



# Edinburgh WOMEN'S AID

SUPPORTING SURVIVORS

2019/20  
IMPACT REPORT

**'I was invited to come along to your office after the awful evening when my partner tried to take my life. God I was a shadow of myself. I did not want my life to carry on. I had lost my home, my belongings etc., most of my dignity and self-worth, which is worth more than anything.**

**Eight months on this person was charged with attempted murder. I have bought a new home, I have my family back around me. I can smile at times now. I still have a long road to go but for the first time in months I can see some light. Thank you!'**

**Recent feedback from a woman supported by EDDACS our court support service.**

# OUR CHAIR

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**2020 is our 47th year and one of the most difficult we have encountered in our long history of tackling domestic abuse in Edinburgh.**

Over the years we have seen a growing awareness of the prevalence of domestic abuse and developed a better understanding of its nature. We have moved from a view of domestic abuse as ‘battered wives’ to a recognition of the phenomenon and impact of coercive control. Women and children have always told us that the impact of the power and control of the abuser is the hardest thing to move on from. This year, the lockdown as a result of the COVID19 pandemic shone a spotlight on that, and as a society we realised the horror of the 24/7 entrapment of women and children in abusive relationships.

In Edinburgh, the strong relationships built up over many years meant that we were able to respond quickly and effectively to the pandemic. We immediately set up weekly meetings with key partners in Police Scotland and in criminal justice. Together we looked carefully at the impact of criminal justice responses to the pandemic and ensured that the needs and safety of the women and children affected were taken into account. We worked more closely than ever with colleagues in housing and social work to ensure that the safety of, and options for, women and children were not limited. We also provided regular information to the Scottish Government to ensure that the voices of women and children affected by domestic abuse were heard in the necessarily rapid development of policy and legislation to deal with the pandemic.

All of the achievements you read about in this report would not be possible without the commitment, passion and skill of our staff and Board members. I am extremely grateful to them all for their hard work, compassion and flexibility, particularly in recent months.

Throughout this difficult time we have been humbled by the considerable support we have received during 2019/20 and during the COVID crisis. We received additional support to manage the crisis from the Scottish Government, Comic Relief, Children in Need and many smaller trusts. We also received considerable support from individuals, groups and local companies who very generously raised and donated funds. We are enormously grateful to every single one of you.

This year is my last as Chair of Edinburgh Women's Aid, as I step down after six years on the Board. It has been an honour to work with everyone at Edinburgh Women's Aid and to play a role in working towards a society that is free from violence against women and children.

**Abbie Harley**

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# THE YEAR IN NUMBERS

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**701**

women contacted our helpline  
or attended drop-in for support

**47**

women stayed in refuge  
accommodation

**61**

children were supported through  
our outreach service

**1027**

women used the EDDACS  
court support service

**52**

children and young people  
were supported by our court  
advocacy service

**65**

women engaged with our  
employability service

**748**

people attended training with  
us around domestic abuse  
awareness

**12**

children stayed in refuge

**19**

children and their  
mothers completed CEDAR  
domestic abuse recovery  
programme

In total we supported

**1868**

women and

**148**

children and young people

## OUR CEO

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**This year our annual impact report not only includes information from the year April 2019 to March 2020 but also includes information about how Edinburgh Women's Aid has responded to the pandemic and the challenges this has created for everyone.**

In 2019/20 Edinburgh Women's Aid was in a stable position, midway through our larger contracts and growing our range of services in planned response to need. After an extremely successful pilot, we were in the process of restructuring the organisation into four Edinburgh locality teams, strengthening our local multi-agency relationships with staff from the NHS, City of Edinburgh Council and Police Scotland, and supporting improved responses to domestic abuse in local areas.

When the pandemic hit and then lockdown started, we swiftly moved the majority of our staff to home working, while retaining cover in our 24-hr refuge. We continued to admit women and children into refuge and we expanded the number of hours per day that women and children could make contact with our services. In addition our office at Cheyne Street remained staffed throughout lockdown for women to come to if necessary.

