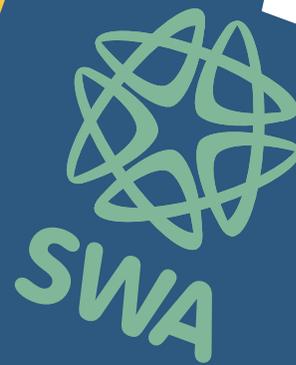


SWA
ANNUAL REVIEW
2012-13



SANDWELL WOMEN'S AID

"They helped me to regain my confidence and rebuild my life"

"When I came here my hands were empty...now they are full of happiness"

SWA (Sandwell Women's Aid) is an independent charity with over 25 years' experience supporting victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence in the West Midlands. We place victims' voices at the heart of our work and we constantly develop our services in response to needs in our community.

Over the years SWA has grown from a small refuge provider to a diverse organisation with a portfolio of specialised services which now includes: domestic abuse accommodation and community support; a regional Rape and Sexual Violence service, an International Human Trafficking service; a female offenders' project; a Children's Specialist Team including a regional sexual exploitation service, and specialist therapeutic support. These closely integrated services enable us to respond quickly and take a whole-person approach to support vulnerable women and families experiencing the complex impact of interpersonal violence.

THIS YEAR WE SUPPORTED:

- 1279 victims of domestic abuse in the community
- 295 women through our Court IDVA service
- 273 victims of rape and sexual violence
- 204 young victims of rape, teenage relationship abuse, and child sexual exploitation
- 200 women and children with safe refuge away from their abusers
- 51 women to resettle into the community through our floating support service
- 83 victims of international human trafficking
- 10 female offenders

"Lots of organisations sit around and talk about it; SWA are out there doing the work!"

SARA WARD AND STAFF TEAM



INTRODUCTION FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

MARGARET O'NEILL

SWA never ceases to amaze me with their energy, commitment and creative approaches to responding to the needs of victims of abuse. I and my fellow trustees/directors are very proud to be on the Board of this highly professional dynamic organisation, led by women predominantly for women. It is with great pleasure that I present this Annual Report for 2012/13.

From a strong base in the Sandwell borough, SWA's presence across the Black Country and the wider region is strengthening. Sustainability remains key to the continued delivery of services, as partners across the region recognise the significance of domestic abuse, rape and sexual violence, child sexual exploitation and human trafficking and their impact on victims' lives. We are seeing positive changes across the region to improve strategic and service coordination amongst partners. I consider Sandwell Women's Aid central to that response. We have also responded to the needs of male victims of domestic, rape and sexual violence ensuring consistency in service delivery and increased opportunity for male victims to come forward.

SWA remains a key partner in a number of statutory and operational partnerships and continues to prioritise the need for sustainable funding to continue this essential work. We continue to build upon our diversification strategy utilising all the skills embedded within the organisation, services and people to reach more victims of abuse.

With oversight by the trustees/directors the Executive Director implemented the organisational transformation plan. This followed an external evaluation of strategic development, operational effectiveness, performance management as well as financial and administrative infrastructure. We are confident that this will enable the organisation to be prepared for further challenges ahead. Sadly, during this process we said goodbye to long standing employee Patricia Dixon Lort who had provided support and refuge services for Sandwell Women's Aid for over 20 years.

Whilst we understand the changing financial landscape we are especially pleased with the improved strategy to raise funds and generate funding from other sources and look to improve on this in future years. We remain committed to pursuing our vision to provide support, to raise awareness, provide information and guidance and to be there for victims of abuse.

I would like to thank everyone associated with the organisation for their continuing support, to all staff and volunteers for their dedication and hard work supporting victims and making things happen.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

SARA WARD

Domestic violence and abuse is a serious issue costing Sandwell in excess of £29 million per year. With recent analysis indicating that over 84% of victims reporting are female SWA knows first-hand the impact that this heinous crime has on the victim, their family and the wider community. With record numbers of victims being supported by SWA we continue to build upon our services to address the needs of victims.

SWA continue to experience challenges to funding, responses to local welfare reform, partnerships as well as local and national government re organisation and reform. However, despite these challenges we can report incredible achievements as detailed within this report.

As a result of the organizational transformation plan we welcomed new Heads of Services who take the lead on operational service delivery, quality and audit. From the outset we have seen significant improvements in operational efficiency and importantly an expansion of evidence based interventions and support to victims of violence and abuse. Following audit our refuge and outreach services were rated Level A in accordance with the Supporting People Quality Assessment Framework, the SWA trafficking service achieved national services standards and continues to grow as demand increases.

In addition SWA recognized the importance of ensuring continuity of support following the closure of Sandwell Organisations Against Domestic Violence(SOADA) where SWA welcomed the SMBC independent domestic violence advocate (IDVA) into the expanding SWA IDVA team. As SWA further develop this service we look forward to these services being integrated into partnership responses as Sandwell refreshes its co ordinated response.

I am particularly pleased with the developments of services across the Black country region as we work with partners in Dudley, Walsall and Wolverhampton providing rape and sexual violence services as well as ensuring co ordination for child sexual exploitation services following success from the Ending Gang and Youth Violence Fund. Whilst its early days we are seeing early successes as this issue gains momentum.

To meet the needs of an increasing number of victims approaching SWA we will continue to enhance resources by improving training and education opportunities for staff and volunteers and will be establishing an apprenticeship programme later this year.

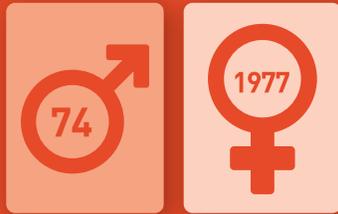
There are many individuals, staff, volunteers, community groups, partners and companies to thank for our success all of whom share our vision to protect victims of abuse. We need to remain united against violence and abuse as there are further tough times ahead.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

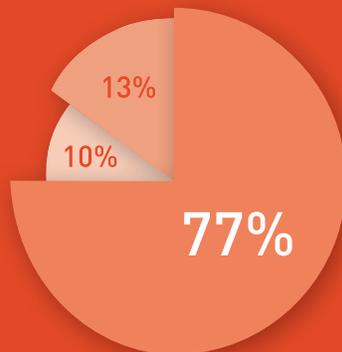
SWA Community Services houses our Domestic Violence, Rape Support and Children's Teams, offering specialist individual support, group work and outreach from our Head Office in West Bromwich.

