



**Every woman deserves
to feel worthwhile**

Leeds Women's Aid
**Impact Report
2023**

Introduction

Leeds Women's Aid (LWA) was set up in 1972 and is now the biggest women's charity in Leeds. 2022 saw us celebrating our 50th Anniversary with a Celebration Event and a Fundraising Appeal to refurbish the gardens at our main refuge site.

Although the scope of our work and activity has expanded through supporting women and families, speaking out about violence against women and girls and our approach to partnership work, we remain committed to our feminist approach. We continue to provide a range of the very best services for women and families who are victims and survivors of: domestic, sexual and honour-based violence and abuse, forced marriage, stalking and harassment.

We continue to be the lead agency in the local authority commissioned Leeds Domestic Violence Service (LDVS) consortium and Women and Girls Alliance Leeds (W&GAL - formerly Women's Lives Leeds) projects.

Under the LDVS contract, we are responsible for the delivery of the commissioned refuge provision for Leeds, Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy (IDVA) service, the 24/7 Helpline and drop in support services and specialist support for women and young people with multiple and complex needs. We also deliver other services such as supporting children and young people in the community, running two non-commissioned independent refuges, online web chat, healthy relationship and staying safe programmes and activities and support for women and girls.

In the year ending March 2022, the police in England & Wales recorded over 1.5 million incidents of domestic abuse* with Yorkshire and the Humber having the highest recorded rates of domestic abuse related crimes. However, this does not tell the full picture – it is impossible to assess the volume of incidents of abuse that happen which are not reported to the police.

Demand for our services continues to increase, and every day our staff speak to women who are at serious risk of homicide from their male partners/ex-partners.

SINCE 2017, THE NUMBER OF HELPLINE CALLS HAS INCREASED BY



58%

FOR THE YEAR ENDING MARCH 2023, WE RECEIVED NEARLY

2,000

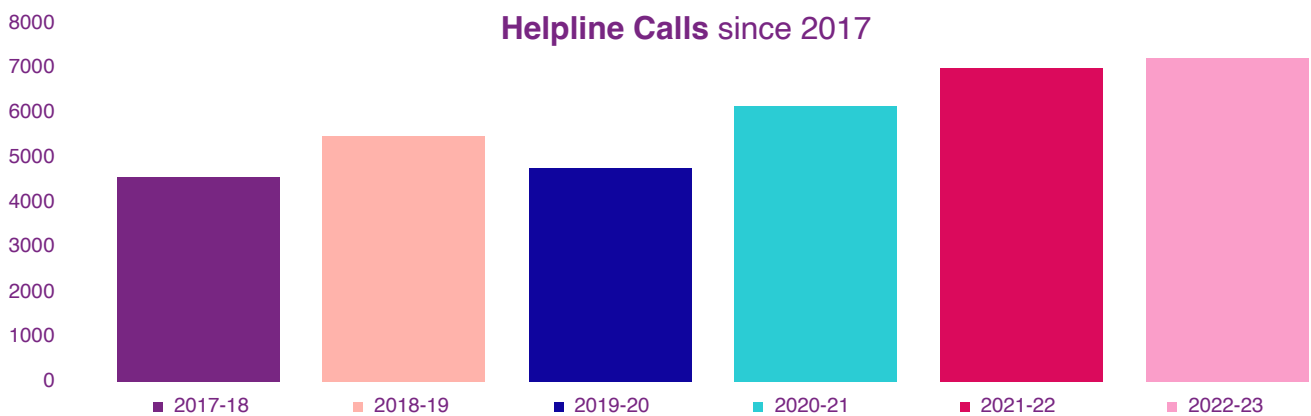
ENQUIRIES ABOUT REFUGE AVAILABILITY

98% of the people we support are women and 96% abusers are male. This is borne out by national statistics - according to the ONS, the victim-survivor was female in 74.1% of domestic abuse related cases in the year to March 2022. Between the years ending March 2019 – March 2021, 72.1% of victims-survivors of domestic homicide were female compared with 12.3% of victims-survivors of non-domestic homicide*.

* Office for National Statistics (ONS), released 25 November 2022, ONS website, article, Domestic abuse victim characteristics, England and Wales: year ending March 2022.

While we recognise that domestic violence & abuse (DV&A) continues to impact mostly women, we can still support people of any gender within LDVS.

In England and Wales, 1 in 4 women experience domestic abuse in their lifetime. Two women a week are killed by a current/former partner.



IN THE LAST
YEAR WE HAVE
RECEIVED OVER

12,500

REQUESTS
FOR SUPPORT

We do what we do because we believe



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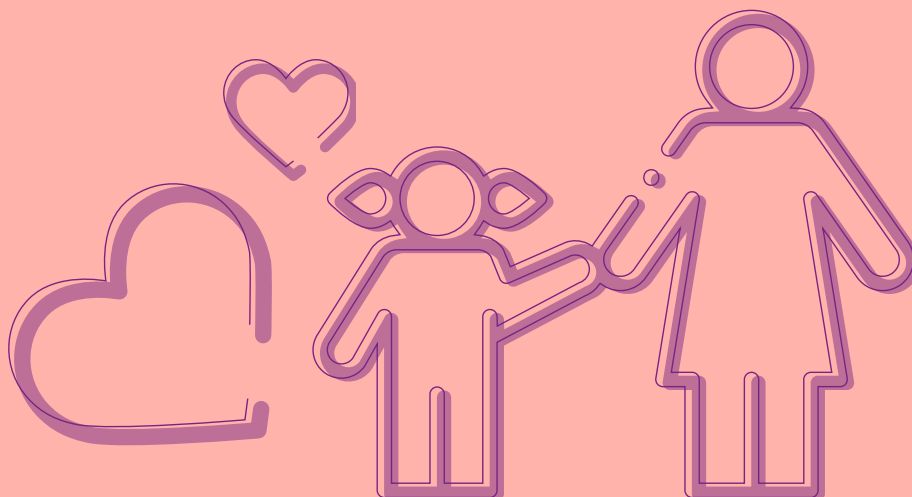
ALL WOMEN & CHILDREN SHOULD LIVE IN SAFETY,
FREE FROM ABUSE & FEAR

2

EVERY WOMAN & CHILD HAS A VOICE & SHOULD
BE EMPOWERED, INSPIRED & LISTENED TO

3

WOMEN-CENTRED SUPPORT IS POWERFUL
& IMPROVES THE LIVES OF WOMEN, MEN
& CHILDREN



2022-2023 at a glance

ON AVERAGE THERE WAS A THREAT TO
A WOMAN'S LIFE EVERY DAY THIS YEAR.

72%

OF REFERRALS WERE
SUCCESSFULLY CONTACTED
AND LISTENED TO

3,500

PEOPLE RECEIVED SUPPORT
FOLLOWING REFERRALS TO
OUR SERVICES

AVERAGE
105

REFERRALS FOR SUPPORT
EACH WEEK

AVERAGE
139

HELPLINE CALLS
RECEIVED PER WEEK

OVER
12,500

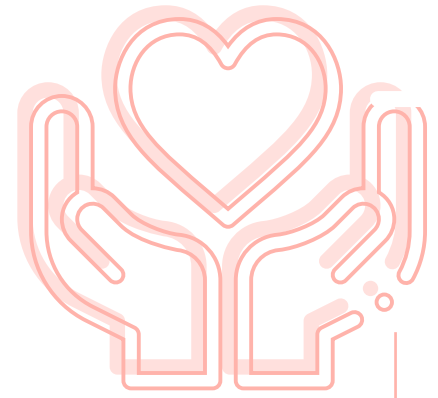
REQUESTS FOR SUPPORT BY EITHER
PHONE, EMAIL OR ONLINE CHAT

12,300

PEOPLE FOLLOW US ON
SOCIAL MEDIA

‘LWA have been there every step of
the way and so I was not feeling alone
or ‘in the dark.’

The support we offer



We offer a variety of person-centred support across our teams from one-off support with a Helpline call to longer term intensive support and refuge accommodation.

The support is tailored to the needs of the individual or family and can include practical support covering safety planning, support through the criminal justice system, information around injunctions, housing, family courts, physical and mental health and finances.

