# Annual Report 2026

This year's theme reflects both the challenges facing our communities and the way Stop Domestic Abuse has continued to evolve in response.

# Adaptability




STOP DOMESTIC ABUSE

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# Adaptability


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# Our vision

**Our vision is**

## a world without domestic abuse.

### Our mission:

**Stop Domestic Abuse is an innovative and unique provider of all services to those affected by domestic abuse. Through the provision of our services, we will continue to empower victims and survivors, giving them a voice and supporting them in trauma-informed ways, whether that means supporting them to be safe in their current relationship or to move forward and rebuild their lives.**

### Our core aims are:

- To provide choice
- To provide holistic solutions
- To use the strengths of service users
- To empower women to support other women
- To break the cycle of domestic abuse where families repeat behaviour as victims or perpetrators of domestic abuse
- To be a sustainable organisation

### Our values

At Stop Domestic Abuse we are committed to these core values:

- Equality
- Openness and honesty
- Respect for individual dignity and diversity
- Empowering women and children
- Care and compassion

### To achieve our vision of a world without domestic abuse, we will:

- Work in partnership
- Lobby and campaign
- Involve those who use our service
- Provide services that reflect the diverse needs of the communities that we serve
- Be easily accessible
- Be relevant to service users' needs
- Be of real assistance to women, children, young people and men affected by domestic abuse
- Provide services by a diverse workforce
- Be well-managed and provide value for money
- Regularly monitor our services and outcomes
- Continually improve
- Ensure good governance of the charity
- Be open to progressive and innovative ways of doing things
- Ensure everyone counts.

By achieving our vision for Stop Domestic Abuse and committing ourselves to the values that underpin our work, we will significantly improve the lives of those for whom we provide services.



# Chair's report

## I am very pleased to invite you to read our 2026 Annual Report. Welcome!

**This year's theme, "Adaptability," reflects both the challenges facing our communities and the way Stop Domestic Abuse has continued to evolve in response. Across the sector, domestic abuse services are seeing increasing demand and greater complexity in the needs of the adults and children seeking support. The ongoing impact of financial hardship, housing instability, mental health pressures and trauma continues to shape the experiences of many victim-survivors. This can make it more difficult for people to access safety and stability.**

Against this backdrop, I remain immensely proud of the way Stop Domestic Abuse has responded throughout the year. The organisation has continued to demonstrate flexibility, resilience, and a clear commitment to placing survivors at the centre of its work. Rather than standing still in the face of changing need, the organisation has adapted thoughtfully and proactively, ensuring that services remain accessible, responsive, and effective.

As Chair, I have seen the organisation continue to strengthen its commitment to providing choice and person-centred support. This has included expanding group work programmes, maintaining both virtual and face-to-face delivery models and developing services that better reflect the diverse needs of people accessing support. Importantly, this work has been shaped not only by professional expertise, but by listening carefully to the voices of survivors and responding to what people tell us they need.

Alongside direct service delivery, the organisation has also continued to play an important role in influencing wider systems and partnerships. Domestic abuse cannot be addressed by any one agency alone. Collaborative working is essential to improve responses, increase early identification, and reduce harm.

The Board of Trustees is committed to ensuring strong governance, accountability, and sustainability. During a period of continued pressure across the charity sector, the organisation has maintained a clear strategic focus while carefully managing risk and planning for the future. The Board has continued to work closely with the leadership team to support the organisation's long-term sustainability while ensuring that quality, safeguarding, and survivor wellbeing remain central to decision-making.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to our funders, commissioners, partners, and supporters for their continued trust and collaboration. It is through these relationships that we are able to continue adapting, developing, and responding to the changing needs of our communities.

I would also like to give my heartfelt thanks to all our staff, volunteers, leadership team, and my fellow trustees for their dedication and professionalism throughout the year. Supporting adults and children affected by domestic abuse requires compassion, skill, resilience, and an unwavering commitment to making a difference.

The impact of this work can be seen not only in the lives of the people directly supported, but also in the wider cultural and systemic changes the organisation continues to help shape.

However, we cannot be complacent, there is a long way to go before we see an end to violence against women and girls. Significant challenges remain across the sector. All of us need to speak out, wherever we are and whoever we are with. Where there are anxious silences, they may be filled with the misogyny so prevalent in our society today. Together, we can all speak out and work towards a future where everyone can live free from domestic abuse. I remain confident in the strength of the organisation, the clarity of its values, and its continued ability to drive positive change.

On a personal note I am stepping down from my role as Chair but will continue my involvement as a Trustee. I would like to thank everyone who has supported me in this role. It has been a very great privilege to observe at close hand so much amazing work by all the staff.



# Our work

Stop Domestic Abuse supports and protects victims and survivors of domestic abuse and stalking. We provide a range of flexible and accessible services across Hampshire, Portsmouth, Southampton and the Isle of Wight.

## Helplines

Stop Domestic Abuse have Helpline Partnership accredited helplines in Hampshire and Portsmouth and deliver the Southampton helpline in partnership with Southampton IDVA service. Helplines can be accessed by victim-survivors, professionals and concerned friends and family.

## Accommodation based services

### Refuge

We have 18 refuges across Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton and can accommodate 106 women and their children. We make each refuge feel like a home and provide both one-to-one support and group activities for women and children.