STATISTICS

IN 2012-13 SWA'S COMMUNITY SERVICES SUPPORTED 2051 PEOPLE:



1695 CHILDREN WERE IN THESE FAMILIES AFFECTED BY DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE:



Domestic abuse services	77%
Rape & Sexual Violence Services	13%
Young People's Services	10%

WE ASKED OUR CLIENTS WHAT THEY THOUGHT ABOUT OUR SERVICES:

- 74% said they got what they wanted from our service
- 64% said their overall situation had improved
- 60% said their confidence had improved
- 67% said their ability to cope had improved
- 67% said their personal safety had improved

WHERE DO OUR REFERRALS COME FROM?

- 30% Police
- 20% Self
- 13% Children's centre
- 9% Court
- 8% Children's Services
- 6% Other
- 5% SWA internal
- 3% Health
- 2% Education
- 1% Probation
- 1% SARC
- 1% Victim support
- 1% Housing



Spotlight On...

NIKKI PENNISTON

In 2012, we undertook a restructure, enlarging our management team to support the growth of our services. Meet our new Community Services Manager, Nikki Penniston, who coordinates our community services across Sandwell and the Black Country.

WHAT'S YOUR BACKGROUND?

I worked in substance misuse services for almost ten years, most recently as Service Manager at Solihull Drug Treatment Services.

WHAT ATTRACTED YOU TO SWA?

In my previous work I had coordinated a number of women's projects and developed a keen interest in the issues faced by victims of domestic and sexual violence and sexual exploitation. I leapt at the opportunity to come and work for SWA, an organisation with innovative, integrated approaches to supporting women affected by these issues.

WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN WORKING ON IN YOUR FIRST YEAR?

Initially, I looked at implementing more robust internal structures to support our staff and manage ever-increasing referrals into our services. This year we have developed service provision significantly and I have been reaching out to partners in mental health, substance misuse and homelessness services to develop stronger links to reach and benefit the most vulnerable.

WHAT'S YOUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE AT SWA?

Being able to smarten our systems to cope with the continued increase in referrals, provision of effective evidence based interventions, and expansion of our community services.

WHAT'S THE BEST THING ABOUT WORKING AT SWA?

When I have the opportunity to work with our clients front-line; it really brings to life what a privilege it is to be part of a victim's journey to become a survivor.



NIKKI PENNISTON

GETTING THE RIGHT SUPPORT

All of our services can be accessed by calling our Single Point of Contact: **0121 553 0090**. An adviser will explain the services available, take an initial referral, and ensure immediate needs are identified and met. A support worker then contacts the client or referring agency within 24 hours.

Since the introduction of the Single Point of Contact in 2012, every referral into community services has been contacted within 24 hours of referral, and high-risk cases are usually responded to within 1 hour.





SWA gave me a chance to talk about any issues I have in confidence with other women who can relate to me and me to them

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES

“She has been exceptionally supportive and there for me at any point when I needed her. She reassured me on many occasions that the choice had to be mine. She was not judgemental and understood why my decision was so hard”

“Thank you for believing in me and supporting me every step of the way”

SWA's Domestic Abuse team offers support within the community to victims of domestic abuse who are at risk of harm from intimate partners, ex-partners or family members, with the aim of securing their safety and the safety of their children.

Our trained and nationally accredited IDVAs and Domestic Abuse Advocates offer a range of emotional and practical support, including:

- Independent advice and advocacy;
- Risk assessments and safety planning;
- Support through the Criminal Justice System;
- Information on legal and civil remedies;
- Health & wellbeing support; confidence building;
- Working with other agencies to maximise a victim's safety;
- Representing victims at MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference).

The IDVA service maintains strong working links and formalised protocols with partners such as West Midlands Police, Sandwell Homes, SMBC Children's Services and Staffordshire and West Midlands Probation Trust.

STATISTICS

1279

new cases, an increase of over 480% from last year

38

men compared to 6 last year

1384

children in these families affected by domestic violence

148

women attended the Freedom Programme, a 12-week group support programme which builds self-esteem, reflection and awareness of the patterns and effects of domestic abuse.

Sandwell Independent Domestic Abuse Services

we listen, we support, we care



“IN 2012-13 WE SUPPORTED 295 WOMEN THROUGH THE COURT PROCESS”

KAREN'S STORY

Karen's* ex-partner assaulted her in a supermarket in front of their young daughter. She became terrified to leave her house alone, and was distraught when she first came to meet with an SWA IDVA. We had serious concerns for her and her children's safety, referring her case to a MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) and providing continuous support to help Karen feel safe and her voice to be heard as the case progressed to court.

Although a restraining order was imposed at court, the offender continued to harass her by phone and social media. Her IDVA liaised with the Police Public Protection Unit (PPU) and referred to case to another MARAC. The offender was re-arrested and PPU installed a panic alarm in Karen's home.

Karen was worried about her children. Their behaviour had changed and as the offender began to pursue child contact, she feared the impact of this on them. The family was referred for a Common Assessment Framework (CAF) meeting to identify further support. Karen's IDVA supported her through SWA parenting courses and the Freedom Programme to help her understand the impact of abuse on children, and develop ways to overcome this.

Karen's ex-partner finally dropped his harassment and requests for child contact. Karen now feels safe and much more confident. She is looking forward to enlisting on a college course and furthering her education.

*name changed to protect anonymity

COURT IDVA

“Thank you, I couldn't have done it without you”

“Always there to help, a shoulder to cry on”

Attending court can be a daunting and traumatic experience for victims of domestic abuse. SWA's Court IDVA provides specialist support, advice and information to enable them to feel safe to engage with the court process. The Court IDVA keeps victims fully informed about the progress of their case (including bail conditions and sentencing), ensures that they are able to access special measures and that their views are represented through Victim Personal Statements. The Court IDVA is based full-time in Sandwell's Specialist Domestic Violence Court and works closely with magistrates, solicitors, witness care and the police.

“Our number of clients that attended court increased which increased the guilty pleas and findings. Victims feel reassured when they have someone supporting them on the day of trial, someone they have had contact with from the beginning and who is aware of the details of their case. They also feel assured when they know we are there for the sentencing and are acting as their voice when they are not required in court.”