72% WERE SUPPORTED AROUND HOUSING RELATED ISSUES

41% WERE SUPPORTED AROUND FINANCES

56% WERE SUPPORTED THROUGH THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROCESS

46% WERE SUPPORTED TO ACCESS ADDITIONAL SUPPORT AROUND THEIR EMOTIONAL HEALTH & WELLBEING

39% WERE SUPPORTED AROUND INJUNCTIONS

20% WERE SUPPORTED TO RE-ESTABLISH RELATIONSHIPS WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY

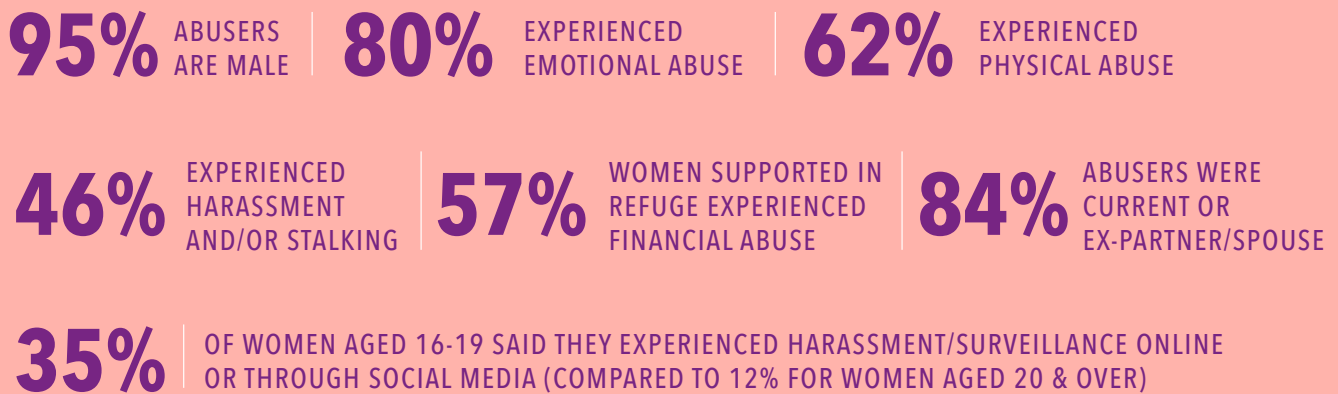


“I found myself in a difficult and dangerous situation and was referred to the services by the police. My case worker, warm and friendly, was supportive, non-judgemental and knowledgeable. She did not tell me what to do or what is the best solution to my problem. Instead, she provided information on my rights and options, while reassuring that I would be supported whatever my decision will be. She was easy to talk to, approachable and professional.”

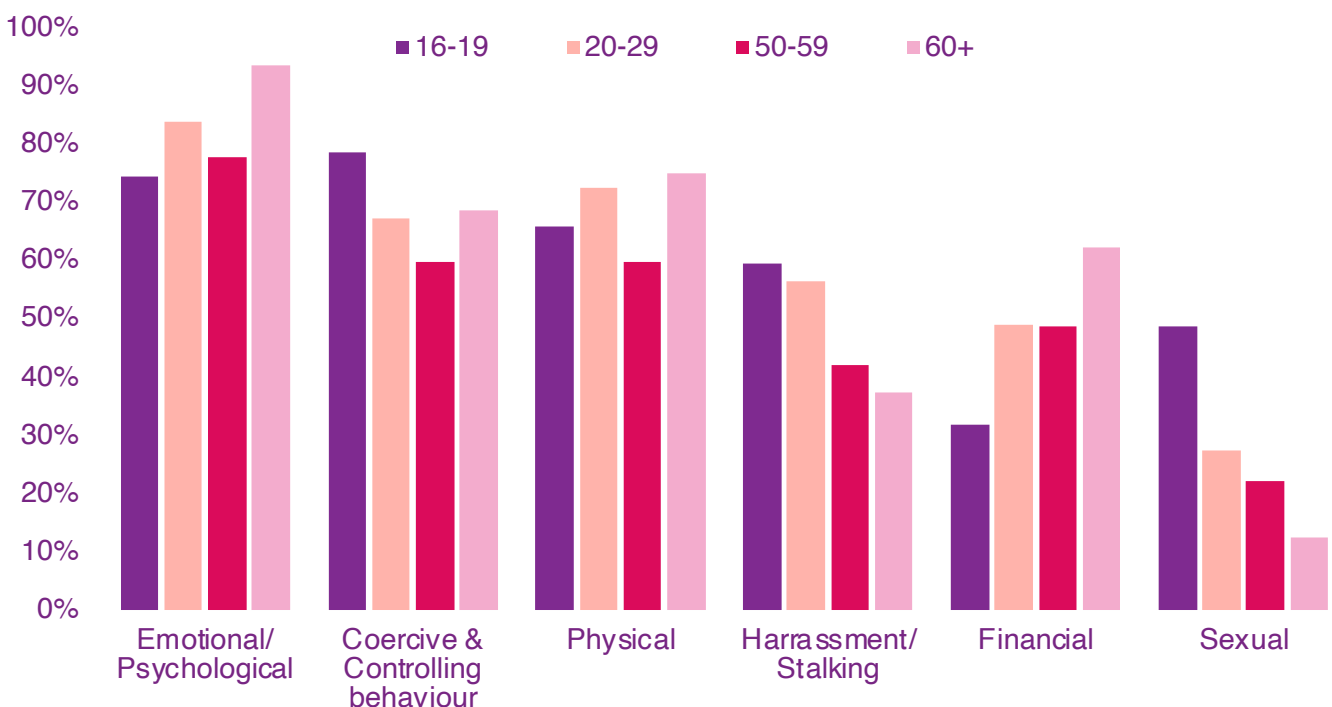
Experiences of Domestic Violence & Abuse (DV&A)

Typically, the women we supported had experienced abuse for 5 years with some having experienced abuse for over 30 years or more.

Of the women we supported:



Types of abuse experienced (by age)



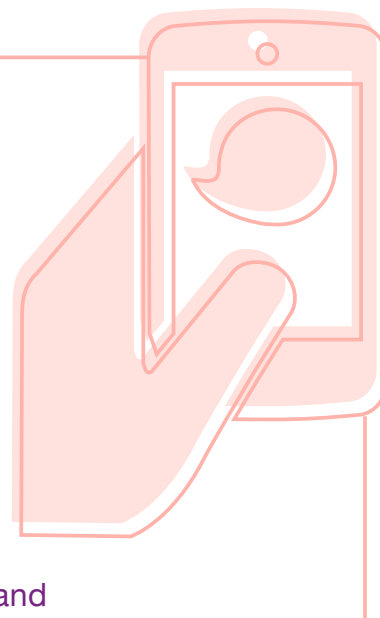
First point of contact

Helpline

The Helpline is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for people to call us for emotional support, and information on all LWA and other services. It is open to victims-survivors, concerned friends or relatives as well as professionals from other organisations.

The Helpline team can search for refuge availability in Leeds and the wider area as well as taking a self-referral from callers if they would like ongoing support. They can also arrange for an interpreter if required.

In July 2023, following a lot of hard work and dedication by the team, our Helpline received accreditation from the **Helplines Partnership**.



Webchat and Email support

We also operate a confidential webchat facility. A trained worker can talk with women in need via the instant messenger service. Similar to the Helpline, help, advice or ongoing practical or emotional support can be provided.

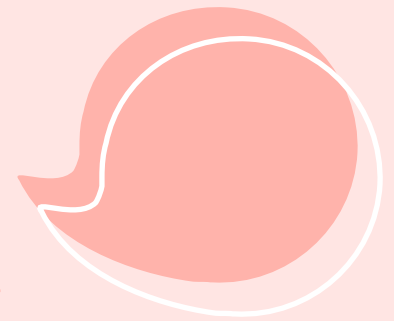


“When I first went to drop-in I was scared about everything, I was insecure, vulnerable and hopeless. The support I received made you feel that you were going to be safe and that there was light at the end of the tunnel. I was given guidance, kindness and was introduced to people who have helped me to come out of a horrible situation. The domestic abuse advisor at drop-in was my lifesaver and I will be thankful forever as I wouldn’t have done it without her.”

Drop In Service

We run regular discreet drop-in services across the city of Leeds for women. Our drop-in worker will offer confidential, emotional and practical support and can give information about rights and discuss various options. No appointment is necessary and it can be completely anonymous.

