




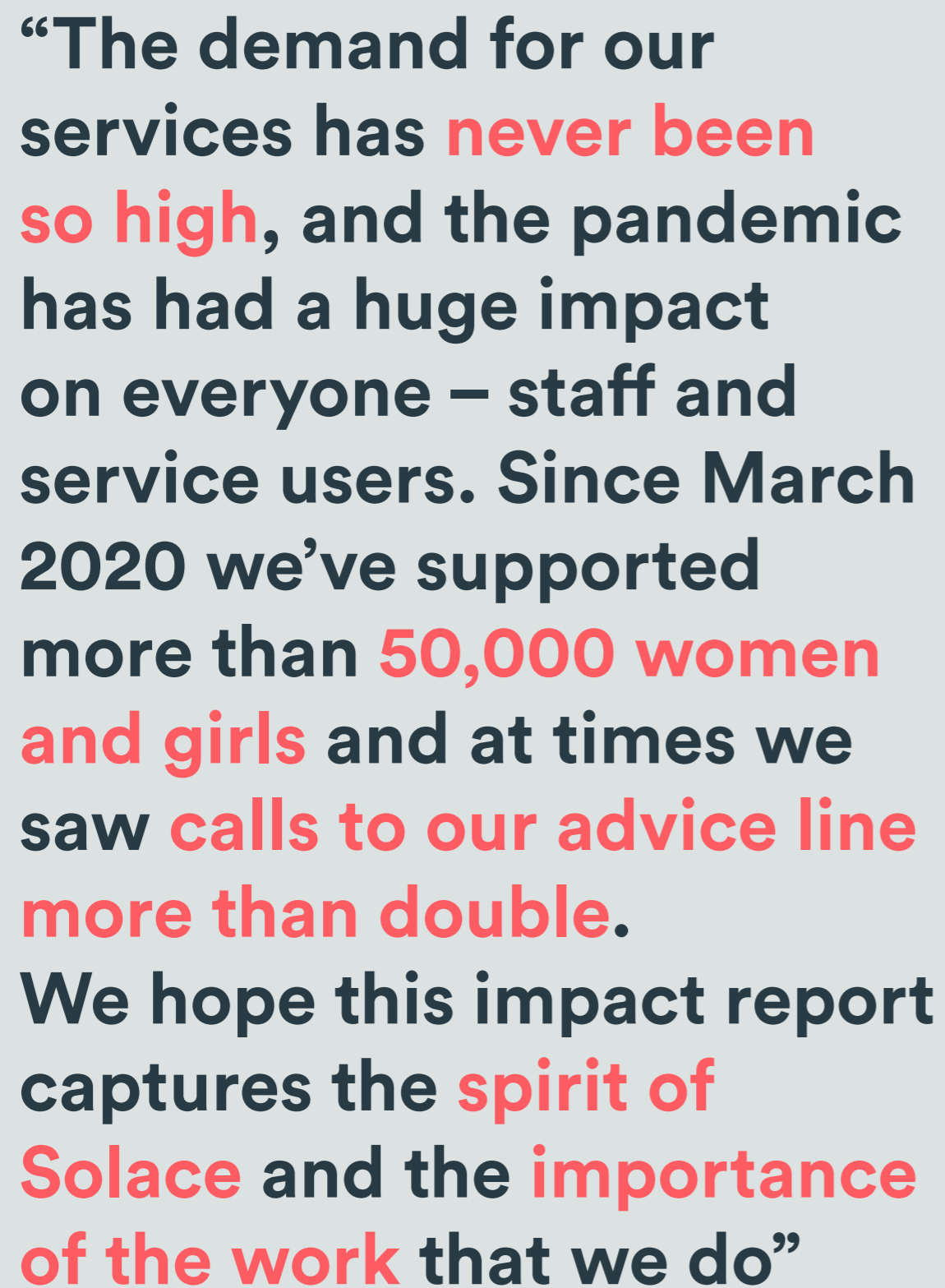
solace

Impact Report 2022

solacewomensaid.org

Solace Women's Aid is a charity registered in England & Wales.
Charity Number 1082450. Company Number 3376716.

@SolaceWomensAid   



“The demand for our services has **never been so high**, and the pandemic has had a huge impact on everyone – staff and service users. Since March 2020 we’ve supported more than **50,000 women and girls** and at times we saw **calls to our advice line more than double**. We hope this impact report captures the **spirit of Solace** and the **importance of the work that we do**”

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“ When I fled abuse... Solace stepped in to help exactly when I needed them ,,”
(A Survivor)

Solace's vision is of a world where women and children live their lives free from all forms of male violence against women and girls (MVAWG).

A message from our Chair and CEO

This past year was a time of remarkable challenges, change, organisational reflection, as well as achievements.

Our incredible staff managed to support **29,205** women, children, and non-binary people. On top of this, our fantastic national project, The Labyrinth, worked with **327** wonderful women's organisations and supported a further **14,557** women, meaning in total we reached **43,762** people. This is the time to say a huge thank you to our staff and partners as we are all committed to providing creative and safe services for those we support. We never forget that male violence against women and children can have long term adverse impacts and our vital and lifesaving services have never been more needed.

As a leadership team, we cannot reflect on this year without recognising it has now been a year since some colleagues and former colleagues raised concerns about racism at Solace. We are firmly committed to rebuilding trust with our staff and becoming an anti-racist organisation. We recognise that this will be an ongoing journey and it is not over and is something we will need to continually work on. We are totally committed to doing this work.

We have created an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) action plan, together with employees, volunteers and trustees, which has been a key milestone for us in the last year. We are committed to ensuring that our beneficiaries who access our services experience the same values that we uphold within the charity. You can read more here bit.ly/EDIActionPlan

Other challenges, like many other charities, include a demanding financial environment, high staff turnover, difficulties with recruitment and, most challenging of all, government contracts which fail to provide full cost recovery.

During the year we launched:

- Our powerful new charity film, showcasing our services and demonstrating how they change the lives of women and children bit.ly/CharityFilmSolace
- Solace Futures is our five-year strategy to shape our work and steer Solace into an exciting and brave new future bit.ly/SolaceFutures
- Freya our Virtual Assistant providing advice and support twenty-four hours a day bit.ly/SolaceFreya

2021-22 also saw a significant political and public focus on issues relating to violence against women and girls, following the increased prevalence of domestic abuse during the pandemic and the recent tragic femicides including Sarah Everard, Bibaa Henry, Nicole Smallman and Sabina Nessa. In our new public affairs function, we sought to ensure that the voice of the survivors we support, and our frontline workers were represented in key developments around the response to MVAWG, particularly around housing and the criminal justice process.

The environment remains extremely challenging in terms of balancing increasing demand for our work against a lack of funding for these vital services. We look to the Government to recognise the value of the specialist Male Violence Against Women's and Girls sector and commit to investing in the safety and wellbeing of women and children.



Kirsty Telford
Interim Chair

KTelford



Judith Banjoko
Interim CEO

JABanjoko

Our year at a glance.

