

Edinburgh
WOMEN'S AID

SUPPORTING SURVIVORS

50
YEARS
1973-2023



2023-24
IMPACT REPORT

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OUR VISION

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 50 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 work in partnership with other organisations and together we have developed an effective multi-disciplinary approach to dealing with domestic abuse across Edinburgh.

This report takes you through the journey that we and the 2215 women and 220 children we supported took between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024.



PLEASE CONSIDER SUPPORTING US

Edinburgh Women's Aid (EWA) is proud to be Edinburgh's leading charity in the fight against domestic abuse. Our work is only possible through the generous donations of the public, businesses, and trusts.

As we face a 38% year-on-year increase in demand from January to March 2024, it's more crucial than ever to expand our resources to meet the needs of the women and children in Edinburgh who are seeking refuge from the trauma of domestic abuse. With your help, we can ensure that more women and children become safe, recover, and rebuild their lives free from fear and harm.

If you are inspired by this report and would like to support us, we'd love to hear from you. Please call us at **0131 315 8111 or email us at hello@edinwomensaid.co.uk.**

EDINBURGH WOMEN'S AID 50TH ANNIVERSARY

In 2023, Edinburgh Women's Aid commemorated 50 years of service.

Although attitudes are changing, with awareness increasing and stigma decreasing, the incidence of domestic abuse is still high and so there is still a long way to go in our fight for a society free from domestic abuse – over 2000 women contact us each year.

From our beginnings with 1 refuge and a small group of dedicated women, to now, a staff of over 50 women providing:

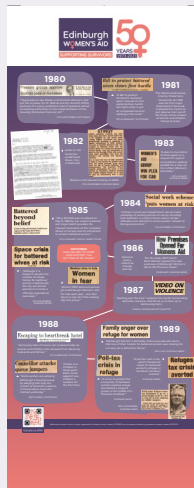
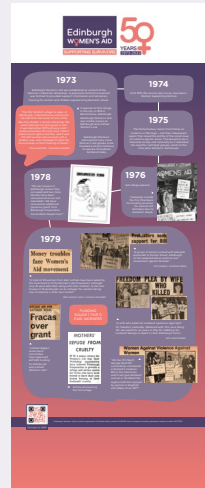
- **Helpline**
- **Drop-in**
- **1:1 Support**
- **Children and Young People Support**
- **Court Advocacy**
- **Refuge**
- **Counselling**
- **Works 4 Women - Employability program**
- **Art Therapy**
- **Peer Support**
- **Training**

Here are some of the highlights of EWA's work over the past 50 years.

1973

"The first Scottish refuge to open, in Edinburgh, in Broomhouse, and across the hall from the home of one of the Bay City Rollers. I cannot remember the exact date but my best guess is that it was December 1973 and very cold. I vividly remember the cold since I didn't know how to light a coal fire, and it was the first woman who arrived, with a broken nose, who managed to light the fire and keep us from freezing to death."

FRAN WASSOFF, FOUNDER MEMBER



1981

The Matrimonial Homes (Family Protection) (Scotland) Act 1981 was the first major development because it allowed the Courts to put abusive men out of the family home instead of women and children having to leave.

Bill to protect battered wives clears first hurdle

By JAMES NAUGHTIE, O.c. Parliamentary Correspondent

▲ *"A Bill to protect Scotland's 'battered wives' cleared its first parliamentary hurdle last night when it got an unopposed second reading in the Lords."*

25TH FEBRUARY, SCOTSMAN

1999

Housing problems forum Help for women

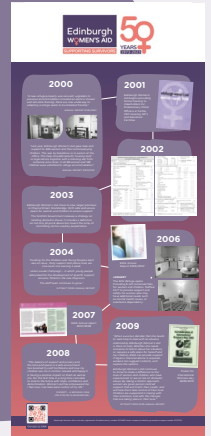
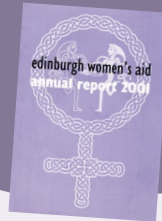
"The district council housing committee have voted to set up a special sub-committee on women and housing and plan to invite representatives from organisations like Women's Aid to sit on the committee as non-voting members."

EVENING NEWS



2001

Edinburgh Women's Aid begins providing formal training to stakeholders inc. Probationary Police Officers at Fettes, CEC Housing, GP's and Education Facilities.



2010

LOBBYING AT THE CITY CHAMBERS

Staff undertook to highlight the cause of women and children in the "I'm here because I'm not safe at home" campaign. We aimed to highlight how vitally important our funding and services are to women and children and young people in the city.



2018



▲ We celebrated our 45th Anniversary.



Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018

2018, 8th May

The Bill for this Act of the Scottish Parliament was passed by the Parliament on 1st February 2018 and received Royal Assent on 9th March 2018.

An Act of the Scottish Parliament to create an offence with respect to the engaging by a person in a course of behaviour which is abusive of the person's partner or ex-partner; and to make order of criminal procedure for that offence and also for offences subject to the statutory aggravation involving abuse of partners or ex-partners.

Domestic Abuse Act passed by Scottish Parliament. The Act covers the range of coercive control tactics that woman have been telling us about for decades and also covers ex-partners.

2020

As the world went into lockdown due to the global Covid 19 Pandemic, Edinburgh Women's Aid was able to quickly adapt our services. Identifying that women and children may now be trapped with their perpetrator and accessing support more complex. This was the 'Shadow Pandemic'.



LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Welcome to our 2023-24 Impact Report. Throughout 2023-24, 2215 women and 220 children used our services. This report shows the positive impact that we were able to make in their lives.

We hope that this report will give you an idea of the wide range of services which Edinburgh Women's Aid (EWA) provides to the women, children and young people in our city who have been affected by domestic abuse. We are proud of our achievements in 2023-24 and very grateful to everyone who has helped fund the various services which we provide.

In 2023 we celebrated the 50th anniversary of Edinburgh Women's Aid with a year of events, campaigns and milestones.