**OVER
7,200** TOTAL CONTACTS RECEIVED
BY THE HELPLINE



24% CALLS TO HELPLINE
SEARCHING FOR REFUGE
ACCOMMODATION

87% OF CONTACTS TO THE
HELPLINE WERE VIA
TELEPHONE

824 CONTACTS WERE RECEIVED
VIA WEB CHAT OR EMAIL

58% OF CALLERS WERE
VICTIMS-SURVIVORS,
34% PROFESSIONALS
WORKING WITH SURVIVORS
WHILE OTHERS INCLUDED
CONCERNED FRIENDS
AND FAMILY

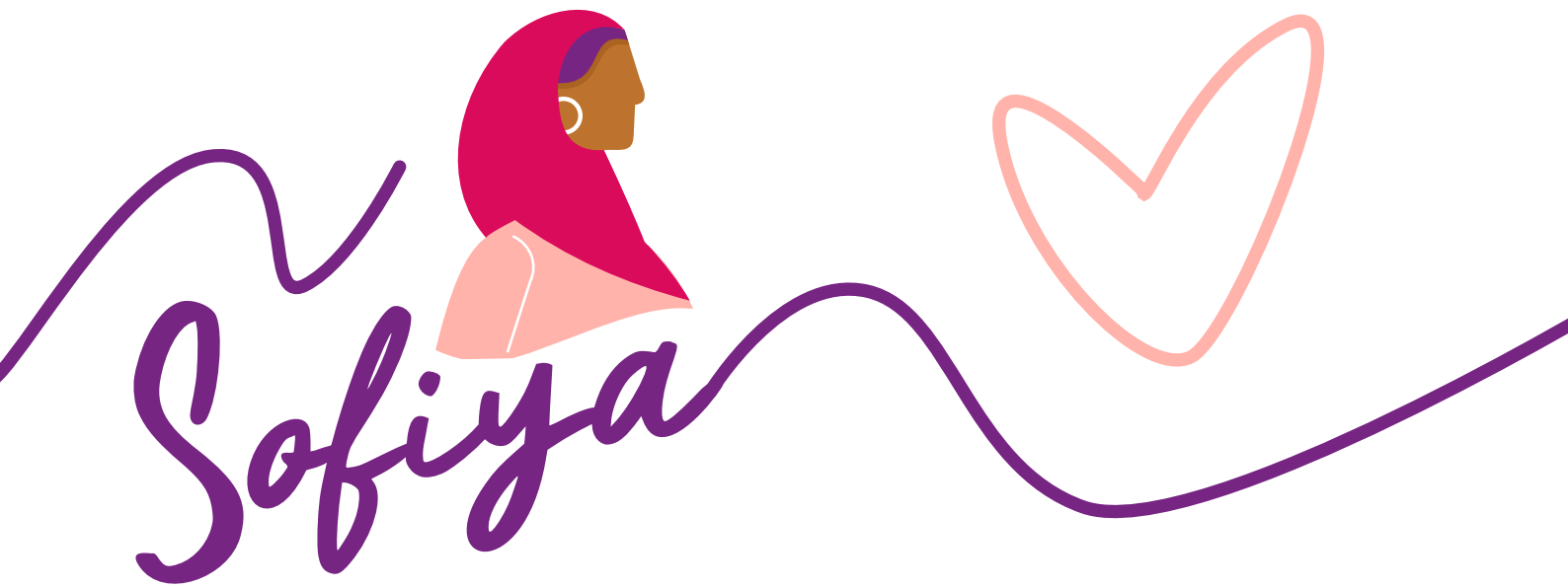
Police control room

The Police Control Room pilot scheme finished in March 2023 when it lost its funding. During this pilot, we had a specialist DV&A worker based in the main Leeds control room at Elland Road police station.

The worker would contact victims-survivors after incidents where the police became involved to offer immediate practical and emotional support and offer referral to our services or other appropriate support services.



968 PEOPLE WERE CONTACTED TO OFFER SUPPORT FROM
A DV&A WORKER AFTER INCIDENTS INVOLVING THE POLICE.



Sofiya contacted our Helpline, as she had been experiencing abuse from her husband since coming to the UK several years ago. Due to her immigration status, Sofiya relied on her marriage to remain in the UK and continue working.

Their home was in her husband's name, so she was afraid of being made homeless if her relationship broke down. Sofiya was isolated from any family or friends in the UK and had no one to turn to for help.

Sofiya had reported various assaults to the police at first... but she was conflicted between her feelings for her husband, and her concerns for her own safety.



"I was so scared and I didn't think anyone could help me."

Although Sofiya speaks English, she sometimes needed an interpreter when speaking over the telephone to fully understand information from the police or other professionals.

A Helpline advisor spoke with Sofiya about seeking emergency refuge accommodation. We were able to support her with applying for benefits in her own name and accessing emotional support.



"It made me understand I'm not alone and can't reach out and speak to people about what's happening, that gave me great advice on all matters not just the abuse I suffered."

Referrals

We received **5,500** referrals for support during 2022-23. The number of referrals received from Daily Risk Assessment Meeting (DRAM) has remained constant since its introduction back in July 2021, however the number of referrals from other sources continues to steadily increase.

79% OF REFERRALS ACCEPTING SUPPORT WERE ADMITTED INTO SUPPORT DELIVERED BY LWA AND THE OTHER 21% TO LDVS PARTNERS

26% OF REFERRALS TO REFUGE ARE MADE BY WOMEN THEMSELVES NEEDING CRISIS ACCOMMODATION

53% OF ALL REFERRALS ARE FROM DRAM

72% OF REFERRALS WERE SUCCESSFULLY CONTACTED AND LISTENED TO

“I felt I was able to ring at any time and was also contacted to see how I was getting on.”

Contacting referrals

Our Assessment Team play a key role in our success and are the heart of our service and operate the first point of contact for many service users. Attempts are made to contact every referral to LWA and LDVS within strict timescales.

4,300 | **CALLS MADE TO VICTIMS-SURVIVORS WHO NEED ADVOCACY AT DRAM**

100% OF VICTIMS-SURVIVORS SUCCESSFULLY CONTACTED FOR DRAM HAVE INTERVENTION & ASSESSMENT AND ARE OFFERED SUPPORT. THIS HAS MEANT THAT INDIVIDUALS HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ACCESS SUPPORT SOONER AND HAVE THEIR VOICES HEARD EARLIER.

Accommodation based support



Support for women at refuge

We offer emergency refuge accommodation for women and children who are homeless as a result of DV&A. We can offer spaces for up to 43 adults and their children who need crisis accommodation in our refuge and dispersed properties.

Each person is allocated a DV&A Support Worker who will provide emotional and practical support and will work in partnership with other services such as counselling, mental health support and housing. We also have Children and Family Workers to provide additional support to children and young people who stay in refuge.

NEARLY
100 FAMILIES
SUPPORTED WITHIN REFUGE
DURING 2022-23

1/4

OF REFERRALS TO REFUGE ARE FROM
WOMEN THEMSELVES, 1 IN 6 CAME
FROM HOUSING IN LEEDS

FOLLOWING SUPPORT IN REFUGE:

91% OF WOMEN SAID THEY FELT
MORE ABLE TO ASK FOR HELP
WHEN THEY NEED IT

83% FEEL THEY HAVE BETTER
SUPPORT NETWORKS AFTER
THEIR TIME AT REFUGE

60% OF WOMEN THAT
LEAVE REFUGE STAY
IN THE LEEDS AREA

“

“It’s so lovely here. I like that we had a welcome pack, it was clean and the children had toys on their bed. I was able to believe in myself, that I could do things, be more independent. I became happier and I had friends to spend time with and places to go.”

Counselling and Therapy

The transition to freedom from abuse may be stressful and women may not have time to process their feelings in the moment as they are busy understanding legal processes, arranging housing and securing children's futures. In partnership with Women's Counselling & Therapy Service, we have been able to offer access to therapists to support the whole family in refuge, helping families with the abuse they experienced and other things they would like to discuss.

"My therapist is really good. It's different to the support I get from my key worker. I can share things with my therapist that I don't with my key worker. The domestic abuse stuff is good but I sometimes just need to talk things through."

Staying Safe Programme

The Staying Safe Programme is designed so that women can support one another to understand DV&A, how it happens and how to become safe. It can be very useful for women who are worried about getting into another abusive relationship in the future as we look at the first signs that a new partner may be abusive.

We currently offer this programme to women in refuge on a one-to-one basis.