We correctly predicted that lockdown would have an impact on women and children's ability to access services safely, if they were living with the abuser, and that as lockdown was relaxed that the number of women and children requiring services would rocket. During lockdown we planned for this by applying for and allocating additional funds to create short term posts in our key service areas - crisis response, court support and children's outreach. These new staff joined the organisation as lockdown eased and were able to

provide additional support hours as we saw the number of women and children needing our services increase exponentially.

This report shows the difference that our specialist committed staff team have made to women's and children's lives over the last eighteen months. From their own homes and while dealing with the effects of the pandemic on their own lives, our staff team have continued to support women and children in unsafe relationships, experiencing the trauma of abuse and in recovery. I am humbled by my team's commitment to the women and children who need our support and I am eternally grateful to them for everything they have done during this difficult time.

As always, grateful thanks to our core funders and to the increasing number of trusts, companies and individuals who support our work. It is because of your generosity that we have been able to make a positive difference to the lives of so many women and children in Edinburgh.

**Linda Rodgers**

# MARIA'S STORY

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*'When I first came to Edinburgh Women's Aid I was in such a mess, in shock, mental paralysis, unable to cope. Everything was incomprehensible. For a very long time I actually think I got worse, a total mental breakdown, believing there was no tomorrow and more so not wanting one. But there you were! Edinburgh Women's Aid and my amazing support worker, holding me up. Your constant encouragement, just to take baby steps...it actually works. Being able to leave the house without a panic attack, to face going to the shops, just to face people, to do these little things even one a day...Under the umbrella of Edinburgh Women's Aid, the support and care was all encompassing.*

*Of course some days are still challenging but my journey with Edinburgh Women's Aid has left me stronger. Your help and kindness has been overwhelming and unforgettable. Thank you!'*

# 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 also 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

&

**1 in 5**



children & young people

**will experience domestic abuse**



# HOW WOMEN AND CHILDREN ARE AFFECTED

**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 and 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.

A photograph of two young women in a field of green grass and white flowers. The woman on the right is smiling broadly and has her arms around the woman on the left. The woman on the left is leaning her head against the other's shoulder. They are both wearing light-colored tops and jeans. The background is a soft-focus field with trees.

## YOUNG PEOPLE AND DOMESTIC ABUSE

**In a recent survey 41% of UK girls aged 14 to 17 in an intimate relationship experienced some form of sexual violence from their partner and 1 in 3 young women said they found it difficult to define the line between a caring action and a controlling one.**

In addition, studies in the US show that young women victimised in adolescent relationships are more likely to experience domestic violence in adulthood.

Our increasing reliance on technology also puts young people at risk. More than 70% of those receiving support from domestic abuse charity Refuge reported tech related abuse within a relationship. In another study, between 50-70% of all young people, reported experiencing abuse via technologies including controlling behaviour and surveillance through messaging or social networking sites – pressured sexting was most commonly reported by girls.

