

*CLYDEBANK WOMEN'S AID  
SERVICE*



**Women's Aid Opens Doors**

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*CLYDEBANK DISTRICT COUNCIL*

*AND ANY OTHER GRANT MAKING BODIES, LOCAL ORGANISATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS WHO  
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**WE WOULD ALSO LIKE TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE COURAGE AND STRENGTH OF THE  
WOMEN AND CHILDREN WHO HAVE USED THE SERVICE AND THE VALUABLE  
CONTRIBUTION MADE BY ALL WORKERS, PAID AND UNPAID, PAST AND PRESENT.**

**CWA IS A REGISTERED CHARITY AFFILIATED TO SCOTTISH WOMEN'S AID.**



## INTRODUCTION

In Scotland in 1993-94 2,757 women and 4,230 children fled to the safety of a refuge to escape Domestic Violence.

25,932 women used the services of Women's Aid groups. 4,738 women and 6,958 children were turned away due to lack of suitable refuge accommodation.

Refuges and refuge support are widely recognised as an effective way to intervene in the common crime of Domestic Violence and to prevent its repetition.

The Home Affairs Committee report on Domestic Violence (1993) recommended that:  
"the first priority for Government action on Domestic Violence should be the establishment of a central co-ordinated policy for refuge provision throughout the country".

In the absence of such a co-ordinated response to the problem of Domestic Violence each local authority must ensure that services for abused women and their children have adequate and secure funding.

In the Clydebank area, Clydebank Women's Aid have been providing a service since 1981, when local women identified a need and campaigned to this end. The group provides accommodation for six women and their children and a drop-in service offers counselling, information on housing, benefits and legal rights, advocacy, work with children, public information and inter-agency liaison.

**1% OF RECORDED VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE ARE MEN!**

**10% OF RECORDED VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE ARE CHILDREN!**

**75% OF THE RECORDED VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE ARE WIVES!**

**94 % OF THE RECORDED VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE ARE WOMEN!**

**97% OF RECORDED ABUSERS WITHIN THE HOME ARE MEN!**

**NO MAN HAS THE RIGHT!!!  
NO WOMAN IS TO BLAME!!!**



## **STAFFING LEVELS**

The Staffing complement at CWA is as follows:-

- 1 Family Resource Worker
- 1 Finance Support Worker
- 2 Refuge Support Workers

All 4 workers are paid for 30 hours per week on Salary scale AP3.

The staffing levels have been static since 1986 even although there has been a dramatic rise in referrals as the enclosed graph illustrates.

CWA collective work many hours unpaid to cope with the vast number of referrals. Also there has been an expansion in the areas of work covered. Noticeably the lack of residential resources for abused women with children who have mental health, drug or alcohol problems has increased the workload for CWA.

The human resources, both paid and unpaid, available to refuge groups, represent a substantial capital base in terms of energy, expertise and commitment. It is important, that this investment is recognised and maintained. (As mentioned in the Training report it is also necessary to have funds available to train new unpaid workers.)

In the absence of available funding to create new paid posts CWA believe that all existing paid workers should become full time (from 30 hours to 35 hours) and that to have parity with other Women's Aid Workers the salary scale should be increased from AP3 to AP4.



## COLLECTIVE WORKING

Within Women's Aid, nationally and locally, there has always been a belief in collective working methods. We believe that the structure of collective working best suits our aims, politics and way of working for, and with women. The responsibility for the running, success (or failure) of the group is therefore shared by all workers paid and unpaid.

Sometimes outside agencies or funding bodies have misconceptions or concerns about this way of working, perhaps feeling that there may be a lack of structure. We hope the following information will be helpful in this respect.

Clydebank Women's Aid collective presently consists of two unpaid workers and four paid workers. Together we are responsible for all aspects of managing the project.

Collective working is a way of working which aims to create equality, share skills, build on women's confidence and to equally share both the power of the group and the responsibility of the work. All group members are equal.

Essentially collectives are about giving power or ability to people to allow them to direct what happens within the group and the wider organisation of Scottish Women's Aid.

Clydebank Women's Aid has a commitment to equality of pay and conditions for all workers. All paid workers in Clydebank Women's Aid have parity of pay. Individuals within the group may take responsibility for a particular area of work, but ultimately the whole collective is responsible for all work.

Within Clydebank Women's Aid, workers meeting take place weekly and business meetings fortnightly. Minor decisions can be made by an individual, or part of the group when appropriate. Clear policy guide-lines help group members know when full collective decisions are required. Decisions are reached by consensus. (This can mean compromise or agreeing to differ). A decision finally taken may not be what each member feels is best, but rather the best solution that can be reached at the time under the circumstances. We strive to make all decisions by consensus, but do take a vote for majority decision when circumstances dictate this.