"THANK YOU FOR HELPING ME UNDERSTAND THAT ABUSE WASN'T MY FAULT AND THAT IT IS A CHOICE NOT BECAUSE OF ME. THANKS FOR HELPING ME WORK ON HOW TO MOVE ON FROM IT AND UNDERSTAND NEW BOUNDARIES."

Follow on support

Support from LWA does not end when a family leaves refuge. All women are offered a period of Resettlement support which will support them with the challenges of setting up and running their own home in Leeds. This could include support to furnish their new home, help setting up utilities and support to get children settled into school.



POEM BY A WOMAN WHILE STAYING AT REFUGE

I can't believe it was 2022 we moved here
So, I left behind my heartache and wiped away the cold tear
All the way here I thought "Am I making a mistake?"
But that's the chance I had to take
I now feel a lot more calm
Felling safe, knowing I won't come to any more harm
All the staff here are very kind
If you have a problem they listen and don't seem to mind
It's nice to go out and not worry about going home
Me and my son are free to roam
It's great to see my family every Friday and Saturday
Waking with a twinkle in my eye and a smile on my face everyday
Going out and discovering new places
Meeting new and old friends with smiles on everyone's faces
All that's left is for my son and myself to let out a huge cheer
And say thank you for letting us stay here.



Marianne

Marianne had been in a relationship with Ryan for over 10 years and it was when Marianne became pregnant that the abuse started. Ryan wouldn't let her have any money and constantly wanted to know where she was. He would grab Marianne and physically assault her; she was often covered in bruises. Marianne and Ryan went on to have other children and the abuse got worse over time.

“I COULDN'T EVEN GO TO THE HAIRDRESSERS WITHOUT HIM.”

One evening when Ryan had assaulted Marianne, she managed to call the police. On attending their home address, the police were able to take Marianne and the children to a family member's house for safety. Following the report to the police, Marianne felt more confident to reach out for support and a referral was received for them to come into our Refuge.

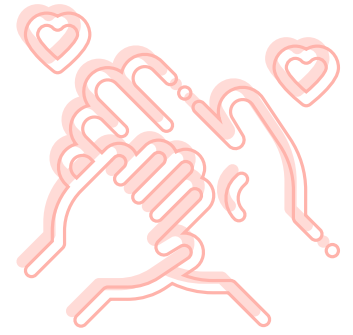
Marianne struggled to work with professionals following her own experiences in childhood. However, over time she started to work closely with refuge staff and open up about the abuse she had experienced. Refuge staff supported Marianne to get a Non-Molestation Order and to report incidents to the police where Ryan breached the terms of the order.

The Children's Team in refuge were able to support Marianne with parenting the children alone and with other meetings with Social Care and appointments relating to child contact issues. They also worked closely with the children and encouraged participation with other activities in refuge such as wellbeing sessions, after school clubs and other play and activity sessions.

The Refuge Team supported Marianne with the child contact issues through court and following this the children are settled and happier. Marianne has now moved on from refuge to her own property and she is more confident to ask for further help and support if she needs it.

“ I AM HIGHLY GRATEFUL THAT I HAVE MY SUPPORT WORKER. SHE HAS BEEN THERE FOR ME FROM THE MINUTE I CAME INTO REFUGE. SHE IS ALWAYS THERE NO MATTER THE PROBLEM AND HAS BEEN REALLY HELPFUL.”

Support for Children & Young People at refuge



Often children and young people are the hidden victims-survivors of DV&A. They not only witness DV&A but can also experience it as well and this has a huge impact on them. The Domestic Abuse Act made children victims-survivors of DV&A in their own right.

We have specialist Children, Young People (CYP) and Family workers who provide additional support to the children and young people who stay in our refuges.

During their time in refuge, the team will offer one-to-one support, group play and well-being sessions. The expansion of the team has meant that we have been able to offer more activities to individual children and to family groups which has a positive emotional and wellbeing impact on the families. These include a weekly Nurture Group, After-School Club and running the Women's Aid 'You and Me, Mum' programme

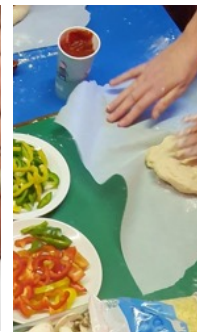
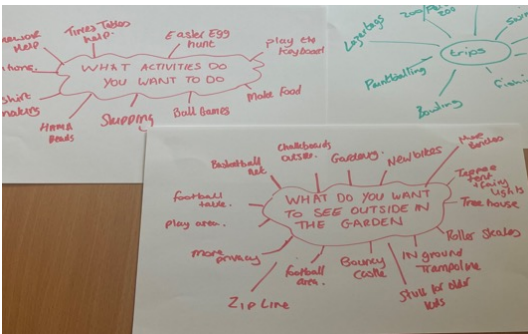
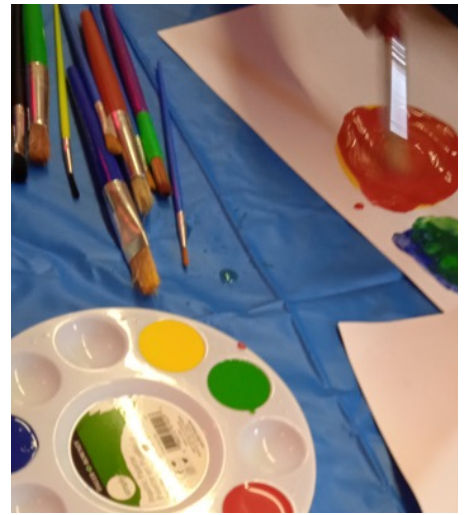
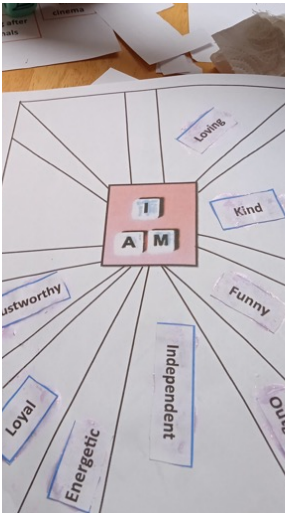
The team have regular engagement with the children to see what they want from our service and this helps us decide what activities and trips to run. These have included arts & crafts sessions, educational trips, celebration events & parties, cooking and baking sessions, emotional, mental & physical development sessions.

Additional activities are held in the school holidays including trips to the farm, seaside, Stockeld Park, picnics in the park as well as other cultural and seasonal celebrations.



"THE TEAM ARE AMAZING. I FELT REALLY SUPPORTED BY MY WORKER AND IN THE SHORT TIME I'VE BEEN AT REFUGE, I'VE LEARNT SO MUCH. I UNDERSTAND SO MUCH MORE ABOUT ME AND PARENTING, THAT HAS HELPED ME TO BETTER SUPPORT MY CHILDREN."

Here are a few photos of some of the things our wonderful children and young people have done:



118

CHILDREN WERE SUPPORTED WITHIN REFUGE

76%

OF PARENTS SAID THEY FEEL MORE CONFIDENT ABOUT THEIR PARENTING SKILLS

100%

SAID THEY KNOW WHERE TO GET HELP WHEN THEY NEED IT

80%

SAID THEY FEEL LESS SCARED AFTER BEGINNING SUPPORT WITH THE CHILDREN'S TEAM

2/3

CHILDREN HAVE SAID THAT THE CHILDREN'S TEAM HAS HAD A POSITIVE IMPACT ON THEIR PROGRESS AT SCHOOL

86%

SAID THEY ARE FEELING CONFIDENT TO TRY NEW THINGS

Independent Domestic Violence Advocates

(IDVA)

Our IDVA team supports people at times of immediate crisis or when safety advice is needed. They are the primary contact point in high risk cases and criminal justice cases. Their primary focus is reduction of risk to help achieve long-term safety. Our IDVA's are legally trained and provide advice and advocacy related to Criminal and Family law.

The IDVA Team represents LWA and LDVS at various multi-agency meetings including Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC), DRAM and Clare's Law Adjudication Panel meetings.

The IDVA team have attended nearly 400 MARAC, DRAM and Clare's Law meetings in the last 12 months and have represented victims-survivors over 6,500 times during these meetings.

