

Domestic Abuse charity welcomes visit from Cabinet Secretary for Communities,
Social Security and Equalities

Media Release
1 Dec 2016

Since January 18th Scotland's National Domestic Abuse and Forced Marriage Helpline has taken 3000 calls from people in every single local authority, the vast majority of those from women experiencing domestic abuse.

Ahead of Angela Constance Cabinet Secretary for Communities, Social Security for Equalities' visit to the helpline, Scottish Women's Aid have emphasised how important it is for people to have somewhere supportive and safe to speak about their experiences of domestic abuse.

Scottish Government figures for 2015-16 reflect 22,075 incidents of domestic abuse of women up to the age of 30 – this is up 8.9 per cent from 20,283 in 2014-15. Scottish Women's Aid warn that whilst these figures are significant, the recording of domestic abuse as an 'incident' does not take into account the way domestic abuse is experienced, as a constant pattern of intimidation and control.

Lydia Okroj, Helpline Co-ordinator said:

"More than anything our experience managing the helpline this far has shown just how critical it is that there is an understanding and supportive space to talk about domestic abuse for everybody, no matter their walk of life.

"We already knew that domestic abuse cuts across all sectors of society, and our first year in the helpline has made this even clearer. The youngest person to call the helpline was only 14 years of age and the oldest was 86 – there's no such things as the typical victim; domestic abuse can happen to anyone.

"We're delighted that the Cabinet Secretary is joining us to learn more about the specialist service we provide, and we are looking forward to discussing how the helpline fits into Scotland's broader strategy to end violence against women."

Marsha Scott, CEO of Scottish Women's Aid added:

"We are grateful to the Cabinet Secretary for visiting during 16 days of Activism to highlight Scotland's National Domestic Abuse and Forced Marriage Helpline, which we are immensely proud to manage.

"We know how important specialist support is for people experiencing domestic abuse, and the helpline is a crucial piece in a much bigger jigsaw of providing victims and survivors of domestic abuse with the high-quality support that they deserve."

Equalities Secretary Angela Constance said:

"Violence against women and girls is a violation of human rights, and we are determined to tackle this scourge in our society. Making sure those affected by gender-based violence can access advice and support is crucial in that aim. Aligned with strengthening our laws in this area, we can end this once and for all."