In December 1973, Edinburgh Corporation agreed to allocate the first refuge in Scotland to Edinburgh Women's Aid - making history in Scotland, and perhaps leading the way for all local authorities in Scotland to provide refuge accommodation for women and children, affected by domestic abuse.

In our 50th anniversary year, we sought to celebrate the past and the women who founded EWA as well as the staff - past and present - who have continued to build it into the organisation it is today. We also focussed firmly on our future, making strategic decisions to ensure we can continue to provide specialist domestic abuse support services to as many women, children and young people as we possibly can.

SOME OF THE HIGHLIGHTS OF OUR ANNIVERSARY YEAR WERE:

- the purchase of a property - a new home for a family seeking refuge. This refuge space adds to the 29 refuge spaces we already operate in Edinburgh and ensures that safe havens are now available in all four localities within Edinburgh.
- the award of new contracts from City of Edinburgh Council for domestic abuse services for five years which have the potential for extension to a maximum of 10 years.

- our CEO presenting at a European Conference on Domestic Abuse in Reykjavik, describing the implementation of the Domestic Abuse Scotland Act and sharing the forward-looking way in which we work with other professionals who encounter domestic abuse day to day.
- the “Changing the Landscape” seminar at the University of Edinburgh, which; (i) profiled 50 years of activism and action against domestic abuse, (ii) explored the role of research in changing the policy landscape around domestic abuse, and (iii) looked back on the development and growth of Edinburgh Women’s Aid over five decades.
- the “Source of Strength” exhibition at Stills Gallery in October - a fantastic photography exhibition celebrating the relationship between children and mothers and the role they play in protecting and supporting children to recover from domestic abuse.
- the City of Edinburgh Council unanimously agreeing a Motion, put forward by the Council Leader, to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of Edinburgh Women’s Aid, and the Lord Provost hosting a Civic Reception in the City Chambers to underscore this achievement.

We are very thankful for the ongoing funding we have received from The Scottish Government and The City of Edinburgh Council, as well as numerous trusts and grant-making organisations. Thank you for enabling us to provide crucial support services to the women and children who need them. We have also received enormous support from the local community and have benefitted from many fundraising challenges, workplace charity initiatives and individual donations - we are so grateful to everyone who has supported us in some way.

None of this would be possible without the compassion, commitment and skill of our staff team and our Board members. I am extremely grateful to them all for their dedication over this last year. As ever, it is an honour to work with the women of Edinburgh Women’s Aid and be part of the ongoing challenge of eliminating domestic abuse.



Morag Waller



OUR IMPACT IN 2023-24



2215
women
supported



220
children & young
people supported

WOMEN'S SERVICES

Crisis Support

987 women accessed crisis support services.

Refuge Support

53 women and **29 children** found safety in our refuges.

Ongoing Local Support

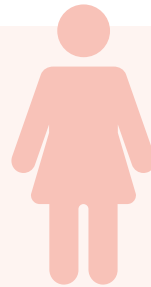
314 women received continuous support in their local areas.

Language-Specific Support

59 women received support in Polish.

Additional Needs

107 women received help with mental health and/or substance use issues.



High-Risk Cases

253 women were assessed as being at high risk of serious harm or murder.

Court Support

661 women were guided through the legal process via our EDDACS court support service.

Legal Services

131 women were referred to our new civil legal service project in just six months.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Advocacy and Rights

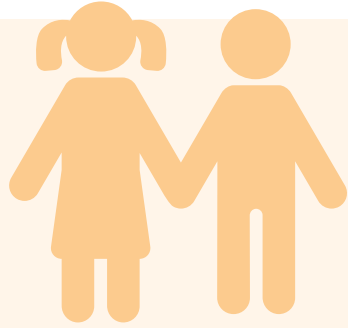
52 children had their rights advocated for and were supported in decision-making.

Art Therapy

24 children participated in art therapy sessions.

1:1 Support

130 children and young people received personalised support, including those in refuge.



Children Experiencing Domestic Abuse Recovery Programme

49 mothers and their children were supported through the CEDAR programme.

LIFE AFTER ABUSE



Peer Support

56 women engaged in our peer support programme.



INFLUENCING CHANGE

Awareness Training

435 individuals from partner organisations accessed our learning and development programmes.

Young People

14 sessions delivered to **144 pupils**

EMPLOYABILITY SERVICES



64 women benefited from the Works4Women employability service.

OUR IMPACT SUPPORT FOR WOMEN

CRISIS SUPPORT

Our crisis support service is often the first point of contact for women seeking help. Women can reach out to us directly through telephone, drop-in, or online services, and we also accept referrals from other agencies.

INITIAL RESPONSE

Our first priority is to address the immediate issue, helping the woman assess her risk and develop a personalised safety plan. We then discuss her broader support needs and establish a safe, ongoing communication plan.

PERSON-CENTRED APPROACH

We offer a range of services tailored to each woman's unique situation, including:



Emotional Support:

Provided on a therapeutic, trauma-informed recovery basis.



Risk Assessment & Safety Planning:

Ensuring the woman's safety and helping her navigate her options.



Court Support: Guiding women through the legal process.



Practical Support & Advocacy:

Assistance with financial, housing, and legal matters.



Access to Other Services:

Connecting women with additional resources as needed.



TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE

Our services are grounded in a strengths-based framework that prioritises the physical, psychological, and emotional safety of survivors. We aim to empower women by giving them control over their choices, including whether or not to engage with our services and whether to consent to sharing information with other agencies. This approach recognises the importance of choice in the context of domestic abuse, where control is often forcibly taken away.

IMPACT

In 2023-24, our crisis support service assisted **987 women** in addressing their immediate needs.

“I really cannot tell you again the impact and power that our call this morning has had on me, which I’ve carried with me throughout the day - thank you for that, from the bottom of my heart.”

COMMUNITY-BASED SUPPORT

373 women received ongoing support within their communities through our locality-based staff and specialist Polish language service. These long-term, one-on-one services are crucial for women whose needs extend beyond crisis support, particularly those at high risk of serious harm or murder by a partner or ex-partner.