90% OF IDVA CLIENTS RECEIVED SUPPORT TO NAVIGATE THE CRIMINAL & CIVIL JUSTICE PROCESS WITH 890 INCIDENTS REPORTED TO THE POLICE

76%
SAID THEY FELT BETTER ABOUT THEMSELVES FOLLOWING IDVA SUPPORT

2/3
SAID THEY FELT BETTER ABLE TO MAKE UP THEIR OWN MINDS ABOUT THINGS

96%
SAID THEY WERE NOW CLEAR THAT THE ABUSE WAS NOT THEIR FAULT

99% OF CLIENTS ASKED SAID THEY FELT SAFER AS A RESULT OF IDVA SUPPORT



“I found myself in a difficult and dangerous situation and was referred to the services by the police. My case worker, warm and friendly, was supportive, non-judgemental and knowledgeable. She did not tell me what to do or what is the best solution to my problem. Instead, she provided information on my rights and options, while reassuring that I would be supported whatever”

Aisha



Aisha had been experiencing emotional and physical abuse from her husband for many years. After one particular incident, she reported him to the police and gave permission for her contact details to be passed to our organisation.

When we contacted Aisha, she was filled with self-doubt and insecurity. She doubted her choice to even contact the police. Our support workers reassured Aisha that she was absolutely right to have reported the abuse.

Aisha told us that her husband had systematically isolated her from her family over the years they had been married. He could be abusive to Aisha both physically and emotionally. He controlled the family finances, so Aisha did not have any money of her own.

'He told me he would kill me if I tried to leave'

Our advisor spoke to Aisha about the support that we could offer. Aisha didn't know what to expect when speaking to the police and she wanted support to understand the process. We transferred her to the IDVA Team who found out that her husband had been charged with various offences, including assault.

The IDVA team were able to provide support to Aisha with the criminal charges brought against her husband. We kept her updated during the course of the criminal justice case; explaining the process every step of the way.

Eventually, the case went to trial and with the support of her IDVA, Aisha felt able to give evidence in court. Her husband was found guilty of the charges against him. A Restraining Order was granted as part of his sentence preventing him from contacting or approaching Aisha giving her additional protection.

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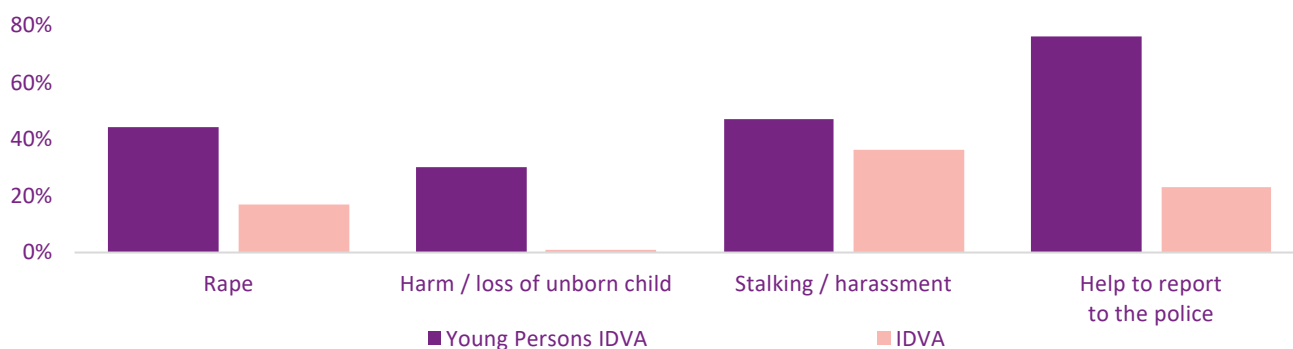
“MY IDVA ALWAYS MADE ME FEEL AT EASE, I CANNOT THANK HER ENOUGH FOR BEING THERE FOR ME THROUGH MY PROCESS AND MY PROBLEMS. ALSO AT COURT SHE WAS AMAZING ALL THE WAY THROUGH ALWAYS RANG UP AND CHECKED IN ON ME AND MADE SURE I WAS OK, VERY UNDERSTANDING AND LISTENED TO ALL MY CONCERNS. ”

Specialist IDVA's

The IDVA Team also has two specialist IDVA's: Young Person's (YP) IDVA, who supports people aged 16-24, and Complex Needs (CN) IDVA who supports women with multiple complex needs. People supported by the specialist IDVA's face additional barriers when accessing support and are not always able to engage with the traditional ways of delivering services. The specialist IDVA's allow opportunity to be flexible in supporting victims-survivors, adapting the approach and communication styles to fit their unique needs.

92% of those supported by the specialist IDVA said they felt more confident about asking for help when they need it.

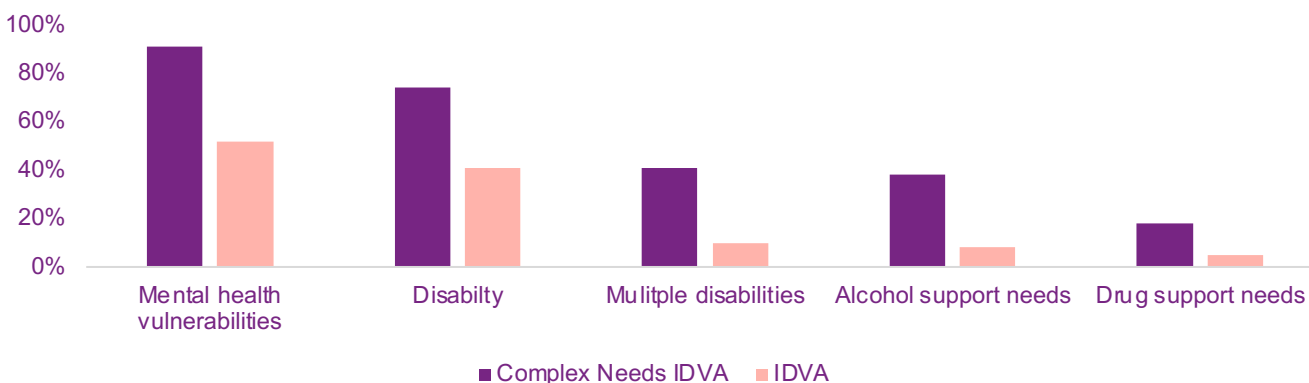
Comparison of YP IDVA & IDVA client experiences



81% of those supported by the CN IDVA said they felt optimistic about the future

100% people supported by the YP IDVA said they felt better able to recognise abusive behaviour

Support needs and vulnerabilities IDVA & Complex Needs IDVA clients





Anna has been referred to our services many times and has experienced DV&A from several partners. Most recently she has experienced physical, sexual, emotional, financial abuse, stalking and harassment and extensive coercive and controlling behaviour. Anna also endured traumatic events throughout her childhood which have left long-lasting effects on her mental health. She uses drugs and alcohol as a coping mechanism.

Anna received intensive support from our CN IDVA following a referral for support with the abuse she was experiencing from her ex-partner. Anna was often in a state of crisis, needing immediate safety planning and emotional support. The IDVA also worked closely with other agencies working with Anna and attended regular professionals' meetings.

Throughout support, our IDVA kept in regular contact with Anna, speaking with her several times a week. She also encouraged Anna to report further incidents to the police, which resulted in further criminal charges being brought against her abuser.

During the course of the criminal case, the IDVA kept Anna up to date and explained what would happen at the trial. Anna was extremely worried about giving evidence and how she would cope in such a stressful situation.

With the support of her IDVA, Anna was able to attend the trial and give evidence. This was the first time that Anna had supported a prosecution all the way to trial. Her abuser was found guilty of the charges brought against him and Anna was also granted a Restraining Order as part of sentencing to provide additional, ongoing protection for her.

Since the trial, Anna has not had any contact with her ex-partner. She has increased her engagement with other services and continues to make positive changes in her life as a result including reducing her reliance on drugs and alcohol.

"I FEEL SO MUCH BETTER IN MYSELF. I DON'T HAVE A LOT OF FRIENDS OR FAMILY, SO IT FEELS AMAZING JUST KNOWING THAT SOMEONE ACTUALLY CARES IF I AM OK OR NOT. I DON'T KNOW WHAT I WOULD'VE DONE WITHOUT YOU, YOUR PATIENCE WITH ME AND EVERYTHING YOU HAVE DONE FOR ME"

Supporting children & young people in the community

Elevate Project

The Elevate project was set up in early 2023 and supports children & young people (CYP) up to the age of 18 living in Leeds who have been witnessed or experienced DV&A. The Elevate team offer individualised support for every young person they work with and this can include informal discussion-based sessions to therapeutic interventions and fun activities in the community.



