



Newcastle
Women's Aid
Domestic Abuse Services

Impact Report

April 2017–December 2018



Introduction

Newcastle Women's Aid have been providing independent, specialist support to women and children who have been affected by domestic violence and abuse since 1975.

1975

In 2016 Newcastle City Council concluded a procurement process and awarded contracts for domestic abuse services to a new provider. Newcastle Women's Aid Directors and staff were committed to continue the provision of specialist domestic abuse support services.

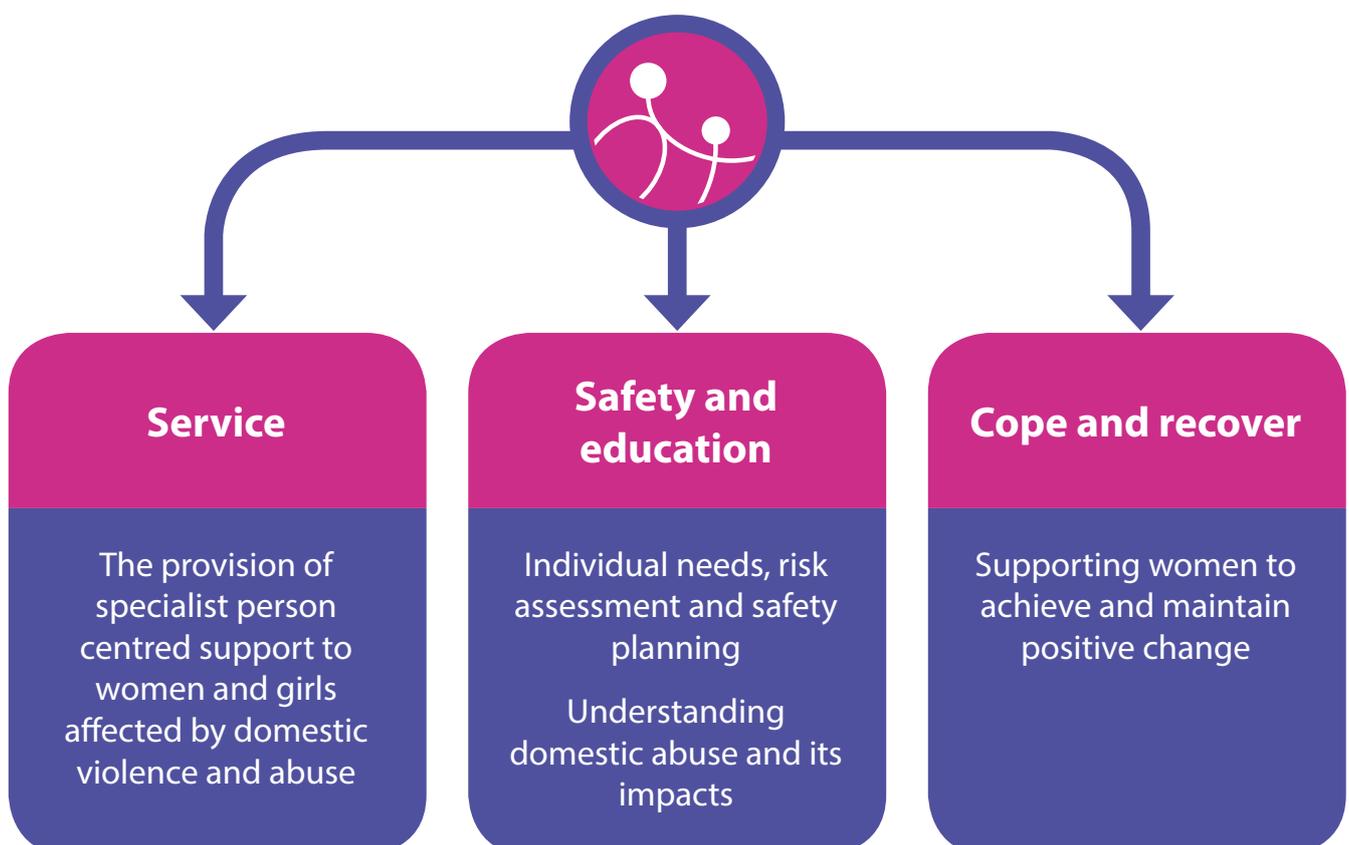
2016

After 40 years, In March 2017 we closed our much loved refuge which was known as the 'Big House' in the east end of the city. It was a very sad day for us as we remembered the many women and children who had accessed our services over the years.