Raj Lagan, Court IDVA

In 2012-13 we supported **295** women through the court process, with **252** children between them. Of those cases that have proceeded to trial, there have been **144** guilty verdicts.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ADVOCATES

This year we created the new post of Domestic Abuse Advocate, extending the support we offer to families affected by domestic abuse. Our two Advocates work in coordination with Sandwell's Family Support service to offer early interventions which reduce risk and improve protection for vulnerable families. They provide a range of one to one and group interventions, including accredited parenting courses, to victims of domestic abuse and ensure that their children receive intervention through our Young Person's Advocate. The Advocates also play a key role in providing vital training to a range of partner agencies in Sandwell on the effects of domestic violence on families. The Advocates' role has grown over the year and they are integral to the transformation of children's social care locally.



“THERE HAVE BEEN 144 GUILTY VERDICTS”

BLACK COUNTRY RAPE AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE SERVICE

“I didn’t know what to say. I stayed silent for years, I looked for someone to tell. When I did, I felt a weight had been lifted from my shoulders. I was not alone. Sharing my experience with people who understand has been difficult, challenging and hard work, but most of all it has been the most liberating experience of my life”

“It’s obvious when a victim is being supported by SWA. They have a strength to them”

Police Detective Sergeant, Sandwell Public Protection Unit

SWA’s team of Independent Sexual Violence Advisers support both male and female survivors of rape, sexual assault and childhood sexual abuse in Sandwell, Dudley and Wolverhampton. Whether or not survivors choose to report to the police, we can offer:

- One to one emotional and practical support;
- Someone to talk to in confidence;
- Access to counselling;
- Support and information for family and friends;
- Support and advocacy through the legal process working with police, crown prosecution service, witness care and courts.

The support of an ISVA is instrumental in helping survivors of abuse overcome trauma and move on with their lives. The service is an essential partner for the regional Sexual Assault Referral Centres.

This year has seen the growth of our sexual violence service and its expansion into a Black-Country-wide service. SWA’s ethos is to develop specialist services for vulnerable victims of abuse, particularly where they have no other options for support. Historically, we developed our sexual violence services to fill a gap left in Sandwell Provision by the closure of the Rape Crisis Centre. Similarly, where we identified a lack of service provision in Dudley we were able to find the resources and work in partnership to build and integrate sexual violence services there. This year

Wolverhampton face a similar lack of provision and through a strong partnership with the Wolverhampton Domestic Violence Forum, we have introduced and seen the much-needed success of the Wolverhampton Independent Sexual Violence Advisor.

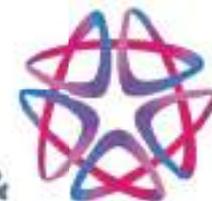
STATISTICS

273 clients supported, increasing from 242 last year, including 17 men

COMPLEX NEEDS

- 56 clients with Health issues
- 104 mental health issues (including depression)
- 13 clients with drug misuse
- 23 clients with alcohol misuse
- 23 clients with self harm
- 38 clients with suicide risk
- 29 child protection cases
- 31 clients with housing issues

Sandwell Police Public Protection Unit recorded a 44% detection rate for rape cases in 2012-13, against a national target of 37%, a performance they credit directly to the support offered to victims by SWA ISVAs.



**Black Country Rape &
Sexual Violence Services**
We listen, we support, we care

**I feel strong enough
to build a new life for
myself without
depending on a man**

“CASE STUDY

Women's Aid on speed dial

Always goes that extra mile

Someone to listen

Someone to care

This in life is very rare

Never judged me

Always kind

Stopped me from going out of my mind

So if things get tough & you can see no end

Women's Aid will become your best friend!

ISVA client

CRIMINAL INJURIES COMPENSATION

The Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority can pay a financial award between £1,000 and £500,000 to people who have been physically or mentally injured because they were the blameless victim of a violent crime. SWA's ISVA team support clients through the application process and we have been very successful with some large awards this year, enabling vulnerable victims to start rebuilding their lives.

Steve* was a vulnerable young man with a chaotic family background, due to domestic violence in the home. He spent his youth in and out of different homeless hostels, never having any stability or anything to call his own. In one of the hostels he was attacked and raped by another resident.

One of our ISVAs supported Steve through the court process and beyond, acting as an essential rock in Steve's rootless life. She helped him to complete a Criminal Injuries Compensation application and he was awarded £11,000. This life-changing amount of money enabled Steve to finally settle down in a place of his own with his girlfriend and plan to go to college.

*name changed to protect anonymity



SWA STAFF & PARTNERS AT THE LAUNCH OF BLACK COUNTRY RAPE AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE SERVICES

YOUNG PEOPLE'S TEAM

"She didn't give up on me and believed me when no one else did"

Our specialist Young People's Team provides support to young victims of rape, sexual assault, childhood sexual abuse, child sexual exploitation (CSE) and domestic violence. This is a growing service as we work with local, regional and national funders to develop multi-disciplinary support for some of the most vulnerable young people in our communities. We work with children and young people to devise services appropriate to their needs, so that they are able to access specialist, sensitive support on their terms, when and where they feel comfortable.

"My confidence has improved and I have someone that I can talk to about anything. I am always smiling now. Every time I see my support worker at school she makes me smile"

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

The Children and Young People's IDVA is fully integrated with our Domestic Abuse services for families, enabling us to offer a full family approach and work in partnership with Sandwell Children's Services. SWA can offer one to one support for any young person aged 11 – 18 in Sandwell.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE SERVICES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Support for victims of rape, sexual violence or sexual abuse, and childhood sexual abuse is available for any young person aged 11-18 in Sandwell, Dudley and Wolverhampton.

SEXUAL EXPLOITATION SERVICES

Our CSE Service is for any young person, female or male, who is at risk of, experiencing, or who has experienced sexual exploitation or gang related abuse. As part of the Home Office Tackling Gangs and Serious Youth Violence Strategy SWA were awarded the funding to deliver these services across the Black Country Boroughs of Sandwell, Dudley, Walsall and Wolverhampton. SWA is member of the national reference group for Young People's Advocates and is fully integrated with local, regional and national approaches to tackle this issue.

