



we listen, we support,

Annual Report 2013-14



Sandwell Independent
Domestic Abuse Services
we listen, we support, we care



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



Sandwell Women's Aid
Refuge Services
we listen, we support, we care



Sandwell Asian
Women's Services
we listen, we support, we care



SWA Women's
Justice Services
we listen, we support, we care



SWA Children &
Young People's Service
we listen, we support, we care



Annual Report 2013-14

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Sandwell Women's Aid

*"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.

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

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 **4622** people:

3064 victims of domestic abuse in the community

425 women and **25** men through our Court IDVA service

399 victims of rape and sexual violence

325 young victims of rape, teenage relationship abuse, and CSE

235 women and **250** children with safe refuge away from their abusers

61 women to resettle into the community through our floating support service

67 victims of international human trafficking

21 female offenders

Introduction from the chairperson

Margaret O'Neill

It is with great pleasure that I present this Annual Report for 2013/14 demonstrating the continued commitment that SWA has in supporting women and children across the region. What makes me most proud is that we continue to be innovative and dynamic creating every opportunity for women to be supported and get the help they need.

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 whose presence in the Sandwell borough remains strong but whose reach across the Black Country and with a variety of partners is strengthening.

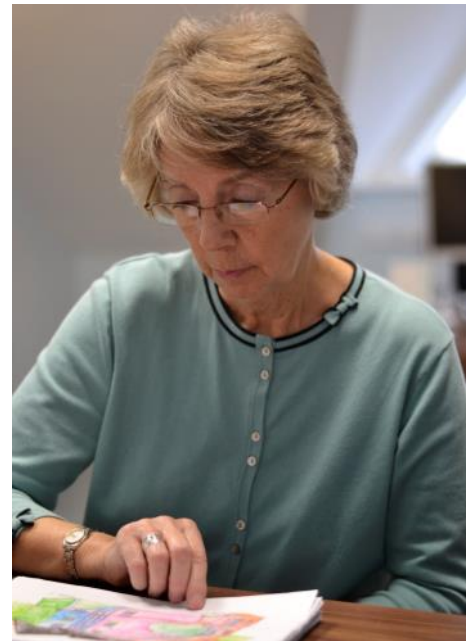
For me this was evident in the Mariposa Project that was developed in this year. This project delivers the court orders or specified activities agreed by magistrates, in conjunction with the Community Rehabilitation Company for female offenders. The aim of the project and programme is to reduce reoffending and provide help and support where necessary. It is on this programme that many women make disclosures of historic and recent domestic, rape and sexual abuse. Nationally this approach is recognised to not only reduce female offending but also to address social and practical issues, such as abuse, faced by women. I am glad that we are there to support women

wherever they present.

Despite significant changes across the partnership providing community based solutions to victims of violence, refuge remains close to our hearts and still very much in demand. We opened the first refuge in Sandwell in the mid 80's. This year we successfully opened another refuge with our excellent housing partners Black Country Housing group specifically for single women. Some early teething problems have resulted in a high demand service supporting our local strategic partnership.

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 the impact on women and children's lives and each year we see an increase in the number of people we support. Our skilled business development team continue to source funds to enable the continuation of our services. It remains a challenge to remain an independent service representing the voice of victims and developing services defined by survivor voices whilst maintaining a close working relationship with our statutory partners. At times of austerity it is essential to create local solutions.

A stable and skilled workforce is essential to deliver effective



support services. We were pleased with the achievement of Silver Investors In People and positive feedback from both our staff and assessor. SWA welcomes external assessment and scrutiny. We remain proactive in regional and national discussions regarding service standards, much of which I am confident that we achieve and deliver best practice. We are fortunate to attract staff from a wide range of disciplines who all share our values and add talent to our growing service portfolio.

We remain committed to pursuing our vision to provide support, to raise awareness, to 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

"I am living in hell from one day to the next. But there is nothing I can do to escape. I don't know where I would go if I did. I feel utterly powerless, and that feeling is my prison. I entered of my own free will, I locked the door, and I threw away the key."

Haruki Murakami

Despite all the services, the media coverage, strategic priorities and funding that is available to support victims of violence we must never forget the difficulties and challenges faced every day by those living with violence and abuse. The quote above sums up the feeling of victims of domestic abuse heard daily in our services. We know that seeking help or breaking free is only the start. Knowing this, talking to women every day faced with this challenge keeps our passion alive: to create local, regional and national solutions for victims and listen to the voices of women and children, making sure they are heard loud and clear.

