



PRESS RELEASE

Monday 9 August 2010

Save Our Services

Rape Crisis Scotland and Scottish Women's Aid issue warning over funding fears

Rape Crisis Scotland and Scottish Women's Aid will today issue a plea to the Scottish Government to protect ring fenced funding for services that support women and children who have experienced rape, domestic abuse and other forms of violence.

The warning that these lifeline services are at risk comes on the back of the news that a specialist counseling service for sexual abuse survivors, Breakthrough for Women, is to close due to a lack of funding. Rape Crisis Scotland will launch a short film in Glasgow today - *Making Recovery a Reality* – to highlight the support provided to women by rape crisis centres in Scotland.

The Scottish Government has provided crucial and much needed support over the 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 and has led to a significant improvement in the services for women across Scotland. [2]

RCS and SWA are concerned that, by removing ring fencing from these funds, women, children and young people who have experienced violence and abuse may have nowhere to turn and will be further exposed to danger.

Commenting on the campaign to Save our Services, Rape Crisis Scotland's National Co-ordinator Sandy Brindley said:

"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.

"We believe this is the only way to adequately protect the continued existence of these services. Scotland has led the way in providing services for women, children and young people who have experienced violence and abuse; let's not lose ground now."

Scottish Women's Aid Manager Lily Greenan said:

"Rape Crisis Centres and Women's Aid Groups provide specialist services that other agencies simply do not. Without them, many women would have no access to support, information or a safe place to go. Many of those would be at risk and in the worst case scenarios, lives could be lost.

"The Equality & Human Rights Commission has 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. Ring fenced funding for services was cited as a reason for Scotland's good practice and deemed necessary because these services were not being adequately funded at a local level."

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For further information, contact Jacq Kelly on 0131 226 5124 or 07882 585

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Notes

1. [Scottish Women's Aid](#) is the lead organisation in Scotland working towards the prevention of domestic abuse. We play a vital role campaigning and lobbying for effective responses to domestic abuse.
2. 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 five new rape crisis centres. Support available for children experiencing domestic abuse has also been greatly improved by the Children's Services Fund, and 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.
3. Each year, 3 million women in Britain experience rape, domestic abuse, stalking or other violence
4. 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.
5. A study by NSPCC showed that a third of teenage girls in a relationship suffer an unwanted sexual act
6. It is estimated that 20% of women and 5% of men have experienced some form of child sexual abuse
7. It is estimated that violence against women costs society £40 billion each year