### Dispersed Accommodation

We provide self-contained accommodation in Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton that meets the needs of a diverse range of service users, including male victims, disabled victims, women with older male children and families with very complex needs who are unable to go into communal refuge spaces.

## Community based services

Tailored, specialist, trauma-informed and person-centred one-to-one support for victim-survivors (adults and children) of domestic abuse across Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton.

### Group Work Programmes

Our Group Work programmes are available across Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton and give adults, children, and young people the opportunity to learn about domestic abuse and how it has affected them including specialist programmes for LGBTQ+ victims and male victims.

### Target Hardening

Our specialist workers visit homes to give safety advice and issue personal and home safety equipment. Available in Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton.

### Support for victims of Harmful Practices

Specialist work addressing harmful practices including female genital mutilation, forced marriage and so-called 'honour' based abuse across the whole of Hampshire and Portsmouth.

### LGBTQ+ Advocacy

We provide support, advice and assistance to adults in the LGBTQ+ community who are victims of domestic abuse, and we deliver training to other professionals working with victims from LGBTQ+ communities. We also deliver Polari, a 12 session recovery groupwork programme for LGBTQIA+ survivors.

### Stalking Advocacy and Support

We deliver a specialist support and advocacy service for victims of stalking delivered pan-Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, offering a range of support, including risk and safety planning, advocacy support, emotional and practical support, specialist advice and support in relation to cyber stalking and support to access any other services the victim may need.

### Stop.Think.Change

Stop. Think. Change. is for people who want to stop using abusive behaviours in their relationships. It is designed to support those who have acted in ways that are harmful or controlling towards a partner, ex-partner, family member, or others close to them. Available in Fareham, Gosport Havant and Portsmouth.

### Community Ambassadors

Stop Domestic Abuse Community Ambassadors support our mission to make domestic abuse everyone's business. We offer training for members of the community who would not usually access formal training. Sessions aim to increase understanding of domestic abuse and knowledge of specialist support services that are available to victims and survivors.

### Community Champions

Stop Domestic Abuse provides Domestic Abuse Champion training for professionals with a responsibility to the public and want to be a domestic abuse lead within their organisation. After the training, Champions will be confident in their understanding of domestic abuse and how to effectively respond to victim-survivors, support colleagues and improve referral pathways. Champions can attend quarterly networking events and have access to monthly drop-ins for support, advice and information.

# Our work

### Workforce Development

We have a dedicated Workforce Development Team that deliver a Co-ordinated Community Response (CCR) model of training courses for external organisations and professional partners in the community. By bringing together statutory and voluntary sector partners, we strengthen our collective ability to identify, respond to and prevent domestic abuse.

## Co-located Services

### Health Advocates

Domestic Abuse Health Advocates are co-located at Royal Hampshire County Hospital, (Winchester), Basingstoke and North Hampshire Hospital, Andover War Memorial Hospital, Queen Alexandra Hospital (Portsmouth) and University Hospital Southampton, offering immediate advice and support to staff and patients.

### Mental Health IDVA

A Mental Health IDVA works across mental health settings in Hampshire to improve the early identification and response to domestic abuse, ensuring victim-survivors can access timely, appropriate, and trauma-informed support. The service combines direct advice, support and safety planning to survivors, professional consultation, workforce development, and system improvement activity.

### Primary Care IDVAs

The Primary Care IDVAs, co-located across Primary Care settings in Hampshire work directly with victim-survivors providing one-to-one support, supporting healthcare professionals to recognise signs of abuse, respond safely to disclosures, and connect patients with specialist services. The service contributes to strategic and system-level improvements by identifying gaps in provision, influencing policy and practice, and promoting trauma-informed approaches across health services. Through training, consultation, partnership working, and data-led evaluation, Primary Care IDVAs work to reduce the health impacts of domestic abuse, prevent escalation, and improve outcomes for survivors while strengthening the overall health and social care response.

### Housing Advocates

Co-located in all 11 Hampshire local authorities, advocates offer support to housing teams and directly to victims and survivors who present to the local authority housing service as homeless due to domestic abuse.

### Family Safeguarding

Family Safeguarding Teams in Southampton are co-located, multidisciplinary teams of social workers and specialist adult practitioners. Stop Domestic Abuse's Family Safeguarding Outreach Workers are co-located in Southampton City Council, providing domestic abuse expertise, supporting risk management, family safety planning, and accountability for abusive behaviours. They also offer direct support and advocacy, ensuring victim-survivor's and children's voices are reflected in multidisciplinary settings.

### Families First Partnership Programme

We co-locate five workers into Hampshire County Council Children's Services to improve responses to Teenage Intimate Partner Abuse (TIPA) and Child/Adolescent to Parent Violence/Abuse (CAPVA). The Families First Partnership Programme is a national reform programme focused on fundamentally shifting how support is delivered to families. At its core, it is about moving away from a system that reacts at crisis point to one that intervenes earlier and more effectively. It emphasises a whole-family approach, relational practice, and much stronger partnership working across agencies.

### Raneem's Law

Domestic Abuse Specialists are co-located within Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary's Force Control Room providing real-time advice, improving risk identification, and strengthening pathways into specialist support. Raneem's Law is being introduced nationally to strengthen the police response to domestic abuse, particularly in emergency and high-risk situations. It focuses on ensuring that victims receive a more informed, consistent, and safeguarding-led response at the point of contact with police.