We are pleased that Violence Against Women and Girls remains a priority for the Government and partners within the Criminal Justice System. We can see within our statutory partnerships that services are becoming joined up in a way never seen before. Are we all now finally singing from the same hymn

sheet? Services available to help now have some synergy and getting results against those committing such crimes against women and children is more important than ever.

Criminal Justice

Data from the Violence Against Women and Girls Crime (VAWG) Report 2013/14 indicates that this year the highest number of perpetrators of domestic abuse were brought to court since records began, with a 17% increase from the previous year. 69% of offenders brought to court were sentenced. We are pleased to hear that out of court disposals at the pre-charge stage are at their lowest level to date at only 1% of all referrals. This is great news and sends a clear message to those who commit such heinous crimes. It tells us that at every corner of our society, perpetrators of violence have nowhere to hide. Police and Crown Prosecution services are working together to achieve their highest level of convictions.

Victims of violence need to feel that they have every confidence in the system to report or get help and rebuild their life after violence and abuse. Our work within the criminal justice system through the Court IDVA enables our criminal justice partners to listen to the voices of victims and gain a greater



understanding of the implications of their actions and decisions. This integration is essential as victims of violence and abuse have often felt that services are disjointed and uncoordinated SWA continues to build services that respond to the needs of victims.

Celebrating a year

This Annual Report can only give you a snapshot of the successes achieved throughout the year. It cannot tell you about the heartache, the devastating impact or the lives affected by these abhorrent crimes. It is important however to see this as a celebration of the years' work, without which lives would not have been transformed, families rebuilt and children and young people made safe now and in the future. It is because of the heartache and the impact that we strive to create new ideas, new development and new opportunities.



A developing organisation

I am proud to be part of a growing team that all are committed to making a difference to people's lives. Every day is a challenge and every day we work hard to support people in our services asking for help. Our achievement through Investors in People was the icing on the cake as the Silver Standard was achieved by meeting additional targets set out in the framework, providing apprenticeships as well as offering training and learning opportunities for staff, students and volunteers. The assessment also challenged our business plans and strengthened us for the continued challenges ahead. I know that SWA will achieve together because the teams across all services all strive for excellence.

Effective partnerships

New services are always exciting to develop but always emerge from gathering evidence: that the service is needed; that it will create positive outcomes and make a difference; and that partners are willing to engage or be part of the development. Mariposa, our new refuge and our integration within the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub

(MASH) all arose from innovative partnerships with our statutory partners. With 82% of all serious case reviews finding that domestic abuse was a factor within the family, it is now recognised as a serious safeguarding matter. As the MASH model is adopted across the country, Sandwell can be proud that it has a third-sector specialist domestic abuse provider located within it; not many do.

Austerity puts further pressure on our local authority partners. Working together is more important than ever to avoid gaps, duplication, and mismatches of funding or services. Together we

can create solutions. As a service provider, we work hard to ensure that there is a consistency across services, that we input at both strategic and operational levels, and we respond constructively to scrutiny and challenges. We continue to develop services across the Black Country working with partners in Dudley, Walsall and Wolverhampton expanding our service portfolio.

Looking to the future

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 tougher times ahead.

We remain committed to raising awareness of the issues, finding solutions as well as protecting women and children whose lives are or have been affected by domestic violence, rape and sexual violence. If we don't who else will?





During 2013/14 our
Community Services
supported:

4238 people



3995
women



243
men

What do people say about our service?