In April 2017 we moved into our new premises within Mea House in Newcastle city centre and launched our new integrated, specialist domestic abuse support services.

2017

We adopt a 3-tiered approach to addressing domestic abuse



Why the need for specialist services?

Our expertise and knowledge is a key factor in achieving sustained engagement levels with clients across all areas of our service provision.

Specialist support services increase the chance of women and girls staying safe and achieving positive outcomes.



“Domestic violence and abuse is everybody’s responsibility. We need to talk about it in order to understand it and be equipped to support anyone who is affected because every victim of domestic abuse deserves the right response at the right time.”

Elaine Langshaw, CEO Newcastle Women’s Aid

Women’s Aid is the national charity working to end domestic abuse against women and children. They are a federation of just under 180 organizations providing lifesaving services to women and children across England.

Each year nearly 2 million people in the UK suffer some form of domestic abuse - 1.3 million women, 600,000 men

ONS (2016), March 2015 Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW)

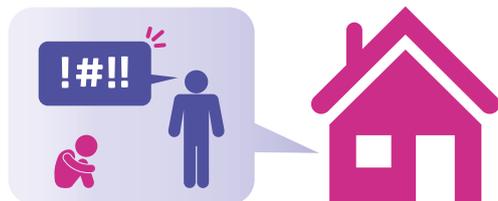


7 women a month are killed by a current or former partner in England and Wales

ONS (2016), March 2015 Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW)

130,000 children live in homes where there is high risk domestic abuse

SafeLives (2015), Getting it right first time: policy report. Bristol: SafeLives



On average victims experience 50 incidents of abuse before getting effective help

Walby, S. and Allen, J. (2004), Domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking: Findings from the British Crime Survey. London: Home Office

How we revised and developed our new services

In January 2017 we met and consulted with women and girls who had previously accessed our services and also, with our key partner agencies. We examined the gaps in service provision, and listened to what women said they needed from support services. The feedback we received was invaluable in helping us redevelop our new services.

30 women and girls took part in consultation and focus groups.



The 3 key findings were:

- ▶ The specialist expertise and knowledge of support staff was crucial
- ▶ To be able to dip in and out of services when they had differing levels of support needs
- ▶ Peer support was really important, bringing women together to share their similar experiences and reduce isolation

Services we provide

Information and advice

Telephone advice and support service and free helpline Monday - Friday, 9am - 4.30pm.

Domestic Abuse Flexible Support (DAFS)

One to one specialist support focusing on coping, recovery and staying safe.

Group programmes

The Freedom and Freedom Forever Group programmes provides opportunities for women to share their experiences, reduce their isolation and learn about domestic abuse and its far ranging impacts.

Education and public awareness

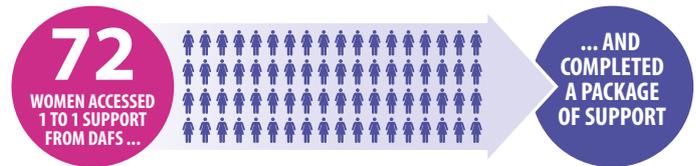
Raising awareness of domestic abuse within schools, colleges, women's support services, working within national and local Violence Against Women and Girls Strategies.



So... what impact have we had?

DAFS

72 women accessed 1 to 1 support from DAFS and completed a package of support.



Telephone support

Advice line - 608 calls
372 from Newcastle
236 from out of area

608
CALLS TO
ADVICE LINE



372
CALLS FROM
NEWCASTLE



236
OUT OF AREA
CALLS

Group work programmes

90 women accessed group work programmes.