Our services touched the lives of 29,205 people

We supported 14,465 adults and children in our frontline services

We worked with 14,740 people in our prevention services

We provided safe refuge accommodation for 1,049 women & children across our 22 refuges

We grew our income to 16.4 million

We worked in partnership with 42 organisations across London

Our team of 300 Staff make our work possible

We trained 2,063 people to recognise and respond to abuse

Volunteers gave 4,588 hours that made all the difference

97% reported that the service met or exceeded their expectations

69% of service users said that the service helped them to feel safer

93% of service users rated Solace services as excellent or good



Service User Feedback

We measure our success annually via our service user survey, exit questionnaires and analysis of the impact of our services through outcomes achieved with our service users. Successful outcomes are demonstrated through increased autonomy, independence and capability, better mental health and self-care, and better parenting and relationships with children.

97%

rated there was a continued need for Solace services (2021: 93%)

97%

rated the service met or exceeded their expectation (2021: 88%)

93%

rated the service as good or excellent (2021: 88%)

Marta was trafficked at a young age, and she had no known family. Since being in the UK she has been exploited and abused by a number of men. There is a history of men “taking care of her”, which has left her feeling she is not able to live alone.

In her most recent relationship Marta has been sexually abused and forced to have sex against her will. She has been stalked, she has experienced economic abuse, been told not to take medication for her mental health, and has also experienced coercive control.

We asked what she would say to someone in a similar situation of violence or abuse? She said;

“ Give Solace a call, speak to them and be honest with them. They won’t judge you. They will try to find a way to help ”
(A Survivor)



Solace Futures Strategy

Solace Futures is designed to deliver our strategic vision for the next five years. We are building on Solace’s 48 years of providing specialist, holistic support services for women and children. We are ambitious and want to drive change at every level to ensure that everyone lives healthy lives free from violence, abuse, and exploitation.

We will work together with our service users, staff, volunteers, and the wider world to make a tangible difference to women and children’s lives, both individually and collectively, as a movement of women committed to jointly ending male violence against us.

We shall create lives based on our right to safety and freedom from oppression for all women, ensuring we can equally contribute to social justice and have respect for cultural understanding.

As we have grown as an organisation, we have become more visionary about what we want to do to support survivors of all forms of violence and abuse. We have diversified and strengthened our services to provide holistic support packages to women, children and men who need them. We have started to strengthen and build on our existing partnerships and develop our influencing work at all levels – amplifying the voices of the more than 20,000 women we work with each year.

To read more about our future, click here bit.ly/SolaceFutures



Our Plans for the Future

During the development of our new strategy, the Covid-19 Pandemic and all its devastating impacts started to change the way that we work and deliver services. At the same time, as an organisation working intersectionally, we took time to review our approach to our feminism in light of the Black Lives Matter movement and providing support to trans women, as well as focussing on other areas including disability and class.

Our new focus will offer:

- Services to male victim/survivors and to perpetrators of domestic abuse who wish to change their behaviour.
- Develop a strong and healthy workforce.
- Acquire our trauma informed quality mark and run services that are healthy, mindful and reflective.

Staff safety (psychological and physical) and wellbeing is the number one priority for the senior management team and the Trustees coming out of last year, and particularly for Black and Minoritised staff.

As well as being key to living our values as an organisation, staff wellbeing and empowerment is crucial to fostering the right environment to enable the best outcomes for the women and children we work with.

In the coming year, we will continue to work with partners to ensure that our services are accessible to all women. Intersectionality is a key principle of the work that we do at Solace, and we will recognise the multiple and intersecting barriers that women face.

We will continue to implement a business development programme which will support income generation and strengthening our reserves, with the goal to achieve our target reserve levels of £2.2million which will enable us to meet the varied needs of our service users, staff, and volunteers at Solace. In conjunction, we will support the organisation's growth by strengthening core services and improving our digital offerings in our services.

We will create a safe, supportive, compassionate, proactive and inclusive work place, ensuring that we have a framework and language that reflects on our purpose, mission and values



We have bold ambitions for change, with a focus on equity, diversity and inclusion

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion

Solace is committed as an organisation to living our values on equity, diversity, and inclusion in all aspects of our work and service provision. Solace understands its responsibilities for everyone to feel supported and live our values of intersectionality and inclusion at all levels.

Our Journey to Become Actively Inclusive

We have engaged with our staff teams and reflected as an organisation on the need to become an actively inclusive organisation. The creation of an EDI action plan together with employees, volunteers and trustees has been a key milestone for us in the last year. We are committed to ensuring that our beneficiaries who access our services experience the same values that we uphold within the charity.

Our EDI plan is a living document and we have determined it shall remain the driver of all that we do to meet the challenges of enhancing equity and fairness across our charity.

The 2021-22 plan sets out the actions we have taken across the core areas through which we will make tangible changes, and on which we will build each year:

- Our leadership and governance
- Our people
- Our services
- Our partnerships
- Our communications and campaigns.



Public Affairs

Our new public affairs function seeks to ensure that key decisions in Westminster and London are influenced by the survivors we support.

2021-22 saw a significant political and public focus on the issues relating to MVAWG following the increased prevalence of domestic abuse during the pandemic, and the recent tragic femicides including Sarah Everard, Bibaa Henry, Nicole Smallman and Sabina Nessa.

The year also saw the passing of the landmark Domestic Abuse Act in May 2021. The Government launched a new MVAWG Strategy, which introduced a National Policing Lead for MVAWG, and committed to MVAWG being a priority in its first ever Women's Health Strategy.

We sought to ensure that the voices of survivors and our frontline workers were represented in key developments in the response to MVAWG, particularly around housing and the criminal justice process.

As the provider of the largest crisis accommodation for domestic abuse survivors during the pandemic, we felt it was crucial to call for the inclusion of their voices in the Government's upcoming covid-19 inquiry and submitted evidence to recommend this.

In London, we saw a new Mayoral term start and ahead of this we set out our priorities for the new Mayor through our London Mayoral Election Pledge campaign, which focused on the need for action on housing, supporting migrant victims, sustainable funding, and our priorities for a new MVAWG strategy.

29
mentions in the UK Parliament and London Assembly

26
key stakeholders across the UK Government, UK Parliament, London Assembly and Metropolitan Police

17
consultation responses or written evidence we submitted



Our services are holistic, needs led and trauma informed

solace advice & support

Solace offers advice, crisis support and advocacy to survivors, helping them to rebuild their lives.

solace accommodation

Safe refuge and move-on accommodation is vital for women and children made homeless through domestic or sexual abuse.

solace therapeutic services

Our 1-1 counselling, group work and specialist holistic therapies help women recover after experiencing traumatic abuse.

solace rape crisis

Our rape crisis service offers a range of services to women and girls who have experienced any form of sexual violence at any time in their lives.

solace for young people

We deliver a range of services to children and young people, including prevention work, for families and young people living in the community.

solace multiple disadvantage

Specialist, tailored services for women with multiple disadvantages and special needs, including mental health needs and problematic substance use.

solace partnerships

Partnership working is central to our approach to provide a comprehensive range of specialist support to meet the needs of women and children.

solace training

Our expert training service works with organisations to improve their response to domestic and sexual abuse.