99% said they got what they
wanted from our service

93% said their overall
situation had improved

93% said their safety had
improved

92% said their ability to
cope had improved

88% said their confidence
had improved

85% said their access to
support networks had
improved

Community Services

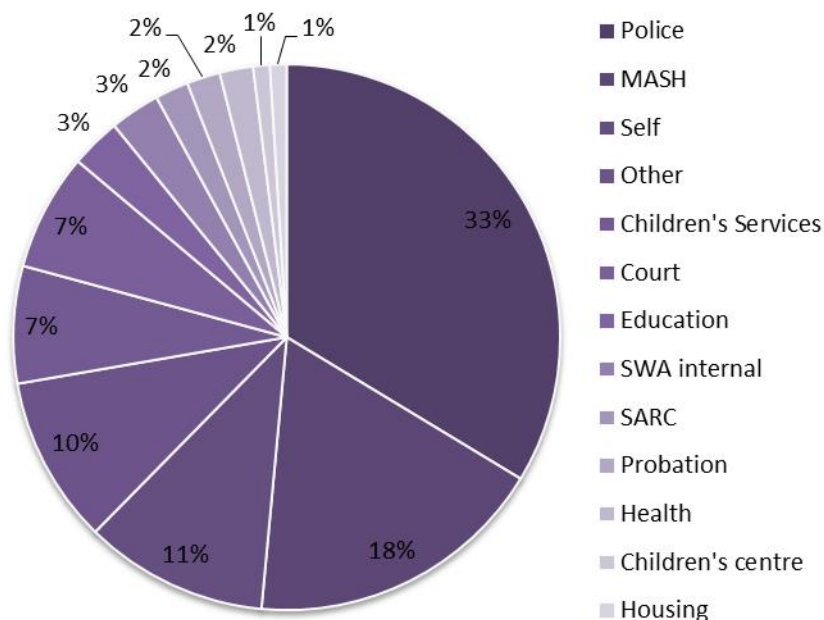
SWA Community Services houses
our **Domestic Violence, Rape
Support, Children and Young
People and Female Offenders'
Services**, offering specialist
individual support, group work and
outreach from our Head Office in
West Bromwich.

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.

Where do our referrals come from?



New Women's Centre

In January 2013, SWA established a
brand new Women's Centre at our
head office in West Bromwich. The
Centre is a creative and stimulating
setting for a number of our
programmes including The
Mariposa Project, the Freedom
Programme, Beyond Trauma, You
and Me Mum, as well as craft and
IT drop-in sessions.





Sandwell Independent
Domestic Abuse Services

we listen, we support, we care

In 2013/14 we
supported

3064 adults in our
domestic abuse
services, an increase of
139% from last year

This includes **153** men,
an increase of **302%**
from last year

4342 children were in
these families affected
by domestic abuse

157 women attended
the Freedom
Programme, a 12-week
group support
programme which
enables women to
understand the patterns
and effects of domestic
abuse.

Domestic Abuse

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, aiming to securing their safety and that 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;
- working with other agencies to maximise a victim's safety;
- representing victims at MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference).
- health & wellbeing support;
- confidence building;

"I am lucky to have people who understand. I was in a very dark place. But thanks to you I can see some light. I feel like I have been trapped underground. Now I can breathe again"

"I could never have gone through what I have without you. I lost a whole part of my life... so many times I wanted to make this end. But support from you has made me fight. I could not put into words how much you mean to me and my children. Because of you I feel that I have a life to live."

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.





Court IDVA

Attending court can be a daunting and traumatic experience for victims of domestic abuse. SWA's Court IDVA is based full-time in Sandwell Magistrates Court and provides specialist support, advice and information to enable them to feel safe to engage with the court process and stay informed about the progress of their case.

This year we supported 425 women and 25 men (with 532 children between them) through the court process. Of cases that proceeded to trial, there were 232 guilty verdicts.

MASH: Sandwell's Multi Agency Screening Hub



In 2014, SWA became an integral part of Sandwell's excellent new Multi-Agency Screening Hub. The MASH is a co-located multi agency team formed to protect children and families who are at risk of harm.

An average of 30 referrals a day come into the team, with our specialist IDVA working alongside partners from Children's and Adult Social Care, Police, Education, Housing, Health, Probation and more to fully assess risk and take timely action to support each family and prevent abuse, neglect and serious harm.



Love Shouldn't Hurt: Sandwell Domestic Abuse Campaign

On Valentine's Day 2014 we launched a new domestic abuse campaign in partnership with Sandwell Council, West Midlands Police, and Sandwell & West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust.

The campaign's message is *Love Shouldn't Hurt*, and the theme and poster designs were developed along with women in our domestic abuse services. The poster aims to raise awareness of different forms of domestic abuse: emotional, psychological, financial and sexual as well as physical.

The campaign ran across Sandwell throughout 2014 in newspapers,



Launching the campaign with partners

public transport, community venues and public places, and received an extremely positive response, with self-referrals to SWA increasing by 20% in the weeks following the launch. The partnership now plans to translate the posters into 6 languages to widen the reach to communities.