# CEO's report

Adaptability has always been at the heart of Stop Domestic Abuse, but this year it feels especially fitting. In March I marked 25 years of working for this wonderful organisation, at a point where both the challenges we face and the ways we respond to them continue to evolve at pace.

When I first began this work, domestic abuse was often hidden, poorly understood, and rarely spoken about in public or policy spaces. Services were small, under resourced, and victim-survivors' voices were too often absent from decision-making.

Over the past 25 years, there has been significant progress: domestic abuse is now recognised as a serious social issue; victim-survivors' experiences increasingly shape policy and practice; and our sector is firmly embedded within safeguarding, housing, criminal justice, health, and community systems. None of this progress was inevitable; it has required sustained advocacy, learning, and, above all, adaptability.



## A year defined by change and resilience

The past year has once again tested our ability to respond to a changing landscape. Demand for support has remained high across both our community based and safe accommodation services, with increasingly complex needs presented by adult and child victim-survivors. Alongside this, we continue to operate within a stretched funding environment, ongoing cost pressures, and wider system challenges affecting housing, legal aid, statutory services and access to justice.

Despite this, Stop Domestic Abuse has shown resilience and flexibility at every level. We have adapted services in response to changing patterns of abuse, including post separation and technology facilitated abuse, and have continued to strengthen our trauma informed response across the pan-Hampshire and Isle of Wight region. Our practice reflects not only what survivors need now, but how those needs are changing over time. This adaptability ensures that our services remain relevant, effective, and survivor centred.

## Adapting our accommodation to meet changing need

Ensuring safety for people affected by domestic abuse requires flexibility, responsiveness and an understanding that there is no single route to safety. Our accommodation model reflects this reality, combining traditional refuge provision with dispersed accommodation so that we can offer the right support, in the right setting, at the right time.

Dispersed accommodation enables victim-survivors to move into self contained homes within the community, while continuing to receive specialist, trauma informed support from specialist workers. This approach places survivor choice and dignity at its heart and demonstrates our ability to adapt services around individual circumstances rather than relying on a single model. At the same time, refuges remain an essential part of the safety net for women and children fleeing immediate danger. They provide urgent protection, structured support and specialist services for women and children at a critical point of crisis.

This year, our commitment to adaptability and long term resilience was strengthened through the purchase of our Fareham refuge property. Securing ownership of this refuge safeguards vital local provision at a time of national pressure on refuge capacity and increasing demand. It also enables long term investment in the quality, safety and sustainability of the accommodation we provide.

Together, our mixed accommodation model reflects an organisation that is adapting with purpose, responding to changing patterns of abuse while planning for a more secure and resilient future for the services victim-survivors and their children rely on.

# CEO's report

## Progress on our new purpose built refuge

A significant and hopeful development this year has been continued progress toward our new purpose built refuge for women and children which will be opening in 2027. This project represents much more than a building it reflects decades of learning about what safety, dignity, and recovery truly require.

The design and planning of the new refuge have been intentionally shaped by survivor voice, staff expertise, and trauma informed principles. The new refuge will include two fully adapted units suitable for disabled women or children. Our ambition is to create a space that not only offers immediate safety, but actively supports healing, independence, and long term stability for families affected by domestic abuse. The focus on adaptability is central here: ensuring the accommodation can meet the evolving needs of families today and in the future.

We are grateful to our partners and supporters for their continued commitment to this vision, which will deliver lasting benefit to the local community and strengthen safe accommodation provision across Hampshire.






## The Violence Against Women and Girls strategy

In December 2025 , the Government published its long awaited cross government Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy, setting out an ambition to halve violence against women and girls within the next decade. After a prolonged period of delay, the publication of the strategy is an important moment for survivors, frontline services and the wider sector.

The Government's VAWG Strategy reinforces the importance of prevention, early intervention, and long term, specialist support for survivors' priorities that have long been central to our work. While the strategy is ambitious in its intent, there remain significant concerns about delivery. The scale of investment currently outlined falls short of what is required to achieve transformational change. Specialist domestic abuse services remain under sustained financial pressure, with demand continuing to outstrip capacity. Without long term, sustainable funding for the services that people affected by domestic abuse rely on every day, the strategy risks remaining unfulfilled.

Specialist domestic abuse services must be adequately resourced and meaningfully involved in shaping local and national responses. We continue to engage actively with partners, commissioners, and policymakers to advocate for approaches that are trauma informed, evidence based, and grounded in lived experience. Stop Domestic Abuse remains committed to playing a leadership role within this agenda, both locally, regionally and nationally, ensuring that policy ambition translates into real, practical improvements for survivors and their children.

As we look ahead, adaptability will remain essential. Legislative change, commissioning reform, political shift and evolving community needs will continue to shape our work. However, adaptability is not about constantly reacting, it is about learning, improving, and holding firm to our mission, vision and values while evolving our approach.

I would like to thank our trustees, volunteers, partners, and supporters for their unwavering dedication, and Stop Domestic Abuse's committed and skilled workforce, whose adaptability, professionalism, and compassion continue to be the foundation of everything we do. Most of all, I thank the survivors who place their trust in us. We remain deeply committed to ensuring that survivors are heard, believed, and supported to rebuild their lives. It is a privilege to lead this organisation, and together, we will constantly adapt so that we can continue to protect, empower and create lasting change.

**Claire Lambon**

**CEO**



# Year at a glance

We help thousands of people every year. This year at Stop Domestic Abuse has been no different.