To date, demand for this service has been extremely high and we are currently operating a waiting list.

27%

REFERRALS CAME FROM OTHER LWA OR LDVS SERVICES

54%

REFERRALS TO ELEVATE CAME FROM SCHOOLS

21%

SAID THEY BETTER UNDERSTAND HOW DV&A HAS IMPACTED ON FAMILY LIFE

70%

OF CYP WHO COMPLETED SUPPORT PROGRAMME WITH ELEVATE SAID THEY WERE PROUD OF THEMSELVES AND FELT CONFIDENT TO TRY NEW THINGS

Feedback from a school who has made referrals into Elevate:

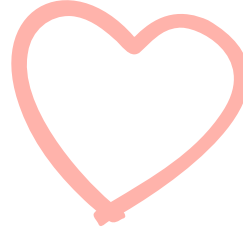
“The service has been amazing for our pupils in so many ways. We have seen individuals grow in confidence, being able to ask for help, walk away from conflict, talk about their experiences (something they haven’t shared before)”

Feedback from a young person supported by Elevate

“The sessions made me feel so much better in myself. I’ve learned to love myself more and to believe in myself too”



Charlie



Charlie is feeling anxious and sad.

His older brother is the abuser and is being very violent in the home, uses weapons and has threatened to kill his whole family.

When his brother has a violent episode, Charlie has been given the responsibility of taking his younger siblings in to a room and locking the door in order to keep them and himself safe and away from potential harm.

Charlie is finding that having the responsibility of his siblings during a violent episode is weighing heavy on him and he doesn't like the feeling of being locked in a room and listening to what is going on. It makes him feel scared.

Charlie is now accessing support from the Children's Community Team (Elevate)

The Elevate worker met with Charlie and his parents at his primary school as the risk of being in the home was too high. They talked about how they could help Charlie and started one-to-one sessions with him during school.

Together they talked through Charlie's feeling about what is happening in his home, finding ways to make difficult situations more manageable for him. During weekly support they developed a plan for Charlie during the violent episodes and ways for Charlie to recognise his own feelings and anxieties about his situation.

Support continued through video calls helping Charlie transition through difficult home changes.

Charlie has now finished support with Elevate. His parents have noticed such a difference in Charlie's anxious behaviour due to the support provided by Elevate and he is now happier and doing well in school.

Impact of our Work

FOLLOWING SUPPORT FROM OUR SERVICES

100% OF WOMEN SAID THEY FELT BELIEVED BY LWA

100% SAID THEY FELT SUPPORTED BY STAFF AT LWA

74% SAID THEY FELT BETTER ABOUT THEMSELVES

92% SAID THEY WOULD COME BACK INTO SERVICE IF NEEDED

“

“I felt supported and empowered to understand what I had experienced was in fact abuse, despite no physical violence occurring. Without LWA, I would probably be thinking I had deserved the abuse and somehow been responsible for the way my ex-partner treated me. Now I know his actions were abusive and I was right to stand my ground and see things through to a conviction”

“I REALLY BELIEVE THERE'S EVERY CHANCE THE SERVICE SAVED MY LIFE AND PROBABLY MY SON'S. THE INTELLIGENCE AND UNDERSTANDING EXTENDED TO MY CASE IS LIKELY TO HAVE PREVENTED A DOMESTIC HOMICIDE, EITHER IN TERMS OF DIRECT VIOLENCE FROM MY ABUSER OR SUICIDE TO ESCAPE THE IMPACT OF THE ONGOING FEAR AND ABUSE. THE KINDNESS AND DIGNITY WITH WHICH I WAS TREATED HELPED ME RECOVER MY SENSE OF SELF BEYOND ABUSE. THANK YOU.”

FOLLOWING SUPPORT FROM OUR SERVICES

88% SAID THEY FEEL LIKE LWA HAS HAD A POSITIVE DIFFERENCE IN THEIR LIFE

96% SAID THEY FELT THAT THE STAFF AT LWA WERE KNOWLEDGEABLE AND COMPETENT

74% SAID THEY FEEL MORE CONFIDENT ABOUT THEMSELVES

100% SAID THEY DIDN'T FEEL JUDGED BY STAFF AT LWA

95% SAID THEY FELT THEY BETTER UNDERSTOOD THE IMPACT OF ABUSE ON THEIR CHILDREN

“

“Without support from LWA I don't think I would have survived. I had broken away from the relationship but of course that didn't stop the abuse or prevent the escalation in dangerous, unstable stalking. LWA restored my self-respect and ability to feel safe and look to the future”

“IF I DID NOT RECEIVE THE SUPPORT, THERE IS NO DOUBT, I WOULD HAVE CONTINUED LIVING WITH THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF ANXIETY AND STRESS, JUST AS I WAS BEFORE I WAS REFERRED TO THE SERVICES. I WOULD HAVE BEEN DOUBTING AND BLAMING MYSELF FOR WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO ME. I WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN ABLE TO MOVE ON AND LIVE MY LIFE.”

Your voices our ears

At LWA we are continually looking at how we can improve our services and ask for feedback from people who have been supported by us.

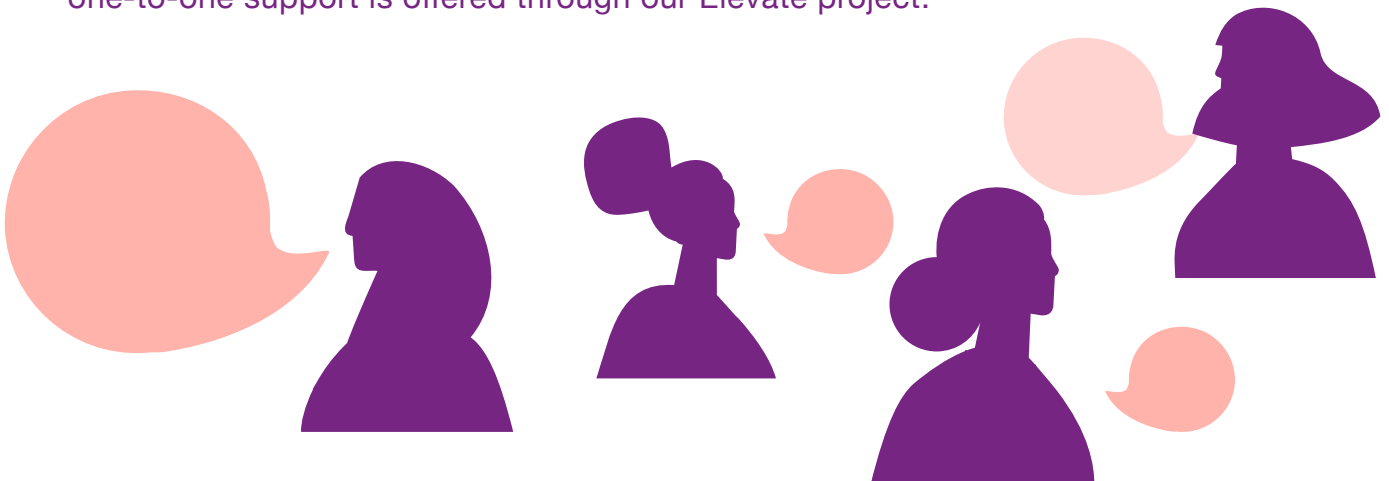


“The commitment, professional competence and integrity of the staff is quite wonderful. I think more resources needs to be invested in the service rather than victims-survivors of domestic abuse going around in circles”

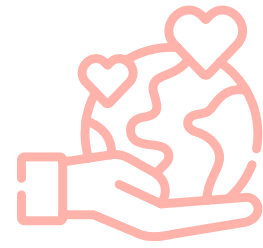
DV&A Voices Project

The DV&A Voices Project is an exciting project where victims-survivors voices can influence service commissioning for the future. It is open to all victims-survivors of DV&A including women, children, men and LGBT+ communities. The aim of the project is to ensure their voices are heard at the highest level of decision making within Leeds City Council. Victims-survivors can decide their level of involvement, for example through focus groups or questionnaires and all feedback is given anonymously. Consultation work with participants and potential participants has been around ‘What I wish I knew’ and ‘What makes a good service’ and an awareness campaign about the project has reached over 50 organisations and 250 schools.