Love Shouldn't Hurt campaign poster



In 2013/14 we supported:

399 victims of rape, sexual assault and childhood sexual abuse, an increase of **46%** from last year.



Each year we see an increase in complex needs amongst the people we support:

- **213** clients with health issues
- **337** with mental health issues
- **73** clients with drug misuse
- **104** clients with alcohol misuse
- **220** clients with self harm
- **246** clients with suicide risk
- **139** child protection cases
- **90** clients with housing issues

Rape & Sexual Violence

SWA's team of Independent Sexual Violence Advisers (ISVAs) 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 and advocacy;
- someone to talk to in confidence;
- access to specialist counselling;
- support and advocacy through the legal process working with police, CPS, courts and witness care;

*"My life changed completely when I became involved with SWA. I was **never judged**. Everyone was **supportive**. Ups and downs, we all have them. But when you crash down you always climb up higher than before"*

- support and information for family and friends.

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.

Launch of the Black Country-wide service



Sara Ward speaks at the launch on 17th April at Himley Hall

On 17th April 2013 we held a regional launch for the **Black Country Rape and Sexual Violence Service** as we expanded into Wolverhampton. Over 120 delegates from a wide range of organisations Police; CCGs; Adult/Children's Services; Probation; Public Health; Victims' Services attended from across the region.

Sex Workers' Outreach

SWA held several joint service outreach sessions in 2013 with the SAFE project in Birmingham, speaking to sex workers about their experiences of domestic and sexual violence and raising awareness of support services at SWA.



In 2013-14 we supported:

325 young victims



288

female



37

male

We support young people with a wide range of issues; they often experience multiple types of abuse:

- Sexual exploitation: 30%
- Teenage relationship abuse: 18%
- Sexual assault: 17%
- Rape: 15%
- Childhood sexual abuse: 6%
- Physical assault: 6%
- Psychological & emotional Abuse: 5%
- Verbal Abuse: 4%
- Online exploitation: 2%
- Forced marriage/honour based violence: 1%
- Causing the person to engage in sexual activity without consent: 1%

1500+ young people took part in TRAPPED or VIVA sessions in **23** schools

Young People's Services

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.

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

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 young people get a voice in a complicated system;
- Attending case reviews and multi-agency briefings



SWA is proud to be a member of the Children's Trust and is working with Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, Sandwell Police and the Home Office.



Domestic Violence Services

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

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

CSE Services

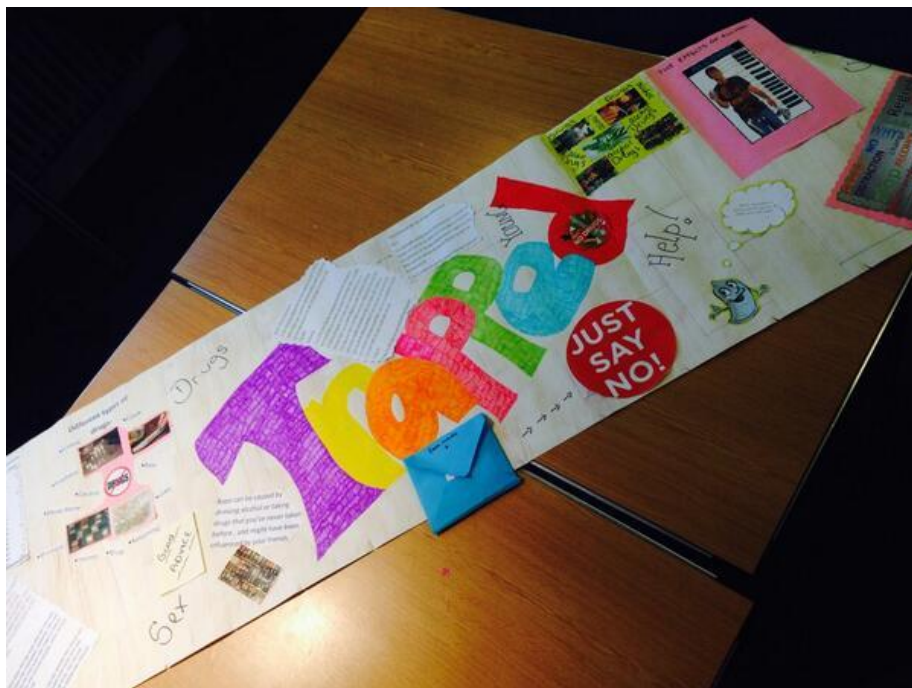
Support for any young person, female or male, who is at risk of or affected by sexual exploitation or gang related abuse. As part of the Home Office Tackling Gangs and Serious Youth Violence Strategy SWA were funded to deliver these services across the Black Country.