Received over
**45,000**
calls through helplines for advice and support, a 15% increase from the prior year

**247**
clients have been supported through our Stalking and Advocacy Support services. 95% said that they felt safer after receiving support

**4,905**
adults supported through outreach, health and housing advocacy

Engaged with
**13,638**
children and young people through healthy relationships workshops: more than three times as many as the previous year

Supported
**1,905**
children and young people, an increase of
**26.2%**

Provided refuge to
**348**
victims and their children through our accommodation-based services, an increase of 9.8%

Helped
**595**
clients with support to improve and manage their mental health: an increase of 16.4%

**244**
individuals engaged with our behaviour change programmes, a 36.3% increase on the previous year

**592**
victims and survivors received Target Hardening to improve their safety at home

Supported
**156**
clients who had been affected by Harmful Cultural Practices and Female Genital Mutilation (64.2% increase)

Provided training for
**3,550**
professionals and community members to improve their response to domestic abuse and stalking

# Provide **choice**

## Through Our *Team Around the Worker* model



**Choice is at the centre of meaningful support. For victim-survivors, having choice means more than accessing services, it means feeling heard, empowered, and able to engage with support in a way that feels safe and manageable. Our Team Around the Worker (TAW) model is designed to bring this organisational aim to life by creating flexible, person-centred support that adapts to the individual, rather than expecting the individual to adapt to services.**

The TAW model places the victim-survivor's needs, voice, and choices at the heart of intervention. Instead of navigating multiple professionals independently, individuals are supported through a coordinated approach led by a trusted worker. Specialist practitioners work collaboratively around that lead relationship, ensuring support is holistic, joined-up, and responsive without becoming overwhelming.

This approach provides greater adaptability in how support is delivered. Victim-survivors can access specialist knowledge and tailored interventions while maintaining continuity with a worker they know and trust. By reducing the number of separate referrals, assessments, and repeated disclosures, the model helps individuals remain engaged and in control of their support journey.

> *"The Team Around the Worker model allows us to respond to the whole person, not just one area of risk. It gives victim-survivors more choice in how they engage and helps build trust over time."*



One example of this in practice involved a high-risk victim-survivor who was receiving support from an IDVA due to escalating abuse from a former partner. During ongoing support, additional concerns emerged relating to stalking behaviours. Rather than requiring the individual to engage separately with multiple services, the TAW model enabled the IDVA to remain the primary point of contact while drawing on the expertise of a Stalking Advocate. They worked collaboratively with the IDVA to strengthen safety planning, share professional insight, and respond to evolving risks.

This coordinated approach meant the victim-survivor received specialist, tailored support while avoiding the stress and re-traumatisation that can come from repeating experiences to different professionals. Most importantly, it gave them greater choice and control over how support was delivered, reducing the likelihood of disengagement at a critical time.

The TAW model also extends beyond internal teams. External partners, including mental health services, substance use agencies, housing providers, and social care professionals, can form part of the wider support network where appropriate. This ensures support reflects the complexity of people's lives and creates opportunities for individuals to access services in ways that work best for them.

> *"I felt like people were working with me, not just telling me what to do. I had options, and I felt supported without being overwhelmed."* Annabelle, victim-survivor.

By embedding collaboration, flexibility, and trust into our practice, the TAW model helps us deliver on our commitment to provide choice, ensuring victim-survivors receive support that is empowering, accessible, and centred around their individual needs.

**If your organisation would like to learn more about how our Team Around the Worker model could support your services, please contact us:**

0330 0533 630
advice@stopdomesticabuse.uk

# Provide person-centred **solutions**

## to support neurodiverse needs

**Person-centred support means meeting people as they are when they come to us. Every child, young person and adult brings their own experiences, strengths, communication needs and pace of recovery, so we listen carefully, build trust and shape support around what works for them. Jack's story shows how thoughtful, adaptable practice can make support feel safer, more accessible and more meaningful, helping someone engage in a way that feels right for them.**

Jack, aged 8, was referred to us after experiencing domestic abuse from his stepdad, who was physically and emotionally abusive towards both Jack and his mum. Jack has Autism and mum reported that he could not communicate verbally about what had happened. This increased concerns about physical abuse and neglect and meant he needed support that did not rely on spoken language. Our work therefore focused on finding Jack safe, consistent ways to show what he needed, how he was feeling and what he had experienced.

From the outset, it was clear that our standard approach would not meet Jack's needs. Open-ended conversations would quickly overwhelm him, and he would need more time to process verbal information.

Working closely with Jack and the trusted adults around him, we identified tools and strategies that had helped him in other environments and adapted our support accordingly.

To ensure Jack could engage meaningfully, our Children & Young People's Worker reshaped the structure and delivery of his sessions. These became shorter, more frequent meetings (twice weekly for 30 minutes) introducing alternative communication and sensory based resources such as:

- Choice boards to help Jack express preferences without relying on spoken language
- Talking mats and emotion thermometers to support him in identifying and communicating feelings
- Sensory resources and calmer spaces to reduce sensory overload
- Routine and repetition to help Jack feel prepared and secure
- Clear, concise information to avoid overwhelming him with unnecessary detail

These adaptations created a safer, more predictable environment where Jack could participate at his own pace. Over time, he became more settled and began engaging consistently with his Support Worker. He started to look forward to his sessions, arriving with warmth and familiarity, and the visual and sensory resources reduced pressure by giving him alternative ways to understand, respond and express himself.