J had been in an abusive relationship for over 30 years and was experiencing flashbacks, triggers and anxiety which were stopping her leaving the house or going out on her own.

J had experienced physical violence, coercive control, gaslighting, and financial control throughout the relationship. After a violent incident, J left the perpetrator and went to stay with a friend as the perpetrator's level of control was escalating and she feared he would kill her.

EWA support helped J to understand the dynamics of domestic abuse and how the abuse was not her fault. J had been isolated for many years and had kept the abuse she was experiencing a secret throughout the relationship. In time, and at her own pace, J was able to open up about what she had experienced.

J found it difficult to make decisions as the perpetrator always controlled everything. J is gradually finding the confidence to make decisions and acknowledges that she is capable and can do anything she sets out to achieve.

J has now registered on a degree course and is very excited about starting it in the autumn. J is pleased about the prospect of learning about a subject she is deeply interested in and developing a career in the future.

“Being believed and supported has helped me to stay strong and move on with my life.”

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES

Domestic abuse can have devastating and far-reaching effects, often leading to mental health challenges or substance use as women try to cope with their experiences. In many cases, perpetrators may also use drugs and alcohol as tools of control. Women facing these compounded challenges require specialised support to help them recover and rebuild their lives.

SPECIALISED SUPPORT

In the past year, our mental health and complex needs services supported **107 women** who were dealing with the additional health consequences of domestic abuse, such as mental ill health or substance misuse. These women often have complex practical needs as well, including issues related to housing, legal matters, and finances.

Our specialist staff work closely with mainstream services to provide comprehensive, wraparound support. This collaborative approach ensures that women can address their most pressing issues, stabilise their situations, and engage more fully with domestic abuse support.



IMPACT AND OUTCOMES

Our evaluation of these services revealed significant positive outcomes for the women we supported:

96% felt safer
after engaging with our services.

92% reported improvements
in their health and wellbeing.

88% experienced improvements
in their housing situation.

92% felt more empowered
as a result of our support.

WOMEN AT HIGH RISK OF MURDER OR SERIOUS HARM

Edinburgh Women's Aid (EWA) plays a vital role in safeguarding women at the highest risk of serious harm or murder through our coordination of Edinburgh's Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC).

MARAC COORDINATION

Our senior staff actively represent EWA at the four-weekly MARAC meetings, where cases involving women at severe risk from their partner or ex-partner are reviewed. During these meetings, key representatives from local police, health services, child protection, housing, probation, and other statutory and voluntary sectors share crucial information. Together, they develop and implement a comprehensive action plan aimed at reducing the risk to the victim and any children affected.



IMPACT IN 2023-24

In the past year, EWA coordinated **52 MARACs**, resulting in action plans designed to protect the safety of **253 women** at risk of serious harm or murder by their partner or ex-partner. These cases also affected **263 children under 16** who were living in their mother's care and were directly impacted by the abuse.

REFUGE SERVICES

We offer safe refuge accommodation for women and their children who are at risk of domestic abuse or have become homeless due to abuse. Our refuge spaces provide a secure environment where they can begin to rebuild their lives.

REFUGE ACCOMMODATION

We manage **29 refuge spaces** across Edinburgh, with 27 of these accommodating women with children. Our refuges include a variety of accommodation types:

- **Shared Refuge:** Women and children have their own rooms within a shared house.
- **Individual Flats:** Located within a building where staff are on-site 24/7 to support women with higher needs.

In 2023-24, 53 women and 29 children found safety and support in our refuges.

EMPOWERING EXPERIENCES

Our refuges offer more than just shelter; they provide opportunities for women and children to engage in empowering activities that support their recovery. One of our service users and her three children participated in a photography project that explored the relationships between mothers

and their children recovering from domestic abuse. The project culminated in an exhibition at the Stills Art Gallery, titled “A Source of Strength.”

The mother shared her thoughts:

“It was really nice, I enjoyed it. The children were shown how to take photos which was fun for them, and I enjoyed being able to spend that time with them. It was a really good experience for all of us.”

COMMUNITY AND CELEBRATION

During the holiday season, our 24-hour refuge staff organised a Christmas Day buffet and festivities in the community area, which was attended by three families. Thanks to generous donations from EWA’s supporters, toys were provided for the children, adding joy to the celebration.

One woman who attended expressed:

“Being a domestic abuse survivor in refuge and estranged from my family and country of origin can be an isolating experience. The Christmas day buffet and party provided by refuge staff made me feel like I was part of a family again; loved, supported, and united in solidarity with other women survivors and children.”

OUR IMPACT SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN

Children and young people affected by domestic abuse require specialised support to help them process their experiences and begin to heal. In 2023-24, 130 children and young people received tailored 1:1 support through our dedicated programmes. All children in refuge receive support throughout their time in refuge.

1:1 SUPPORT PROGRAMME

Our 1:1 support is designed around a 12-week programme that offers age-appropriate assistance to help children understand and process what has happened in their lives. The programme focuses on the following key areas:



Processing Trauma: Helping children make sense of their experiences in a safe and supportive environment.



Safety Planning: Empowering children with the knowledge and skills to stay safe.



Emotional Development: Building emotional resilience and the capacity to manage their feelings.



Social Integration: Encouraging children to widen their social circles and engage positively with their peers.

TAILORED APPROACH

At the eight-week mark, our specialists work with the child to assess their progress and readiness to complete the programme at the 12-week point. If additional support is needed, we extend the programme, ensuring that each child receives the time and attention necessary to fully benefit from the process.

Our specialised approach recognises that every child's journey is unique, and we are committed to providing the ongoing, personalised support they need to recover from the trauma of domestic abuse and move forward with their lives.

CASE STUDY

M loves gymnastics and playing with her friends.

M and her mother moved to Edinburgh a few years ago. The transition of the move became more challenging for M when her mum's new partner became abusive. M was offered a space in our Children and Young People service so she could process her feelings and experiences surrounding the domestic abuse.