A safe place to start to recover.



Our specialist multiple disadvantage refuge in Camden offers 24-hour support to women with mental health needs and problematic substance use. We operate a specialist accommodation hub in Southwark for women with multiple disadvantages and special needs leaving prison or at risk of street homelessness.

We provide second stage dispersed accommodation and specialist support services across two projects with a total number of 19 flats: The Amari Project provides second stage accommodation for women who have been sexually exploited through prostitution or trafficking and the Rhea project provides immediate temporary, crisis emergency accommodation for women and children in Southwark.

Our Housing First Project in Islington, in partnership with Fulfilling Lives in Islington and Camden (FLIC), to support women with multiple disadvantages is the first project of its kind to be run by a specialist MVAWG provider whereby we

provide the specialist support to this group of women and FLIC allocates and manages the flats.

Since August 2019, we have also been running a Housing First Project in Westminster, funded by Westminster Council and in partnership with Standing Together.

Our skilled refuge teams manage 22 refuges offering 178 rooms across seven London boroughs for women and children fleeing abuse. Our supportive environment helps them to reach a place of safety and begin their recovery from their trauma and rebuild safe and independent lives. Within our accommodation services we provide women with support with their practical and emotional needs, including finances and welfare benefits, housing - especially move-on accommodation, legal matters, immigration issues, health, education, training and employment.

1,049
women supported

“ Because of the support from Solace, I was able to flee abuse and start afresh in a new home for myself ”
(A Survivor)

“ I am so happy to be able to live somewhere safe and free from threats and fear. My life has changed. I am no longer scared ”
(A Survivor)

“ I didn't know support like this existed. If I had known, I probably would have left years ago ”
(A Survivor)



Reaching more women in need.



Our work supports women who experience multiple disadvantages - those who face multiple and intersecting inequalities including gender-based violence and abuse, substance use, mental ill health, homelessness, being involved in the criminal justice system and the removal of children.

WiSER

The Women in Safe Engagement and Recovery (WiSER) project targets women who find it very hard to access/engage with support and who are facing severe and multiple disadvantages, delivered in partnership with

- Against Violence and Abuse (AVA)
- Fulfilling Lives Islington and Camden (FLIC)
- Hopscotch
- IMECE Women's Centre
- nia
- Women at the Well using assertive outreach in a trauma and psychologically informed way

Multiple Disadvantage outcomes:

51%

had accessed various health services and were better able to manage

“ Thank you (advocate) for supporting me... I am a free woman now. Thanks a lot for your effort. You're the person who gave me hope in life ”
(A Survivor)

6.4 months

is the average case length

Survivors story

RK was trafficked into the UK in 2003 after being forced into Modern Slavery in Uganda. Up until 2021 she was given the wrong legal advice from different sources and entered 3 + applications to the home office which were all rejected

She has a complex background including being convicted of fraud which led to a ten-month prison sentence.

During this time RK was referred to WiSER and supported to complete the correct asylum claim. She was also referred through the NRM on the basis of Modern Slavery.

In July 2021, the same police officer came to her accommodation to charge her with a further 5 counts of Fraud. This was a traumatic experience as RK did not trust the police and began to understand that this detective had a personal

vendetta. At this time RK had a first interview for her asylum claim, the date was moved to accommodate for this court case. RK was seen at Thames Magistrates Court in August 2021 where her solicitor asked the CPS to waive the 5 charges on the basis that she had already been given a sentence for these offences. The decision was to NFA the charges, but the case would lie on file. A reason for this was not given in court and RK was told that it may impact her immigration.

RK served her custodial sentence for her charges. It was not until August 2021 that she was able to put her experience of criminal justice system to the side to focus on her immigration situation and that there was a resolution. RK had legal support and was also supported to receive subsistence from the NRM & S95 for essentials. RK stated that she felt hope for the first time, as this had been hanging over her since 2020.

WiSER were able to:

- Link her up with an immigration solicitor and a criminal solicitor for her separate cases.
- Link her up with first responders for the NRM to start this application.
- Support her immigration appointments for her asylum claim including writing her witness statement.
- Support her to keep track of the network around her
- Support around finances and essentials while waiting for her subsistence.
- Support in applying for and communicating with the home office around her S95 subsistence.
- Support with accommodation
- Support her to be linked up with local services like food banks, grants for clothing items, a laptop for her to look at college courses.
- Support her with a year long gym membership which RK highlighted would support her mental health.



For survivors of sexual violence.



London Survivors Gateway is a partnership between the four London Rape Crisis Centres, of which Solace runs the North London service, along with Galop, SurvivorsUK and the Havens.

It is led by the Women and Girls' Network and Solace provides specialist complex needs support with our Independent Sexual Violence Advocate (ISVA) working with women with multiple and complex needs.

Our North London Rape Crisis team work with women and girls over the age of 13 who have experienced any form of sexual violence at any point in their lives. This includes child sexual abuse, recent and non-recent rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment, women involved in prostitution, trafficking, and female genital mutilation. North London Rape Crisis is part of the Pan-London Rape Crisis and Gateway service for survivors of Rape and Sexual Abuse working to ensure access to support is easily available across London.

Holistic Therapies

We run a variety of groups, well-being classes and one-to-one body therapies to help survivors' recovery from trauma. Our group work includes: Trauma Informed Yoga, Tension and Trauma Releasing Exercises, Lesbian and Bisexual Group, Creative Group, Psychoeducational Group, Quarterly Women's Group.

Our work with children and young people, from the age of 4 to 18, has trained art and drama therapists, who use art, drama and play to help explore their feelings around the violence they have experienced, understand that they are not to blame and rebuild vital relationships with their mother, carer, peers, and siblings. 100% of children and young people expressed that using creative mediums was most helpful and the most enjoyable part of the therapy process, which facilitated them processing and expressing feelings and memories that were hard to talk about.

North London Rape Crisis

78%
felt an increase in emotional and mental wellbeing

84%
had an increased understanding of survivors' rights and choices

The Rape Crisis service runs a free and anonymous helpline, open daily, to offer support as well as a regular caller service. The helpline provides specialist emotional support and confidential information about options and services available. The Rape Crisis Service co-locates ISVAs with partners including police and children's centres across Enfield, Haringey, Barnet, Islington, Camden, Westminster, and Kensington & Chelsea.

Specialist advocates, counsellors, group therapists and helpline workers provide non-directive emotional and practical support and information to help women understand the impact of abuse, recover from the trauma they have experienced, and - if a woman chooses - dedicated support through the Criminal Justice System, from report to court and afterwards. They also provide support and advice for the friends and family of survivors, as well as professionals working alongside them.