SUPPORT

Our specialist Young People's Advocates build an individual support package for each client which includes:

- A non-judgemental, safe space to talk and listen
- Emotional and practical support and advocacy, risk and safety planning, access to counselling
- Support through the legal process and at court, working with the criminal justice system including police and crown prosecution service
- Institutional advocacy with relevant professionals for example schools, youth settings, children's services, ensuring that the young people gets a voice in a complicated system
- Attending case reviews and multi-agency briefings

GROUP WORK

SWA have developed the pioneering group programmes TRAPPED and VIVA, developing awareness and safety around teenage relationship abuse; sexual bullying; sexual exploitation; domestic and sexual violence; gang culture; drugs and alcohol.

"I would look forward to the group and got quite close to the others who were on it, I realised it was not just me and it helped to hear other people's stories"

STATISTICS

Total Number Of Cases Opened: 204



Over 670 young people across 8 schools took part in TRAPPED or VIVA sessions.



Viva!



STACEY'S STORY

Stacey*, a 15 year old girl, was referred to SWA by the police. She had been in an abusive relationship for around 9 months and when I met her she had head injuries and severe bruising to her face. Although she was scared, she felt that she could not leave her boyfriend; she was in love with him and could not see that the relationship they had was unhealthy. Stacey thought that he would change in time, and felt she had to change her own behaviour and not 'annoy' him. She was in her last year at school and felt she was going to fail her exams.

Although at first Stacey did not want to end the relationship she kept in contact with me. There were other abusive incidents and she always trusted that could talk to me, and I would be able to advocate on her behalf with police and social services to help her situation. I referred her case to a MARAC so that additional safeguarding measures could be offered. We would talk about what a healthy relationship should be like. With time Stacey realised that her partner was controlling and abusive and that the relationship was unhealthy and she ended it with him. She managed to pass her exams with brilliant results and is now at college doing really well and has a part time job which she enjoys.

*name changed to protect anonymity

Written by a Young People's Advocate

SPOTLIGHT ON... SEXUAL EXPLOITATION COORDINATOR KATIE YOUNG

Katie Young joined the team in 2012 in the new Home Office funded post of Sexual Exploitation Co-ordinator. She works across the Black Country to undertake mapping of gang and CSE activity, identify good practice, and develop effective cross-border partnerships between the diverse organisations that can play a role in supporting and safeguarding young people.

WHAT'S YOUR BACKGROUND?

I worked in the third sector for a number of years, developing projects for vulnerable people and communities including refugees; ex offenders; people living with life limiting illness and children in poverty.

WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN WORKING ON IN YOUR FIRST YEAR?

My priority has been to further develop our services and bring together the work of our CSE advocates and other CSE providers within the Black Country in a forum to enable joint working across the region. The Children's Team continues to go from strength to strength and so too does our reputation! We are now a part of a number of regional and national networks, feeding into policies and reports such as The Office of the Children's Commissioner's Inquiry into CSE in Gangs and Groups: "I thought I was the only one". I met with two of the authors of this report, Sue Berelowitz and Carlin Firman to highlight the voices of victims of CSE within the Black Country. I also had the opportunity to meet the Duchess of Cambridge to discuss the difficulties faced by young victims of sexual violence.

WHAT'S YOUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE AT SWA?

The coming year will be very exciting as we work together with the police, schools, local LSCBs and new MASH partnerships set up across the region. We will continue to ensure that young people have a voice and are offered high quality support. We are also hoping to train a number of volunteers to support us to do additional work in local youth settings.



KATIE YOUNG WITH THE DUCHESS OF CAMBRIDGE

SURVIVORS' VOICES

VOICES OF SWA

For International Women's Day 2013 we asked our clients to tell us about their experiences, hopes and dreams for the year. The Voices of SWA are now displayed in our reception area, bringing insight, hope, comfort, and solidarity to all who visit our offices and read them.

ONE BILLION RISING 2013

SWA led and collaborated with regional organisations supporting victims of domestic and sexual violence to create a patchwork banner protesting about violence against women. It was displayed at the front of Birmingham City Council House for One Billion Rising on 14th February and at Sandwell Council House for International Women's Day on 7th March. Each patchwork square was contributed by an individual survivor or campaigner and sewn together by women's support groups, bringing women's voices to the seat of power.



MY HOPES FOR 2013

**Be strong,
independent
and move on to
a better future.**

MY HOPES FOR 2013

To move away from
him and his mates
and to have son
back with me in
my new home.

END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

I want to work and
stand on my own two
feet, lead a busy life and
help poor people.

THE FREEDOM PROGRAMME
HAS TAUGHT ME

**Protect children
from emotional
abuse. How to
protect yourself.**

Stay strong, don't give up
on what you believe and
NEVER blame yourself!

THANK YOU



MY SUPPORT WORKER
Helped me
through, gave
me advice and
became a friend

*Thank you Women's Aid
My voice you heard*

*Thank you for sending a life
line to come to my aid.*

*You made me realise what's
important, and that is me.*

*A woman is special, who has
the right to treat you this way?*

*Who has the right to control
you this way?*

*I'm glad I am free I can be
who I want to be*

My life can only get better.

*The years that were stolen
I'm getting back*

*I thought I was doomed for
a life of misery*

*But thank my friend for
Women's Aid.*

*You made me strong, you
gave me with tools to carry on,*

*Thank you for giving me courage
and strength to stand up strong.*

*Knowledge and understanding,
you taught me. Thank you
freedom I learnt so much.*

I have a chance to build my life,

*Courses, counselling, training
and advice.*

*I have learnt I'm never alone,
take the step, the help will flow.*

*Whenever I feel alone I pick
up the phone*

*Someone to talk to I'm never
alone.*

*Thank you for safe guarding my
life, things you put in place to
keep me safe.*

*I look forward to your visits,
any help I need forms, support
your there for me.*

I enjoy our time and cups of tea.

*Thank you so much for giving
me the chance*

*To better myself, and skills
to enhance.*

New friends I have made

Feelings, experiences I can relate.

*Tears I shed knowing I'm never
judged, we come together,*

*And leave taking something
back forever.*

*I love those coffee mornings,
art festivals and my love of poetry.*

*Thank you so much you helped
me do it.*

*Thanking for developing my skills,
sewing writing even speaking out.*

*I'm coming alive I know I can
survive, thank you all for giving
my confidence back.*

*I love you Women's Aid keep
that door open*

*You have changed my life. My
future is bright I'm happy and free*

This is what life is born to be free.