Although M was quiet and nervous initially, a trusting relationship was built. M was eventually able to start to share some of her story of hurting that has happened in her home.

M spoke about the house she had drawn with a crack down the middle of the home, she described that one half of the home is for the mum and one half is for the dad. The picture depicted adults fighting. M drew a little girl and said the little girl was worried about the fighting in the home. M spoke of the little girl feeling afraid

and watching TV on her iPad as a distraction. When asked what the little girl could do to feel safe, M said that the girl could hide in her room when the adults are fighting. M also said that the little girl could phone 999.

Providing a safe space for M to process and share her story has supported her in her healing journey from domestic abuse. It has allowed her to develop her confidence in safety planning and identifying safe people or actions.

M was ultimately able to directly share the sadness that she felt when domestic abuse was happening in her home.

M's understanding of finding a safe space and learning how to call the police was an important learning point for her.

Recognising and naming feelings is a key element in our support with children in their journey toward healing from experiencing domestic abuse.

'I don't have to conceal or hide anything. I can be myself.'

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS AND PARTICIPATION

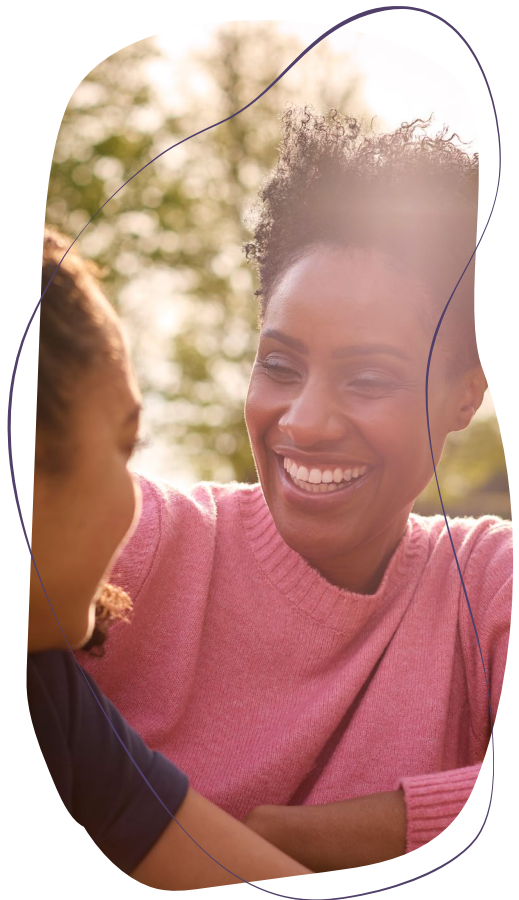
Our Children's Rights and Participation Service (CRPS) is dedicated to supporting children affected by domestic abuse who are involved in the court or other statutory systems as victims or witnesses.

The CRPS ensures these children receive the necessary support to recover from their trauma while advocating for their rights under Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which guarantees their voice is heard in decisions that impact their lives.

IMPACT AND REACH

In 2023-24, 52 children had their rights advocated for and were supported in participating in decisions affecting them. Over the past two years, we have supported children in more than **80 hearings and/or court cases**. We anticipate that around 50% of the children using our service will be involved in multiple legal proceedings, whether in the criminal or civil justice systems or both.

One notable example from 2023-24 involved a child who participated as a witness in two criminal court cases and attended four civil hearings regarding contact. Children facing such complex and often overwhelming legal challenges need specialised support to ensure their voices are heard and their rights are protected.



SPECIALISED SUPPORT

Our service provides tailored support to help children navigate these challenging circumstances. For example, our children's rights and participation worker shared a story about a child, A, who expressed deep anxiety about an upcoming court case, fearing for both his and his mother's safety. A was also overwhelmed by the pressure of preparing for school exams, worried that the court case would negatively impact his performance and future.

Despite these challenges, our service helps children feel more secure and empowered.

"I know what I want my job to be when I am older. I want to be just like you! I want to help children like me, who are really scared because they have to go to court. I want to help them not be scared of that building. I was scared when I knew nothing about it, but you made me feel better. I want to do that."

This testimony reflects the profound impact of our CRPS, which not only supports children through immediate challenges but also inspires them to envision a future where they, too, can make a difference.

ART THERAPY

Our registered Art Therapist provides specialist, intensive, longer-term support to some of the most vulnerable and traumatised children and young people in our services.

Art therapy is particularly effective for children who have experienced trauma that has severely impacted their sense of safety, trust, and attachment – especially those who suffered abuse during early, nonverbal years. In cases of coercive control, where the abuse is often hidden or difficult to articulate, art therapy offers a unique and powerful means of expression.

THE HEALING POWER OF ART THERAPY

Art therapy offers children a symbolic language to express their feelings and memories, allowing them to process their trauma in a way that traditional talk therapies might not reach. Through creating art, children can communicate emotions and experiences that are too complex or painful to put into words. This non-verbal form of expression is crucial for those who have struggled to articulate the impact of abuse, even as adults these experiences are often difficult to convey.

THERAPEUTIC RELATIONSHIP

Engaging in art therapy helps establish a therapeutic relationship that is foundational to a child's recovery. The process provides a safe space where children can explore their feelings, regain a sense of control, and begin

to rebuild their trust in others. The therapist supports the child through this journey, helping them make sense of their experiences and work towards healing.

In 2023-24 24 children received therapeutic support to recover from domestic abuse from our Art Therapy service.



ART THERAPY CASE STUDY

A was referred to our Art Therapy Project. She had been subjected to significant domestic abuse from her father. She was displaying challenging behaviour; she hit, punched and said terrible things to her mum. Her nursery stated that she displayed manipulative behaviour. She was very anxious, wouldn't go anywhere without her mum, she screamed for her mum when she was left with anyone and had night-time terrors.

