

A woman and a young girl are shown in profile, smiling and blowing bubbles. The woman is in the upper left, and the girl is in the lower center. The background is a warm, orange-toned scene with many small bubbles and one larger, prominent bubble on the right. The overall mood is joyful and hopeful.

# Edinburgh WOMEN'S AID

SUPPORTING SURVIVORS

IMPACT REPORT  
2018/19

**“ Before I called Edinburgh Women’s Aid I believed everything that happened was my fault. With your help, I started to believe in myself again and slowly returned to normal life. ”**

**“ Your kindness and patience are what have kept me sane throughout the most harrowing journey of my life. ”**

**“ I can’t even tell you how much it helps to know you guys are there and understand my situation. ”**

**“ I would not be here now if it was not for you. ”**

# OUR CHAIR

**Our first refuge was set up in Edinburgh 46 years ago to support women and children experiencing domestic abuse. Since then our organisation has continued to grow and strengthen, to offer new, innovative services and to work in vibrant and strong partnerships with other organisations; with funders, policy makers, sister organisations and referral agencies.**

Sadly though our services are still needed as much, if not more, than ever, with almost 2000 women and children using our services this year. Domestic abuse remains a significant issue in Scotland with around 60,000 cases reported annually, and over 80% of these perpetrated against women. Yet at the same time, funding for essential domestic abuse services is at best stagnant and at worse decreasing. Edinburgh Women's Aid is tasked therefore, as are most third sector organisations, with doing more, with less.

This report demonstrates the impact we have made this year as the leading service provider for domestic abuse response in Edinburgh. It demonstrates the meaningful change we deliver to the lives of the women and children we work with, and how essential our services are to meeting these needs.

All of these achievements would not be possible without the commitment, passion and skill of our staff, and the dedication and hard work of our Board members. This year is my last as EWA Chair, as I step down after 6 years on the EWA board. It has been an honour as Chair to be part of and work with the women of EWA who are committed to achieving our vision and mission and be part of the ongoing struggle to eliminate violence against women and children.

**Naomi Blight**



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# THE YEAR IN NUMBERS

**794**

women contacted our helpline or attended a drop-in for support

**63**

women stayed in refuge accommodation

**70**

children were supported through our outreach service

**1096**

women used the EDDACS court support service

**38**

children and young people were supported by our court advocacy service

**37**

women engaged with our employability service

**684**

people attended training with us

**29**

children stayed in refuge

In total we supported

**1788**

women and

**187**

children and young people

**18**

children and

**19**

mothers completed CEDAR a domestic abuse recovery programme

# OUR CEO

## Welcome to our first Impact Report

During 2018-2019 we improved our monitoring and evaluation so that we can better evidence the difference our organisation makes to the women, children and young people who use our services.

Over the last five years at Edinburgh Women's Aid I have led an inspiring team of staff committed to providing the best outcomes for women and children. I am proud to be able to introduce this report that shows the difference our work has made through crisis intervention, therapeutic support and recovery programmes.

This year we have continued to develop our services in response to what women and children tell us they need, and as always we have supported women and children to use their voice to make change in society. A powerful tool in domestic abuse is silencing the victim. Raising the voices of women and children is not only about supporting others to hear them and learn. It is also a crucial element of the recovery journey. We support survivors to know that they are not alone and to appreciate that what has happened to them is not their fault, so that the shame surrounding abuse begins to lift. In this report you will read some of the stories of courage and survival behind the numbers.

We want the best outcomes for women and children. We know that we cannot achieve this alone. We continue to work alongside existing partners and to create new partnerships. The importance of being part of a national network of other women's aid organisations cannot be understated. Locally we work closely with Shakti Women's Aid, the police, social work, housing and schools. New projects this year have included a piece of work with the Edinburgh Poetry Library to produce '*When Women Speak, I Hear*,' an anthology of poems written by survivors, and working with the universities in Edinburgh to reduce gender based violence among students.