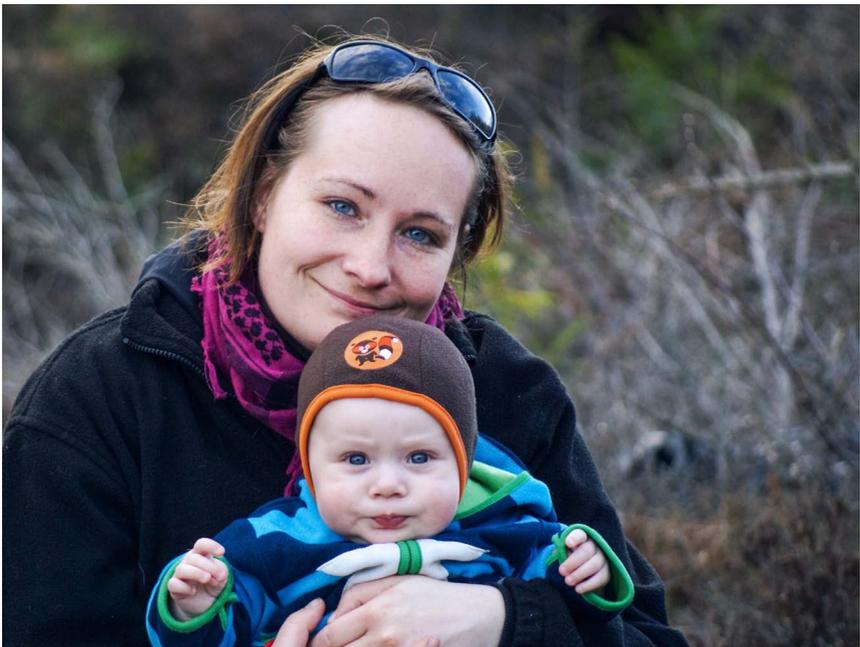
# DOMESTIC ABUSE AND COVID

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**What was already a very serious problem has been exacerbated by COVID creating a toxic combination of circumstances which further enable abusers.**

67% of survivors who are currently experiencing abuse said that it has got worse since COVID-19 and it has become common for perpetrators to use lockdown restrictions to further isolate and intimidate their victims.

The current pandemic and the requirement to isolate within households puts women and girls in increasing danger of intimate partner abuse whilst enforcing isolation from friends, family and support networks.





# 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 47 years. We provide a range of services covering crisis support, recovery and prevention and we operate across Edinburgh.

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

We 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 2020 we supported



**1868**  
women

**&**

**148**  
children &  
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, Drop-in and Webchat
- Refuge accommodation for women and accompanying children
- Court Support (available in Polish and English)
- 1:1 Support (available in Polish and English)



- Refuge accommodation for children and young people alongside their mothers
- Court Advocacy for Children and Young People

## RECOVERY



- Counselling
- Peer Support
- Housing Support
- Works4Women Employability Programme



- 1:1 Support for children and young people
- CEDAR 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



- Agency Training - providing training across the third and public sector to increase awareness about domestic abuse - how to recognise it and how to improve the safety of women and children.



- Working with schools, colleges and universities to raise awareness and support young people to avoid abusive relationships

# JOHN'S STORY

*Before CEDAR, John, who was 10 years old, said that he felt “broken”. He was so overwhelmed by his emotions that he was unable to sustain friendships and found school a challenge. He thought that he was the only person who had been abused in the way he had been abused by his dad and he felt that no one else would understand.*

*CEDAR is an innovative 12 week programme of group workshops undertaken by children and their mums. Children and their mums attend concurrent workshops which aim to repair the bond between them which may have been damaged as a result of their experiences of domestic abuse.*

*Attending CEDAR helped John to realise that other children had also experienced abuse at the hands of their dad or their mum's partner. This helped him feel less negatively about himself. Because of CEDAR, he began to feel less lost and overwhelmed. He began to understand that his feelings were a normal response to what had happened to him and that it was ok to feel as he did. During the course of the programme John felt increasingly able to cope with his emotions.*

*Before CEDAR, John said that he could talk to his mum about what happened, but now he can also talk about his feelings. His confidence has increased and as a result, his social circle has increased too. Before CEDAR, John said, “I had no friends... because I was so depressed and felt so sad. I didn't want to talk to anyone”. Now he feels included and happy. He has friends that he can be open with and feels less isolated. John said of his experience: “I used to be depressed before CEDAR. I now feel better.”*

*'I am so grateful that I get to work with such resilient children and young people. They have experienced fear, anger, sadness and uncertainty yet over the 12 week CEDAR programme I watch in awe as their strategies to understand and cope with their trauma evolve and strengthen and their confidence grows week by week. The impact of the work we do is undeniable and for many children, the journey they take, with our support, is life changing.'*

*'I feel lucky to work with the mums who take the CEDAR programme to support their children. They have experienced domestic abuse themselves and then through CEDAR start to face their children's experience.*

*Mothers often believe they have managed to hide the abuse from the children, however this is rarely the case. It's difficult for mothers to face the reality of the impact of the abuse. It's my job to support the women to realise that they are not responsible for the abuse and that this needs to be put at the door of the perpetrator. We are able to build the mum's awareness and support them to support their children. It's a pleasure to take this journey with the mums and to watch the peer support happening in the group. Something magic happens!*

**Comments from  
our CEDAR  
Programme  
Coordinators**



## OUR SERVICES DURING THE PANDEMIC

**The challenges faced by the women and children we support have been exacerbated by this crisis. Women and children who are slowly recovering from the trauma are at risk of being triggered by the current situation.**

Many women that we support who already have poor mental health and/or feel isolated as a result of the abuse they have experienced are disproportionately affected. Some of the women we support are afraid to go out, many have higher levels of anxiety than usual and many who are already vulnerable are feeling even more isolated, helpless and alone.