Women who accessed our services wanted to continue to meet after completing their package of support, they asked if we could help by facilitating a monthly group meeting. "The Maintenance Group" is in the early stages of development and is a peer mutual support group in which the women share information, experience and skills.

Client evaluation

Here are some examples of what clients told us, and the impact the service has had.

Can you tell us how Newcastle Women's Aid service has been beneficial to you?

I couldn't see what was left in my life or what was the point of it!

I was in denial and felt I was going mad and not a victim. I've learnt just how much of a victim I have been. I've learnt how to deal with worries, fears and emotions. I've made wonderful friends along the way. It has changed my life.

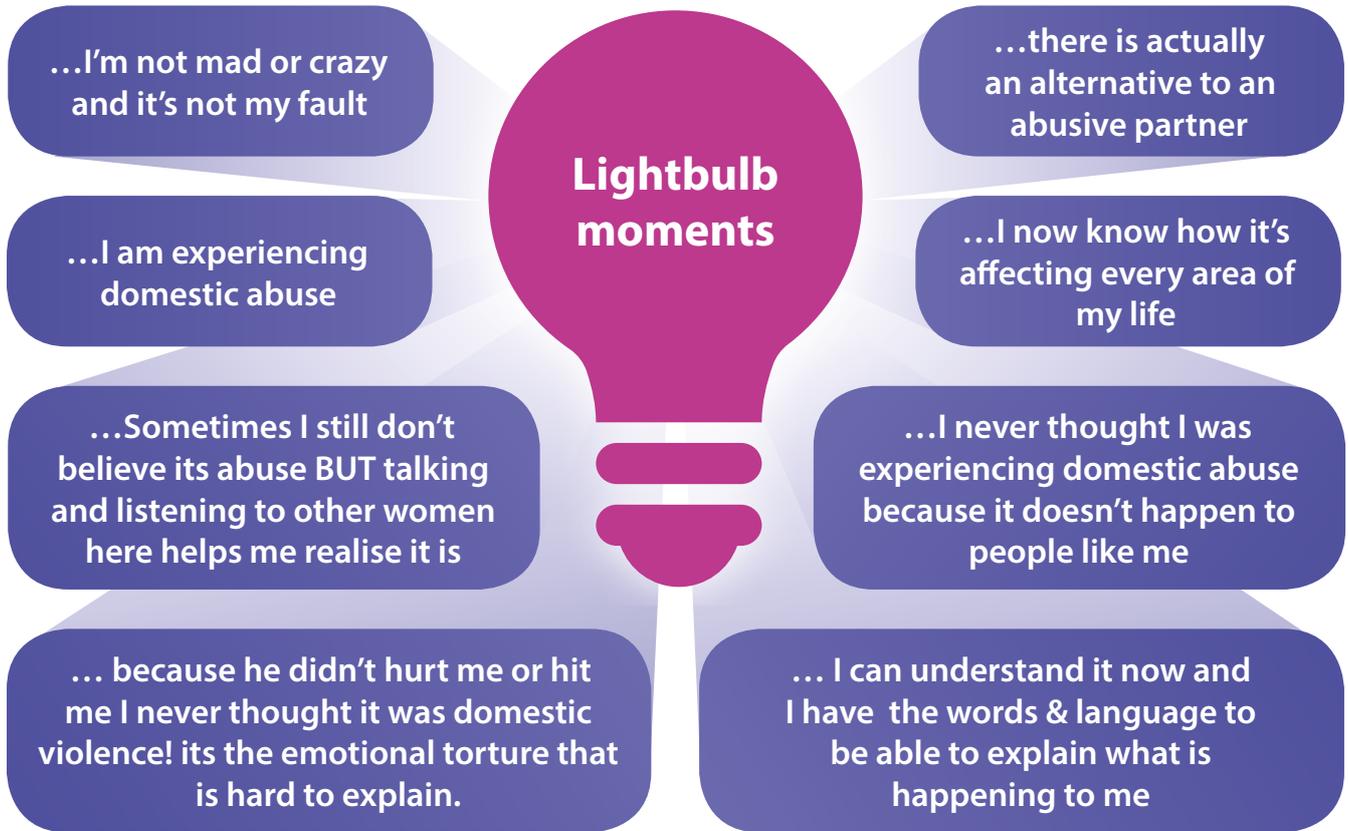
I felt confused, depressed, desperate, and a lot more.