When A was referred our priority was to create a safe space for her to be able to share how she is feeling. Our art therapist allowed her to play, make a mess and take up space and this helped her to then work more on boundaries.

Art therapy enabled her to explore what happened to her

and her mum and this helped her to be better able to form secure relationships.

A displayed a symbolic wish through her art for her earlier life needs to be met, such as being nurtured and cared for, and having her basic needs attended to, such as being cleaned, fed and protected.

A's collaboration with the art therapist provided her with the opportunity to develop a better understanding of healthy relationships, to feel comfortable sharing her feelings, processing her traumatic experiences, practice her boundaries, and to explore safety in a nonverbal and symbolic way.

During the penultimate session, A shared that art therapy had improved her life in every area.

CEDAR PROGRAMME

The Children Experiencing Domestic Abuse Recovery (CEDAR) programme is an internationally recognised, evidence-based initiative that supports children and young people (CYP), and their mothers as they recover from the trauma of domestic abuse.

We co-ordinate and deliver this programme with financial support from the City of Edinburgh Council and the RS Macdonald Trust, in partnership with Police Scotland, Health, Social Work, and Women's Aid East and Midlothian.

PROGRAMME GOALS

CEDAR is designed to aid the recovery of children and young people by:

- Helping **mothers and their children** develop a deeper understanding of domestic abuse and its impacts.
- Assisting **CYP** in increasing their knowledge of how to identify and manage their emotions.
- Enabling **mothers** to better understand the impact of domestic abuse on their children and become more confident in supporting their recovery.
- Providing **mothers and children** with the knowledge and tools needed for effective safety planning.



IMPACT AND REACH IN 2023-24

From April 2023 to March 2024, we received referrals for **49 mothers and their children**. Assessments were completed with **44 children and young people**, a thorough process involving detailed conversations with both mothers and their children to determine the programme's appropriateness. When CEDAR was not deemed suitable, we referred families to other services within Edinburgh Women's Aid, such as 1:1 support or art therapy, or to external organisations like Circle or Children 1st.

This year, we successfully delivered **four children's groups** and **two women's groups**, along with 1:1 versions of the group for two women. The programme's impact is profound, as reflected in the feedback from participants:

"Excellent support for me and my child. The programme has literally changed our lives for the better. The guidance I have received has enabled me to be a better mum and to keep my child safe going forward. I can't thank everyone enough."

SUSTAINABLE RECOVERY THROUGH EMPOWERING MOTHERS

A key element of CEDAR's success is its focus on empowering mothers to play a central role in their children's ongoing recovery. By helping mothers understand the effects of domestic abuse on their children and equipping them with the skills to support their children's

emotional and psychological needs, CEDAR ensures that the benefits of the programme extend far beyond its duration. This sustainable approach fosters a supportive home environment, enabling mothers to continue providing the care and guidance their children need as they heal and grow.

LIFE AFTER ABUSE: WORKS4WOMEN AND PEER SUPPORT SERVICES

WORKS4WOMEN

Our employability programme, Works4Women (W4W), empowers women affected by domestic abuse to achieve greater economic independence.

In partnership with Shakti Women's Aid, the programme provides a wide range of specialised support, helping participants enhance their health and wellbeing while gaining the skills and experience needed to pursue education, training, and employment goals.



IMPACT IN 2023-24:

64 women benefited from W4W.

12 women secured employment after receiving support from the service.

17 women participated in a 6-week employability programme in partnership with State Street Bank, which included learning about the banking and finance sector, CV development, and interview coaching. Two women secured jobs in the sector, and several others found work in other industries or pursued further education.

18 women received laptops, enabling them to search for jobs, apply for courses, study, and become more digitally connected. Digital support and training were provided by partner organisations.

20 women participated in “Confidently You!” confidence-building sessions and “Make your Money Count” financial awareness courses.

“I’ve built my confidence and it’s given me positivity for my future. It’s good to talk to other women. I feel more up to date with computers and online security. Nobody judges you; you’re given the support to ask questions, and everyone supports you. I look forward to coming to the group. It’s given me a new lease of life.”

PEER SUPPORT SERVICE

Over the past year, we have successfully designed, tested and delivered the first stage of our Peer Support Service.

This service now operates three weekly peer support groups across various locations in the city. Each group runs for 10 sessions, including seven discussion sessions and three activity sessions.

OBJECTIVES OF PEER SUPPORT GROUPS

Validate group members' experiences

Reduce isolation

Increase knowledge about domestic abuse

Empower women to become more independent and confident

IMPACT IN THE FIRST YEAR

91 referrals were received, leading to **38 women** attending groups with a **75% average attendance rate**.

100% of women in exit feedback would recommend EWA's Peer Support Service.

100% of women on exit showed improvement on the Empowerment Star in areas like Support Networks, Health and Wellbeing, and Self-Esteem.

35% of women expressed interest in supporting other women, leading to plans for co-facilitator training.



“Thank you so much for the invite to the absolutely wonderful group social today. I absolutely loved it, and I really cannot begin to express how much I needed it today. It was a firm reminder that I’m not alone and if these other strong, brave women can get through (you included in that) then so can I.”

The Peer Support Service not only helps women recover from the trauma of domestic abuse but also fosters a sense of community and shared strength, empowering them to support each other as they rebuild their lives.

SUPPORT SERVICES IN THE CRIMINAL COURT: EDDACS

Edinburgh Domestic Abuse Court Advocacy and Support Service (EDDACS) is a dedicated support service for women victims of domestic abuse whose cases are processed through the Edinburgh Domestic Abuse Court. Funded jointly by the Scottish Government Justice and Equalities Directorates, EDDACS plays a crucial role in guiding women through the court process and ensuring their safety and well-being.

KEY FUNCTIONS OF EDDACS

- **Court Process Support**

EDDACS explains the court process and potential outcomes, providing clients with a clear understanding of what to expect. This includes preparing detailed risk assessments and individual support and safety plans, which also consider the safety and risk to any children involved.