**Linda Rodgers**




## KIRSTY'S STORY

Kirsty was in her 40s and had been with her abusive partner for 3 years. She had normalised and minimised her partner's controlling and undermining behaviour, ignoring warning signs and family concerns because she believed that things were all her fault. She regularly visited her GP because of her anxiety, stomach problems, headaches and debilitating fatigue. Eventually her GP referred her to Edinburgh Women's Aid's drop-in service.

Staff at Edinburgh Women's Aid recognised the severity of Kirsty's situation and supported her to put together a safety plan. She was provided with accommodation in one of our refuges so she could escape the abuse and was supported to begin to address some of the issues which had kept her locked in an abusive relationship.

Since escaping from her abuser, Kirsty has signed up for a course to develop her skills and learning and has benefitted from the support of other women who have been through similar experiences. Kirsty now has a much greater sense of self-worth, her physical and mental health is much improved and she no longer feels isolated. She says that for the first time in ages, she is looking forward to the future.





# WHAT IS DOMESTIC ABUSE?

**Domestic abuse is persistent and controlling behaviour by a partner or ex-partner which causes physical, sexual and/or emotional harm. It often gets worse over time. It is a pattern of dominating and isolating someone through fear and threats or undermining their self-confidence and self-esteem.**

Domestic Abuse, sometimes called 'intimate terrorism' can happen if you live with your partner, or if you don't. It can be perpetrated by a partner or an ex-partner. It can happen if you have children, and if you don't, and it cuts across class, ethnic and social boundaries.

Domestic Abuse often involves serious and sustained physical and sexual abuse which can cause injuries and lead to long-term health problems. It can take the form of withholding money and finances, monitoring women and children's movements, restricting what they wear, who they see, where they go and what they say, on and offline.

Although domestic abuse can happen in same-sex relationships and men can be victims too, in the vast majority of cases the abuse is experienced by women and children and perpetrated by men.

**It is estimated that 1 in 4 women and 1 in 5 children and young people will experience domestic abuse.**

ANGRY

ANNOYED

SCARED

TERRIFIED

CONFUSED

SAD

SHOCKED

HEARTBROKEN

DESTROYED

*Words used by children attending the Children Experiencing Domestic Abuse Recovery programme to describe how they felt about what they had been experiencing.*

# HOW WOMEN AND CHILDREN ARE AFFECTED BY DOMESTIC ABUSE

**Domestic abuse can have serious short and long-term effects on physical and mental health and can have high social and economic costs for those directly affected, their families and communities.**

Domestic abuse can destroy confidence and self-esteem, and propel women affected into unemployment or underemployment and can result in poverty and homelessness.

In the most severe cases, victims of domestic abuse may be permanently harmed or killed by the perpetrator.

Effects of domestic abuse on children can include but are not limited to: anxiety or depression; difficulty sleeping; nightmares or flashbacks; being easily startled; physical symptoms (such as tummy aches or bedwetting); temper tantrums; problems with school; behaving like a much younger child; aggression or withdrawing from others; and low self-worth. Older children may skip school, use alcohol or drugs or self-harm as a response to abuse.

**I found myself in a desperate situation, with great anxiety as to who I should turn to for support. From the beginning I was welcomed very warmly at Edinburgh Women's Aid and felt safe in speaking of my very upsetting home life. I was given practical advice as well as emotional support, which contributed to giving me the courage to leave an abusive relationship after many years of unhappiness. You offer an amazing service for women and their children when they have nowhere else to go. Thank you.**



## ABOUT EDINBURGH WOMEN'S AID

### **Edinburgh Women's Aid's vision is a society that is free from domestic abuse.**

To that end, we have been providing critical support to women and children affected by domestic abuse for the past 46 years. We provide a range of services covering crisis support, recovery and prevention.

We empower women, children and young people to make their own decisions and support them in this process.

We frequently work in partnership with other organisations and together we are developing an effective multi-disciplinary approach to dealing with domestic abuse across Edinburgh and beyond.

