

MISSION STATEMENT

"Greenwich Women's Aid seeks to work towards an end to abuse against women and children in the home and outside."

OUR WORK

Towards this ultimate end we seek to meet the following objectives:

- Provide safe and secure temporary accommodation, advice, support and information to women and children fleeing abuse inside and outside their homes
- Outreach support to women and children who choose not to use the refuge for temporary accommodation
- Facilitation of groups to raise awareness of domestic violence issues
- Planning and facilitation of Domestic Violence Awareness and Good Practice training to external agencies at present through the Greenwich Multi-agency Domestic Violence Forum
- Counselling to women
- Specific services to children
- Multi-agency work and networking
- Campaigning
- Advocacy

We recognise that not all women are ready to permanently leave abusive relationships. They may use the refuge for respite rather than making a final break, they may want to talk individually to us to get support in order to cope with their lives at home or they may want to join a group. We will support them in any decision they make, providing we believe no child to be at serious risk of abuse.

We know that women from all cultures, races, classes, sexuality's, ages and disabilities experience domestic abuse. Whilst each woman's experience is unique to her, we are aware that many issues profoundly affect her, e.g. her access to services, who she can confidently ask for help, what she is likely to lose if she leaves the relationship?, will she be believed?, does she risk losing custody of her children? We are always mindful of each woman as a unique individual and how her difference can affect her life and the choices she makes.

Children account for over fifty percent of our residents and we have a priority to provide services to them. Importantly, in our refuges children know they have a right to lives free from violence. To this end, children may not be smacked or physically punished. We encourage and support women to find non-abusive ways of sanctioning and disciplining their children. We are also very aware that recent research has shown links between domestic abuse and child abuse.

Aims & Objectives

- To be committed to the principle of self-help and self-determination by encouraging women to make their own decisions and determine their own future by providing practical help, information, encouragement and support and creating opportunities for the women to develop their potential.
- To recognise and care for the overall needs of children in the refuge.
- To campaign for the rights of children.
- To promote the needs of women and children in relation to domestic violence and sexual abuse and to encourage statutory and voluntary agencies to address and meet those needs.
- To inform, train, liaise and advise statutory and voluntary organisations on issues affecting women and children as a result of domestic violence and sexual abuse.
- To increase campaign work around safeguarding the future of refuge provision nationally.
- To continue our commitment and support to multi-agency working.
- To establish contacts and networks with other agencies/organisations where appropriate.
- To continue and extend the service we offer outside the refuge.
- To fundraise to improve the services we offer to women and children.
- To encourage and support other groups of women to set up refuge provision, be that in Britain or abroad.

Background

Greenwich Women's Aid opened its first refuge in the London Borough of Greenwich for women and children fleeing domestic violence in 1975. We have a group of local women activists and the London Borough of Greenwich to thank for starting the services that exist today.

The organisation has grown from one house and two workers in 1975 to three houses and eight workers today.