- **Advocacy and Reporting**

EDDACS prepares reports for all hearings to inform the court of the client's perception of risk and the assessment of risk from the perpetrator. This advocacy includes sharing views on prosecution, special bail conditions, and sentencing, as well as requesting special measures such as remote testimony or having an assigned supporter present during trials.

- **Ongoing Communication and Support**

Clients are kept informed about court progress and outcomes. EDDACS conducts periodic support calls tailored to individual risk assessments and refers women to additional services for them and their children as needed.



IMPACT IN 2023-24

661 women were supported through **998 court cases** by EDDACS, with **424 new referrals** contacting the service for the first time. Many cases involved repeat offenses by the same perpetrator, including some instances where women were navigating the court process for the 23rd time with the same abuser.

CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS:

- **Inconsistencies in Court Orders**

EDDACS has addressed inconsistencies in special bail conditions, non-harassment orders, and other sentences by requesting additional information and reconsideration when appropriate. They assist with the complaints process and refer women to the legal services project for advice on civil measures if needed.

- **Communication Issues**

To improve communication with court agents (Procurator Fiscal, Victim Information and Advice), EDDACS has arranged meetings to enhance consistency and partnership.

- **Availability of Special Measures**

Due to high case volumes, there has been limited availability of special measures like remote testimony. Despite this, EDDACS

has successfully secured these measures for many clients and is participating in research on the implementation of digital courts for domestic abuse cases.

- **Non-Appearence Warrants**

EDDACS has identified issues with the issuance of non-appearance warrants and delays in court proceedings. By monitoring these cases, they have successfully raised concerns with the court to ensure timely and appropriate handling.

“EDDACS always provided me with updates and information when I required it. Whenever I contacted the Court, I never got a response to my emails, but EDDACS always responded to me in a timely manner.”

EDDACS remains committed to providing comprehensive support and advocacy for women navigating the criminal justice system, ensuring their voices are heard and their safety is prioritised.

CIVIL LEGAL SERVICE

The Civil Legal Support Initiative, launched in September 2023, is a vital partnership between Scottish Women’s Aid (SWA), Edinburgh Women’s Aid (EWA), and Baker Gostelow Family Law. This collaboration is designed to provide rapid and accessible legal advice, interventions, and services to women and children affected by domestic abuse, addressing a critical gap in existing support structures.

KEY FEATURES OF THE PROJECT

1 Immediate Access to Legal Services

Unlike traditional legal advice services that require clients to navigate administrative hurdles, such as setting up appointments or assessing legal aid eligibility, this initiative offers immediate and free access to legal services. This is especially crucial for domestic abuse survivors who often face urgent and complex legal challenges.

2 Specialist Legal Support

The project employs a domestic abuse specialist solicitor, which helps to reduce the risk of further trauma by providing expert legal support tailored to the unique needs of abuse survivors. This approach has been shown to lead to better outcomes for women seeking to end abusive relationships.

3 Comprehensive Legal Service

The services focus on a wide range of child and family law matters, including separation, divorce, parental responsibilities, child residence, and contact issues. Additionally, the initiative addresses complex financial and property disputes arising from separation, which are often exacerbated by financial abuse.

CHALLENGES AND OBSERVATIONS

- **Child Welfare and Safety Concerns**

A significant number of cases involve women trying to arrange child contact in situations where there are serious concerns for child welfare and the mother's safety. Even in cases without such severe concerns, mothers often need protection when dealing with their abusers.

- **Barriers to Resolving Financial Issues**

Many women struggle to resolve financial and property issues due to a lack of available solicitors offering services under the civil legal assistance scheme. This results in legal services being unaffordable, forcing some women to remain in unsafe situations or unable to pursue their rightful claims.

- **Dissatisfaction with Legal Responses**

Women often report feeling that their concerns about child welfare in the context of domestic abuse are not being adequately addressed by existing legal services or the court system.

131 women were referred for civil legal advice and support in the first six months of this project.

"I really appreciate your advice and assistance. You've been terrific, and I'm very grateful to Women's Aid for providing your service. I'm meeting with my new solicitor on Thursday, so hopefully, I can bring matters to a close soon."

This initiative is a significant step forward in supporting women and children facing domestic abuse, providing them with the necessary legal tools to navigate complex and often dangerous situations, and ultimately helping to ensure their safety and well-being.



INFLUENCING CHANGE

TRAINING AND AWARENESS RAISING

In 2023-24, Edinburgh Women's Aid (EWA) significantly expanded its reach through training, development, and awareness-raising initiatives. These efforts targeted various organisations, including educational institutions like Edinburgh College, Queen Margaret University, and Napier University, as well as community services such as Street Assist, St Columba's Hospice, and City of Edinburgh Council departments, including Social Work and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

A total of **435 delegates participated in these sessions**, which included seven online and twelve in-person events. These training sessions are designed to enhance understanding of domestic abuse (DA) among professionals who may encounter women and children affected by such abuse. By improving knowledge in this area, these sessions aim to increase safety and well-being for those impacted by domestic abuse.

EWA's approach is tailored to the needs of each participant, ensuring that the training is relevant and impactful. The sessions are planned with consideration for potential survivors among the attendees, with support offered to those who may need it after the training.

TRAINING ATTENDEE FEEDBACK

"We know that financial abuse is happening. After listening to this session, I feel confident to involve the police. He has taken enough from her."

"I had no idea that you supported children too, or that you offered counselling. Having more knowledge about how EDDACs works alongside us is great."

"I can see all the different things that stop women from getting help. I want to work as a social worker, so I needed to hear this to understand."

YOUTH AND PHILANTHROPY INITIATIVE

EWA also engaged with young people through the Youth & Philanthropy Initiative (YPI) in schools, **delivering 14 sessions to 144 pupils**. These sessions empowered students to educate their peers and school staff on domestic abuse, fostering a deeper understanding of the issue.

YPI PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

“I gained more of an understanding of what EWA does and what services are offered.”