Decision making can sometimes be a bit more time consuming than in hierarchical organisations, and a clear understanding and commitment to collective working and willingness to share the responsibility, particularly around difficult issues, is required to make it work well. However, we feel the advantages of this style far outweigh the disadvantages.

Clydebank Women's Aid are also accountable, and have a commitment to the Scottish Women's Aid network. Localised Groupings meet regularly throughout Scotland. Clydebank Women's Aid are part of West Strathclyde Localised Grouping, which consists of six local groups. West Strathclyde Localised Grouping meets every six weeks to share information and discuss local and national issues.



## AREAS OF WORK COVERED WITHIN WOMEN'S AID

### REFUGE

1. General maintenance
2. Counselling of women resident in the refuge.
3. Practical information / legal advice.
4. Arranging and / or attending appointment with women e.g. lawyers, D.S.S housing department, police and court where appropriate.
5. Collecting donations of clothing, toys, furniture etc.
6. Completion of necessary D.S.S forms, Housing Benefit forms etc for residents.
7. Weekly refuge meetings.
8. Preparation of rooms for new residents.
9. Washing, bedding etc.

### OFFICE

1. General office duties - typing, filing, leaflets etc.
2. Telephone counselling.
3. Housing / Legal information by telephone.

### LIAISON WORK

To liaise and maintain good communications with all relevant agencies, statutory organisations, Police, D.S.S. Housing Departments, Social Work Departments etc.

Others organisations, One Plus, Woman's Support Project, C.A.S.A, Woman's Counsel and Resource Service etc.

### MANAGEMENT OF PROJECT

1. To attend collective meetings in order to participate in all aspects of management i.e. policy decisions, forward planning, areas of work, employment and staffing matters, training etc.
2. Attend regular Monitoring Group meetings to discuss project and future planning etc.

### NATIONAL WORK (Localised Group)

Clydebank Women's Aid is part of West Strathclyde localised grouping, comprising of six Women's Aid Groups Meeting held approximately every month. These are held to share information, joint training, to collate local group decisions to be taken to Women's Aid.



Attendance at case conferences or court proceedings are sometimes appropriate. We work closely with Health Visitors / Social Workers in situations where there is concern of neglect or abuse of children in the refuge.

Children's worker attends regular meetings with other children workers throughout Scottish Women's Aid. Our children's worker has also been involved in completing and information pack on working with children in Women's Aid.

Training with G.P's and agencies on issues relating to children is another aspect of our work.

### **CAMPAIGNING**

We campaign on issues affecting abused women and their children (if any) e.g. Community Charge, D.S.S Legislation, Mat Homes Act, Child Support Act, Diversion schemes for abusive men.

### **FINANCE**

Our group has a paid refuge / administration worker who's duties include the following.

### **BANKING**

Monitoring of bank accounts.

Bank reconciliation records on request by the collective updating all relevant banking records.

### **ACCOUNTS / FINANCES**

Maintaining appropriate accounts files including year end.

Liaison with accountant where necessary.

Responsibility for administering petty cash. Paying and recording invoices.

### **GENERAL**

Keeping minutes of collective meetings etc.

Providing regular financial statements for appropriate meetings.

### **ON CALL SERVICE**

C.W.A provides a 24 hour on call service for women living in our refuge. We also strive to provide an on call service at all times to women calling outwith office hours. As there is very little funding in our budget to cover this work it is done on an expenses only basis by both paid and unpaid workers. This can often entail long and stressful calls during the night or sometimes situations when a worker may be called out to the refuge.



## AN UNPAID WORKERS ACCOUNT

I have been an unpaid worker with Clydebank Women's Aid for the past six years. Most times the work is frustrating and stressful, especially when experiencing financial difficulties such as providing the service on 50% of the agreed required budget, employment conditions are bad with workers working in poor surroundings for long hours and low pay. This in turn affects the service we are able to provide and for abused women this can be a matter of life and death. I have been involved in all aspects of women's aid work which is making beds, cleaning, training, finance, counselling, children, business meetings and other relevant meetings, providing on-call and important information, the work seems endless but I won't go on.

What I find hard to except are the priorities set by funding bodies. There is money available yet it seems women and children are low on the list. There is also I suspect confusion between voluntary organisations and volunteers, as its voluntary it does not cost anything and in some quarters a proven mistaken belief that too much grant aid undermines the "voluntary spirit". I feel the Government agreed to give financial support to the activities of women's organisations, agreeing that they must affirm the dignity of women as priority action.