Jack's journey highlights the importance of adaptation and child-centred practice. By reshaping the pace, structure and resources used in sessions, our Support Worker created space for Jack to feel safe, understood and more in control of how he engaged. His increased confidence and consistency show that effective support is never "one size fits all"; it requires us to adapt our methods so every child can participate safely, confidently and meaningfully.





# Keep voices of victim-survivors **central to our work**

Between November 2025 and January 2026, 76 service users took part in participation workshops. Their feedback was clear, practical and powerful.

**Survivor voice shapes what we do and how we do it. In 2025/26, we listened through refuge house meetings, day-to-day conversations, participation events, surveys, feedback, complaints, compliments and our Survivor Voice Advisory Group, and then we used that learning to make practical changes.**

**You said access matters.** All community-based participants said accessing support was easy, with 92% describing it as very easy. In refuge, 79% said access to safe accommodation was easy or very easy, with survivors highlighting the speed of response, warmth and welcome they received.

**We did more to make support easier to understand.** Survivors told us some agencies do not explain refuge or community-based support clearly, increasing anxiety and uncertainty. We are developing awareness videos, strengthening work with police and partners, and producing visual storybooks so children can better understand what refuge is and what to expect.

**You said being believed changes everything.** In community-based services, 100% of participants said they felt safe, listened to and believed, and that their choices were respected. One survivor said, *"My support worker always believed and validated my experiences."* Another said, *"I was respected with every choice I wanted to make."*

**We listened to what still feels unsafe.** In refuge, 94% of participants said they felt safe, but some highlighted practical barriers, including older children who could not or did not want to access refuge, pets they could not bring, and uncertainty about family life in refuge. These voices will continue to shape our dispersed and refuge accommodation services.

**You said support helped you feel safer and more in control.** Community-based participants reported improved safety, emotional wellbeing, decision making, understanding of rights and options, coping strategies and daily functioning. People told us they felt calmer, safer, more confident and more able to manage practical issues such as moving home and debt.

**You said refuge helped rebuild lives.** Residents described growing confidence, independence, self-esteem and stronger relationships with their children. Their words say it best: *"I was so scared. I am now fearless"*; *"I now know I am not to blame and I didn't deserve it"*; and *"I am safe for the first time."*




**You said what matters is kindness, tenacity and practical help.** One participant told us: *"You need somebody who provides gentle solutions, practical solutions and keeps showing up for you."* That is the standard survivors tell us they value, and the practice we continue to build around.

The impact is clear. When survivors are listened to, support becomes safer, clearer and more responsive. People told us they felt believed, calmer, more confident, better able to make choices, and safer in their homes, communities and relationships. Their feedback has not sat on a page; it has shaped how we explain support, how we work with partners, how we respond to barriers, and how we keep improving the help children, families and survivors receive.

# Empower women

## Finding hope beyond domestic abuse




*"Abuse does not define who you are, and it does not have to define the rest of your life."*

Domestic abuse can take away confidence, independence, relationships and, over time, a sense of who you are. But with the right support, victim-survivors can rebuild, find their voice and begin to imagine a future beyond abuse.

For 35-year-old Abbie, that journey has taken her from surviving domestic abuse as a young mother to building a life she is proud of and now using her experience to support other women through volunteering at Stop Domestic Abuse.

### Abbie's journey

At 18, Abbie believed she had fallen in love. Over time, her relationship became increasingly controlling and isolating, with constant calls and messages and restrictions on who she could see. At the time, she did not recognise these behaviours as domestic abuse.

At 19, while pregnant with her daughter, Abbie experienced a terrifying incident of physical abuse that became a turning point.

> *"I thought I was going to die."*

Abbie wanted to create a safe future for herself and her daughter. When her partner was sent to prison, she finally had the opportunity to begin rebuilding her life.

At the time, Abbie was not aware of specialist domestic abuse services. She was fortunate to have family support and later attended a community group for young mothers, where she experienced the importance of being heard.

> *"It was so refreshing being listened to without judgement and knowing that people believed me. For the first time, I didn't feel like I had to explain or justify what had happened to me."*

For Abbie, rebuilding meant reconnecting with family and friends, returning to work and going on to study for an Open University degree. She built a career with Hampshire Constabulary, became a mother of two and found a healthy relationship built on love and respect.

Most importantly, she rediscovered her independence and learned that her past did not have to define her future.

> *"Hope means knowing that my past doesn't define my future. It means waking up every day feeling safe, loved and free to make my own choices."*

Today, Abbie volunteers with Stop Domestic Abuse, supporting women through the court process. Having experienced how frightening and overwhelming the journey can be, she understands how important it is to have someone alongside you who listens, believes you and helps you understand your choices.

> *"I know how frightening and lonely domestic abuse can be. If sharing my experience or standing beside another woman helps them feel less alone, then everything I've been through can have purpose."*

For Abbie, volunteering has also given her the opportunity to see her own journey differently.

> *"Instead of seeing myself as a victim, I now see myself as someone who survived and can help others find their own strength."*

### Supporting women to rebuild

Abbie's story reflects why specialist domestic abuse support is so important. Asking for help can be difficult. People may not recognise their experiences as abuse, may feel isolated or may be unsure what options are available.