We have continued to run all of our services throughout the pandemic - helpline and webchat; our 29 refuge spaces; 1:1 support for women and children; our court advocacy services for women and children; art therapy; our CEDAR therapeutic programme for women and children; and our employability programme.

# OUR IMPACT

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As a result of support from Edinburgh Women's Aid, in our most recent evaluation:

**91%**

of women report feeling safer

**55%**

of children and young people reported an increase in confidence and self-esteem

**86%**

of women reported feeling more positive about their accommodation

**100%**

of children and young people supported completed a safety plan

**82%**

of women reported an increase in their sense of empowerment and self-esteem

**63%**

of children and young people reported feeling more positive about their safety

**82%**

of women reported feeling more positive about their support networks

**85%**

of women reported feeling more positive about their legal situation

# SUSIE'S STORY

*Susie relocated to Edinburgh from another UK city for her own safety. She was accompanied by her 7-year-old son and was offered a place in temporary accommodation. She was very isolated as she had no friends or family here. She suffered from depression and felt suicidal at times. She was referred to Works4Women (W4W), our employability programme, to help her to become more financially independent.*

*Susie was well qualified but had not been in paid employment for a number of years and never in the UK having spent the last few years as her son's primary carer.*

*Susie got involved in a video making project as part of W4W where she made new friends and her confidence increased. With help from the W4W coordinators she began to research admin jobs. She started a computer coding programme, investigated STEM careers and started a work placement at a bank which she really enjoyed and which boosted her confidence.*

*She continued to increase her skills and experience with volunteering roles and once she moved into permanent accommodation she started to focus on looking for work. At W4W she revised her CV and began to be offered interviews. W4W referred her to Smartworks who provided her with new clothes and interview skills coaching. She started an IT course and W4W was able to contribute to the cost of a laptop so she could do course work at home. Susie all the while continued to apply for jobs and just before lockdown was offered one.*

*It took Susie almost two years of persistence, stamina and hard work but she is now happy and safe in her new flat with her son. He is settled in school and she has made more friends in Edinburgh.*

**Susie took part in Works4Women our employability project which supports women affected by domestic abuse to become more financially independent.**

Quotes from women attending our Works4Women employability programme.

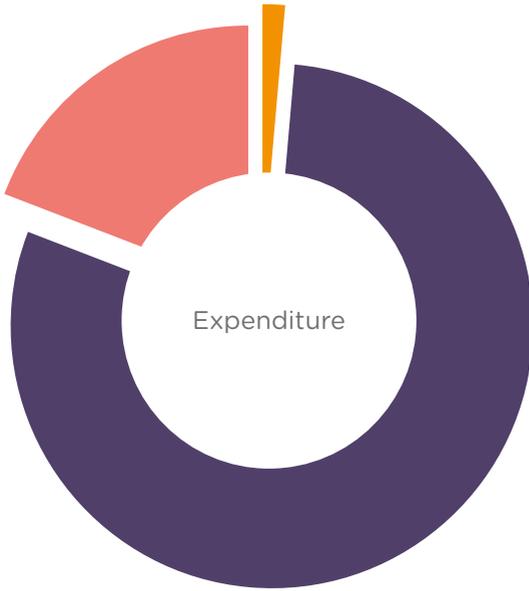
*I really can't believe the difference in me since I started your group a few weeks ago. I couldn't even look people in the eye because I was so ashamed to find myself in this situation. But I'm looking straight back at people now and I just know deep down this mess won't last forever. Now I feel hopeful, and I didn't just a short time ago.*