S. KAUR

THERAPUETIC SERVICES

"I remember when you first started counselling me, I was frightened, insecure and had low self esteem... I blamed myself for the past. You have helped me so much...I have now found myself in life, have bright prospects for my life... thank you for helping me to see that life can be great."

Therapeutic counselling is nationally recognised as an essential component of a specialist domestic and sexual violence service. Counselling can help victims of abuse to develop more effective coping strategies and overcome problems arising from these potentially devastating experiences. At SWA, counselling underpins and supports all of our community and accommodation services.

"I learned to distance myself from my thoughts and take a step back to evaluate...thank you for being here to help."

This year's restructure has seen the expansion of SWA's Therapeutic Services, enabling us to support more victims of abuse and reduce waiting times. The department is now headed by Jennifer Lumsden-Gordon, previously our Rape Support Manager. We have increased the number of counsellors we work with, particularly by linking with local universities to offer student placements, and by reaching out to skilled volunteer counsellors. We are also developing specialist services such as counselling victims of torture, victims of human trafficking, working

through interpreters, and specialist counselling for children and young people, and new therapeutic interventions such as Mindfulness and Sensorimotor Psychotherapy.

During the year we improved our monitoring systems, implementing the CORE (Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluation) evidence based recording system. The information gathered is invaluable when demonstrating the value and benefit of counselling as an integral part of support.

STATISTICS

260

hours of counselling per month, 80 of these hours offered by volunteer and placement counsellors

70%+

of clients said that counselling enabled them to rebuild their lives following experiences of violence, indicating that they felt more confident in themselves and their ability to cope with the trauma of their abuse.





HANAN'S STORY

Hanan's* journey to us began in Syria where she was approached by extended family with an opportunity to flee the fighting and hardship for a job and safety in the UK. The position Hanan actually found herself in was far from either, she was forced into domestic and sexual servitude, violence and exploitation.

Hanan arrived at our trafficking refuge very distressed, traumatised and suicidal. SWA Support workers recognised signs of post-traumatic stress disorder and immediately referred her for counselling. Initially, counselling was very difficult for Hanan as she struggled to trust. Working through an interpreter, a counsellor was able to forge a strong working relationship with Hanan, stabilising her emotional state in the crucial initial weeks.

As a victim of trafficking, Hanan had no leave to remain in the UK. However, she feared that her life would be in danger from those who had trafficked her if she returned to Syria. Hanan had to undergo interviews by the UK Border Agency to further her claim to remain; counselling was essential to enable her to cope with this process of talking about and reliving her abuse, which was at times very harrowing.

With support Hanan moved out of the refuge but was still able to access support from outreach services and counselling. With letters of support from SWA, she was successful in gaining leave to remain in the UK.

*name changed to protect identity

I HAVE LEARNED

To look out for someone who wants to take advantage. To speak about how I am feeling and not feel stupid. To always look forwards and not look back.

You can't change the past. Life is a challenge and not an obstacle.



ACCOMMODATION SERVICES

“She [my support worker] helps us with the smallest problems to the biggest dilemmas...she always treats us with respect and listens to us.”

Our refuge service remains at the heart of SWA, offering secure accommodation to women and children who have fled domestic abuse and human trafficking. We provide a safe, supported environment where they can start to rebuild their lives and look forward to a life free from violence.

Over the years we have developed a diverse portfolio of accommodation which enables us to meet individual needs, including:

- A generic refuge where clients have access to their own self-contained flats, with 24-hour staffing
- Humdard, a specialist south Asian Refuge with staff with language specialism
- Five safe houses which have undergone the sanctuary scheme
- O'Neill House, our Human Trafficking Refuge, where staff support victims who have been trafficked for sexual exploitation and domestic servitude.

Last year we identified a need for more integrated services across our accommodation, building on the success of our service achieving a Level A in the Supporting People Quality Assessment Framework. Our new Head of Accommodation, supported by our Senior Refuge Support Worker, manages all of our accommodation, and individual staff work across different sites to provide support and key-work to residents.

Our staff support clients to empower them to make informed choices; we listen and offer support in a non-judgemental manner and above all we care. No two women's needs are exactly the same, and refuge staff develop responsive individual support plans which include:

- Personal safety information;
- support to report abuse to the police;
- Support with on-going family/criminal and civil matters;
- Support around improving the safety of child contact;
- Support around safe housing options;
- Referral to other services;
- Support to access benefits;
- Immigration support.

We also work in partnership with other professionals and agencies including solicitors, social workers, health professionals, children's centres, Early Years Teams, immigration services, alcohol and drug services benefit of counselling as an integral part of support.

STATISTICS

In 2012-13 we supported a total of 134 women and 98 children with refuge across all of our accommodation services

134 WOMEN

98 CHILDREN



Spotlight On...

SUKHVINDERGILL

Met Sukhvinder Kaur Gill, our new Head of Accommodation Services...

What's your background?

I have worked in the voluntary sector for 12 years, ranging from managing a Health & Wellbeing Centre for women in Nottingham to working on the Preventing Violent Extremism agenda. I am passionate about supporting women, empowering them to make their own choices and ensuring that they have fair access to services.

What attracted you to SWA?

SWA is an innovative organisation as it offers women personalised support through a range of in-house services. Having previously worked for a national domestic abuse service, I was eager to apply my knowledge and experience to working with this excellent local service.

What have you been working on in your first year?

My main focus has been integrating all of the accommodation within our organisation, to make maximum use of the resources available to enable us to better assess and meet individual needs by finding the right accommodation for the right woman.

What's your vision for the future at SWA?

My vision is to see our accommodation services grow and expand regionally.

What's the best thing about working at SWA?

The support that is available from other managers at SWA and the passion and dedication of our staff who go the "extra mile" to support women.

SWA is an innovative organisation as it offers women personalised support through a range of in-house services.

SUKHVINDER GILL



ACTIVITIES

"This is the best refuge I have ever been in, and I have been in 6 refuges."