They can share their story through case studies, give specific feedback on topics of interest and/or attend a Survivor Group. As group work is not appropriate for children, one-to-one support is offered through our Elevate project.



Equity, Diversity & Inclusion



We recognise that anyone can experience DV&A regardless of sex, gender identity, race, ethnic or religious group, sexuality, class or disability; however, women are disproportionately affected.

We strive to ensure that everyone we work has equality of access to support from our services.

Some women who experience other forms of oppression and discrimination may face further barriers to disclosing abuse and finding help, for example, women from black and minority ethnic communities, refugees and asylum seekers, those experiencing Honour Based Violence, Forced Marriage or Female Genital Mutilation, trans women or non-binary people, pregnant, older or younger women and disabled women.

Over the last year

1 IN 10

WOMEN ACCESS SUPPORT WITH AN INTERPRETER, WITH 30 DIFFERENT LANGUAGES BEING SPOKEN, INCLUDING BRITISH SIGN LANGUAGE

34

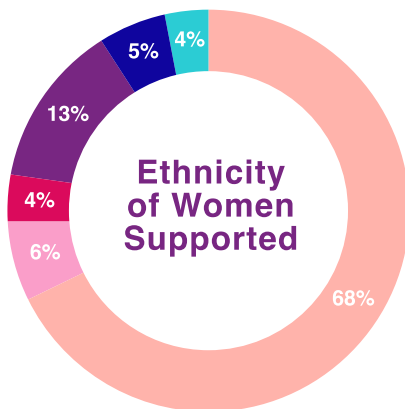
DIFFERENT NATIONALITIES OF WOMEN SUPPORTED

46%

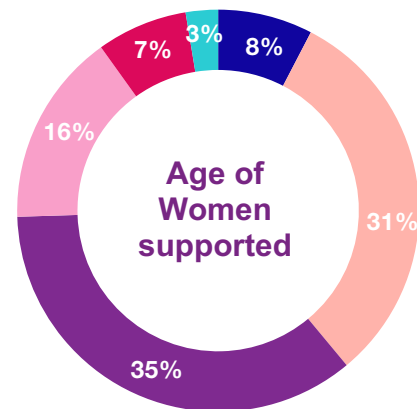
SUPPORTED AROUND THEIR MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS

41%

HAD A DISABILITY, WITH NEARLY A THIRD OF THESE HAVING MULTIPLE DISABILITIES



■ White British ■ White Other
■ Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Background ■ Asian/Asian British
■ Black/African/Caribbean ■ Other Ethnicities



■ 16-19 ■ 20-29 ■ 30-39 ■ 40-49 ■ 50-59 ■ 60+
 8% 31% 35% 16% 7% 3%

Leeds Domestic Violence Service (LDVS)

LWA is proud to be the lead partner of Leeds Domestic Violence Service.



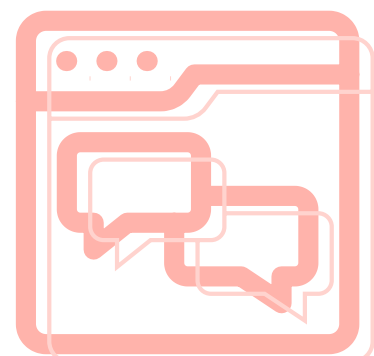
LDVS is a partnership of 3 specialist agencies – Leeds Women’s Aid, Behind Closed Doors and Women’s Health Matters - who have been working together since 2011 to deliver Leeds City Council’s commissioned services to provide emergency accommodation and practical support to people who have experienced domestic violence and abuse.

LDVS comprises of the commissioned refuge provision; 24/7 Helpline, IDVA support, Community DV&A support, Support Group and Drop In services. Additionally, over recent months, further funding has been received from other sources to complement the commissioned service and includes additional children’s workers, specialist IDVA’s and the Sanctuary Support Team.

Community DV&A Team is delivered by our partners at Behind Closed Doors. Their team of specialist DV&A practitioners provide support people of all genders around, but not limited to, safety, housing, finances, family and civil court matters.

Support Groups are delivered by our partners at Women’s Health Matters. Their experienced facilitators offer weekly groups in various locations throughout Leeds.

Sanctuary Support Team (SST) – offer practical and emotional support around DV&A to victims-survivors of all genders who have had a sanctuary security installation via Leeds City Council. The team is overseen by LWA with specialist workers based in ASHA, Behind Closed Doors, Karma Nirvana, PAFRAS, Shantona, Touchstone, Women’s Health Matters and AGE UK.



WOMEN & GIRLS ALLIANCE LEEDS

Influence • Challenge • Support

LWA is the lead partner in the W&GAL, which is an alliance of 12 organisations who provide support and services for women and girls in Leeds. The W&GAL deliver the Women's Lives Leeds projects.

These are:

Empowering Systems Change – this is a wide-ranging project which includes a Complex Needs Support service providing specialist holistic support to women and girls that other individual services may not have been able to provide.

Women Friendly Leeds (WFL) which is the movement to make Leeds a more women friendly city and leads on safety issues including the highly successful 'Ask for Angela' campaign and Women's Night Safe Space. Other initiatives include the 'Switch on to Women's Safety' train the trainer sessions, various Hub meetings, groups for culturally diverse women, menopause meet ups and health & well-being and art & activism sessions.



You'll often see the Women Friendly Team out and about raising the profile of their work, for example at the successful WOW Barn festival held in May 2023 where they ran a 'Menstruation to Menopause' event and the 'Own Your Power' event at the The Biskery.

This is just a tiny flavour of the huge amount of work that the teams do – we strongly recommend that you take a look at their websites for more information and how to get involved.



www.womenandgirlsallianceleeds.org.uk/
www.womenfriendlyleeds.org/

Leading the way

As the biggest provider in Leeds of DV&A support, we are proud to offer support and guidance to other organisations throughout the city.

Practitioner Quality Support

We recently received funding for a Practitioner Quality Support (PQS) Co-ordinator to provide support to DV&A practitioners across a number of supported housing services. The role ensures best practice is used across the services to ensure that victims-survivors of DV&A receive the right support. The PQS co-ordinator leads a DV&A Practitioners Forum looking at developing ways of sharing and improving practice across Leeds.

Raising awareness of DV&A

Promoting DV&A support through partnership engagement is crucial in ensuring that victims-survivors of DV&A have access to the support they need.

We continue to engage with community and other organisations in order to promote our service through joint outreach efforts, delivering presentations and training sessions, improving referral networks, attending training courses and thereby ultimately increasing awareness and access to our critical service.

SOME EXAMPLES OF THIS ARE:

- Presentations to Magistrates to understand DV&A and how it applies to what they see in the courtroom. Our IDVA's were able to bring the legislation to life with real life examples from our court work with high risk clients.
- Learning sessions for colleagues at the Legal Aid Agency to explore DV&A and coercive control



“LWA’s attendance at this training was very valuable. I must say most of the information was not known by the group today. Therefore, please keep attending and enlighten other magistrates about the important and informative work you do.”

Ambassador

Leeds Women Aid Ambassador Laura Bartlett

We are really excited to announce that Laura Bartlett founding editor and publisher of global magazine House of Coco has agreed to be LWA's first Ambassador.

The role of Ambassador is to help us to raise awareness of the work of LWA and domestic violence and abuse, and encourage more people to support this work.

From being ridiculed on Dragons Den at the age of 25, Laura built the House of Coco with zero investment and it now amasses over 350,000 readers and is published to over 90 million subscribers worldwide. As well as founder of House of Coco, Laura is a pioneer in elevating women in business and strives to inspire women daily by speaking openly about her experience.

Laura is proud to be from Leeds and we feel she will be great inspiration for people we support and fantastic advocate for LWA.



Leeds Women's Aid Ambassador 

Laura Bartlett
Founding editor and publisher of
global magazine, House of Coco



It is a real honour to be the first Leeds Women's Aid Ambassador, I have immense admiration for the work that the team does and I think that the service they provide is one of the most important in my hometown of Leeds.

Charity Shop

We pride ourselves on having a strong presence within the local community and have participated in local events such as the Horsforth Winter Wonderland in December during which we offered late night shopping and hosted local makers in the shop.

We have organised several private events where refuge residents can visit the shop and choose items they need at no cost to themselves. These events are an extension of the support we provide and empower our residents by allowing them to pick out clothes and accessories for themselves and/or their children.