What would you say to anyone who is thinking about joining the group programme?

Everything in the programme is useful, especially the group talking to each other, supporting each other and most of all believing you.

I would strongly recommend the programme to anyone in the situation I have been in. I have told my doctor how amazing the programme has been and my doctor thinks it has greatly helped my mental health and recovery.

Women and girls frequently refer to what they call that 'Lightbulb moment' when they suddenly realise...



From the lightbulb moments women and girls:

Now know this service can and will help and this has an immediate effect on their emotional wellbeing.

Have a better understanding of domestic abuse and how it directly impacts on them, their relationships, family and life.

Begin to learn the language, words, that she can use to describe what is happening to her.

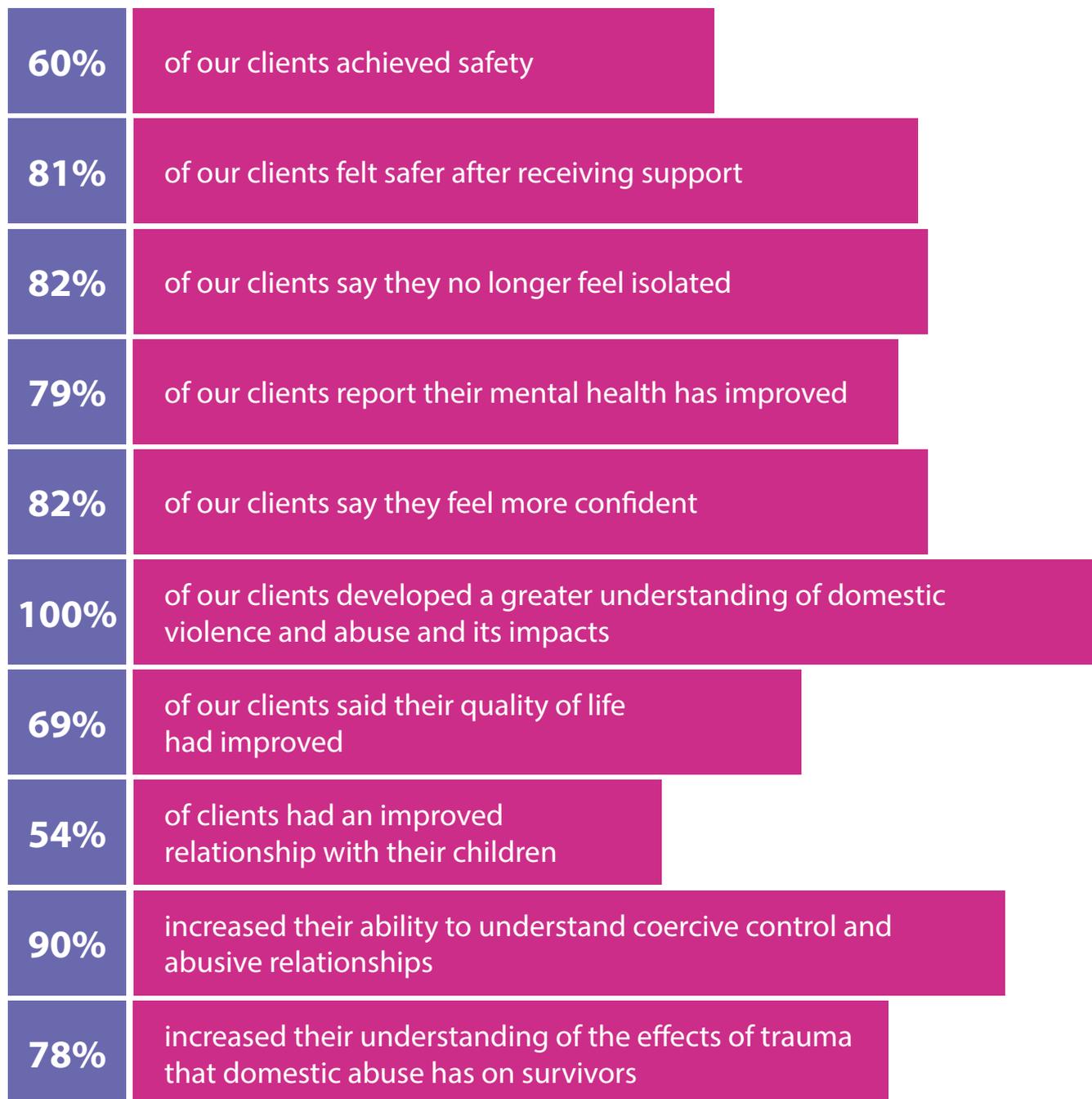
Are better at explaining their situation to get the correct support i.e. police, health, and legal.