We organise a range of activities in refuge, which range from practical to therapeutic to just good fun. These include The Freedom Programme, Play & Stay, sewing, poetry, yoga, Zumba, music, summer play schemes, parties at Christmas, Diwali, Eid and Vaisakhi, pampering, and coffee mornings. Many of these activities are organised by residents themselves through weekly House Meetings and residents forums.

A day in the life of...

A SENIOR REFUGE SUPPORT WORKER

Each day at the refuge begins with a handover meeting as all staff get together at shift changeover. We talk through each resident's needs for the day: support to attend appointments; progress on benefits, housing and school place applications; and check in about anyone who needs extra emotional support. One of the women has been receiving threatening phone calls from her ex-boyfriend's friends. The court case is coming up and she is worried, so we discuss which support worker will accompany her to court.

After handover, I start my follow-ups. A woman had called us requesting refuge but is now not sure she needs it as her partner has left the house. I talk through the options with her on the phone. We never tell women what to do, the choice to leave must be theirs. She wants to take some time to think. We don't have room for her here but we never turn anyone away without finding them a space somewhere else. We have two women moving out of our South Asian specialist refuge today, so I call the refuge support worker there to talk through the departure arrangements.

This isn't a desk job – I spend most of my days on the phone chasing up different cases, on the road between refuges, or in key-work appointments with women. After lunch I support a new staff member to facilitate a women's empowerment group in the shared lounge.

Later in the afternoon we have a meeting with all the residents to discuss housing. A shortage of appropriate housing is one of the main problems women face in moving on from refuge. We support them to bid for local authority accommodation in safe areas, but we need to be clear that if they refuse properties they run the risk of the council discharging their duty.

Benefit changes have also affected us a lot, especially as local authorities focus more on localism. Women escaping domestic violence need to move a safe distance from the perpetrator, which usually means they cross local authority borders when accessing a refuge and setting up their new home. This affects their eligibility to access certain local benefits, and we have to talk this through to help them make an informed decision about where to live. Local crisis loans don't exist any more, so women have to rely on donations and furniture banks to establish their new home.

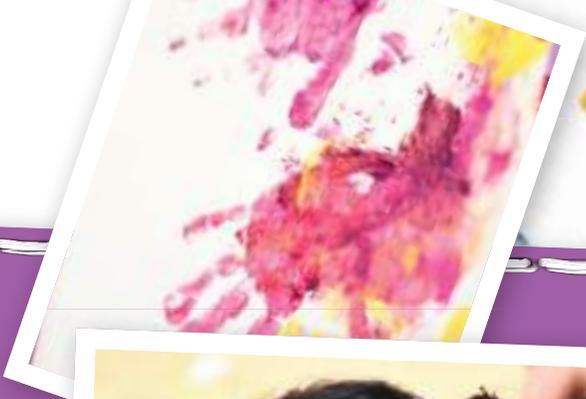
I take a call from a housing officer with the offer of flats for two of our residents. They have become good friends in refuge and this means they will be neighbours: great news. I go straight to each resident to let them know, and sharing their excitement about their new start is a brilliant end to my day.

The last task of the day is handover, discussing the actions of the day with the night staff.

BALDISH SOHAL, SENIOR REFUGE SUPPORT WORKER

A longer version of this article appeared in The Guardian on 6th September 2013





SPECIALIST SERVICES - HUMBARO & RESETTLEMENT SUPPORT

SWA operates a number of culturally sensitive, multi-lingual services specifically for South Asian women who have suffered domestic violence.

Humdard refuge provides safe, secure, supportive accommodation to South Asian women and their children escaping domestic abuse.

Humdard floating support provides support to women resettling into the community after or during their escape from domestic abuse.

THE SUPPORT SERVICES INCLUDE

- One to one emotional and practical support including safety planning
- Support for women who are at risk of or have experienced forced marriage and honour based violence
- Assistance with both criminal cases including child custody
- Immigration advocacy
- Support and advocacy with housing, welfare benefits, education, training and employment
- Support with all aspects of setting up a new home such as utilities, tenancy agreements, schools and getting to know the local area

STATISTICS

In 2012-13 we supported:

13

women

13

children at Humdard including

51

women through our floating support service

*SWA Helped me
believe in myself.
Put things in
perspective.
Made me a
stronger person*

**SWA are friends
who care to listen to
me fears, hopes, ME
when no-one ever
heard my voice.**





PRIYA'S STORY

Priya* and her two children arrived at Humdard refuge with only two carrier bags of belongings. Priya was extremely distressed, underweight and withdrawn. She had lived in fear in her marriage, enduring years of physical, psychological, verbal and mental abuse. Shortly before she escaped, her husband had locked her in her bedroom for two weeks with little food. Priya told us that she had turned into someone she hardly recognised, unable to tell right from wrong or look to the future with any hope.

Priya had only ever been allowed to leave the house for 15 minutes each day to take her children to and from school, and it was this journey that had been her lifeline. Staff at the school noticed how withdrawn she was and slowly Priya began to feel that she could trust them. When she told them what was happening to her, the staff contacted SWA. We worked collaboratively to ensure that Priya and her children would be able to leave their home safely to come to our refuge.

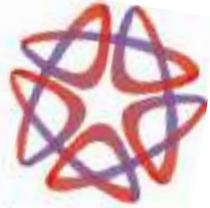
At Humdard we gave the family emergency food and clothing, settled them into their room and gave essential emotional and practical support. Support staff worked closely with Priya to help her to rebuild her life. She had specialist counselling which enabled her to come to terms with what had happened and begin to build up her self-esteem. It was important for her to develop a sense of ownership over her life; we supported her to identify her own needs and plan a safe future. She also took part in the group Freedom Programme which helped her to understand her experiences.

Priya's husband had always condemned her parenting decisions, never allowing her to set boundaries or bond with her children. Living at Humdard, she was finally able to parent them herself for the first time, but needed some support. We helped Priya to access parenting classes and begin building attachment with her children.

As Priya was in the UK on a spousal visa, we supported her through her successful application to the UK Border Agency for indefinite leave to remain in the UK with her children, and to apply for housing through the local authority. Our floating support service helped her to establish her new home and settle in.

Priya has grown confident in her ability to deal with life stresses and parent her children. With our support she was able to build a positive self-identity, now able to live her own life in safety and look to the future with her children.

