

Finally I'd like to express my thanks to the Manager and staff at Scottish Women's Aid and to our members, the Women's Aid groups which provide invaluable specialist support to women, children and young people experiencing domestic abuse.

I'd also like to thank our partners, the Scottish Government, which supports our work not only through funding but also through its continued commitment to tackling domestic abuse and other forms of violence against women.

Amanda Jones

Chair of the Directors' Group, Scottish Women's Aid

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP FOR CHANGE

CEDAR pilot project launched

Building on much of the excellent work that has been done to develop services for children and young people, Scottish Women's Aid, in collaboration with Edinburgh, Fife and Forth Valley local authorities (LAs) formed the National Cedar Partnership.

Funded by the Scottish Government, Cedar (Children experiencing domestic abuse recovery project) established three local projects to pilot a multi-agency therapeutic group work programme for children and their mothers who have experienced domestic abuse and are at a stage where they feel able to rebuild their lives.

The group work model is based on a Community Groupwork Treatment (CGP) Programme that was originally developed in Ontario, Canada

The National Cedar Project has commissioned researchers to evaluate the pilots, the findings of which will be used to facilitate the sharing of practice across the three areas.

SOA analysis report

Following the election of the SNP Government, and the subsequent signing of the Concordat between national and local government in November 2007, we undertook research into the introduction of Single Outcome Agreements (SOAs) for local authorities. We also looked into the possible implications resulting from the removal of ring-fencing from the Supporting People fund, from which Women's Aid Groups receive much of their funding.

The resulting document – Analysis of local authority Single Outcome Agreements 2008 – was sent to MSPs and councillors, and examined each local authority's description of their local context and references to domestic abuse or violence against women in their Single Outcome Agreements (SOAs).

We continue to monitor the situation in relation to local authorities' funding of Women's Aid groups in Scotland in the run-up to the 2010 spending review, and will produce a follow-up report in the coming year.



“Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing Nicola Sturgeon, Dr. Claudia Garcia and SWA Manager Lily Greenan addressed delegates at the SWA conference”

SWA conference

Our annual conference this year brought people together from across Scotland for a day of exploring issues around domestic abuse, as well as a chance for some informal networking. The theme of the day encouraged delegates to “Think globally, act locally” to end domestic abuse by tackling gender inequality. The conference brought together international, national and local perspectives on ending domestic abuse by tackling gender inequality. We featured a number of prestigious keynote speakers, as well as parallel sessions chaired by experts who informed delegates, and encouraged them to share their own experience and knowledge.

Amongst the issues discussed, debated and explored on the day was the signing of the Concordat between national and local government, and how groups could effectively engage with the changing dynamic in a way that would address gender inequality and domestic abuse.

Speakers invited to address our delegates included Dr. Claudia Garcia Moreno, Coordinator of the Department of Gender and Women’s Health at the World Health Organisation, who spoke about International perspectives on gender based violence and health and Nicola Sturgeon MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing who responded on behalf of the Scottish Government. The Cabinet Secretary outlined ways in

which the Scottish Government plans to address gender inequality and violence against women through its strategic objectives. She told delegates: "Violence and fear should not be part of anyone's life. That is why the Scottish Government has been so committed to tackling all forms of violence against women."

Dr. Madeline Coy, Child and Woman Abuse Studies Unit, London Metropolitan University spoke about the Map of Gaps: the Postcode Lottery of Violence Against Women Support Services and Morag Alexander, Scotland Commissioner for the Equality and Human Rights Commission spoke about the Gender Equality Duty and local authority responsibilities.

What our delegates said

"Nicola Sturgeon was impressive, it is good to see that the government are keeping violence against women and children on the agenda"

"Great networking, a renewed determination to make a difference at my workplace. A big injection of enthusiasm"

"I think the link between global and local worked really well"

REACHING OUT TO CHANGE LIVES

Website development

Improving access to our information and resources was a key focus of the past year. The development of a new website was an exciting part of that. The new site offers a great resource for Women's Aid groups, students, people working with women, children and young people experiencing domestic abuse and women and children themselves.

We incorporated a dedicated area for children and young people on the site, which has general information about domestic abuse, information about what they can do if they are experiencing abuse or know someone who is.

Written in plain language, with a view to improving accessibility to our services, this resource is in continual development for members of the public, stakeholders and Women's Aid Groups to find out what we do, access SWA publications and research and find out more about domestic abuse and what support and services are available. Our pages for young people also contain short video clips featuring children and young people sharing their experiences and talking about the support they had from a Women's Aid group.