**WOMEN'S  
AID SAVED  
MY LIFE.  
REALLY!!**

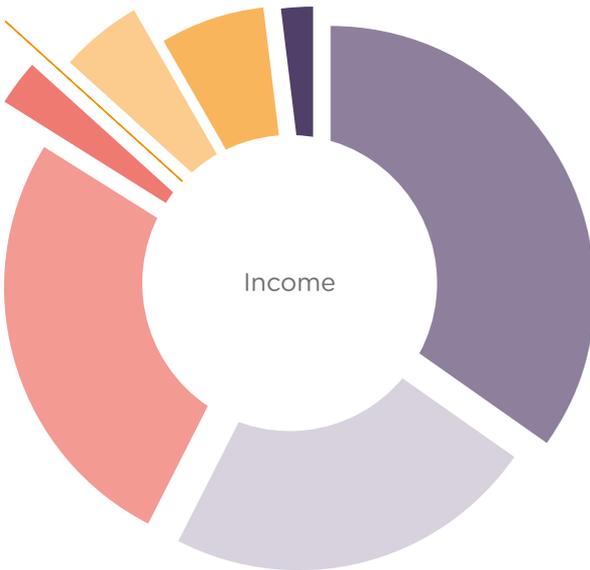
*I can't thank you enough for all the help and support you have given me over the past couple of years. The work that you and the rest of the team do at EWA is truly amazing. And I'm so grateful to you and the refuge staff for being there for me at such a difficult time in my life.*

*I find it hard to explain just how much the group helped me. I had no confidence in myself and sometimes didn't even see myself as human! He used to tell me I wasn't a real person and I began to believe it. One of the best things about the group was all the different experiences we had, and all the learning of things I never thought I could do. I started to feel that if I could do these things, then there must be other things I could do that I'd never even considered. It made me see myself in a completely new way, and also see how my life could be in the future. I began to have hope that things would get better, and once I had that hope, I felt so different inside. Better. Happy!!*

# INCOME AND EXPENDITURE



- Cost of Generating Funds (£23,745)
- Women's Services (£1,176,717)
- Children's Services (£279,769)



- City of Edinburgh Council (£520,725)
- City of Edinburgh Council - Housing Income (£338,938)
- Scottish Government (£393,386)
- Housing Income (£39,844)
- Investment Income (£2,321)
- Trasts & Foundations (£71,911)
- Donations (£96,455)
- Scottish Women's Aid (£27,720)

# HELP MAKE A DIFFERENCE

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**If this report has inspired you to want to make a difference please consider getting involved. By working together we can help more women and children in Edinburgh to recover from the trauma of abuse.**

Here's how you can help:

- **Keep in touch via social media**

**Facebook:** @edinwomensaid

**Twitter:** @EdinWomensAid

**Instagram:** @edinbwa

**Website:** [www.edinwomensaid.co.uk](http://www.edinwomensaid.co.uk)

- **Make a donation via JustGiving**

[www.justgiving.com/edinburghwomensaid](http://www.justgiving.com/edinburghwomensaid)

- **Set up a regular payment via JustGiving**

[www.justgiving.com/edinburghwomensaid](http://www.justgiving.com/edinburghwomensaid)

- **Take on a fundraising challenge**

- **Leave us a gift in your will**

To have a chat and find out more, contact our fundraising officer on 0131 315 8111 or email: [info@edinwomensaid.co.uk](mailto:info@edinwomensaid.co.uk).

We look forward to hearing from you!



Kiltwalk and Edinburgh Marathon Festival participants in 2019 raising funds for EWA



International Women's Day Swimrise 2020



## THANK YOU!

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We are extremely grateful to the **City of Edinburgh Council** and the **Scottish Government** for their significant and continued support of our work.

As our services continue to expand in response to need, an increasing proportion of our income comes from trusts, foundations, companies, legacies and individuals.

Thanks to the following and to everyone one else, too numerous to mention, who has supported us during the year. We could not do what we do without you.