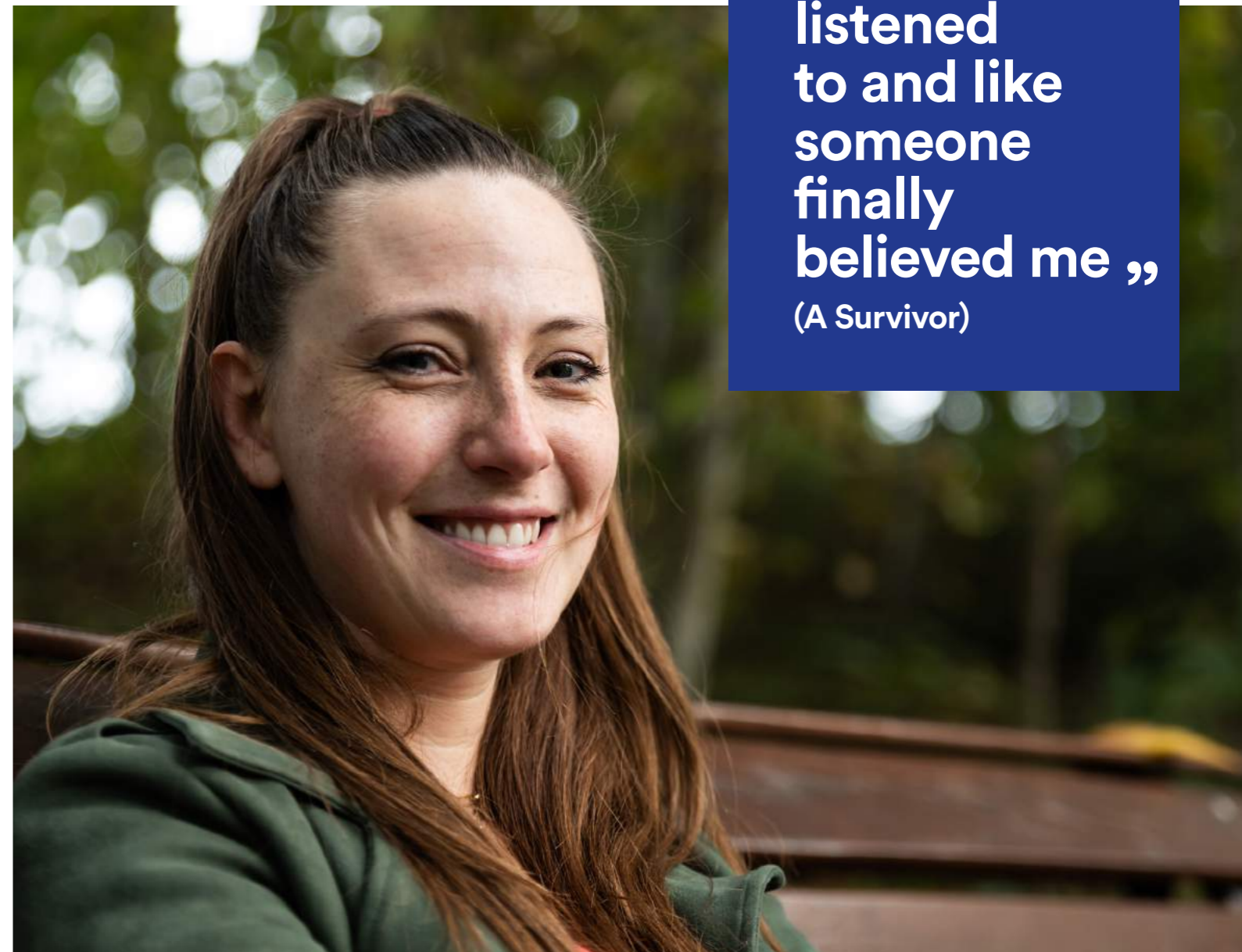
538
the number of service users

301
of these accessed rape crisis therapeutic services

17
of these accessed groups

1 in 4
have been raped or sexually assaulted as an adult

9,245
rapes were reported to the Met in the 12 months to March



**“I felt listened to and like someone finally believed me ,”
(A Survivor)**

Rebuilding lives in the community.

Advice

Solace's dedicated, confidential advice line provides a first point of call for survivors and is available five days a week including one evening. The Advice team take calls from individuals and agencies across London who are concerned about domestic and/or sexual abuse and provide immediate advice and short-term support on:

- safety planning
- legal rights and options
- housing advice, financial concerns
- immigration issues
- safeguarding and mental health issues
- referrals to specialist services

The advice line is part of one of two advice hubs in London within the Ascent Advice and Counselling partnership of 14 organisations, which is led by Solace.

Immigration Advice Service

Our Immigration service is an important part of our Advice Service and last year supported some of the most vulnerable women in London. We supported women with complex, insecure immigration status, and No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF). These women are much more vulnerable to be subject to continued exploitation and violence and are often frightened to seek support due to the risk of deportation. We work with women who are eligible to make applications under the Domestic Violence rule, under their human rights and EU regulations. We work with migrant women and EEA Nationals with NRPFs who have experienced domestic abuse and sexual violence, including; women exiting prostitution, sexually exploited and trafficked women, women who are at risk of homelessness or are homeless and women needing refuge accommodation and other community advocacy services.

Advocacy and Support

Our Advocacy and Support teams offer support to those affected by domestic and sexual violence in their community. Our teams supply information, advocacy, and specialist services – these can include:

- ongoing safety concerns
- emotional or housing support
- reporting to the police
- legal options and support through court
- help around child contact, benefits, and financial advice.

As well as providing direct assistance, we also work to build capacity and develop expertise amongst professionals and agencies.

We engage with professionals and community groups through a range of programmes - examples include:

- The Silver project
- The Irish Traveller project
- The Identification and Referral to Improve Safety (IRIS)
- Our Women's Resilience Awareness Project (WRAP)
- Southwark's Sanctuary Scheme

For more information, visit bit.ly/SolaceAdviceAndSupport

Advice, Advocacy and specialist services outcomes

10,689
women supported

97%
of those who accessed treatment support for Sexual Health, 97% were better able to manage it

92%
of DDVC (destitution of domestic violence concession) applications made were successful

3.1
months is the average case length throughout all community services, a decrease from 6 months last year



“ Give Solace a call, speak to them and be honest with them. They won't judge you. They will try to find a way to help ”
(A Survivor)

Futures free from abuse.



The POW Project

The 'Protect Our Women' project is a community-based programme for young people in primary and secondary schools aged 10-25 years in Haringey.

The programme engages young people in creative ways with a Champions programme supporting young people to take learning back into their communities.

Hear2Change (Women and Girls Initiative)

Funded by the Big Lottery, the Hear2Change project works with young people in schools and community settings across Haringey and Islington with the aim of changing attitudes to MVAWG.

The project is led by a steering group of young women.

Major Trauma Centre - in partnership with Redthread Youth Violence Intervention Programme

Solace, commissioned by The Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC), has teamed up with Redthread, a London-based youth violence charity, to allocate Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVAs) in London's four major trauma centres. Our IDVAs provide specialist support for young people aged 11 – 25 who are admitted into hospital due to domestic and/or sexual violence and abuse.