In addition the website hosts a dedicated site for our member groups, where they can keep up-to-date with training opportunities and events, campaigns and policy developments.

16 days event and post-card campaign

Making the most of the opportunity to highlight the ongoing issues around violence against women, we participated in the 16 days of action against gender based violence. We hosted a play by Naomi Breeze which explored the dynamics of domestic abuse and coercive control, as well as launching a postcard campaign aimed at local authorities. The campaign was successful in sending a powerful message to policy makers about gender-based violence and their role in tackling it.



“Our postcard campaign sent a powerful message to policy makers”

International Women's Day

In celebration of women we approached women from around Scotland to make a contribution to an online exhibition, taking as the subject 'what makes a woman?', inspired by the 60th anniversary of Simone de Beauvoir's work "The Second Sex".

Training

We delivered a comprehensive training programme to our members as well as to external agencies throughout the year in order to raise awareness of domestic abuse and other gender-based violence. Our biannual training calendar had a high up-take of courses. In addition we delivered training to the Scottish Police College, the Crown Office and the Procurator Fiscal Service focusing on training drug and alcohol workers. We also delivered seminars on 'training for trainers'.

Our external training work has also supported the development of some of the new health initiatives arising from the National Domestic Abuse Delivery Plan and developed and we have delivered training with the Tayside Multiple and Complex Needs Project.

Gender Justice training module

As part of our work to promote activities that link Domestic Abuse to women's inequality, we continued to deliver a Gender Justice Module at Queen Margaret University in Edinburgh, which is funded by the Scottish Government. Preparatory work also started on a postgraduate course. The advisory group in relation to course content included Rape Crisis Scotland, the Women's Support Project and other representatives working on violence against women.

SWA and Amnesty International UK – women with no recourse to public funds

We continued our work on the campaign to secure rights for women with no recourse to public funds (WNRPF) in partnership with Amnesty International UK, with a demonstration outside the Scottish Parliament in December. As things stand, women with insecure immigration status are forced to choose between living with an abusive partner or destitution because they are barred from claiming benefits and receive no other financial support should they decide to leave. Workers from Women's Aid Groups, Amnesty International and women and children experiencing domestic abuse congregated to join the call for an emergency fund to aid women in this situation. Protesters also urged MSPs to lobby Westminster politicians and UK Ministers for a change to Home Office rules.

In 2007-08 alone, 106 of the 139 women requesting refuge accommodation from Women's Aid groups in Scotland had to be turned away because they had no recourse to public funds.

The cost of accommodating the other 33 women and children - £120,047 – was absorbed by the Women's Aid groups through loss of potential rent income.



“Women and children lobbied Parliament over the “No Recourse to Public Funds” Rule”

Consultations and committees

As part of our ongoing engagement with policy makers in the Scottish Parliament, we responded to both the Sexual Offences (Scotland) Bill and the Offences (Aggravation By Prejudice) (Scotland) Bill. In both instances we submitted written evidence to Parliamentary Committees, as well as appearing before MSPs to provide further details about the proposed legislation. We will be monitoring progress of the Bills in the coming year, and responding as appropriate.

In addition, we responded to Scottish Government consultations on forced marriage, sentencing guidelines and the sentencing council as well as a Law Society Consultation on Law Society Standards and Conduct and on legal training.

Changing Lives film launch

To highlight the importance of the excellent work that Women's Aid groups do in Scotland, we produced a DVD – *Changing Lives* – showing the impact that our groups have. The film was accompanied by a detailed publication outlining what domestic abuse is, the impact that it can have and the work that Women's Aid groups do in order to support women and children who are experiencing it.

SWA premiered the *Changing Lives* DVD to a full house at the Glasgow Film Theatre in March. The women who took part in the film were there for the special screening, along with Women's Aid workers from around Scotland. Celebrated singer/song writer Karine Polwart donated the music for the film's soundtrack and the audience was addressed following the screening by Dr Evan Stark – a long standing campaigner for women's rights and the founder of the first refuges for women experiencing domestic abuse in the United States.

Changing Lives – Women's Aid in Scotland is the result of months of hard work and collaboration between SWA, local Women's Aid groups and women, children and young people who have used Women's Aid services. The 15 minute film shows the excellent work being done every day by Women's Aid groups across Scotland. Women who have used the services talk about the impact Women's Aid has had on their lives and Women's Aid workers give an insight into the range of services they provide.