We provide a range of specialist support to help people experiencing domestic abuse feel safer, understand their options and regain control of their lives. This can include emotional and practical support, safety planning, advocacy, support through the criminal and family justice systems, and specialist support for children and young people.

Her message to other women experiencing domestic abuse is simple:

> *"No matter how trapped or hopeless you feel, there is a way forward. Abuse does not define who you are, and it does not have to define the rest of your life. You deserve to feel safe, respected and loved."*

# Provide **services**

## That reduce or eradicate domestic abuse

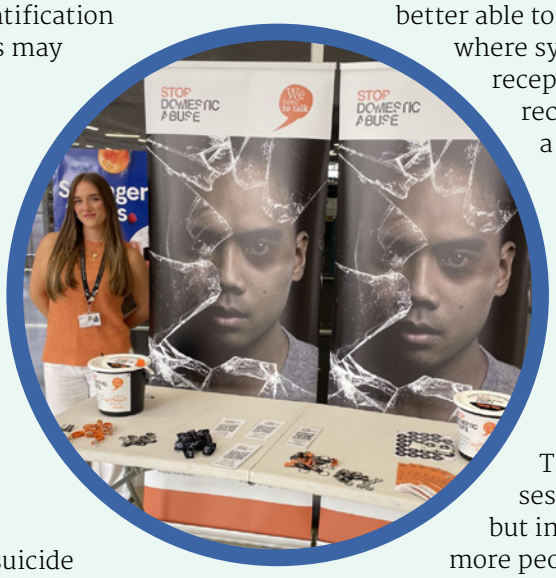
**Building communities that can recognise and respond to domestic abuse**

Domestic abuse cannot be reduced by specialist services alone. It takes communities, public services, voluntary organisations, workplaces, schools, colleges, health teams, housing providers and police colleagues who can recognise abuse, respond safely and help people reach the right support earlier. In 2025/26, Stop Domestic Abuse continued to build that wider network of awareness, confidence and action across Hampshire, Portsmouth, Southampton and the Isle of Wight.

Over the year, we delivered training, learning and awareness sessions and events to over 3,500 members of the public and professionals. This included frontline health staff, police, housing teams, safeguarding partners, schools and colleges, community organisations, primary care, social care, mental health services, probation, councils and voluntary sector partners. These figures show the breadth of our work, but the real impact is in what that reach makes possible: more people able to notice the signs of abuse, ask safer questions, respond without judgement and connect victim-survivors to specialist help.

Our work with professionals focuses on practical confidence, not abstract awareness. We supported emergency department staff, junior doctors, midwives, health visitors, physiotherapists, paediatric teams and primary care colleagues to understand how domestic abuse may present in health settings, how trauma can affect disclosure, and how a calm, informed response can improve safety. Across the year, our health-focused sessions alone reached hundreds of professionals, strengthening the opportunities for earlier identification in places where victim-survivors may already be seeking help.

We also worked with police, housing teams, safeguarding partnerships, colleges, schools and local authorities to strengthen shared language and safer pathways. Sessions on DASH (Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Harrassment) risk assessment, coercive control, post-separation abuse, economic abuse, adolescent-to-parent abuse, male victims, LGBTQ+ relationships, children and young people, stalking and suicide helped partners understand risk in a more holistic way. This matters because domestic abuse rarely sits neatly within one service: it is seen in housing need, mental health distress, school concerns, child safeguarding, workplace absence, repeat police callouts and health appointments.




Community building is central to this work. We delivered Domestic Abuse Ambassador and Champion sessions to partners including Ambition Portsmouth, Recovery Connect, primary care and housing colleagues, helping people become informed points of contact within their own settings. We also reached students, teachers, safeguarding staff, volunteers and community-facing teams, recognising that prevention depends on everyday people feeling able to name abuse, challenge harmful attitudes and respond safely when someone reaches out.

The feedback shows why this matters. Participants told us they felt more confident asking about abuse, better able to spot subtle changes in behaviour, and clearer about how to signpost people to the right support.

*"I have learned to take disclosures seriously and remember that victim-survivors may minimise risk."* – Community Ambassador

*"I feel better equipped to help someone experiencing domestic abuse and provide appropriate signposting."* – Housing Advocate, Champion Training Attendee

Looking back, 2025/26 was a year of strengthening the protective network around victim-survivors and their families. Every professional trained, every community member reached and every partnership conversation helped move domestic abuse from something hidden behind closed doors to something communities are better able to notice, name and respond to. This is where system change begins: in the moment a receptionist asks a safer question, a teacher recognises a child's distress differently, a housing officer understands coercive control, or a health professional knows how to respond without judgement.

By building informed communities around victim-survivors, Stop Domestic Abuse is helping to create earlier routes to safety, reduce isolation and strengthen the confidence of the whole local system. The impact is not only measured in sessions delivered or people reached, but in the safer responses that follow: more people believed, more risks recognised, more families connected to support, and more responsibility shared by the community around them.

# Be a sustainable **organisation**

## Adapting our services to meet changing needs.

**For Stop Domestic Abuse, sustainability means building services that can withstand pressure, respond to changing need and continue to offer safety, choice and dignity to victim-survivors long into the future.**

Victim-survivors are presenting with increasingly diverse and complex needs, shaped by housing instability, financial hardship, disability, mental health, substance use, immigration barriers, family circumstances and the ongoing risks that often increase when someone is preparing to leave abuse. In this context, a sustainable organisation cannot stand still. It must be able to evolve its models of support so that more people can access safety in a way that works for them.