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.



Group work

SWA's pioneering group programmes TRAPPED and VIVA, are delivered in schools across Sandwell, developing awareness and safety around teenage relationship abuse; sexual bullying; exploitation; domestic and sexual violence; gangs; drugs and alcohol.



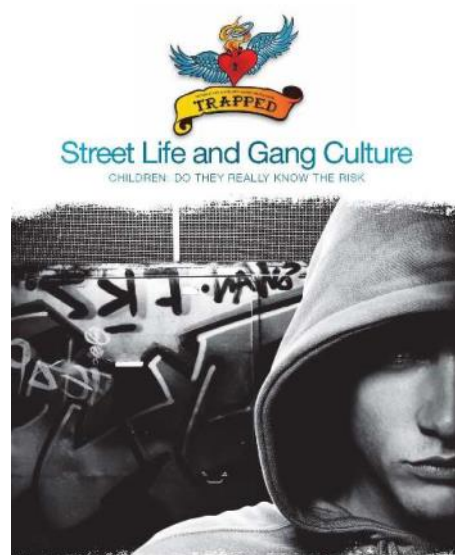
Sandwell Street Project

Sandwell Street Project was a new initiative in 2013 aimed at finding new ways to reach young people who might not otherwise engage with services.

In partnership with Sandwell Young People's Services, SWA delivered several successful TRAPPED programmes in local youth clubs, with sessions focusing on healthy and unhealthy relationships, gender stereotypes and power, domestic violence, grooming, exploitation and gang culture.

SWA trained 50 youth workers and recruited four peer mentors aged between 14 and 21 to continue delivering TRAPPED in youth clubs across Sandwell.

SWA also carried out assertive outreach sessions focussing on engaging young people in street settings in 'hotspot' areas for gang activity and child sexual exploitation.





In 2013/14 we
supported:

21 female offenders

Female Offenders

SWA Female Offenders' Services offer holistic, person-centred support to women involved with the criminal justice system.

"It's helped me face my 'demons', to deal with issues that have brought about positive changes to my lifestyle."

Female offenders are vulnerable individuals who are much more likely than the rest of the population to have experienced domestic or sexual violence. There is a strong national movement towards dealing with their offending through diversionary programmes in the community, rather than prison, which causes severe mental, physical and emotional harm to women and their children.

"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."



**MARIPOSA
PROJECT**

The Mariposa Project

Mariposa is a partnership initiative between Sandwell Women's Aid and Staffordshire & West Midlands CRC (formerly Probation). The project supports female offenders in Sandwell and Dudley through Specified Activity Requirements (SARs) designed to address their complex needs and provide a viable alternative to custodial sentencing.

"I've learnt a lot... I'm now able to understand and address my feelings more than before and I'm really motivated to do something with my life"

Female offenders assigned to Mariposa participate in a holistic programme of group and individual support aligned with the **9 Pathways to Offending**. It focusses on identifying their context to offending and improving key aspects of their lives to empower them to live a crime free life. The programme is underpinned by person-centred planning, individual case management and one to one support from SWA's Women's Justice Worker.

Development

In 2014 SWA received a grant from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation towards the development of our Female Offenders Services. Thanks to this SWA were able to engage a full-time Women's Justice Worker and establish a firm foundation to engage with the Transforming Rehabilitation process which will see the management of offenders moved from Probation Trusts to private providers.

In 2013/14

210 clients received specialist counselling with SWA

Of counselling clients surveyed:

78% stated that they had improved their coping strategies

86% stated that they were more able to explore & express their feelings

80% stated they had improved their personal understanding

55% stated that they had improved their day to day functioning

Therapeutic Services

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. SWA is also developing specialist services such as counselling victims of torture, victims of human trafficking, working through interpreters, specialist counselling for children and young people, and new therapeutic interventions such as Mindfulness and Sensorimotor Psychotherapy.

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



SWA counselling room



Exploring safe spaces

Den-building activities for children in refuge.