**In 2018/19 we supported 1788 women and 187 children and young people to recover from the trauma of domestic abuse.**

# OUR SERVICES

We provide Crisis, Recovery and Prevention services for **women, children and young people** affected by domestic abuse:

## Crisis

- Helpline and drop-in open 6 days a week
- Refuge accommodation for women
- Court Advocacy
- 1:1 Support
- Refuge accommodation for children and young people alongside their mothers
- Court Advocacy for Children and Young People

## Recovery

- Counselling
- Peer Support
- Housing Support
- Employability Programme
- 1:1 Support for children and young people
- Children Experiencing Domestic Abuse Recovery – a 12 week therapeutic programme for children, young people and their mothers
- Art Therapy for children and young people

## Prevention

- Awareness raising and training for students and professionals

# SUPPORTING WOMEN

## Helpline and Drop-in Support

Our free helpline and drop-in service are open 6 days a week, 52 weeks of the year, closing only for the Easter, Christmas and New Year Bank Holidays.

Our helpline and drop-in are the first port of call for women referring themselves or who have been referred into our service.

Our experienced team support women emotionally and practically to identify their needs and assess their options and choices. As with all our services, our helpline and drop-in are non-judgemental and confidential.

**During 2018/19 our helpline and drop-in provided support to 794 women.**

## Refuge Accommodation

Crisis accommodation is available for women and any accompanying children who are at risk of further abuse, or who are homeless as a result of abuse. We offer both shared refuge (women or women and children have their own room in shared accommodation) and refuge with 24 hr support for women and children with higher support needs.

We manage 29 refuge spaces across Edinburgh, all but two of these spaces can accommodate women with children.

We support women and children to find suitable permanent accommodation once they are no longer at risk.

**In 2018/19 we provided refuge accommodation for 63 women and 29 children.**

# JEN'S STORY

Jen was referred to EDDACS after her ex-partner Chris caused serious damage to her property. Jen and Chris had previously been in a long-term relationship which ended as a result of abuse. Chris continued to harass Jen after the relationship ended and he used their youngest child as a means to 'get at' Jen to the detriment of the child's wellbeing.

When the police became involved, EDDACS staff contacted Jen and completed a risk assessment with her and explained the court process. Jen told her EDDACS worker that Chris suffered from poor mental health including schizophrenia and paranoid psychosis, and that he had made threats to kill her in the past. He had a criminal history including assault and indecent exposure. EDDACS staff reported their concerns to Social Services, provided Jen with a personal alarm and made a referral to Edinburgh Women's Aid support service. They also arranged for a home safety assessment with Police Scotland.

EDDACS provided a report to the court to inform them of Jen's concerns and of their assessment of her risk. The accused appeared at court and was given special bail conditions not to contact or approach Jen or enter her address.

Jen disclosed other abuse that had happened and her EDDACS Advocacy Worker encouraged her to report this to the police. Further charges were raised and Chris was charged with three assaults on her, one assault on their oldest child and a further charge of reckless conduct around the youngest child. Jen's EDDACS Advocacy Worker continued to advocate for Jen and her children.

The accused eventually received a community payback order, a supervision order and a 6 year non-harassment order not to contact or approach Jen.

Jen received support from EDDACS over an 8 month period. During that time Jen changed from being fearful and anxious to being more independent and confident to ask for help when she needed it. Jen is now settled, in a new relationship and her sons' emotional wellbeing has improved, a fact that has been noticed by their schools.



## **Court Advocacy (EDDACS)**

EDDACS is a support and advocacy service for female victims of domestic abuse crimes going through the court process.

EDDACS supports women by explaining the court process, the potential outcomes from the court and by completing a risk assessment and individual support and safety plan.

EDDACS also prepare a report for all hearings to inform the court of the clients perception of her risk and of EDDACS assessment of the risk. EDDACS have a worker within the domestic abuse court to advocate for the client.

EDDACS keep clients informed of the court progress and outcomes.

**In 2018/19 EDDACS supported 1094 women,  
581 were new referrals**

## **Counselling**

Free counselling for women affected by domestic abuse is available from our premises in Stockbridge thanks to a unique partnership with Edinburgh University.

## **1:1 Support**

We provide 1:1 support to women accessing our services. We support women to navigate their options and the services available, helping to keep women safe and informed.