Our growing dispersed accommodation portfolio is a clear example of this adaptability in action. We now have access to 14 owned or leased self-contained properties with five more in the pipeline, providing safe, secure and confidential accommodation for victim-survivors who need crisis accommodation but for whom communal refuge is not the right or safest option. This includes male victims, including men with children; women with older male children; LGBTQ+ victim-survivors; older adults; disabled victim-survivors; larger families; people with pets; victim-survivors experiencing multiple disadvantages; and people from diverse ethnic backgrounds who may face cultural barriers to accessing traditional provision.

Dispersed accommodation strengthens our ability to provide the right support, in the right setting, at the right time. Each property offers a self-contained home in the community, without shared or communal spaces, while specialist domestic abuse support is delivered at a level comparable to refuge. Support is flexible and shaped around individual need, including safety planning, risk management, emotional recovery, housing options, budgeting, parenting, rebuilding support networks and planning for move-on. For many victim-survivors, this model removes barriers that may otherwise prevent them from accessing accommodation-based support at all.

It also supports the wider sustainability of our safe accommodation offer. A mixed accommodation portfolio gives Stop Domestic Abuse greater resilience and flexibility, helping us respond to changing patterns of demand and make better use of available provision across refuge and dispersed accommodation. It enables us to offer more tailored pathways, improve access for those historically excluded from communal refuge, and strengthen our commissioning opportunities by demonstrating that specialist domestic abuse accommodation can be both survivor-centred and responsive to system pressures.

The impact is seen in the experiences of people using the service.

*"Accommodation has been incredible and truly bought feelings of security. Support workers have been excellent. Truly made voices heard, understood and have helped me become more knowledgeable. My self-esteem has massively improved."* - James (male victim-survivor with dependent children)

*"The support I have received while using this service has been incredible. My keyworker has never faulted checking in with me every day and supported me with every assessment and appointment. I really feel ready to move on now. I will always be grateful to the service especially to my keyworker. A lovely, kind, patient woman."* - Alice (referred to this service by a Stop Domestic Abuse Housing Advocate)

*"I don't know what I would have done without this service. I am extremely grateful and think the service is excellent, especially my key worker"* - Louise (needed accessible accommodation to meet her physical health needs)

Looking ahead, dispersed accommodation will remain an important part of our future readiness. As need continues to evolve, we will keep learning from survivor feedback, service data and partner insight to refine the model and ensure it remains safe, inclusive and effective. By investing in accommodation that reflects the realities of survivors' lives, Stop Domestic Abuse is not simply responding to today's pressures; we are building a stronger, more adaptable organisation for the future.

**Our dispersed accommodation portfolio demonstrates what sustainability means in practice: services that are stable enough to endure, flexible enough to adapt, and ambitious enough to drive change for the people who need us most.**

# A community of support

## Every step we have taken this year has been made possible thanks to our funding partners, commissioners and amazing community supporters.

**We are deeply grateful to our commissioners, partners, funders, community groups, businesses and individual donors, including those who have chosen to support us through gifts in memory, legacies, or anonymous donations. Your generosity helps sustain our services and sends a clear message to those experiencing domestic abuse that support is available and that they do not have to face their journey alone.**

### Grant Funders

Our funding partners and commissioners help sustain vital support programmes for victims, survivors and perpetrators of domestic abuse. Our local authority partners at Hampshire County Council, Portsmouth City Council, Southampton City Council, Gosport Borough Council, Havant Borough Council, Basingstoke and Deane Council and East Hampshire District Council, together with the Police and Crime Commissioner for Hampshire & Isle of Wight have enabled us to deliver inclusive, innovative projects to our clients.

Thanks to funding from National Lottery Community Fund, NatWest Circle Fund, Family Action Trust Grant, Hampshire County Council's connect4communities, The Big Give, Comserv, Unite the Union, John Lewis Partnership, The Clothworkers' Foundation and Holybourne Complin Trust, we have been able to provide additional support services for adults and children affected by domestic abuse






## Our community supporters

**Community-based fundraising efforts, alongside donations of essential items such as toiletries, new clothing and bedding, make a significant difference to the lives of our refuge residents.**

During the year, we were delighted to receive financial and in-kind support from so many generous schools, churches, community groups and local businesses including Amber's Hampers, Comfort and Joy Church, St Luke and St Peter's Church, Gosport Masonic Lodge, Parish of Warblington & Emsworth, Co-operative Group, Alresford Show, Basingstoke Lions, Cosham Inner Wheel, Havant United Reformed Church, Parish of The Resurrection Alton, Alresford Church, Citibank and Cala Homes Southern.

We would like to particularly thank our London Marathon runners, whose months of training and miles covered raised vital funds and helped increase awareness of our work.








## Volunteers and Community Ambassadors

From supporting group sessions to providing hairdressing services and holistic therapy, our volunteers and community partners have played a vital role in enhancing wellbeing, building confidence and creating positive experiences for the women and children we work with.

Our corporate volunteers were busy this year with several garden and living space makeovers being carried out across our refuge accommodations. A special thanks to Handelsbanken, Zurich, HeroUK, KidsOut, Comserv, Ageas, Exertis UK and Simply Health.