To date there has been little evidence of this, in fact the reverse is the case. Informing visual awareness raising campaigns are hopefully somehow effectively beneficial to women, but only when every woman and child has access to information, support and refuge can our society claim to support the rights of women and children. Even then it is not simply enough to provide these resources for women and children, nor similarly to provide resources to help individual men. We need to address the position of women in society. This priority action would affirm the dignity of women.

Due to circumstances that have left me as an unmarried single parent and the lack of support for women/mothers, I am unable to commit as much time as I would like, averaging 9 hours a week totalling 2808 unpaid worked hours. The information, confidence, skills and experiences that I have gained have been undoubtably beneficial to myself and others.



Through SWA Training Policy and Development Group and Training Office we have devised packs on incest, funding, as well as packs mentioned earlier. We have recently had a day looking at Schools training sharing information and experiences on work within Schools.

As a result of being involved in this way a varied number of leaflets are available for all agencies, Police, Schools Work, G.P's, Health Visitors, Housing etc.

3. Students - we are contacted by students on various courses at schools, colleges and universities who are undertaking projects or research into domestic violence.

We also have students on placement from Social Work / Care Community Education who welcome the breadth and depth of work undertaken by Women's Aid.

Need for a Training Budget - As mentioned earlier we depend on a strong commitment from unpaid workers therefore because of the experience, skills and knowledge gained by women they move on to paid work within the network or other projects or leave to take up further education or vocational training in the Social Care / Work field.



## FAMILY RESOURCE WORK

Since 1986 a Family Resource Worker has been employed with Clydebank Women's Aid. Her remit is to look at the needs of children living in refuge.

At the beginning a lot of the activities were focused on play. As direct work with children has been developed over the year F.R.W is no longer just a 'play leader' but a vital component on how a child copes with the position they find themselves in when coming into refuge, staying and eventually moving on.

C.W.A's part of the Scottish Women's Aid network recognises the need for regular specialised training and development in the area of this work.

C.W.A has never received mainstream funding specifically to carry out this crucial work.

As our statistics have been rising steadily over the year, partly due to domestic abuse being highlighted through television, media advertising campaigns (Zero Tolerance and Scottish Office Campaign more recently), there is a desperate need for adequate and secure funding from statutory bodies.

Fundraising has always been very laborious and time consuming, but in the past we have managed by receiving money from Children in Need, local businesses and Clydebank Local Committee. After three years time limited funding from Children in Need this was greatly missed when our applications since 1994 have been refused.

We have survived solely on small but regular grants from Clydebank Local Committee. This funding allows F.R.W. to plan organise and implement day to day work on a one to one basis small group work, and 10 weeks of playscheme activities throughout the year.

Outreach work is mainly done through the operation of playschemes. During Easter, Summer and October School holidays (also an annual Christmas Party), women and children who have lived in refuge and now rehoused within the Clydebank area, are invited to take part in the activities we provide. This is a very important aspect of our work allowing F.R.W. to see each child outwith a refuge context and see how they are adjusting to their new lives since leaving refuge. This approach is invaluable to our work and extremely cost effective. We feel if relevant funding was made available we would expand this area of work and include more home visits when appropriate.



### S.W.A's NATIONAL CHILDREN'S MEETINGS

Meetings are held every six weeks and are attended by F.R.W's from S.W.A groups all over Scotland. These meetings are extremely useful as workers exchange information, skills and support. Training needs are recognised, looked at and discussed and regular training days are planned at such meetings, and are undertaken by F.R.W's within the network.

As training costs are very expensive by external agencies, training by internal facilitators proves to be extremely cost effective.

Clydebank Women's Aid F.R.W. was directly involved in the planning of the S.W.A National Conference 1994 - Children, Equality and Respect. Together children, young people, women and W.A. workers discussed children's experiences of domestic abuse and Women's Aid work with children.

The conference was a great success and was attended by 200 women and children. As a direct result of this conference a report was produced (see enclosed).



## NATIONAL WORK

C.W.A. is an autonomous group who are affiliated to Scottish Women's Aid and, like all other groups in Scotland, adhere to the policies and principles of S.W.A.

We operate as a collective and are responsible for the policies and practices of the Network. To service these policies we employ National Workers who are based in Edinburgh. Each National Worker's remit covers specific issues:

- Training
- Children
- Refuge
- Legal Issues
- Network
- Finance
- Campaigning & Publicity

Each local group is part of a bigger regional group. Clydebank is part of West Strathclyde which includes:

- Cowal
- Dumbarton
- Drumchapel
- Gryffe
- Inverclyde

These groupings meet every six weeks and share information, discuss future plans, respond to changing legislation and nominate representatives to attend S.W.A. Executive meetings which are held every three months, where policies and strategies are decided on nationally.