“So much more understanding of why women stay!”

“Learned about controlling behaviour.”

“A wider knowledge of abuse towards women and signs to look for.”



HOUSING POLICY WORK

Despite Scotland’s progressive policies on domestic abuse and homelessness, EWA identified a gap in their implementation. Many Homelessness and Housing officers, both statutory and within housing associations, continue to advise women experiencing domestic abuse to present as homeless, contrary to current policy, which advocates for supporting women to remain in a safe home.

In February 2024, with funding from Nationwide Building Society, EWA employed a housing policy specialist to address these issues. This specialist is working to improve policy implementation, aiming to prevent homelessness and enhance housing options for women experiencing domestic abuse. By March 31, 2024, **eight women had already been supported** through this new service, marking the beginning of a crucial effort to align practice with policy and improve outcomes for survivors.

ART AND REFLECTION PROJECT

In collaboration with Dr Fiona Morrison from the University of Edinburgh and Stills Gallery, EWA supported a participatory project aimed at celebrating the relationships between children and their mothers who have experienced domestic abuse.

Supported by the Nuffield Foundation and the Economic and Social Research Council Festival of Social Science, the project invited participants to create photographs of significant objects that represent their relationship, with the assistance of photographer Morwenna Kearsley.

This project culminated in an exhibition at Stills Gallery in October 2023, providing a resource for initiating conversations about

the importance of the mother-child relationship and the ways in which policy and practice can offer support.

These initiatives reflect EWA's comprehensive approach to addressing domestic abuse, from local training and awareness-raising to influencing international policy and supporting innovative projects that celebrate resilience and recovery.

“The head looks like a cherub - like my child. The books are mine, I collect them. Mum and me like hunting for antiques together.”

“The big clock is my mum and the little one is me. The paint brushes are there because we love painting together.”



INTERNATIONAL INFLUENCE

EWA's influence extends beyond Scotland, with international engagements that share Scotland's progressive approach to addressing domestic abuse:

MAY 2023

EWA met with representatives from Quebec Maisons Femmes and the Quebec Provincial Police to discuss Scotland's criminalisation of coercive control. This collaboration aimed to support similar legislative developments in Canada. A follow-up visit in 2024 allowed Canadian representatives to learn directly from EWA's EDDACS court support team.

SEPTEMBER 2023

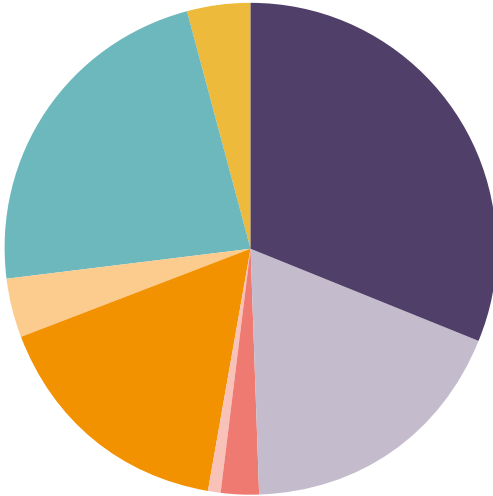
The Hon. Katrine Hildyard, Southern Australia's Minister for Women and the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, visited EWA's 24-hour Refuge. She spoke with a service user, who shared her story and the support she received from EWA. The minister's visit aimed to learn from Scotland's laws criminalising coercive control, with a view to integrating similar legislation in Southern Australia.

OCTOBER 2023

EWA presented at the European Conference on Domestic Violence in Reykjavik, Iceland. Alongside partners from Scottish Government, Police Scotland, and other institutions, EWA highlighted the impact of the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act on prosecutions and shared insights on the experiences of women and child victims and witnesses. The seminar reached an international audience of academics and policymakers, further extending EWA's influence.

INCOME & EXPENDITURE

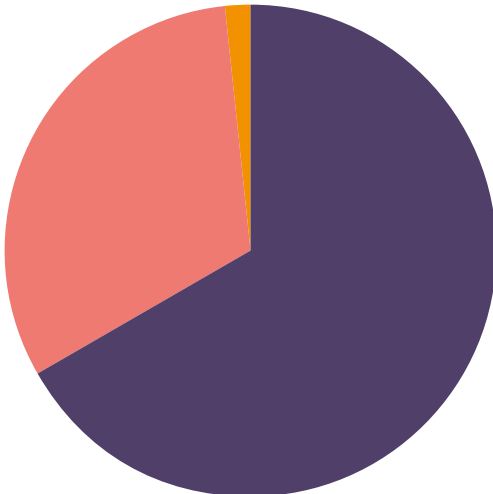
1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024



Income

- City of Edinburgh Council (£673,445)
- City of Edinburgh Council - Housing Support (£398,968)
- Housing Income (£54,012)
- Investment Income (13,500)
- Trufts & Foundations (£356,487)
- Donations (£80,406)
- Scottish Government (£492,782)
- Scottish Women's Aid (£88,487)

Total £2,158,087



Expenditure

- Women's Services (£1,539,685)
- Children's Services and Court Support Services (£723,128)
- Fundraising (£37,774)

Total £2,300,587

A HEARTFELT THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS AND FUNDRAISERS

We extend our deepest gratitude to the organisations and individuals who have generously supported Edinburgh Women's Aid throughout the year. Your contributions have been invaluable in helping us continue our vital work in supporting women and children affected by domestic abuse.

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR MAJOR SUPPORTERS

The Scottish Government
The City of Edinburgh Council
UK Shared Prosperity Fund
Scottish Legal Aid Board (through
Scottish Women's Aid)
State Street
St James Quarter
The Robertson Trust
The MacFarlane Family Trust
Nationwide Building Society

Smallwood Trust
EVOC
The RS MacDonald Trust
National Lottery
The Blackford Trust
Scottish Children's Lottery Trust
Cash for Kids
Youth & Philanthropy Initiative (YPI)
Edinburgh and Lothian Trust Fund
Edinburgh Police Fund for Children

**Your ongoing support has made a profound impact
on the lives of those we serve, and we are incredibly
grateful for your dedication to our mission.**

SUPPORTED BY
EDINBURGH
THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

TO OUR INDIVIDUAL DONORS AND CAMPAIGN SUPPORTERS

We also want to thank the many individuals who have donated regularly or supported our various campaigns. Your generosity plays a crucial role in enabling us to provide essential services and support to those in need.

