

## Women's Aid Updates July 2020 – June 2021

We are so grateful to Simple Life Homes for your incredible donation of £25,480 made in July 2020. This generous support meant that we were able to continue our vital work for survivors and we are so grateful. Here are some brief highlights of our achievements over the past year. These would not have been possible without generous donations such as yours.

### Expansion of Live Chat

In April 2021, we were delighted to be able to expand the hours of our Live Chat Helpline which is now operating from 10am – 6pm, seven days a week. We are so proud of this service and know that it continues to offer vital support to women across the country. The Live Chat Helpline has established itself as a crucial tool for women and children experiencing domestic abuse. Throughout all the lockdowns, it has been more crucial than ever that women experiencing domestic abuse were able to receive knowledgeable support in a way that is safe, accessible and compassionate. We continue to hear from survivors who tell us that being able to access a support service online was just the type of service that they needed to access help whilst trapped at home with an abuser: *“Live Chat meant I could chat on my phone quietly rather than being on the phone which is exactly what I needed.”* Being able to expand the hours of the service, as well as have more trained staff working on the helpline at any one time has been so important in reaching more survivors.

<https://chat.womensaid.org.uk/>

### Launch of Expect Respect Toolkit

Also earlier this year, we launched the Expect Respect Toolkit. This prevention toolkit is a free resource with easy-to-use tools to help adults have important conversations with children and young people in age appropriate ways. The toolkit covers healthy relationships, recognising the key warning signs of abuse, and educating young people on the root causes of gender-based violence. We have also begun working with Expect Respect Advocates who will be trained to deliver the toolkit and receive support and advice as part of our advocates network. You can find the toolkit here: <https://www.womensaid.org.uk/what-we-do/education-and-public-awareness/expect-respect/>. We know how important early intervention and prevention work is and we are so pleased that this project is already having an impact.

### Awareness raising campaigns

We have launched two impactful awareness raising videos, which both have sparked real and widespread conversations about domestic abuse.

1. Our powerful [Respite](#) campaign shows how, during lockdown, any chance for survivors to get out, even for a few hours, has been drastically reduced.
2. [Love Should Not Hurt](#), starring our Patron Mel B, highlights the contrast between what is seen by friends and family and what can be happening behind closed doors. It shows both physical violence and also coercive control. (Please note, it contains scenes of domestic violence from the very beginning)

### Domestic Abuse Bill

The Domestic Abuse Bill became law in April 2021. We are pleased that after many years of our campaigning, along with our member services, our sister federations, survivors and other charities, that many positive amendments have been made to this landmark piece of legislation. For instance, we have seen strengthened protection in the family courts, recognition of children as victims in their own right, and a guarantee that survivors escaping domestic abuse will be in 'priority need' for housing. However, the Act does have significant gaps, particularly a failure to deliver equal protection and support for migrant women. We will continue our work to ensure that this legislation translates to action to provide the changes that all survivors so vitally need.

**Thank you for your support that makes this, and all our wider work, possible.**