

EDINBURGH + LOTHIAN
WOMEN'S AID

GETTING
REHOUSED 
♀ QUICKLY
IS LIKE BANGING
YOUR HEAD AGAINST
A BRICK
WAUGH

TO BE HOMELESS
IS NOT A CRIME
TO IGNORE THE HOMELESS
IS CRIMINAL

BATTERED WOMEN
ARE HOMELESS AND
IN PRIORITY NEED

BATTERED
WOMEN
ARE
REFUGEES



Scottish Women's Aid has spent the last 40 years campaigning for better responses to domestic abuse. Now we are asking, will you



commit

to securing access to justice, a safe home and safe contact for women and children who experience domestic abuse in Scotland?

Will you commit to sustainable, long-term funding for domestic abuse services?

On any given day in Scotland, over 1000 women and children get support from Women's Aid groups. Incredibly, most of our groups have no funding commitment past this current year. 81% of local groups received standstill or reduced funding from their local authority in the past year, and nearly 25% reduced levels of support and put more women and children on ever-longer waiting lists.

We ask all parties to commit to:

- Specific funding to resource Women's Aid advice and support services.
- A sustainable long-term funding plan to support women and children who have experienced domestic abuse that works across other devolved policy areas, including childcare, housing, income support, and education and skills.

Will you commit to upholding children's rights in decisions about child contact and residency?

Domestic abuse by a parent is a parenting choice to cause harm to a child, but the harm to children caused by domestic abuse and court decisions about access to children are treated as separate and unrelated issues.

We ask all parties to commit to ensuring that:

- Children's voices and views are embedded in decisions about contact with abusive parents.
- Existing procedures and legislation are used to protect women and children from unsafe and inappropriate decisions about child contact.
- Domestic abuse is given full and appropriate consideration by courts, local authority social workers, family law solicitors and Child Welfare Reporters.

Will you commit to ending the scandal of women and children being made homeless because of domestic abuse?

Women and children are routinely made homeless in Scotland because of domestic abuse. It is the fourth most common reason for a homeless application in Scotland. Women are commonly forced by housing policy and practice to make themselves homeless to qualify for support.

Scotland needs a housing policy at national and local level that offers women and children real choices for getting and staying safe.

We ask all parties to commit to:

- Introducing legislation that protects women and children and allows them to stay in their own homes if they so choose.
- Ensuring women and children are given appropriate advice, support and legal services to consider their full range of options in housing themselves and their children.

Will you commit to ensuring that women experiencing domestic abuse have access to legal services?

Women, children and young people experiencing domestic abuse have complex and urgent legal needs. They need solicitors who are informed about domestic abuse to give them appropriate representation and advice about their rights and the law.

Domestic abuse impacts on women's ability to pay for legal services, reducing their access to "household" income or assets. Eligibility criteria for legal aid in this setting are inappropriate and often prevent women taking up offers of help. Women should not have to pay for justice and safety.

We ask all parties to commit to the following:

- All women and children experiencing domestic abuse are eligible for free legal services.
- All legal aid provision is domestic abuse competent.



For more information on the commitments Scottish Women's Aid need from our politicians, visit our website at www.scottishwomensaid.org.uk

Follow us on Twitter: [@scotwomensaid](https://twitter.com/scotwomensaid) Facebook: [/scotwomensaid](https://www.facebook.com/scotwomensaid)

Text **YEAR40 5 to 70070** to donate £5 to help our work.



We believe that a world without domestic abuse is not just a dream, it is a possibility. Never doubt it – changing attitudes changes lives.