

WOMEN'S AID IN SCOTLAND

National Service Standards

Summary
April 2011

Women's Aid in Scotland, National Service Standards – April 2011

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In recognition of the gendered nature and complex effects of domestic abuse, Women's Aid provides a range of women-only services that work alongside women, children and young people in a holistic, flexible and person-centred way. All of our work is informed by and promotes the views of women, children and young people who have experience of domestic abuse.

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Introduction to Women's Aid

Scottish Women's Aid (SWA) is the lead organisation in Scotland working towards preventing domestic abuse. SWA plays a vital role in campaigning and lobbying for appropriate and effective responses to the needs of women, children and young people who have experienced domestic abuse.

We believe that ending violence against women means tackling its root cause, which is gender inequality.

We will do this by:

- Promoting women's equality and children's rights
- Campaigning for policy and practice responses that actively prevent violence against women
- Working to ensure appropriate service responses are available for women, children and young people with experience of domestic abuse
- Providing services and advice to our members

SWA has 38 member Women's Aid groups across the whole of Scotland, from the Borders to Shetland. Women's Aid provides specialist domestic abuse services for women, women and their children and young people. The services range from crisis intervention – providing safe refuge accommodation for women and their children – to support for these families in their transition to a new home and schools and a new life.

Overarching principles for Women's Aid

Women's Aid groups are a co-ordinated network of feminist organisations that work to tackle the root cause of violence against women, which is gender inequality. Women's Aid is committed to a gendered analysis of domestic abuse¹.

Women's Aid groups have listened to and worked with women, children and young people for over 35 years. Through this experience, they have gained an in-depth understanding of the dynamics of domestic abuse and how it affects women, children and young people. This knowledge and understanding is central to the model of support Women's Aid has developed and continues to inform and shape the range of specialist support services our members provide.

The services are needs led and use a person-centred approach, in which listening to and believing women, children and young people is central and which enables them to make informed choices.

Women's Aid is committed to partnership working with other services in the locality to ensure that the needs of women, children and young people are fully met.

How well Women's Aid services in Scotland are able to meet the needs of women who use these services was evaluated in the National Outcome Evaluation Project². The evaluation, which involved almost 400 women, found that the help and support they received from Women's Aid services had a significant positive impact on their lives. Furthermore, they attributed their changes to the unique way Women's Aid workers support them to address their needs.

Introduction to the service standards

The service standards have been developed by a number of Women's Aid groups and Scottish Women's Aid.

The development came about due to the lack of benchmarking information for specialist domestic abuse services. They have been written to ensure that the value of specialist women's aid services is clearly defined and that the criteria are underpinned by service user feedback, monitoring and evaluation. The standards are a tool Women's Aid can use to measure the specialist domestic abuse services they provide.

There are three component areas to the standards:

- The service standard
- The elements
- The assessment criteria

The assessment criteria is broken down into a number of elements; it is vital that the criteria is used in its entirety and not spilt up. The whole document which includes the full breakdown of the assessment criteria can be found on SWA's website or by contacting SWA directly.

Commissioning bodies may want to consider using these standards for Women's Aid groups when carrying out service reviews or commissioning reviews as a measure of best practice.

National Care Standards

The Women's Aid service standards do not replace the National Care Standards but complement them. However the Women's Aid standards are underpinned by the main principles of the National Care Standards. Those principles are dignity, privacy, choice, safety, realising potential and equality and diversity.

1 *Safer Lives: Changed Lives - 2009*

2 *Changing Lives : Outcome Evaluation of Women's Aid Services in Scotland (2011) Scottish Women's Aid*

Standard 1

The services Women's Aid provides and the way in which we work are informed by our understanding of the gendered analysis of domestic abuse. We provide services which aim to address domestic abuse through prevention, protection, provision and participation. Our services are staffed and managed by women with specialist knowledge and training in domestic abuse.

Elements

1. All workers, collective members, volunteers, directors and management committee members have an understanding of and a commitment to a gendered analysis of domestic abuse.
2. All workers, collective members, volunteers, directors and management committee members are aware of how the elements of prevention, protection, provision and participation are delivered and embedded into services.
3. Recruitment processes and continual professional development training ensure that all workers, collective members, volunteers, directors and management committee members have specialist knowledge and understanding of the impact of domestic abuse and the broader issues of violence against women.