In the coming year, as a means of helping our groups to use the DVD and publication as effective tools to highlight the specialist nature of services to funders, we plan to host a series of 'roadshow' events across Scotland on PR and effective communication.

SUPPORTING GROUPS FROM SHETLAND TO THE BORDERS

Regional Forums

In response to requests from our members we held 12 regional forums in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Inverness. They covered issues around housing, children, finance and management and presented an opportunity on information exchange between groups and SWA. Due to the positive feedback received about these events, more will be scheduled for the coming year.

Supporting and informing our groups

SWA produced a number of bulletins in order to inform our members about relevant policy developments, relevant research, consultations and relevant work being undertaken both by SWA and other external organisations. These included four bulletins each on housing, children and young people, legal information and employment.

In addition we provided independent support to a number of groups throughout the year on issues such as management, governance, recruitment and funding.

Members' conference – service user involvement

Our Members' Conference looked at the issue of Service User Involvement (SUI) - Realising the Potential. Gill Hague delivered the keynote address, and contributions were also made by representatives from the organisation Eighteen and Under and from Stirling Council. During workshops, groups examined different approaches to service user involvement and the challenges to effective SUI. Service user involvement is core to how our groups work with women, children and young people as a way of ensuring that services remain relevant and appropriate. Delegates examined ways to develop both day-to-day and long-term plans in order that they could take immediate action as well as having an eye on the future.

Training the network

We continued with a varied programme of training for our members in the past year to positive feedback. We developed a seminar on domestic abuse and substance misuse, both as a means of counteracting some of the myths and stereotypes around perpetrators of Domestic Abuse and alcohol and substance misuse, and exploring some of the issues around women who experience Domestic Abuse and have a drug or alcohol problems. In addition we provided training on the protection of vulnerable adults and delivered 14 seminars to members over the course of the year.

Member Statistics Working Group

As part of our drive to establish a consistent system of collecting information about Women's Aid groups and the women, children and young people who use our services, we established the statistics review and working group in order to develop more effective approaches to collecting and disseminating information. It is intended that, in the future, statistics will be used to better establish how many women access WA services and what gaps exist in provision.

Scottish Women's Aid Membership as at 31 March 2009

Angus Women's Aid
Argyll & Bute Women's Aid
Caithness and Sutherland Women's Aid
Clackmannanshire Women's Aid
Clydebank Women's Aid
Drumchapel Women's Aid
Dumbarton District Women's Aid
Dundee Women's Aid
Dunfermline Women's Aid
East Ayrshire Women's Aid
East Dunbartonshire
East Fife Women's Aid
East Kilbride Women's Aid
East Lothian Women's Aid
East Renfrewshire Women's Aid
Edinburgh Women's Aid
Falkirk & District Women's Aid
Glasgow Women's Aid
Glasgow East Women's Aid
Hamilton & Clydesdale Women's Aid
Hemat Gryffe Women's Aid
Inverclyde Women's Aid
Inverness Women's Aid
Kirkcaldy Women's Aid
Lochaber Women's Aid
Monklands Women's Aid
Moray Women's Aid
Motherwell District Women's Aid
North Ayrshire Women's Aid
Perthshire Women's Aid
Renfrewshire Women's Aid
Ross-shire Women's Aid
Shakti Women's Aid
Shetland Women's Aid
South Ayrshire Women's Aid
Stirling Women's Aid
West Lothian Women's Aid
Western Isles Women's Aid
Wigtownshire Women's Aid
Womens Aid Orkney

Directors Group Members as at 31 March 2009

Pamela Brunt
Amanda Jones

Liz Watson
Lorraine McKenzie

Contact Details and Staff Information

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Heather Coady - Children's Policy Worker/Senior Practitioner

Kirstie Farmer - Participation Worker

Ellie Hutchinson - Prevention Worker

Louise Johnson - Legal Issues Worker

Jacq Kelly - Communications Worker

Ash Kuloo - Learning and Development Coordinator

Fiona Morrison - Children's Policy Worker

Lydia Okroj - Housing Development Worker/Senior Practitioner

Jo Ozga - Housing Development Worker/Senior Practitioner

Marguerite le Riche - Senior Administrator

Janet Saunders - Children's Service Development Worker

Emma Sutherland - Administration Worker

Cheryl Sutherland Stewart - Information and Research Worker

Nel Whiting - External Training Officer

Diane Wilson - Finance Worker

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