4,284

lives affected by talks and seminars in schools and seminars with young people

Young Change Makers

Our Young Change Maker group of young people has been set up to raise awareness of MVAWG through empowering them to present their experiences and ensure their voices are heard. This aims to equip young people with specific skills and introduce them to useful strategies (whilst building their confidence and knowledge) in order to design and deliver campaigns of their own. These will be presented in a variety of mediums of their choice (art, drama, music, photography, poetry) and a range of audiences and venues (schools, libraries, community facilities).

Lighthouse

We were part of the first innovative Child House pilots in the UK, bringing together statutory and voluntary sector partners to address Child Sexual Abuse. The Lighthouse is the UK's first Child House, a service where children are put at the centre and given the support they need to recover and rebuild their lives. Specially trained medical, advocacy, social care, police, and therapeutic support is delivered from one place, working together to provide a coordinated approach to supporting children and young people who have experienced sexual abuse. The project was led by University College Hospital and the NSPCC with Solace providing a vital role in the Advocacy team.

9,610

children and young people supported in the community

Children and Young People Outcomes:

We helped and supported 359 children and young people in our community services, helping to build their resilience and dealing with the impact of domestic violence.

Preventive strategies included workshops, talks and seminars with groups of young people in schools impacting 4,284 lives.

**“Feminism to me, is the courage to stand up for women’s rights ,”
(A Survivor)**

CouRAGEus

We have joined together with a number of partner organisations (led by Women and Girls Network) to support BAME children and young people across London. Solace provides a CYP counsellor, a multi-disadvantage advocate and a community engagement worker to provide support and therapy for CYP experiencing various forms of MVAWG as well as raising the profile of MVAWG with children and young people.

301

children and young people helped and supported in our community services



Our Feminist Activism.

International Women's Day

On International Women's Day we held a sell-out event at Rich Mix. This year's theme was Breaking The Bias, and we showcased an art exhibition from the women and children in our services as well as the launch of our charity film and our new five year strategy.

The main event of the evening was a panel discussion investigating rising reports of MVAWG and looking at ways we can all make London a safer city.

Led by journalist Zara Janjua, the panel of young female activists - Maya Tutton (Our Streets Now), Rehema Muthamia (Miss England) and Aliyah Ali (Daddyless

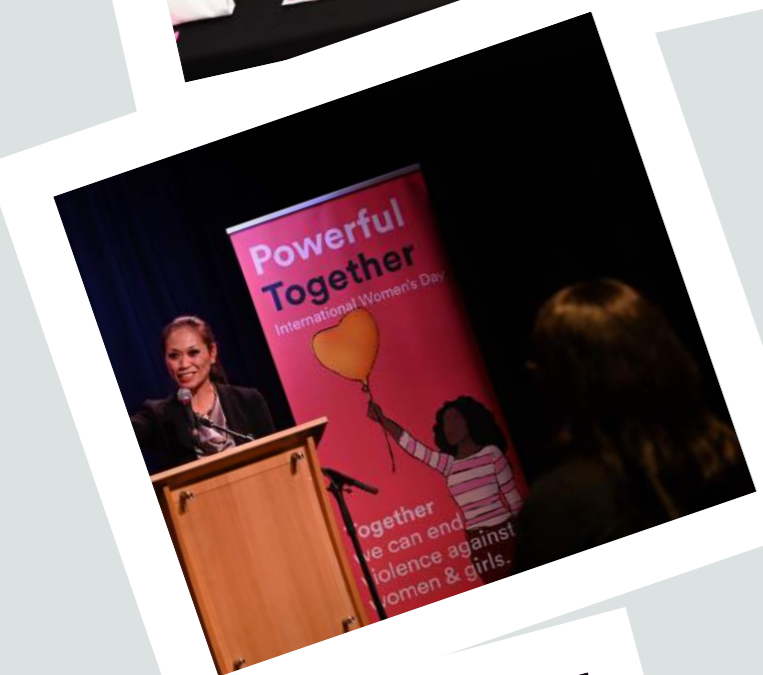
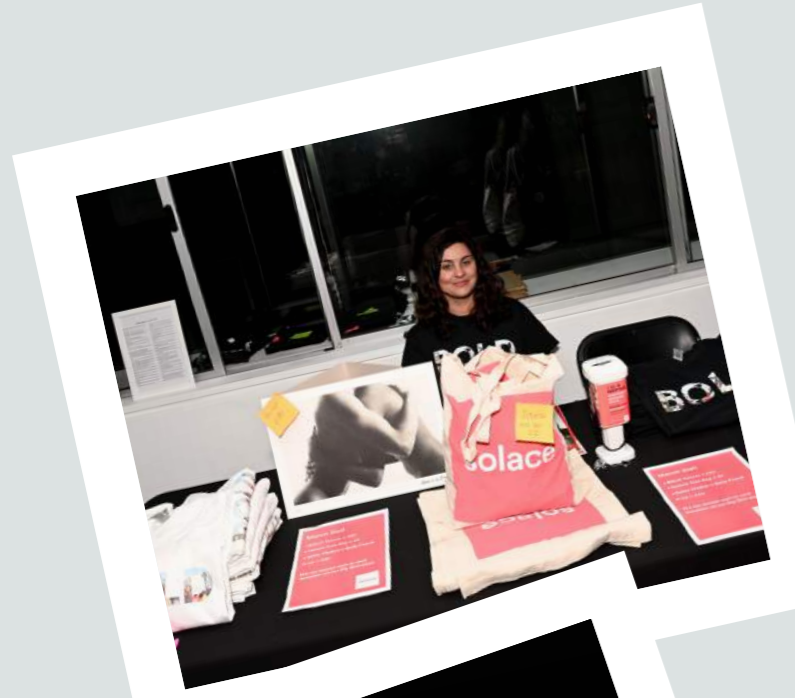
“The biggest, fiercest group of warriors you could really ever come across”
(A Survivor)

Daughters) - discussed a range of topics, from the rise in reporting of sexual assault and sexual harassment, to the impact of trauma on behaviour, the need for awareness raising across all areas such as healthcare, police and education. We all agreed that cultures and communities need to come together to support women and girls. The panel concluded that to make real change we all need to be less reactive and more reflective, and we need men as our allies to proactively help us and be part of the change.

Watch the recording of the event here bit.ly/SolacePowerfulTogetherIWD



#PowerfulTogether



Space to heal from Trauma.

Our therapeutic services implement a person-centred approach, which is a trauma informed and strength-based practice that supports the service user to make choices for themselves. It ensures the full recognition of intersectionality and life experiences and works within an anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive framework. The service supports women who have experienced domestic abuse and all forms of MVAWG with a view to provide support in the following areas:

- Address physical and emotional safety
- Increase awareness of abusive dynamics in relationships – vicious cycles of abuse
- Increase confidence, resilience, and a greater sense of wellbeing
- Manage post-traumatic stress and support the client in their recovery journey
- Empower survivors to explore options and choices

Counselling

The Solace Counselling team offers one-to-one counselling sessions to women, creating a safe space for them to explore the impact of violence on their lives. Experienced counsellors work with women to help them recover from the long-term impact of emotional and physical abuse. Our counselling services are delivered as part of the Ascent Advice and Counselling partnership as well as through separate contracts with Southwark, Waltham Forest, and Islington.