**Artemis Charitable Foundation**

**BBC Children in Need**

**BNY Mellon**

**Charles Hayward Foundation**

**Christina Mary Hendrie Trust**

**Golden Bear Trust**

**Leith Benevolent Association**

**Miss I F Harvey's Charitable Trust**

**RS Macdonald Charitable Trust**

**State Street Community Support Programme**

**The Robertson Trust**

**The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo**

**Women's Fund for Scotland Tampon**

**Tax Community Fund administered**

**by Foundation Scotland**

**Workplace Equality Fund**

**administered by Impact**

**Funding Partners**

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



**The Scottish  
Government**

SUPPORTED BY  
**• EDINBURGH •**  
THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL

# WHO WE ARE

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## Patron

Malcolm Chisholm

## Board Members

Abbie Harley – Chair  
(from December 2019)

Morag Waller – Vice-Chair  
(from December 2019)

Ruth Grindley – Treasurer

Emma Plant

Julie Moran

Jenny Peachey

Jessica Macdonald

Sharon McIntyre

Kate Jones

Jenny Davis

*Members who retired from the board during the year*

Naomi Blight – Chair

Deborah Benson – Treasurer

Maro McNab

Miriam Khan

## Staff

Isabella Balloch, Alison Roxburgh, Alison Thomas, Amanda Vickery, Amélie Lamontagne, Angela Fletcher, Angie Mwafulirwa, Beata Burchard, Bonnie Thomson, Cathy Todd, Clare Philpot, Danielle Coll, Dina Subasciaki, Dorota Lings, Dorota Oleksiewicz, Eleni MacLean, Elini Christopoulou, Beth Fischbacher, Fran Previdi, Gemma Gall, Grace Christian, Helen Murray, Irene Bruce, Irene Carter, Jan Ferguson, Jasmine Clark, Jenny Miller, Joanna Sznajder-Oleszczyk, Julie MacDonald, Karen Drummond, Karen Griffiths, Kasia Sadaj, Kate Tregaskis, Laura Fearn, Leanne Glancy, Lee McCormack, Linda Rodgers, Lisa Valance, Louise Young, Margaret Patrizio, Mariea Nairn, Mary Sinclair, Nicola Dhanda, Noreen McCafferty, Olu Sodipo, Rachel Gollan, Rosie Smith, Sherry Panchal, Sinead McCafferty, Sinead Cronin, Susan Rae, Urska Ozimek, Val Waugh, Veda Runge, Verdi Wilson, Zoi Simopoulou.

**Thank you so much. You don't even know how much support you gave me by calling and texting me. Tonight for the first time in months I slept through the night until my alarm went off.**

**A selection of comments from women who used EDDACS our court support service:**

**I feel safer knowing you are there.**

**Thank you, I did not know anything about going to court and it stressed me out - you helped lots. You work so hard for me - I admire you very much.**

**Thank you so much for your time. You have helped me more than anyone ever has. The texts from EDDACS have been phenomenal. I couldn't live without it. I get the information I need from court immediately which allows me to plan for safety.**

**I wouldn't be here if it wasn't for you.**

**Every time I speak to you, my mood is really good. I seem to see the good in my life again and I seem to have hope again.**

**You have been really supportive, you explain everything clearly. I feel better when I have spoken to you.**

# CONTACT US

## Helpline and Crisis Support

If you are worried about your relationship or about someone that you know, please get in touch with us. We provide specialist confidential support and safety planning. We can provide face to face, telephone and webchat support.

## Drop-in and Helpline Opening Times

Mon 1pm – 3pm (*phone support from 10am*)  
Tue 10am – 3pm  
Wed 10am – 3pm  
Thu 2pm – 7pm (*phone support from 10am*)  
Fri 10am – 3pm  
Sat 10am – 1pm

**Helpline: 0131 315 8110**

**Webchat: [www.edinwomensaid.co.uk](http://www.edinwomensaid.co.uk)**

**Drop-in and office 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**  
**4 Cheyne Street, Edinburgh, EH4 1JB**  
**Office number: 0131 315 8111**  
**email: [info@edinwomensaid.co.uk](mailto:info@edinwomensaid.co.uk)**  
**[www.edinwomensaid.co.uk](http://www.edinwomensaid.co.uk)**

**Edinburgh**  
**WOMEN'S AID**

**SUPPORTING SURVIVORS**

Edinburgh Women's Aid is a charity registered in Scotland, charity number SC028301 and a company limited by guarantee, registered company number SC237521