*name changed to protect identity



Sandwell Asian
Women's Services

we listen, we support, we care

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

SWA have offered refuge and support to victims of international human trafficking since 2011, supporting victims referred through the NRM (National Referral Mechanism). We operate this West Midlands-wide service as a sub-contractor of the Salvation Army, which administers the national service on behalf of the Ministry of Justice.

Our trafficking service includes community outreach for men and women, and refuge accommodation for women at our specialist trafficking refuge, O'Neill House. The service supports victims over a recovery and reflection period of 45 days during which we offer:

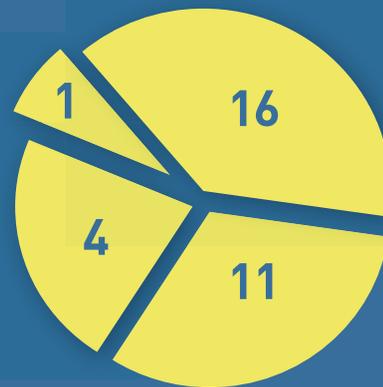
- Continuous emotional support to help them come to terms with their traumatic experience;
- One-to-one key work and support planning, providing information for clients to make informed choices;
- Support with the legal processes of the NRM and UK Border Agency, building their Human Trafficking case, asylum and immigration advocacy;
- Assistance to ensure their rights and interests are presented and considered at appropriate stages of criminal proceedings against offenders;
- Access to counselling, sexual health and GP services;
- Links to local services and educational courses, to develop confidence and independence.

STATISTICS

During 2012-13 we supported



REASONS FOR SEEKING REFUGE:



Sexual exploitation 16%
Domestic servitude 11%
Forced labour 4%
Organ harvesting 1%



My hope is to be reunited with my 8 yr old son, whom I am really missing.

IFE'S STORY

Ife's* boyfriend introduced her to a man who said he would help her move from Nigeria to the UK for a better life. However when she arrived here her passport was taken from her and she was driven to a house where she was told that her 'work' was to be a prostitute, to earn money and repay the 'debt' she owed the traffickers for bringing her to the UK.

For the next year she lived in the house as a prisoner, unable to contact anyone outside and made to have sex against her will with up to six men a day. If she resisted, she was beaten and denied food for days. "I felt hopeless. I gave in and had sex to survive, otherwise they would have killed me. I felt as though my life was not worth living".

Finally Ife seized an opportunity to escape from her traffickers whilst on a rare car journey, stealing some money and fleeing to a bus stop. After working illegally for some months to survive, she was eventually detained at an immigration detention centre where she shared her story. She was referred to the Salvation Army and brought to our trafficking refuge.

"SWA housed me, provided me with emotional support to help me overcome the ordeal I had experienced... They supported me financially and gave me clothing as the only clothes I had reminded me of my bad experiences. They got in me contact with a solicitor who helped me with my asylum and trafficking case. My support worker supported me to appointments at the UK Border Agency office. I was relieved to receive such support that helped me gain my confidence. I can now use public transport alone, attend appointments on my own. I would like to do voluntary work in the future and help people who have experienced what I did as I feel as though I would understand their experience."

The case against Ife's traffickers is still being investigated.

*name changed to protect client's anonymity



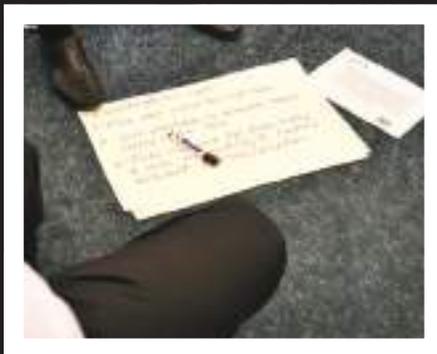
MONITORING AND PERFORMANCE

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE

We have held Investors in People accreditation (IIP) at Bronze level since 1999. IIP is a prized quality standard that enables us to demonstrate our commitment to developing our staff through a culture of excellence, efficiency, and ownership.

MONITORING

SWA has developed a bespoke IT and case management system, 4site, which we use to securely log client records including contact, assessment, support plans, interventions and outcomes. In this last year we have developed 4site to cover all of our service areas. 4site has been invaluable in enabling us to review caseloads and capacity to improve efficiency, as well as map local trends and growing needs, to feed into strategic reports and development work



PERFORMANCE

Due to the increasing needs of funders and commissioners around data collection and monitoring, we identified the need to create a dedicated role of Performance Officer. Our Performance Officer now works across all of our services, fulfilling an essential internal audit function as well as creating reports and returns in response to external funders and commissioners. This vital role enables our support workers to prioritise delivery of direct support services, and enables us to take a clear focus on consistent monitoring and evaluation, to be confident in our delivery of quality services to those who need them.



I THINK WOMEN ARE GOOD ROLE MODELS AS PARENTS





SWA: A CENTRE FOR LEARNING

TRAINING

Social Work Education

This year we have worked hard at developing SWA as a centre for excellence in learning, embedding social work education across all of our services. We have developed strong working partnerships with local universities and offer a large number of placements to social work students each year. At SWA they gain invaluable insights into the issues of domestic and sexual violence and their impact on vulnerable women, which will carry into their careers in either statutory social work or the voluntary sector. Several of our current support workers began their careers with us: a strong testimony to the success of our student placements.

I THINK WOMEN ARE EQUALS IN SOCIETY

DOROTHY BOATSWAIN, SENIOR LECTURER BCU

"BCU have had an effective and successful 'partnership' with SWA over the years and that you provide a range of learning opportunities that enable students to develop their professional social work skills"

ROBERT WU, PROGRAMME DIRECTOR BCU

"SWA have always been very helpful in accommodating students, particularly those that need extra support. SWA always provide a good learning experience and assesses students in a fair and rigorous manner"

ALBERT MOYLAN, SENIOR LECTURER BCU

"I have always enjoyed visiting SWA because of the welcoming and considerate atmosphere among it's staff and their clear focus on the disadvantages faced by women in society"

ELIZABETH BULLOCK, SECOND YEAR SOCIAL WORK STUDENT

"My placement within human trafficking was an amazing learning experience. The knowledge, skills and support from SWA provided a supportive, stimulating learning environment, enabling me to develop my social work practice skills"

DONNA FLETCHER, SECOND YEAR SOCIAL WORK STUDENT

"Feeling like a part of SWA and being given opportunity to work alongside inspirational women will remain with me throughout my future career"

STATISTICS

34 We have supported 34 social work students from partner universities.

PARTNERSHIPS AND DEVELOPMENT

SWA has never been an organisation which stands still or stands alone. The organisation has a history of investing in development and partnerships to ensure that we cater for the changing needs of victims and vulnerable people while maintaining and growing our financial resilience.