Ascent Counselling Service

Offers one-to-one counselling to victims/ survivors of domestic abuse and all forms of VAWG. The service covers one assessment and up to 15 counselling sessions. We also offer 6 sessions of pre-trial therapy. Solace offers this service in 11 London Boroughs (Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Greenwich, Hackney, Haringey, Havering, Islington, Lambeth, Newham, and Southwark).

7.7 months

average period of engagement

264

women supported

854

group sessions provided during the year

7,366

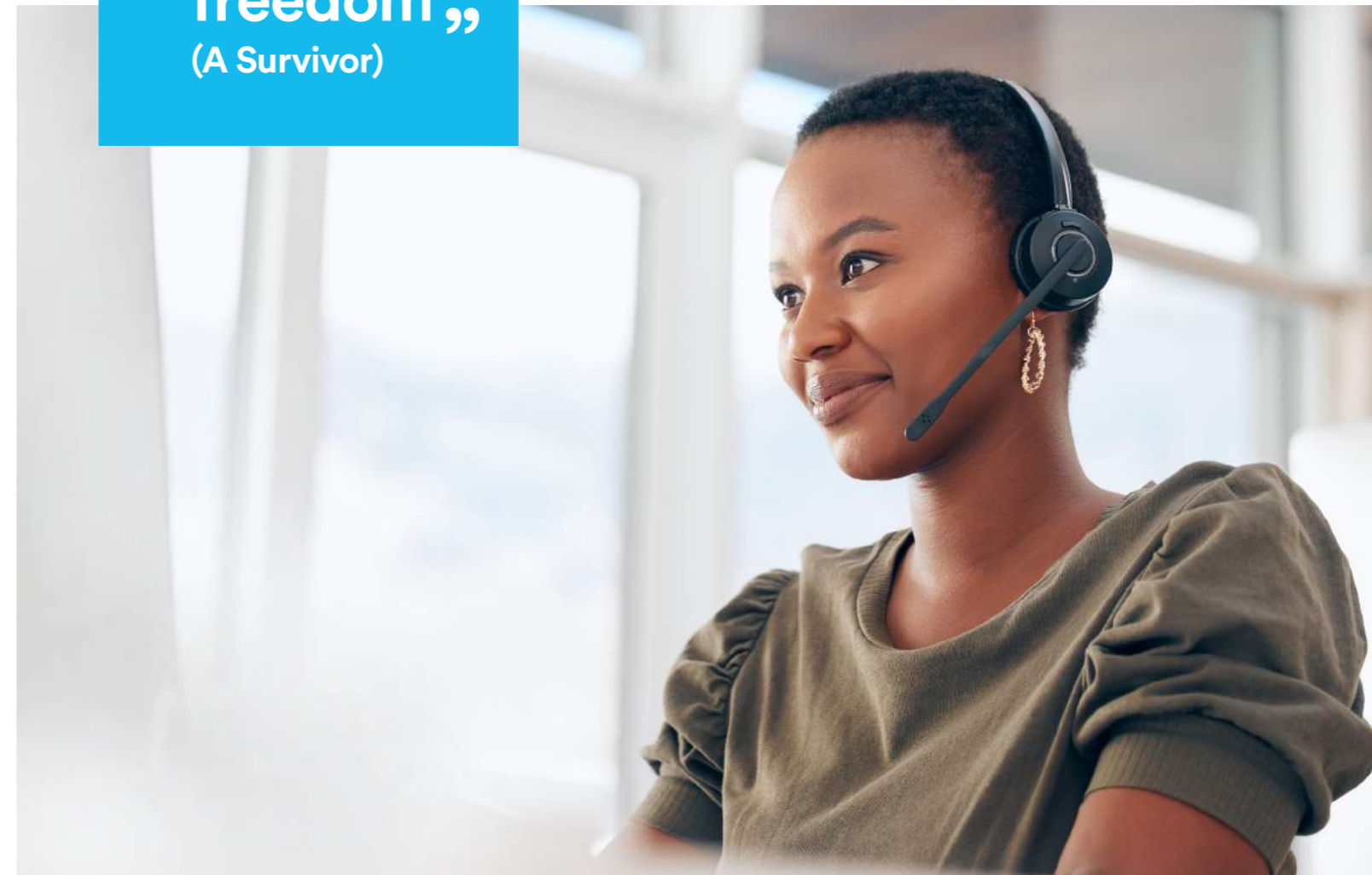
hours of support

“Solace helped me find freedom,”
(A Survivor)

Ascent Moving Forward

The Moving Forward Group is an 8-week educational programme for women aged 16+ who have experienced any form of domestic and/or sexual violence. These groups provide some first steps on the road to recovery from domestic and/or sexual abuse.

It is a safe space to talk, listen and be heard, while gaining emotional support. It gives women the opportunity to share experiences and information and explore and understand the impact of domestic violence and/or sexual abuse and the support to regain power and make positive choices.



In partnership we can do more.



Partnership working is central to our approach to providing a comprehensive range of specialist support that meets the needs of women and children.

Solace works in partnership with 42 other organisations in London and 14 across England, Scotland, and Northern Ireland.

The Ascent Advice and Counselling Partnership

The Ascent Advice and Counselling partnership is the largest specialist MVAWG service in London that works across multiple boroughs.



In 2021/22 the 14 specialist MVAWG organisations supported 6,215 new service users in reaching a place of safety and recovery. These services provide vital, and often life-saving services to women and girls.

During the year 2021/22 the partnership achieved:

14,000
individual counselling sessions

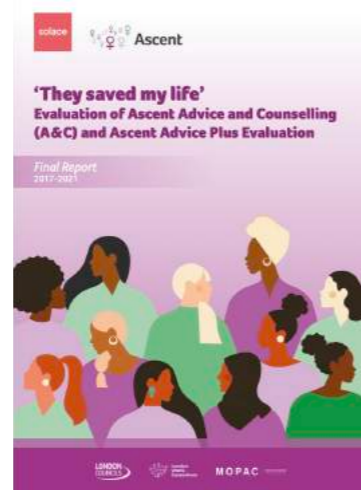
5,900
users provided with 1-1 advice, advocacy and casework support

934
women supported through the London Family Law Line
This led to:

3,504
women reporting improved self-esteem, motivation and confidence to rebuild their lives

3,053
people with protected characteristics being satisfied with the services they were provided

7,860
new users assisted to access advice, counselling and support



2,445
the number of group sessions

Read the full report here bit.ly/AscentEvaluation

Ascent Advice Plus



Since 2019, we have secured additional funding from MOPAC to increase capacity in the two advice hubs and advice casework within Ascent Advice and Counselling, expanding the London legal advice line and incorporate the expertise of four additional Equity & Diversity (E&D) partners that specialise in working with disabled, Deaf, and hearing-impaired women, women with learning disabilities and autism, and LBT+ women. The project allows for longer term support of up to 6 months for women to allow additional support for issues such as housing, immigration, and their mental health needs, recognising the increased complexity of women's lives when they reach us.

