



## **Save Violence Against Women Services Campaign**

The Save Violence Against Women Services Campaign is a joint campaign being run by Rape Crisis Scotland and Scottish Women's Aid. The campaign aims to protect essential frontline services for women experiencing violence.

### **Background Information**

Violence against women is a serious and widespread issue:

- Each year, 3 million women in Britain experience rape, domestic abuse, stalking or other violence (source: End Violence Against Women Campaign)
- There were 53,681 incidents of domestic abuse recorded by the police in Scotland in 2008-09. In the same year, the police recorded 821 reports of rape, 142 of assault with intent to rape and 1,640 incidents of indecent assault (source: Tackling Violence Against Women: A Review of Key Evidence & National Policy, Scottish Government, 2010)
- A study by NSPCC showed that a third of teenage girls in a relationship suffer an unwanted sexual act (Barter, McCarry, Berridge and Kathy Evans, Partner exploitation and violence in teenage intimate relationships, 2009)
- It is estimated that 20% of women and 5% of men have experienced some form of child sexual abuse (World Health Organisation)
- It is estimated that violence against women costs society £40 billion each year (Hard Knock Life, New Philanthropy Capital, 2008).

The Scottish Government has provided crucial and much needed support over the past decade to help sustain and develop support services such as rape crisis centres and women's aid groups. This support has taken the form of ring fenced funding specifically for violence against women services. This ring fenced funding has led to a significant improvement in the services for women across Scotland. The Rape Crisis Specific Fund has provided £50,000 per rape crisis centre per year to guarantee a basic level of service and has also funded the creation of 5 new rape crisis centres. The support available for children experiencing domestic abuse has been greatly improved by the Children's Services Fund which has funded more than 100 children's workers who have provided services to over 2500 children and young people last year. The Violence Against Women Fund has funded a range of vital support services

across the country. If these funds do not continue, the impact on women and children across Scotland will be severe.

### **Why do we need ring fencing?**

The Equality & Human Rights Commission have identified what they call a 'postcode lottery' of vital support services for women experiencing violence across the UK. Scotland, however, is recognised as leading the way in the provision of services, and dedicated funding is the reason this has happened:

“The best story to be told is in Scotland where provision is distributed more equally and furthermore is the only part of the UK where there has been an expansion of Rape Crisis Centres. The reason is simple; the Scottish government is developing a strategic approach to addressing violence against women and has allocated ring-fenced funding for services.”

The national provision of ring fenced funding was necessary because these services were not being adequately funded at a local level.

### **What would be the implications of removing ring fencing?**

In this economic climate, the consequences of removing ring fencing for these services are even more serious than they would be under other circumstances. There is a serious risk that if funds were allocated to local authorities but not ring fenced that the funding would be diverted elsewhere. For some rape crisis centres, where the Scottish Government funding is their main or only source of funding, this would mean the service closing. After the investment of the past few years, this would be a significantly retrograde step, with devastating implications for survivors of sexual violence.

### **The campaign**

In order to protect essential services for women and children experiencing violence, Rape Crisis Scotland and Scottish Women's Aid are calling on the Scottish Government to give a commitment to protect ring fenced funding for violence against women services. We will be asking all MSPs to sign a pledge committing to the continuation of this vital funding.

We believe this is the only way to adequately protect the continued existence of these services.

For further information, please contact:

Sandy Brindley, Rape Crisis Scotland 0141 331 4182 / 07764167501

Lily Greenan, Scottish Women's Aid 0131 226 6606 / 07882 692235