In 2013/14 we
supported

235 women and **250**
children with safe
refuge accommodation
away from their abusers

...plus **61** women and
76 children with
resettlement support to
establish a safe new
home

Refuge Services

Refuge services remain 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.

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

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
- **Our new refuge** which offers supported accommodation to vulnerable single homeless women
- 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.

SWA refuge services are rated as **Level A** in the Supporting People Quality Assessment Framework.

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.

SWA also works 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, education, emergency services, UKBA, the National Human Trafficking Resource Centre (NHTRC), local churches and other charitable organisations to meet women's needs and ensure their rights.

New accommodation for homeless women

We officially cut the ribbon at our new accommodation for single homeless women in Sandwell in January 2014.

It features nine self-contained flats providing a safe space for women who have been made homeless due to a range of vulnerabilities including domestic violence. This is a fantastic addition to our accommodation services, giving us more flexibility to find the right place for each woman's individual support needs.



Sara Ward, Amanda Tomlinson from Black Country Housing Group, SWA Board Member Karen Dowman, SWA Chair Margaret O'Neill, and Trevor Palfreyman from Adullam Homes cut the ribbon



SWA worked with Moat Farm School to name the refuge, holding a children's picture competition



Refuge contract awards

In February 2014 we were awarded a contract by Sandwell MBC to continue providing 24 hour refuge accommodation and Floating Support for a further 3 years.

Refuge Arts Week

In Summer 2013 we ran an arts play scheme in refuge in partnership with the Sandwell Arts Festival, with visiting artists offering dance, music, den building and craft workshops.

All the children, from babies to teenagers, had great fun trying new activities, expressing themselves and growing in confidence, showing the therapeutic power of the arts for vulnerable children.



"The best bit was den making....I liked having my own space."

The play scheme was made possible with support from **SMBC: Play is Making a Difference.**

"I made a disco boat from clay. I did dance routines. The den building was fantastic. This is the best refuge I have ever been in, and I have been in six refuges."





In 2013/14 we
supported

13 women and **10**
children at Humdard

Plus **61** women and **76**
children with floating
support

In 2013/14 we
supported

28 women in our
trafficking refuge

39 women and men
with outreach support

...of **24** different
nationalities

49 were trafficked for
sexual exploitation

11 were trafficked for
forced labour

7 were trafficked for
domestic servitude

Specialist Services

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

Humdard refuge

Safe, secure, supportive accommodation to South Asian women and their children escaping domestic abuse.

Humdard floating support

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 victims and those at risk of forced marriage and honour based violence
- Assistance with both criminal cases including child custody
- Immigration advocacy
- Support and advocacy with housing, benefits, education, training, employment
- All aspects of setting up a new home.

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,
- Support with the legal processes of the NRM and UK Border Agency;
- Assistance to ensure their rights are considered during criminal proceedings against offenders;
- Access to counselling, sexual health and GP services;
- Links to local services and educational courses, to develop confidence and independence.

In 2013, we received the good news that our contract to deliver these services has been extended into 2015.



Service user voices

Hear My Voice

In 2013 we took part in **Hear My Voice**, a wonderful creative project with the Lichfield Festival. Women from our refuge and community services created their own poems with the guidance of a

professional poet, inspired by the themes of freedom, empowerment, and expression.

The recorded poems were included in an exhibition and performance in Lichfield Cathedral in July.



*Life is to live
Not just to survive
Freedom is to express who you are
Who has the right to dim your light?
Who has the right to take your life?
One life we have live it well
But remember this your life is
special
Don't let the darkness dim your light
Promise me you'll cherish your life
Life should be happy for all to see
So live your life and live it free*

S Kaur 2013

A male client's perspective

SWA supports both female and male victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence. Sexual abuse of men can be a very taboo subject; here one of our male clients writes about his experiences to encourage other men who have experienced childhood sexual abuse to come forward for support.

"If the NHS mental health services did not exist it would make no difference to me but without SWA I honestly don't know where I would be today.

I have never been in a place where I felt more accepted and understood. The people here are a real credit to humanity and remind us what the word charity really means.

Put your preconceptions aside and give SWA a chance.

The worst is behind us, it has already happened. What have we left to lose?

Give them a chance today and change your life for the better. I promise, you won't look back."





Monitoring and Performance

Investors in People



In August 2013 we were very pleased to achieve the IIP Silver Standard for the first time. 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. This has a positive effect on our clients and how they perceive the services we offer.