We have workers based in different parts of Edinburgh and are able to meet women at a time and place that is convenient for them.

## **Peer Support**

Peer support is provided through regular workshops and group activities.

“These workshops have really helped to build up my confidence. Without them I don't think I would have been able to cope as well with all the financial stress I have been experiencing at the moment.”

“The group has turned me into a new me. I feel my possibilities when I come to this group.”

“This group is the only time in my week that I can think about me.”

“I feel like a normal person when I come to the group.”

“My friend was depressed for ages then I noticed a difference in her. I asked her if she was feeling better and she said she was going to a group and invited me to join her. She said it was changing her and she felt better. I went too and it's been amazing. We both love it and feel different and happy.”

“Before I came to this group I felt very dark and deranged inside. I had trouble sleeping because the thoughts of what happened to me wouldn't go away. When I come to days like this I sleep well and I feel healthy and have happy thoughts.”

“We feel so safe. It's great for my self-confidence and I feel much happier.”

“We get to feel like normal people when we come along to the group; it's a taste of our future lives.”

## Housing Support

We employ a housing specialist to provide advice and support for women seeking permanent accommodation and to work alongside housing associations, Scottish Women's Aid and the City of Edinburgh Council, to improve the housing situation for women and children who have been affected by abuse.

Domestic abuse is a major cause of homelessness in Scotland however research has highlighted that the scale of the problem is under reported, as women may not disclose that they are experiencing domestic abuse when making a homeless application. Many women, when forced to leave their home, initially rely on friends or relatives for a place to stay and do not make a homeless application until later. Domestic abuse is also closely linked with repeat homelessness.

## Employability Support

Our employability programme supports women affected by domestic abuse towards greater economic independence. The programme is a partnership between Edinburgh Women's Aid and Shakti Women's Aid with referrals coming from both organisations. The programme provides specialist wide-ranging support and practical assistance, supporting the participant's health and wellbeing as well as supporting them to gain the particular skills and experience they need to identify and realise their employment ambitions.

Our most recent evaluation shows that 20% of participants entered paid employment, 6% became self-employed, 40% entered formal education or training and 7% took up volunteering.

**In 2018/19, 37 women increased their employability as a result of this project**

# RACHEL'S STORY

My daughter came home today and said that she had been voted Pupil Council Rep in her class! I was amazed that she even put herself forward. A year ago it would have been completely unthinkable as she couldn't really talk at an audible level to most people and was painfully shy.

Thanks to the CEDAR recovery programme she has come on so much. The other day she was going through the cards you all made and she was telling me the names of the people who gave them to her. Both she and my son go through their folders and talk openly about things they have learned. They also won't stop playing, turning our sitting room into a hotel, Lego, imaginary schools etc. and they are both so relaxed and happy!

I am so grateful to you all for giving them this new found confidence as well as giving me the help I needed to be able to support and nurture them.

I have gone from a complete wreck of a person who was too scared to walk down the street alone to a working mum who will be walking across the playground with 2 children who have both just won awards at school. I am so proud and a little bit embarrassed about it all!

*Quote from a mum with two children who all participated in the CEDAR recovery programme.*

# SUPPORTING CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

**We support children and young people aged 5-18 who have been affected by domestic abuse.**

Our specialist Children and Young People team offer a range of services that support children to move beyond trauma, become more resilient and to rebuild their lives.

## **1:1 Support**

We provide individual support to children and young people in refuge, in their home or at a place of their choosing.

## **CEDAR**

CEDAR (Children Experiencing Domestic Abuse Recovery) is an innovative multi-agency initiative for children and young people who have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties as a consequence of their experience of domestic abuse. CEDAR provides a therapeutic 12-week group work programme for children and young people, alongside a concurrent group work programme for their mothers, enabling them to support their children in their recovery and beyond.