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO OUR STAFF AND COMMUNITY

We are deeply appreciative of our staff members and the wider community who have participated in events like the Kiltwalk and other fundraising activities throughout the year. Your commitment and enthusiasm are truly inspiring, and your efforts have helped raise much-needed funds and awareness for our cause.

Together, we are making a difference in the lives of women and children facing domestic abuse, and we could not do it without the unwavering support of our donors, partners, and community.

PLEASE CONSIDER SUPPORTING US

Edinburgh Women's Aid is proud to be Edinburgh's leading charity in the fight against domestic abuse. Our work is only possible through the generous donations of the public, businesses, and trusts.

As we face a 38% year-on-year increase in demand from January to March 2024, it's more crucial than ever to expand our resources to meet the needs of the women and children in Edinburgh who are seeking refuge from the trauma of domestic abuse. With your help, we can ensure that more women and children become safe, recover, and rebuild their lives free from fear and harm.

If you've been inspired by our report and would like to support us, we'd love to hear from you. Please call us at 0131 315 8111 or email us at hello@edinwomensaid.co.uk.

HOW YOU CAN HELP



TEXT TO DONATE

Text **EWA** to **70580** to donate £5.



MAKE A DONATION

Contribute a one-time gift or set up a recurring donation at [justgiving.com/edinburghwomensaid](https://www.justgiving.com/edinburghwomensaid).



LEAVE A LEGACY

By including EWA in your will, you can help ensure that we can continue supporting women and children for generations to come. Speak with your solicitor or contact us at hello@edinwomensaid.co.uk for more information.



FUNDRAISE

Take on a fundraising challenge and set up your own page at [justgiving.com/edinburghwomensaid](https://www.justgiving.com/edinburghwomensaid) by clicking on 'start fundraising'.



NOMINATE US

Consider nominating EWA as the beneficiary of charitable activities your employer, school, church, or community organise.



STAY CONNECTED

Instagram: @edinbwa
Facebook: @edinwomensaid
X: @EdinWomensAid
LinkedIn: Edinburgh Women's Aid

We look forward to hearing from you and thank you for your support in helping us make a difference in the lives of those affected by domestic abuse. Together, we can create a safer, more hopeful future for women and children in our community.

WHO WE ARE

PATRON

Malcolm Chisholm

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Morag Waller
(Chair)

Jessica MacDonald
(Vice Chair)

Lynn Dewar
(Treasurer)

Claire Patullo
(retired 05/06/2024)

Danielle Trudeau

Fiona Bowen

Hannah Gibson

Jenny Peachey
(retired 12/12/2023)

Julie Moran

Kate Heggie

Laura Cree
(retired 16/11/2023)

Rachel Hindson

MANAGEMENT TEAM

Linda Rodgers
(CEO)

Karen Griffiths
(Deputy CEO)

Claire Gillespie
(Operational Manager,
left 30/06/23)

Debbie Hunter
(Fundraising Manager,
from 01/08/23)

Jakki Spicer (Fundraising
Manager, left 18/08/23)

Julie MacDonald
(Operational Manager)

Margaret Patrizio
(Administration Manager)

Nicola Dhanda
(Finance Manager)

Sinead Welsh
(Operational Manager)

STAFF TEAM

Agata Mazankova

Ainuska Sheripkanova

Alison Thomas

Alison Lawrie

Amanda Garcia

Bathellier

Amy Campbell

Anna Hawkes-Cumming

Anne Hay

Toni McCulloch

Beata Burchard

Bonnie Thomson

Cathy Todd

Charlotte Ronald

Crystal Roebuck

Cynthia Gimenez Payo

Danielle Coll

Debbie Stoddart

Dorota Oleksiewicz

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Elizabeth O'Donnell

Emily Thomas

Fahmida Huczewska

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Hannah Liddle

Holly Cathcart

Ines Lerena Garcia

Irene Bruce

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Jasmine Clark

Jennie Ranta

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Kelly Mattiello

Kira Foster

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Leanne Glancy

Leigh Fraser

Lisa Dowie

Marie Love

Mariea Nairn

Martyna Keckowska

Michelle Appleby

Michelle O'Rourke

Natalie MacKenzie

Nicoletta Katseniou

Noemi Dentice

Palpasa Shrestha

Rafaela Efstratiou

**Roxana Sanchez-
Pedreno**

Sana Ilyas

Sarah McWilliam

Sarah Jones

Shashika Heiyantuduwa

Siobhan Shanks

Urska Ozimek

Veda Cher Runge

Yoana Tsoneva

CONTACT US

HELPLINE

For support or to contact any of our support services, call **0131 315 8110**.

DROP-IN AND HELPLINE OPENING HOURS

Mon	1pm - 3pm (Helpline 10am - 3pm)
Tue	2pm - 7pm (Helpline 10am - 7pm)
Wed	10am - 3pm
Thu	10am - 3pm
Fri	10am - 3pm
Sat	10am - 1pm
Sun	Closed

You can drop in at our office during the above opening hours.

OUR ADDRESS

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

GET IN TOUCH

For general office enquiries, call our business line: **0131 315 8111**, which is staffed Monday to Friday 9.00am - 4.30pm.

Or leave a message on our 24-hour answer machine at **0131 315 8110**, or email us at duty@edinwomensaid.co.uk

**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



Edinburgh Women's Aid
4 Cheyne Street, Edinburgh, EH4 1JB
Office number: 0131 315 8111
email: info@edinwomensaid.co.uk
www.edinwomensaid.co.uk

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