



Beira's Place

Edinburgh Women's Sexual Assault Support Centre

Values and Ethos

| | |
|----------------|--------------------------------|
| Authors | Isabelle Kerr Sue Domminney |
| Date | December 2022 |
| Version | 03 |

Introduction

Beira's Place - Edinburgh Women's Sexual Abuse Support Centre is a feminist organisation committed to providing a single sex service run by women for women. We seek to challenge the societal structures that create a culture where all women live consciously with the threat of sexual violence and build a service that is informed by the work done over the past four or five decades by women's organisations.

By establishing Beira's Place, we are working within a feminist and a human rights framework and returning to the original values of the feminist movement where women developed services to meet established needs of other women and their children. We believe that the key ethos of services led by, run by and for women should not be diluted. It is important that the analysis of male violence and the links with misogyny, oppression and inequality is not lost.

We recognise sexual violence, perpetrated predominantly by men and experienced disproportionately by women as abuses of power, which reinforce the far reaching inequality and oppression of women in our society. We further recognise that we cannot serve all survivors of sexual violence, abuse, and exploitation and that it may be appropriate to refer on some survivors who require different or more specialist services that better meet their needs. We do not work with perpetrators and will refer any who contact us to the appropriate perpetrator programmes where these exist.

This service exists because the need for women only, single sex services which are run by women, for women and are women led, exists. We are reclaiming our own model of working that we have developed over the past four decades in the violence against women movement and supporting women to take back their own power, and their own agency. Women can recover from the trauma of sexual violence, and the aim of Beira's Place is to offer to be part of that journey.

Ethos and Values

Beira's Place is committed to challenging misogynistic and patriarchal power structures that, through the abuse of, and threatened abuse of women and girls, prevents many from reaching their full potential. We recognise that responsibility for any act of violence against women and girls lies with the perpetrator: it can never be excused, justified, or explained away and there is no context within which it is acceptable or valid.

Beira's Place recognise that effective sexual violence services must be independent, needs led, and provide responsive, woman centred services so that they are free from the pressure of current political agendas. We are committed to ensuring that our service is free, confidential, and accessible to survivors who may need them.

Beira's Place believes that services supporting survivors of male violence, abuse, and exploitation are most effective when they are women led, trauma informed and delivered by women for women. We recognise that as well as being women, factors such as race, disability, sexual orientation, class, ethnicity, religious belief, and experience of previous trauma, can affect women's experience of sexual violence.

Beira's Place understands that from the early days of women led support services for survivors of male violence, single sex services have been at the forefront of developing innovative ways of working with survivors through their healing journey. We are committed to continuing this work in providing evidence-based responses to the needs of sexual violence survivors and building innovation to respond to the stated needs of survivors.

Beira's Place challenges the myths surrounding sexual violence and promoting the reality of male violence against women by promoting the understanding of all forms of sexual violence are acts of power and control and are preventable.

Beira's Place understands that all forms of commercial sexual exploitation constitute abuse of women and girls and support the Nordic Model approach which "*decriminalises all those who are prostituted, provides support services to help them exit, and makes buying people for sex a criminal offence, in order to reduce the demand that drives sex trafficking.*"¹

¹ Nordic Model Now - [What is the Nordic Model? – Nordic Model Now!](#) (May 2022)