To all those who have supported us throughout the year, thank you. Whether through fundraising, donations, volunteering, advocacy, signposting or helping to raise awareness, your contribution has enabled us to continue supporting women and children when they needed us most.

We would like to give special thanks to the survivors who have shared their experiences, insights and expertise with us. Whether by contributing to service development, informing our campaigns and policy work, supporting fundraising initiatives or helping us better understand the needs of those we serve, your voices continue to shape and strengthen our work.

Together, your support brings us closer to a future where everyone can live free from domestic abuse. Thank you for being part of that journey.

# In the Media

Help us talk.
Help us break the silence.
Help us Stop Domestic Abuse.

## Many victims of domestic abuse remain silent, so we must be their voice.

### Stop Domestic Abuse in action

**At Stop Domestic Abuse, we aim to reach a wide audience and have a strong presence both online and offline across television, print, radio and social media. We campaign for policy change, speak at conferences, present at events and deliver training to community groups and professionals.**

**Each year our colleagues are invited by the media to offer their expertise on high profile topics surrounding domestic abuse and stalking. This year was no different with radio talks, TV interviews and our specialist knowledge informing documentaries.**

This has included: meeting with No.10's VAWG (Violence Against Women & Girls) Advisors; discussing the heightened risk of domestic abuse during festive periods with ITV Meridian; responding to new legal protections for cohabiting couples experiencing domestic abuse; celebrating two years of our Stalking Advocacy and Support Service; speaking with BBC Radio Solent to raise awareness of domestic abuse and how to seek help; and talking to Greatest Hits Radio about the increase of younger victims of domestic abuse and suicidal ideation. Also attending the House of Lords to mark the significant milestone of achieving a statutory definition of Honour Based Abuse, continuing to share our expert knowledge on domestic abuse to educate and raise awareness of the impact it is having on our communities.

And we continue to learn and expand our own knowledge, attending the Women's Aid annual conference, keeping abreast of changes to legislation and innovation, working with professionals and partners and most importantly learning from Survivor Voice experience events.






### Raising awareness

The United Nation's International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women & Girls, and White Ribbon Day are both on 25th November and mark the start of 16 days of activism. We mark this annually by hosting a variety of awareness raising events across Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton until the campaign ends on Human Rights Day (December 10th).

This year, we campaigned for Children and Young People as Victims in Their Own Right, shining a light on the experiences of children and young people living with domestic abuse, whose voices are too often unseen, unheard, or misunderstood.

As part of the campaign, we encouraged young people to become Youth Ambassadors, supporting awareness raising activities and engaging with them through information stalls at local colleges. We also showcased children's artwork, providing a powerful and creative platform for self-expression and helping to communicate the impact of domestic abuse through their own perspectives. These activities not only raised awareness but also empowered young people to share their experiences, challenge stigma, and become advocates for change within their communities.

# New Refuge **Appeal**

## Help us raise the final £225,000 needed to open our new refuge

**This year we were delighted to have secured enough funding to finally break ground on our urgently needed new refuge in Havant. The nine additional rooms will go some way to address the shortfall in refuge spaces for women who desperately need to find sanctuary.**

This will be our first purpose-built refuge, meaning we've been able to incorporate our experience of providing refuge along with the features our clients have told us are most important to their recovery, to create a nurturing and healing space.

We hope the build will be completed by January 2027, but we still need to raise a further £225,000 to transform the space from a shell into a safe, welcoming home for women and children fleeing domestic abuse.

With your help to raise the final funding, we can open our doors to nine women and their children in July 2027 so they can begin to heal and rebuild their lives.

£225,000 will enable us to furnish nine self-contained units, including two wheelchair-accessible rooms, to create a warm and calm private space that each family can call their own until they are ready to move on. The funding will also ensure the central living space, garden and children's playground are safe, inviting and inclusive spaces where residents can come together to support each other, relax and play.

*"When you come into refuge, you are quite broken as a person and you really need nurturing and support to feel yourself again. It gives you a second chance to live"* – Zoe, victim-survivor.

*"Everyone at school thought I was naughty. I was just so tired. I couldn't sleep at home. Now I'm at refuge I sleep better. Everything is better and I really like my new school."* - Josh, aged 10

We want to be able to provide every woman fleeing domestic abuse with the nurturing and practical support she and her children need to heal and rebuild their lives. The new refuge will provide a temporary home for nine families at a time. Over the next decade, the refuge will enable us to provide timely, life-saving support for around 180 women and their children.

### Scan the QR code to donate now.

**Or email: changemaker@stopdomesticabuse.uk**



# a world without domestic abuse.

## Advice line: 0330 0533 630

**Always dial 999 if you are in immediate danger or in an emergency.**

# STOP DOMESTIC ABUSE

We need to talk

Call us on: 023 9200 8329
email: info@stopdomesticabuse.uk

Stop Domestic Abuse supports and protects victims and survivors of domestic abuse. We provide a range of flexible and accessible services across Hampshire to anyone affected by domestic abuse, including perpetrators. Our vision is a world without domestic abuse. We work in partnership with other service providers, commissioners, the police and our local community to tackle domestic abuse and stalking. Stop Domestic Abuse is the commissioned service provider for domestic abuse services throughout Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton..

Stop Domestic Abuse delivers the Police & Crime Commissioner's Stalking Advocacy & Support Service across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight.

**Stop Domestic Abuse is the trading name of Southern Domestic Abuse Service. Registered Charity Number 1146773.**

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