In 2021/22, the partnership supported:

2,085
supported through the East and West London hub

1,478
were supported by the London Family Law Line

665
were provided with specialist casework support

“ I was so tired of it all, and felt he was never going to leave us alone. I just wanted him to stop. I felt very depressed and anxious. The caseworkers from Solace were really kind and reassuring ”
(A Survivor)

The Women's Development Unit



In February 2021, Solace partnered with homelessness charity Connection at St Martin's to launch the Women's Development Unit, a collaborative project that works with women, services, and stakeholders across the capital to improve access to support services designed for their needs, helping them rebuild their lives from abuse, and supporting them out of homelessness.

In March 2022, the Women's Development Unit published its pan-London women's homelessness strategy, a culmination of its 12 months of evidence gathering and analysis from a wealth of organisations, as well as women with lived experience of homelessness. The development of the strategy was guided by a strategy group, which had 17 external members with key knowledge and influence across London, including London Councils, the Greater London Authority, MOPAC as well as representatives from London boroughs and the MVAWG and homelessness voluntary sectors. The new London-wide Strategy for Ending Women's Homelessness brings together recommendations about the specialist services we need to expand and the different ways we can offer support to women.

The project also sought to improve practice in services across the homelessness and MVAWG sector, as well as wider services. The project delivered two training packages to 209 professionals: Trauma Informed Approach to Supporting Homeless Women Experiencing Gender-Based Violence and Trauma Informed Approach to Supporting Homeless Mothers. The Project has also worked with expert practitioners to produce guidance on best practice on developing women's spaces within homelessness services.

Read the full report here bit.ly/WDUStrategy

In partnership we can do more.



Casa Project



Solace has continued to lead the Casa Project, a partnership within the London Violence against Women and Girls Consortium, which enables women to move on from refuges to high quality, self-contained accommodation with affordable rents, for up to 2 years. Specialist resettlement support is provided throughout the tenancy and beyond by our partners Ashiana Network, EACH Counselling and Support, IKWRO Women's Rights Organisation, Latin American Women's Aid and The nia Project. St Mungo's Clearing House works with Solace to allocate the properties which are provided by several registered providers.

This year the project supported 28 women during the year with their secure tenancies and with their ongoing support needs as they leave refuges across London. 12 women were supported into training/education, and a further eight were supported into paid employment.

28
women supported in safe and affordable properties after refuge



Crisis Project

In May 2020, in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown, Solace and Southall Black Sisters launched a Crisis Project, which offers safe emergency accommodation with specialist support to women and children fleeing domestic abuse and other forms of MVAWG, across London during the Covid-19 pandemic. The project was supported by the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) and the Julia and Hans Rausing Trust, and received continuation funding for a further six months from MOPAC up to September 2022.

The project is coordinated by Solace, with support for women with no recourse to public funds provided by partners Southall Black Sisters. The project supported 205 women, including 73 women with no recourse to public funds during lockdown.

73
women with no recourse to public funds during lockdown

205
women supported by the project



Other Partnerships

Solace is a member of National Women's Aid and Rape Crisis England and Wales which are both national federations leading on policy change and campaigns to meet the needs of women and children experiencing domestic and sexual abuse. We are members of Domestic and Sexual Violence Forums across London boroughs, attend MARACs (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences) across a number of boroughs and work closely with local services and stakeholders.

We are members of the London MVAWG Consortium, along with 28 specialist MVAWG organisations across London and are part of 5 of the projects they ran in 2021/22.

We work in partnership with Jewish Women's Aid to deliver advocacy and support services in Barnet, with Asha in Lambeth to provide refuge accommodation for South Asian women, Women's Inclusive Team in Tower Hamlets and IKWRO in Bexley. We have continued to build on our relationship with Commonweal Housing through the Amari and Rhea Projects.

Solace is one of the partners in the 'London Holistic Advocacy Wrap Around Service (LHAWAS) 'No Recourse Fund,' funded by MOPAC and led by Southall Black Sisters to meet the needs of women and children who are victims of domestic and sexual violence and other forms of gendered violence.

We work closely with the Public Interest Law Centre (PILC) to support our staff with legal issues related to housing. PILC provide training for Solace staff, support staff on individual cases and look to identify opportunities for strategic litigation.

28
other specialist MVAWG organisations that are part of the London MVAWG Consortium

“ In our work in the Life Off the Streets programme, we have relied heavily on the support and expertise of the WDU to refine and improve London's approach to preventing and tackling rough sleeping for women ”
(A Survivor)

In partnership we can do more.



Labyrinth Project



In April 2021, we launched our Labyrinth Project, which is a partnership of 14 women's organisations contributing to a strengthened women's sector in 8 areas across England, Scotland, and Northern Ireland by building capacity and forging stronger networks of support and shared learning locally and nationally. The project particularly focused on supporting the women's sector to emerge stronger from the damage that the Covid-19 pandemic is having on women's lives.

14,557

women supported by the project

422

women trained through 90 individual training sessions

174

group work sessions delivered

1,827

women provided with legal support

327

women's centres engaged in the project



“I couldn't praise enough the value that this group provides me personally. It has helped me gain confidence and shown me that I am not alone in having mental health problems”
(A Survivor)

Women's Empowerment Fund



Through the Labyrinth Project, Solace launched its first grants scheme. The Empowering Women Fund supports organisations that are led by and for women to build their capacity and develop innovative ways of empowering women in their local area. The fund targeted organisations with a turnover of less than £1 million and received 653 applications.

40 grants have been awarded, enabling organisations in the UK to deliver life-saving support to women across England, Scotland, and Northern Ireland through the Labyrinth Project. The funded projects have identified and are responding to a significant increase in need within their community. Mental health and wellbeing are a particular concern, making up over half of all projects, followed by employment and MVAWG.

An important aspect of this fund is to reach a diverse range of women – 53% of projects are run by and for marginalised communities and funding is spread across small and medium-sized organisations in the three nations.

653

applications to the Women's Empowerment Fund

53%

of projects are run by and for marginalised communities

40

grants were awarded

Centre For Excellence



The Labyrinth Project also developed the National Women's Centre for Excellence which is a collection of knowledge, evidence, resources, and tools based on experience by and for organisations within and supporting the women's sector.

This online repository aims to contribute to a stronger, better connected and more inclusive women's sector nationally by sharing knowledge, resources, learning and best practice, and identifying core elements of effectiveness in strengthening the sector.

As part of the Centre for Excellence, partners have launched a Labyrinth learning series, providing support for women's organisations on:

- Supporting Survivors of Harmful Practices
- Learning from the Labyrinth Mapping Exercise Turning Practice into Policy
- Effective Ways to Turn Frontline Practice into Policy Briefs
- The Women Friendly City Movement
- Effective Grant Writing Tips

While the Labyrinth Project is time-limited, the Centre will continue its legacy, taking the learning as a starting point and creating a space to share information and evidence of what works that is readily accessible by women's sector organisations, groups, and individual women.

Corporate Partnership Highlights

Our corporate relationships are of vital importance to our delivering our services, raising the voices of our users and supporting our efficiency.