The assessor commented that our staff are *dedicated, committed and*

“People do think SWA is a great place to work”

passionate about the work that we do and praised SWA for our culture of continuous learning, talent management with staff progressing to management roles, and our whole staff's commitment to working as a team to achieve SWA's objectives.

Education and Training

Social work education

Over the years SWA has developed 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 as students: a strong testimony to the success of SWA placements.



Investing in local talent

SWA are committed to growing talent in Sandwell, offering opportunities for young people. In 2013 we launched an Apprenticeship Scheme in partnership with Sandwell MBC, taking on a number of young Health & Wellbeing Apprentices to develop their skills as support workers within our services.



Development & Partnerships

2013/14 has been another successful year for SWA with new and developing services and the formation of strong partnerships.

In 2010 SWA saw the writing on the wall as the country faced austerity and the sector faced huge threats. Intensive business planning and strategic thinking was needed to protect our services. We implemented to diversify our services and move beyond our historic base of Sandwell. This year we have seen the fruits of many years of work to achieve this and once again SWA have seen our income, staff base and client numbers grow.

Rape and Sexual Violence

Notable new developments have

been the launch of a new sexual violence service in Wolverhampton. Working in partnership with the Wolverhampton Domestic Violence Forum and the community safety partnership we have been able to offer for the first time a specialist sexual violence service for victims of rape and sexual abuse. This service has been further strengthened by SWA success in securing the Home Office Rape Crisis Centre funding which will be used across all areas to enhance services.

In 2013/14 SWA have grown in funding, scope and voice, this will enable us with our partners to face the next stage of difficulties and times of certain change in 2014/15 and beyond.

Partnerships

SWA have adapted to operating in a changing world of commissioning, now made up of PCCs, CCGs and new CRCs. Instead of borough-wide commissioning we have seen the growth of regional strategies and cross border commissioning. In response, we have formed key regional partnerships which create a united front in the specialist sector, enabling us to respond collectively to regional contracts. This includes:

WM Domestic Abuse Alliance.

SWA have joined with all specialist Women's Aid federated services in the region to create the West Midlands Domestic Abuse Alliance.

Women's Justice Partnership

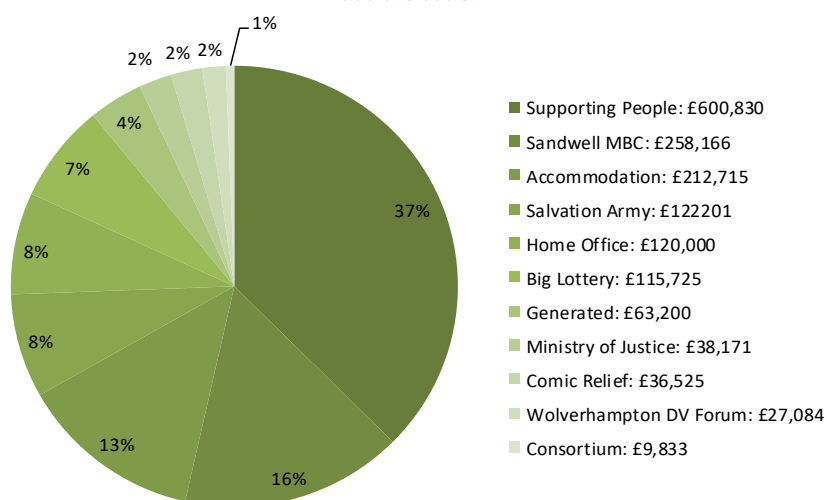
We have also worked with all specialist female offenders services across the West Midlands and Staffordshire to form the Women's Justice Partnership in order to work collectively with new offender management services commissioned by the Ministry of Justice.