This year has seen growth in both the development of new projects, new funding streams and a growth in the development department itself.

The creation of a Business Development Team made up of Development Manager and Fundraising and Engagement Officer this year has given SWA further opportunity to realise its potential; and the benefits are becoming clear. SWA are seeing new and exciting developments in new areas of business such as offering much needed female offender services in Sandwell where none were previously available and accommodation provision for young homeless women.

As SWA grows we know that we must build strong partnerships. 2013 saw the development of a variety of consortia with Health Partners, Offender Management services and other specialist victims' services locally. These partnerships will offer vulnerable people better services no matter where they live, or where they present and it is through our partnership and development work that we will see domestic and sexual violence and abuse become an issue that is everyone's problem and everyone's responsibility.

SWA have been praised nationally for their approach to business development and we are considered as trail blazers in the specialist sector for our approach to partnership and diversification, whilst retaining the core values, drive and motivation of a specialist service for vulnerable victims.

THE MARIPOSA PROJECT

"Feeling more confident and talking has helped. Not bottling it all up... Talking to more people, involving myself in things now and saying what I think."

"Now feel like I could talk in front of a group that I know. I now feel like I have some knowledge in me. Previously felt 'dumb' and had low self esteem"

"Before, I dreamed about how I wanted my world to be. Now I am actually going and making my dreams come true - going to college. I have accepted myself."

This year we created an exciting new joint piece of work in partnership with Staffordshire & West Midlands Probation Trust. The Mariposa Project fulfils a much-needed gap in Sandwell by providing support to female offenders designed to address their complex needs. SWA's work on Mariposa is based on our 25-year specialism in supporting vulnerable women, and specifically with some of the most serious issues affecting female offenders: domestic and sexual violence, exploitation and abuse.

In the autumn, we carried out a successful pilot project in partnership with the Dorothy Parkes Centre, and we will develop Mariposa to provide 12 week Specified Activity Requirements for female offenders in Sandwell consisting of a group programme and individual mentoring which will offer an alternative to custody for vulnerable women, reduce reoffending and help them to improve their life chances.

Mariposa is the next step in the development of SWA as a centre for women's complex needs in a form which does not exist anywhere else in the UK, including domestic abuse, sexual abuse, human trafficking, child sexual exploitation and female offenders' services under one roof.

STATISTICS

10

This year we supported 10 female offenders through the Mariposa Pilot Project

50%

Over 50% of the women taking part in Mariposa's pilot programme had experienced domestic or sexual violence.

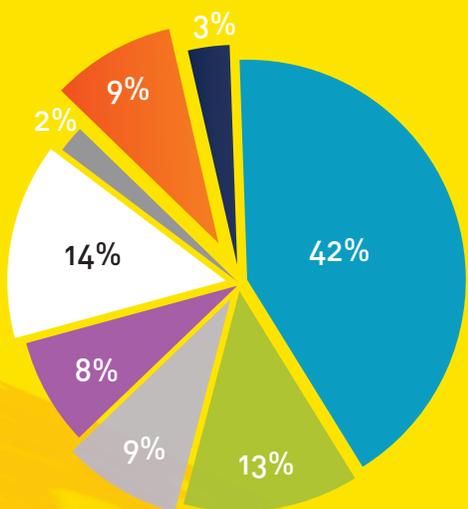


HEALTHY EATING WORKSHOP AT MARIPOSA

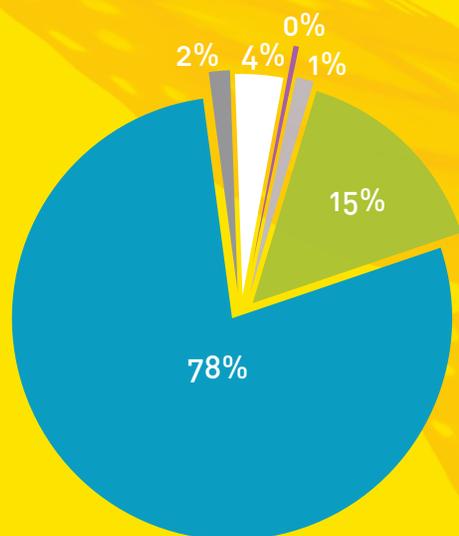


MARIPOSA PROJECT

FINANCIAL REPORTS



INCOME	
Supporting People	£600,830
Sandwell MBC	£186,904
Home Office	£126,384
Big Lottery	£114,020
Accommodation	£207,682
Comic Relief	£28,593
Salvation Army	£132,137
Generated	£44,324



EXPEDITURE	
Activity costs	£40,025
Professional fees	£4,560
Office costs	£14,860
Property costs	£172,070
Staff costs	£886,033
Depreaction	£17,600



DONORS AND FUNDRAISERS

Many thanks to the generous donors and fundraisers who have supported us through the year:

- Brockmoor Foundry
- Gillian Darby and the A Level Psychology class at Alexandra College of Enterprise
- The congregation of West Smethwick Methodist Church
- The children and members at the Sunday Club, Zion United Reform Church
- Mr & Mrs Sandford & family
- Kerry Bates
- M&S, Birmingham
- Gavin Shaw, Shaw Stone Surfaces
- The Old Church, Smethwick
- The Soroptimists
- Sandwell PCT
- Phil Mobsby & Michelle Jeffries
- The RAC
- The Salvation Army, Oldbury
- West Bromwich Building Society, Wednesbury
- Josie Plummer
- St Mary's Church, Harborne
- Julie Reed
- Emma Keeling
- Gail Bradley



LOTTERY FUNDED



Sandwell Women's Aid @SandwellWomensA



Sandwell Women's Aid
Landchard House
Victoria Street
West Bromwich
B70 8HY

0121 553 0090

info@sandwellwomensaid.co.uk
www.sandwellwomensaid.co.uk



Targeted
youth
support
in Sandwell

