



Scottish Women's Aid Marks 50 Years of Action to End Domestic Abuse

31 March 2026

Scottish Women's Aid, the country's leading organisation working to end domestic abuse, is marking its 50th anniversary.

Founded in 1976, Scottish Women's Aid has spent five decades providing life-saving support to women, children and young people, while driving transformative change in policy, law and public understanding. Its vision remains a Scotland where its services are no longer needed - where everyone can live free from abuse.

Across the past 50 years, the organisation has played a pivotal role in reshaping responses to domestic abuse in Scotland, including:

- Launching the national 24/7 Domestic Abuse and Forced Marriage Helpline
- Expanding a nationwide network of local Women's Aid groups delivering accessible, community-based support services and refuge accommodation
- Pioneering the recognition of children as victims of domestic abuse in their own right
- Influencing the introduction of the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act, which criminalises psychological abuse, coercive control and controlling behaviour

Throughout its anniversary year, Scottish Women's Aid will celebrate the strength and resilience of survivors, as well as the dedication of staff, volunteers and supporters who have sustained the movement for five decades. The organisation will also highlight the urgent work that remains to fully eradicate domestic abuse.

Dr Marsha Scott, Chief Executive of Scottish Women's Aid, said:

"Fifty years of work is both a cause for celebration and a stark reminder that domestic abuse remains a devastatingly common issue, often hiding in plain sight.

While we are immensely proud of the progress made and the countless lives changed, our vision remains a Scotland where every woman, child and young person can live free from the fear and reality of abuse. This anniversary year is

about honouring our history while firmly focusing on the future and ensuring survivors' voices are at the heart of the systemic change still needed."

A member of the Scottish Women's Aid Survivor Reference Group: "I thought about leaving my husband not long after I first met him. Four years later I made a bid to escape but he found me. It was ten years before I tried again this time with the support of Women's Aid who provided refuge to me and my children.

"Thirty years on I live a completely different life. One of happiness and not fear. I am so grateful for the help I was given that I continue to support Women's Aid by using my survivor voice to affect government policies.

"I hope Women's Aid continues to gather momentum over the next 50 years and the movement will make violence against women and girls unacceptable in our society."

Scottish Women's Aid continues to work alongside its 33 local member services across Scotland to advocate for stronger responses to domestic abuse and to champion the rights of those affected. This milestone anniversary presents a vital opportunity to drive further change and to highlight the role every part of society must play in ending abuse for good.

If you or someone you know is affected by domestic abuse, please contact Scotland's 24-hour Domestic Abuse and Forced Marriage Helpline at **0800 027 1234** or visit [sdafmh.org.uk](https://www.sdafmh.org.uk) for support.

Notes to Editors

- Scottish Women's Aid is the lead organisation in Scotland working to end domestic abuse.
- The Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 was a landmark piece of legislation recognising coercive control as a criminal offence.
- The Helpline now has more than 30 staff members and responded to more than 20,000 calls and messages last year.

Any story about domestic abuse should point to appropriate sources of help and support, including [local Women's Aid services](#) and Scotland's Domestic Abuse and Forced Marriage Helpline. The Helpline is available 24/7 for anyone in Scotland who wants support around domestic abuse. Users can call on 0800 027 1234, email and web chat from www.sdafmh.org.uk or text or WhatsApp on 07401288595.

Media contact

Please contact media@womensaid.scot with details of your request.

Images

For free, survivor-sensitive images to use in any story about domestic abuse, [see here](#)