Assessment Criteria

- A. All services are provided to women, children and young people by workers, collective members, volunteers, directors and management committee members with an understanding of the impact of domestic abuse.
- B. A training plan that includes a training needs analysis is in place to ensure that workers maintain their high level of specialist knowledge and understanding of domestic abuse and are able to access continual professional development. There are core sets of training requirements for all workers, collective members, volunteers, directors and management committee members at induction.
- C. The group is involved in protecting women, children and young people.
- D. Monitoring and evaluation activities are in place to ensure that service users, workers, collective members, volunteers, directors and management committee members are involved in the monitoring and evaluation process of this standard.

Standard 2

In recognition of the gendered nature and complex effects of domestic abuse, Women's Aid provides a range of women-only services that work alongside women, children and young people in a holistic, flexible and person-centred way. All of our work is informed by and promotes the views of women, children and young people who have experience of domestic abuse.

Elements

1. All workers, collective members, volunteers, directors and management committee members working within the service have knowledge of the range of services that are provided.
2. All workers, collective members and volunteers working within the service work to a holistic, flexible and person-centred way.
3. All workers, collective members, volunteers, directors and management committee members working in the service work within a framework of promoting the views of women, children and young people.

Assessment Criteria

- A. A range of services is provided to meet the needs of women, children and young people.
- B. Clear information on the range of services provided to women, children and young people is available.
- C. There is a holistic support package led by the needs of individual women, children and young people.
- D. Service user participation is fundamental to the ethos of Women's Aid; it underpins, informs and is promoted through our service provision and in strategic planning.
- E. Monitoring and evaluation activities are in place to ensure that service users, workers, collective members, volunteers, directors and management committee members are involved in the monitoring and evaluation process of this standard.

Standard 3

Women's Aid is committed to promoting children's rights and recognises that children and young people have their own unique needs. We provide specialist support services that children and young people can access as individuals or in parallel with their mother.

Elements

1. All workers, collective members, volunteers, directors and management committee members have an underpinning knowledge of the impact of domestic abuse and relevant policies for working with children and young people.
2. We promote children's rights in recognition of the unique needs of children and young people.
3. Services are promoted and provided as holistic family support and/or as independent support for children and young people in their own right who have experience of domestic abuse.

Assessment Criteria

- A. The impact of domestic abuse on children and young people is part of induction training for relevant workers, collective members, volunteers, directors and management committee members.
- B. Children's Rights training forms an integral part of the continuing professional development of children and young people's workers.
- C. Children and young people's workers are skilled in using a child-centred approach so that control remains with the child where possible.
- D. All materials will be appropriate for children and young people and promotional materials are disseminated to target the widest relevant audience.
- E. Monitoring and evaluation activities are in place to ensure that service users, workers, collective members, volunteers, directors and management committee members are involved in the monitoring and evaluation process of this standard.

Standard 4

The refuge accommodation Women's Aid provides has high levels of safety and security to ensure appropriate, accessible and safe accommodation for women, children and young people who have experience of domestic abuse.

Elements

1. Women's Aid provides services to ensure that all refuge accommodation is safe, secure and accessible to meet the individual needs of women, children and young people.
2. Women, children and young people are informed of the options for available refuge accommodation.
3. The refuge accommodation is part of the holistic support package offered to women, children and young people.

Assessment Criteria

- A. The refuge accommodation complies with all Health and Safety requirements.
- B. Women's Aid is committed to ensuring the refuge accommodation has systems in place to maximise safety and security of service users.
- C. The refuge accommodation is appropriate for the needs of women, children and young people and there is a commitment towards ensuring that the accommodation is accessible.
- D. Monitoring and evaluation activities are in place to ensure that service users, workers, collective members, volunteers, directors and management committee members are involved in the monitoring and evaluation process of this standard.

Standard 5

Women's Aid works to raise the standard of all statutory and voluntary services, and represents the views of women, children and young people with experience of domestic abuse, through multi-agency partnership working.

Elements

1. All workers, collective members, volunteers, directors and management committee members are aware of and participate in the appropriate multi-agency partnerships that exist.
2. All workers, collective members, volunteers, directors and management committee members have knowledge of the relevant statutory and voluntary services at a local level.
3. Relevant workers, collective members, volunteers, directors and management committee members are aware of the content in the organisational strategy relating to this area of work.

Assessment Criteria

- A. Proactive contact is made with the relevant services to provide awareness-raising sessions on the impact of domestic abuse on women, children and young people.
- B. Women's Aid works in partnership to improve services available to women, children and young people.
- C. There is an active role in participation at multi-agency partnerships.
- D. Monitoring and evaluation activities are in place to ensure that service users, workers, collective members, volunteers, directors and management committee members are involved in the monitoring and evaluation process of this standard.

Have you signed the pledge yet?

Domestic Abuse – together we can stop it
www.togetherwecanstopit.org

**For more information visit our website:
www.scottishwomensaid.org.uk**

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