*'I initially only came along to CEDAR to support my daughter. I did not expect it to benefit me at all. I was so wrong! I am learning so much!'*

*'My daughter was acting up and behaving in an emotional way. Where in the past I would have told her to go to her room, I asked her what was wrong and how she was feeling'*

*Quotes from mum's attending the CEDAR programme.*

# NADINE & BAZ'S STORY

I struggled for almost a year, since the court order came into effect, trying to get Baz's teachers and school to understand what was going on for him and the affect this was having on him, trying to get support for him at school.

Until the meeting that the Children's Advocacy Worker from EWA attended, the approach from school had been to avoid getting involved in what they described as a dispute between two parents. Despite my sharing Baz's opinions - which EWA and the court welfare officer had independently gathered - school were refusing to consider what could be done to support Baz, despite a number of issues occurring on school premises.

At the meeting, the EWA Advocacy Worker was able to articulate what was happening in Baz's life from his perspective and to get school to understand the impact that Baz's father's ongoing behaviours were having on him and his behaviour at school. Before the meeting I had begun to lose hope of getting Baz's voice heard and getting support at school, but the EWA Advocacy Worker explained the situation very clearly to school so that they had to listen.

The Advocacy Worker gained Baz's trust. He knew she was listening but also respecting his privacy. My son had previously spoken up himself at school but nothing was done.

From my perspective as a mum it's a huge relief to know that my son has a voice through someone he likes and trusts. The perspective you gave at the meeting with school helped remind me too that what is our normal isn't and shouldn't be normal.

## Court Advocacy for Children and Young People

We offer one of only two court advocacy services in the whole of Scotland which specifically supports children and young people affected by domestic abuse to identify their rights and have their voices heard inside and outside court.

**Over the past 12 months we have supported 38 children and young people to make sure that their views are heard, that they understand the court process and that they are aware of their rights.**

## Art Therapy

Our registered Art Therapist provides specialist intensive longer-term support to some of the most vulnerable and traumatised children and young people who engage with our services. Art Therapy is particularly effective in supporting children who have experienced trauma that has shattered their attachments and sense of safety and trust, as well as those for whom abuse was experienced in the early non-verbal years. Particularly in coercive controlling relationships, abuse is hidden and/or complex to articulate, even for adults. Art therapy provides the child with a symbolic language through which to express their feelings about their memories and to engage in a therapeutic relationship that can aid their recovery.

## Trips and Activities

We organise an annual residential holiday for the children and young people we support, to enable them to enjoy time with friends and to have the opportunity to feel safe, have fun and experience some time away.

We also organise regular trips and outings, and workshops over the holidays.

# ETHAN'S STORY

Ethan, 8 years old, and his younger brother were physically and emotionally abused by their father. Ethan was referred for Art Therapy because of anxiety, panic attacks, stomach aches, headaches, sleep problems and difficulty separating from his mum, all of which were impacting on his relationships with his peers and also with his ability to concentrate at school.

Ethan worked with the EWA Art Therapist over a 2 year period. Initially Ethan was traumatised by memories of what happened to him and his brother. He felt haunted by guilt and fear and a feeling that his dad might appear through the walls and steal his younger brother. During therapy, Ethan's focus gradually shifted from the past to the present and to the practical, allowing him to overcome some of his fear and to feel less isolated.

Over the two year period Ethan became more outgoing and curious about the world. His teacher fed back that Ethan's *'progress in school has been remarkable. Socially, he seems far more relaxed, responsible and able to be himself in a mature way. The support he has received has allowed him to feel secure enough to explore his potential. I am confident that as Ethan moves on he will excel and this is in part thanks to the work which you have done with him to allow him to become more confident and secure'*.



# PREVENTION WORK, AWARENESS RAISING AND TRAINING

**We provide free training for professionals, companies, students and young people helping to raise awareness about domestic abuse.**

This training equips participants to recognise when and where abuse is taking place and to respond in ways that support the safety of women and children.