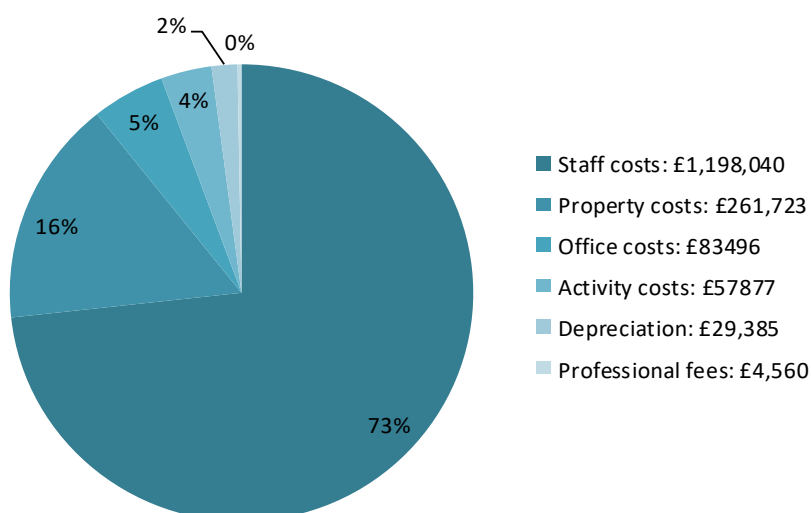


Financial Reports

Income

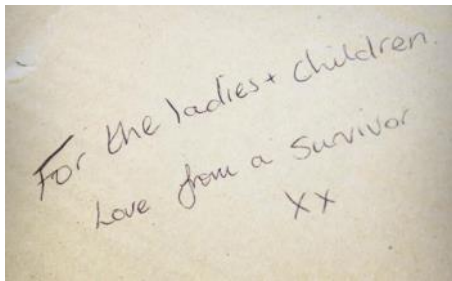


Expenditure



Funders





Fundraisers and donors

A huge thank you to the many people who have supported us this year with donations, fundraising challenges and gifts for our refuge:

- Alex McCorkindale and Sandwell Arts Festival
- Amy Taylor
- ASDA Great Bridge and Tipton
- Beauty Works
- Beeches Road Methodist Church, West Bromwich
- Birmingham Blitz Dames
- Brett Stevens
- Caroline Crolley at Unite
- Chris Hall
- Chris Woodhouse
- Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints
- Conquering Life's Mountains team, Sandwell PPU, WM Police
- Daisy Thevathasan and the Milton Court residents
- Debbie Walker
- Denise Welch and all at Phoenix Collegiate Academy
- Dr Miranda Alison
- Ewan McPherson
- Gail Bradley
- Gavin Shaw
- Gillian Darby and the psychology students at ACE Academy
- Greenwood Academy
- Happy Faces Children's Centre
- IKEA
- Index Books
- Jenny Thompson and all at Galton Valley Primary School
- Joanne Henworth
- Josie Plummer
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- Lush, Merry Hill
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- Neil Thompson and the staff of the RAC
- Nicki White and the 8th West Bromwich Girl Guides
- Nikki Russell
- Paul & Barney's
- Peter Chinn
- Phil Mobsby & Michelle Jeffries
- Philippa Carr
- Powell Office Style
- Purity Soft Drinks Wednesbury
- Racheal Baker and RSA Academy
- Reena Tailor
- Rhiannon Lockley
- Rowena Orme and all at Ormiston Forge Academy
- Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust Cycle Team
- Sandwell Homes
- Sandwell Magistrates Court
- Sandwell MBC Creche
- Sandwell Six Towns Challenge team Beth Davies and Kat Bailey
- Seema Tailor
- Sherran Sharma
- Smethwick Soroptimists
- St Mary's Church
- Stitch Solihull.
- Sue McNaughton
- Telford Labour Women's Group
- TGB Learning
- The Lichfield Festival
- The Old Church, Smethwick
- The staff of Brockmoor Foundry
- The Sunday Club children and all at Zion United Reformed Church, Langley Green
- The West Brom Building Society
- Tom Wood
- Vickie Glynn and Stitch Solihull
- Whitecrest Primary School
- Year 5G and Year 5JG, Dixie Grammar Junior School
- Zion Church, Halesowen

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Sandwell Women's Aid

Registered in England No. 2791788 • Registered Charity No. 1032298

Registered Address: 370-372 High Street, Smethwick, West Midlands, B66 3PJ

**Supported by Sandwell MBC • Safer Sandwell Partnership • Members of the
Survivors Trust, Rape Crisis England & Wales, Women's Aid Federation and
Women's Breakout**



**Sandwell Independent
Domestic Abuse Services**
we listen, we support, we care



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



**Sandwell Women's Aid
Refuge Services**
we listen, we support, we care



**Sandwell Asian
Women's Services**
we listen, we support, we care



**SWA Women's
Justice Services**
we listen, we support, we care



**SWA Children &
Young People's Service**
we listen, we support, we care