The charity shop recycling rag scheme has had a significant impact in raising funds and promoting waste reduction. Through the sale of rags, the scheme has raised £3,166 and recycled 12.6 tonnes of textiles, shoes, bags and household linen.

A total of 13 people volunteered at our charity shop, donating up to 36 hours a week of their time.

£20,000 WORTH OF VOLUNTEER TIME HAS BEEN GIFTED TO OUR CHARITY SHOP

“It is an honour to work with such a vibrant, skilled and dedicated team of volunteers. Every day is fun and different and I have the shop team to thank for that. Without our volunteers our shop would not be the success it is today. Thank you all.”

- Retail Manager



Listen up folks,

'cause I have a story for you, and it all began in 1972

*A group of activists merged
And what a difference they made
Cause if it wasn't for them
There would be no **Leeds Women's Aid***

*It was no easy feat
Opposed by the powers that be
But they fought long and hard
Gaining success in **1973***

*Our first refuge opened
And we were in our prime
Housing up to **15 women and children**
At any one time*

*By the **1990's**
We had 3 sites
The biggest refuge in the country
We were winning the fight*

*When it got to the **2000's**
We thanked parliament for new Acts
As people sat up and listened
When faced with the facts*

*We opened **safe houses**
And self-contained flats
Growing bigger and stronger
You would have thought that was that*

*But we have kept on going
And will never stop
Incorporating new services
And opening our **charity shop***

*We encourage and **empower**
Promote fairness and respect
And we lead by example
To promote the best*

*We are experts in our field
And will adapt to **change**
We will overcome any obstacle
Everything is within our range*

*Whatever your ethnicity or background
We are here to support you
We believe everyone is equal
We're so proud doing what we do*



**Every
woman
deserves
respect &
support**

LEEDS WOMEN'S AID

Building a Brighter Future:

Children and Young People's Hub

This year, we are launching a fundraising appeal to build a new Children and Young People's Hub for the families recovering from domestic violence and abuse that are staying at our refuge.

Families arrive in our refuges vulnerable and scared, as they have had to leave their homes, families, schools and possessions, and sometimes move many miles in order to be safe, away from harm.

The new children's and young people's hub will provide a crucial space for a variety of specialist one to one support, group work and activities for these families. Our fundraising appeal will support the refurbishment of an existing building at our refuge and will have a new kitchen and toilets installed, a designated sensory room for under 5's and accessible entry for all.

This is a very exciting project for us and the aim is to create a much-needed sanctuary for the children and young people staying with us. It will be a place where they can relax, play games and interact with other children helping aid their recovery from the impacts of DV&A.

**IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO
SUPPORT THIS APPEAL,
PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE
OR LOCAL GIVING PAGE:**

<https://localgiving.org/appeal/LWAYoungPeoplesHub/>



Thank you

Aecom, Asda, Beaverbrooks, Bevan Brittan, Burberry, Caval Foundation, Coca Cola, Comic Relief, Department of Levelling Up and Housing & Communities, Elizabeth & Prince Zaiger Charitable Trust, Eversheds Sutherland, Gledhow Sports and Social Club, Golden Acre Foods, Graham Stowe Bateson Solicitors, Headrow House, HSBC, John Lewis, Leeds City Council, Leeds Women's Ice Hockey Team, Limehouse, Master of Craft, Marshall Mill, Michael Page, Ministry of Justice, Morrisons Foundation, National Lottery Community Fund, Oakwood Solicitors, Punch Creative, Ritter Sport, Sir George Martin Trust, Ten percent Foundation, The Charles and Elsie Sykes Trust, Travlaw Legal Services, Smallwood Trust, Supply Chain NHS, Yorkshire Building Society, Wade Charity, Wagamama, Waterlane Boathouse, West Yorkshire Combined Authority, Wickes, Zedex Ltd, Zurich Community Trust, Salesforce, TransUnion, BACIL & hundreds of individuals who have done various sponsored events, fundraisers and supported us through our shop.



“John Lewis Leeds has been happy to support Leeds Women’s Aid over the past five years. We are proud of the relationship we have with the charity and the work they do in the local community.”

- John Lewis and Partners, Leeds

“Leeds Roses are so proud to be supporting Leeds Women’s Aid and the fantastic work they do. As a local women’s team, it’s important to us to be involved with local charities, and LWA is close to our hearts. We look forward to supporting them for years to come and are delighted to wear their heart on our jersey sleeves.”

- Leeds Roses Women’s Ice Hockey Team

50th Anniversary

On Thursday 6th October 2022, over 150 of our supporters and stakeholders came together to celebrate our 50th anniversary.

The event, hosted by our Chief Executive, Nik Peasgood, and our Chair of Trustees, Nneka Ikeogu, was a great success giving guests the opportunity to talk to and meet current and former staff and trustees.

We had three inspiring speakers: Rachel Reeves MP (LWA Patron); Nicole Jacobs, Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales; and Farah Nazeer, Chief Executive of Women's Aid Federation England. They spoke about what LWA means to them and how the challenge of domestic violence and abuse remains despite the progress in recent years. We closed the evening with a performance from the singer-songwriter, Manuka, who finished off the event in style, to huge cheers and much appreciation.

Thank you to everyone who attended the celebration and helped make it such an amazing event.



As part of our 50th Anniversary fundraising appeal we were able to renovate the playground in at our main refuge site. This is a wonderful space to encourage active and imaginative play in a safe surrounding.



A few more thank you's

A huge THANK YOU goes to all our staff. We are fortunate to have such a dedicated team of staff, volunteers and trustees. **We wouldn't be able to deliver the best services possible without the amazing work done by our:**

- wonderful front-line staff and central support teams
- amazing team of relief staff and volunteers
- trustees for their continued leadership and guidance
- consortia partners who we learn and get so much support from

Our staff teams have also received external recognition, including being nominated for the Helpline Partnership's Helpline of the Year award and a staff member being shortlisted as Mentor of the Year in the same awards. The Women's Night Safe Space team received the BACIL (Business Against Crime in Leeds) award for Outstanding Contribution to Female Safety (Night-Time) and our CEO received a Blooming Strong nomination from Standing Together Against Domestic Abuse.

A special thank you to our supporters

From sponsored walks to pub quiz nights, we'd like to thank all funders, fundraisers, donors and individuals for all their time and hard work helping the women and families we support.

Some of our corporate supporters helped revamp the garden areas of two of our refuges allowing women to enjoy relaxed spaces and for children to enjoy playing within the comfort of the refuge.



Keep in touch

TO SIGN UP TO OUR NEWSLETTER OR TO LEARN HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT US THROUGH A GIFT IN YOUR WILL, FUNDRAISING OR PAYROLL GIVING, PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE OR CONTACT US AT:

fundraising@leedswomensaid.org.uk

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SUPPORT US WITH A ONE-TIME OR RECURRING DONATION PLEASE VISIT:

www.localgiving.org/charity/leedswomensaid

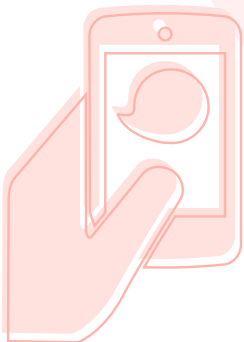
www.leedswomensaid.org.uk

Keep in touch via social media:

Twitter/X @LeedsWomensAid
@LWA_CharityShop

Facebook www.facebook.com/leedswomensaid
www.facebook.com/LeedsWomensAidShop

Instagram @leedswomensaid
@leedswomensaid_shop



What's next the future

LWA's strengths are in delivering excellent services, leading collaborative partnerships, developing new and innovative services and having strategic influence locally, regionally and nationally.

Demand for our services continues to increase and we are proactively looking at ways in which we can develop, improve and increase our services to support more women and children. We do this by playing to our strengths for development and working within our partnerships.

1

**ALL WOMEN & CHILDREN SHOULD LIVE IN SAFETY,
FREE FROM ABUSE & FEAR**

.....

2

**A GREAT PLACE TO WORK, WHERE PEOPLE CAN DEVELOP
AND GROW. OUR VALUES, INCLUDING EQUITY AND
DIVERSITY, UNDERPIN WHAT WE DO AND HOW WE DO IT**

.....

3

**AN ORGANISATION THAT INNOVATES BY IDENTIFYING AND
INVESTING IN OPPORTUNITIES**