**684 people participated in training run or co-facilitated by Edinburgh Women's Aid in 2018-2019**

*'I don't understand why this isn't on the front page of every paper and reported on the news! I work in social work and didn't have any idea of the scale of the problem. How can so many women be losing their lives and we don't know about it? If I hadn't attended this training I wouldn't have had any idea.'*

*'This training has opened my eyes! There was domestic abuse in my family growing up. I felt so angry with my mum for not leaving my dad and keeping us safe. As a result of this training I have a much better appreciation of what she must have been going through and of all things that might make it difficult for a woman to leave her abuser. I only wish she was still alive so that I could tell her that I'm sorry and I get it now.'*

*Comments from professionals participating in EWA training events.*

# ASHA'S STORY

Asha is in her 30s and was referred to EWA by a Health Visitor after she was physically abused by her then partner. Asha was concerned for her child's welfare – at the time he was just a few months old. Asha had no support from her family and few connections she could rely on. She also felt that her parenting was being undermined by her partner and his parents.

Asha took the decision to leave her partner and Edinburgh Women's Aid supported her through this process. Asha also received support both with regard to her ex-partner's court ordered contact with their child, which she was anxious about, and also about his continued contact with herself as a result.

The support Asha received enabled her to manage the contact that she had with her now ex-partner so that she no longer felt coercively controlled and she felt able to make it possible for her ex-partner to have contact with their child in a way that complied with what the court required but also gave her confidence that her child would be safe.

During the course of the support that Asha received there was a huge shift in her self-esteem. She says that working with Edinburgh Women's Aid has had a hugely positive and empowering impact on her life and she now feels able to recognise the early signs of abuse in a relationship and has the confidence to avoid such a relationship in future.

# OUR IMPACT

Support from Edinburgh Women's Aid has meant that of the women and children that took part in our evaluation:

**81%**

of women report feeling safer

**64%**

were happier with their legal situation

**79%**

are more positive about their accommodation

**70%**

said their support networks had improved

**77%**

feel more empowered and have greater self-esteem

**67%**

of children and young people felt that their confidence and self-esteem had improved

# GET INVOLVED!

If this report has inspired you to want to make a difference, there are lots of ways that you can help.

- **Organise an event or hold a collection at your office, school, church or in your community**
- **Collect sponsorship by taking part in a walk or run (with the Kiltwalk or the Edinburgh Marathon Festival for example)**
- **Make either a one-off or a regular donation to Edinburgh Women's Aid via JustGiving or Paypal**
- **Leave us a gift in your will**

To find out more, contact our Fundraising Officer on **0131 315 8111** or email: **[info@edinwomensaid.co.uk](mailto:info@edinwomensaid.co.uk)**

We're looking forward to hearing from you!

# THANK YOU!

An increasing proportion of our income comes from trusts, foundations, companies, legacies and individual donations.

Thanks to all of the following and to everyone else, too numerous to mention, who has generously donated, sponsored or supported us in other ways this year. We are extremely grateful for your support.

## Grant funders



THE ROYAL  
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**Your support is life-changing and life-saving.**

**Not for the first time you have rescued me from the brink. Having you there has made an enormous difference to my health, physically and mentally. I realise I probably have a bit to go but the reduction of stress to both myself and my family as a result of your support has been huge. Thank you.**

# WHO WE ARE

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# CONTACT US

## Helpline and Drop-in

If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic abuse or you feel that the relationship you are in is abusive or unsafe then get in touch.

We offer a Drop-in service and Phone Support – this can be accessed on an on-going basis or as a one-off.

## Opening Times

Mon	1pm – 3pm ( <i>phone support from 10am</i> )
Tue	10am – 3pm
Wed	10am – 3pm
Thu	2pm – 7pm ( <i>phone support from 10am</i> )
Fri	10am – 3pm
Sat	10am – 1pm

**Helpline: 0131 315 8110**

**Drop-in address:**

**4 Cheyne Street, Edinburgh EH4 1JB**

**Emergency Helplines Out of Office Hours**

*(run by other agencies)*

Emergency Social Work: 0800 731 6969

City of Edinburgh Council Emergency  
Housing: 0131 200 2000

Scotland's Domestic Abuse and Forced  
Marriage Helpline: 0800 027 1234 (*24 Hour*)

**Edinburgh  
WOMEN'S AID**

**SUPPORTING SURVIVORS**