Are confident in decision making and communicating.

Their isolation is reduced by engaging with services and developing safe support networks.

What do clients get from accessing our services?

Newcastle Women's Aid prides itself on the high quality of services which we provide. We have developed our own bespoke case management system which measures and captures the outcomes clients achieve. Our data shows us that:



Newcastle Womens Aid is one of the 180 specialist member organisations affiliated to WAFE (Womens Aid Federation of England).

We have WAFE National Quality Standard accreditation.

The Standards support specialist domestic abuse services by providing a set of criteria against which we can evidence the quality of our services.



Jane's journey

Women told us they feel less alone and more confident knowing they can dip in and out of services according to their different support needs. Satisfaction within our service is high. Evaluation results from women who have accessed support from us, suggest successful outcomes can be achieved by providing flexible, individualised support, which is not time limited, but driven by individual need. Jane is a real survivor of domestic abuse and her journey shows how with ongoing specialist support women can escape abuse permanently, build their independence and recover from abuse.

June 2017

Jane initially contacted our Helpline. NWA provided advice and a DAFS appointment arranged for the following day. Jane was experiencing anxiety and depression and was receiving support from her GP and counselling service.

One to one appointment. Jane said that her ex-partner was paying £40 per week for both children, mortgage, household bills etc. NWA worker shared information about child maintenance options and contacted a Solicitor for advice in relation to the property which they jointly owned.

August 2017

Jane contacted our Helpline. NWA worker provided advice and emotional support.

Jane began to notice improvements in her emotional well-being and began to reduce her medication with support from her GP.

January 2018

Jane attended NWA Freedom Programme. Jane was able to use the knowledge she gained from the Freedom Programme when she was working with Cafcass (Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service) and she felt confident reporting the ongoing abuse and harassment to the Police as she could describe the tactics and behaviours he was using.

March 2018

Jane ceased taking all of her medication.

December 2018

One to one appointment. Jane described how she'd had a 'bit of a wobble' and was struggling to deal with her ex-partner's ongoing abusive behaviour. Jane told us that she felt so much better for coming back and speaking with us and felt more confident in dealing with her ex-partner's behaviour.

Conclusion

We were right to revise and continue providing domestic abuse specialist services. Newcastle Women's Aid remains independent and we retain our ethos and focus to empower women and girls to be safe from violence and abuse.

We have continued to receive incredible support from partner organisations, individuals and businesses. We thank everyone who has helped us make a difference.



THANK YOU
to everyone who
supports us to
continue our
work

FIND US AT: 3rd Floor, Mea House, Ellison Place, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 8XS.

 0191 261 0504  office@newcastlewomensaid.org.uk  www.newcastlewomensaid.org.uk

 twitter.com/nclWomensAid  facebook.com/NewcastleWomensAid