The regional group has representation on each Policy and Development Group which is serviced by a National Worker.

In addition representation is required on S.W.A. Staffing Group and Conciliation Group. Other working groups are set up as the need arises. These have included COSLA, Matrimonial Homes Monitoring, Child Support Act Monitoring etc.



## ZERO TOLERANCE

Women's Aid both locally and nationally welcomed and supported the Zero Tolerance campaign which was launched in Edinburgh in 1992. Later in 1994 support and funding for a Strathclyde wide campaign initiated by Strathclyde Regional Council in partnership with District Councils, Health Boards, Women's organisations and other agencies. Both Clydebank and Dumbarton District Councils agreed to back this project and contributed financially.

In preparation for these projects, organisations such as Women's Aid and Rape Crisis were consulted and recognition was given to the fact that they were a valuable source to research the issues around male violence given the years of experience of direct work with abused women, and the campaigns awareness raising work done in previous years by these groups.

The success of Zero Tolerance has been obvious by the increasing number of women using our services recently as reflected by our statistics (See page 3b).

The aim of the campaigns were:

1. To inform people about the nature and extent of the problem of violence against women.
2. To challenge the myths surrounding the issue of male violence.
3. Send out a clear signal that crimes of violence against women and children were unacceptable.

As a direct result of Zero Tolerance more women are challenging abuse in their lives and consequently contacting agencies which provide relevant information, support and / or accommodation regarding all forms of male violence. Women who make the courageous step to seek help deserve to have access to experienced and well trained support workers, adequate counselling services and accommodation if required to enable them (and their children, if any) to live free from abuse.

Recent changes in housing legislation, D.S.S legislation and legal aid coupled with the growing discriminatory attitude towards single parents families in general are just a few of the stumbling blocks which women may have to face.



Women's Aid is the only organisation working specifically on the issue of Domestic Violence both by working directly with women experiencing abuse and by providing training to schools, colleges, workplaces and other organisations and interested individuals. A long standing commitment within our organisation to be informed by service users has given us a clear understanding of the service provision required and the many issues related to abuse of women, in particular around Domestic Violence. Clydebank Women's Aid has been providing this service locally for over 11 years.

Zero tolerance was inspired by a Canadian initiative which the Government there launched in 1991. In Canada awareness raising was seen as part of a strategy which included adequate funding for support services and law enforcement initiatives.

**The Ontario Government's total expenditure on violence against women in 1991/92 amounted to almost 90 million dollars.**

Some women and children may feel that they have been actively encouraged by campaigns such as Zero Tolerance not to accept abuse in their lives, and therefore it should be seen as a responsibility by all who support such campaigns to also support adequate funding for service providers.

In recent years Clydebank Women's Aid has seen a dramatic increase in women and children using our service, while simultaneously our overall budget has been reduced. As the main local service providers in this field we ask that this very important area of work be given full and careful consideration by the new authority.



## RESOURCES

In Scotland, there is a considerable contrast in the resources made available to women and children who have suffered abuse from violent men, and those made available to work with violent men.

Clackmanan Women's Aid supported 543 women and 1,086 children from a total income of £80,964. They have 9 refuge spaces.

Falkirk Women's Aid supported 2,167 women and 534 children from a total income of £34,972. They have no refuge spaces.

Stirling Women's Aid supported 602 women and 1,004 children from a total income of £80,590. They have 7 refuge spaces.

The Change Project, which works with male abusers, gained £108,699 for one year. Their annual 1992/93 Annual Report does not give the number of men supported but it does state that approximately 40 men have been offered their services in the past 3 years.

*Proportionally, these Women's Aid groups have £43 per woman or child while the Change Project has £8,152 per man. Each individual abusive man receives 1900% more than each individual abused woman or her child.*



*"I am very grateful for all the support and help you have given me "*  
**'C' Clydebank.**

*"Thank you from the bottom of my heart for all the help, support and advice I received from everyone in the group"*  
**'K.' Clydebank**

*"I think you all do a great job and I just want to say thank you very much"*  
**'L' Clydebank**

*"The things I like best about being in refuge are the playroom, the workers, in fact everything"*  
**'D.' Aged 14.**

*"What we liked best about being in refuge are the trips, the parties and the back court"*  
**'S.' & 'L.' aged 10 & 9**

*"Thank you for making it possible for me to make a new life for me and my son"*  
**'K.' Clydebank**

*"I would have been dead without Women's Aid"*  
**'A' Clydebank**