The value of professional pro bono services provided to Solace was valued at £90,391 (2020/21: £88,553) with a large proportion attributable to apprentice levy funding received from our corporate supporter Expedia, National Grid and Chelsea Football Club and specialist pro bono support from MC Saatchi. We also received many hours of volunteer support from our corporate partner McKinsey's.

3i



3i generously supported Solace during the Stay Safe at Home campaign launched as an emergency appeal in response to the increased demand on services caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Their donation of £150,000 provided funding for Solace to bring in post a Multiple Disadvantage Outreach Worker and a Clinical Psychologist.

The Clinical Psychologist, employed for one year, embedded the mental health knowledge we needed across the organisation for the benefit of our 280 staff, 90 volunteers and women we support. This post played a fundamental role in helping us to respond to the combined impacts of domestic abuse and the pandemic.

The additional Multiple Disadvantage Outreach Worker employed for 18-months; meant we could work with women for whom very few specialist services exist. Working with a caseload of 5 - 8 women allowed for intensive support equating to months of building trust and supporting women to manage a tenancy to stay safe off the street - providing roughly 3120 interactions with all the women accessing her support.



£90,391
the value of professional pro bono services provided to Solace

£150,000
donation from 3i, which funded a Multiple Disadvantage Outreach Worker and a Clinical Psychologist.

280 staff, 90 volunteers
benefitted from the embedding of mental health knowledge by the Clinical Psychologist

18 months
the time the Multiple Disadvantage Outreach Worker was employed for

Banham Security

EST 1926

BANHAM
SECURITY

Through our partnership with Banham Security, we aim to bring a greater peace of mind and personal safety to women across London, and with the Banham Academy we are providing education and training opportunities for women.

Banham Security are the largest security provider in London and the Southeast. They are a family business with almost 100 years' experience in protecting people and we are proud to partner with them. Solace would like to thank Banham for the generous donation of 1500 personal alarms for women, and through our partnership we aim to bring a greater peace of mind and personal safety to women across London.

We are also excited to work alongside The Banham Academy following the launch of their first women's apprenticeship programme, looking to help bridge the gender gap in the industry and provide access to opportunities for all women.

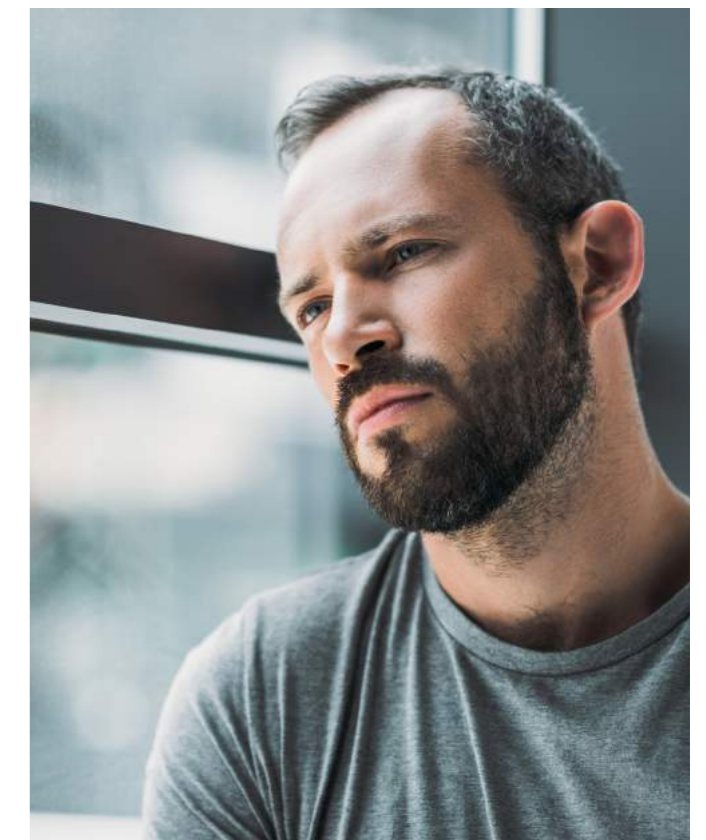
“ Women’s safety on the streets of London has always been an important conversation topic. The safety of women is something we care about not just for our customers but also for our colleagues, their families and the wider community ”
(A Survivor)

The See Change Project

We know that tackling MVAWG begins with the men perpetrating abuse, which is why we aim to increase safety for victims and children by guiding men in changing their behaviour - helping them to recognise abusive actions and become accountable and responsible for their behaviours. The See Change Project combines group behaviour change work and one-to-one sessions to unpick the experiences of masculinity had by these men, and where necessary create place to work through the repercussions of trauma, including adverse childhood experiences.

The Bruno Schroder Trust very generously fully funded the first year of the project, giving Solace the independence to design a completely bespoke project, incorporating the learnings and experience from previous perpetrator programmes, alongside input from Solace front line services.

A very special thank you to the Bruno Schroder Trust.



Expert training for safer lives.



We increased delivery of our training and learning programmes to an even wider audience and transferred our courses, webinars and policy consultancy work to online platforms, finding exciting new ways to teach and raise awareness.

Training outcomes

We supported another 26 new workplace champions in completing our 3-day training programme.

Our casework with older survivors enables us to gather knowledge about their experiences and the professionals, agencies, and communities they have contact with as we develop a targeted approach to working with older survivors. We worked with Dewis Choice, an initiative based in Wales at the Centre for Age, Gender and Social Justice at Aberystwyth University

We have been supporting older survivors for many years and are pleased its importance is gaining more traction. We have launched our SOS Toolkit alongside Dewis Choice which strengthens this offering.

Read here bit.ly/OlderSurvivorsToolkit

5,083
professional and external trainings supported

Solace training now available remotely

In order for us to be able to continue to support people to be able to spot the signs of abuse and respond to the needs of survivors, we've moved our training online. All of our training courses are now available to be delivered via video conferencing to groups within organisations, and our upcoming open training will take place online.

Building a culture of consent

Our years of experience working in education settings has informed and shaped our training packages and tools, identifying a need for strategies both to respond to violence and abuse when it happens and provide holistic support for survivors, and to prevent that violence from happening in the first place. This is by no means an easy task and requires a whole systems approach and a commitment to understanding why it happens, challenging social and cultural norms that reinforce it, and creating environments that support those affected and holds those that perpetrate it to account. We have created four new training modules to support Universities and Colleges specifically for;

- Workshops for students
- Training for student leaders
- Training for staff
- Training for Senior Leadership

2,063
learners trained during the year

30
unique training packages available

Our Volunteers

Volunteers are a vital support to our work, our service users and our staff.

We received 4,588 (2020/21: 3,961) volunteer and professional hours from individuals and students who help us with our advice, advocacy, therapeutic and refuge services, alongside pro bono corporate supporters who contribute to various projects and awareness campaigns.

We manage a programme using volunteers to help with our services, especially therapeutic services and provide women volunteers with specialist training to enhance their skills. In accordance with charity reporting regulations, we have not accounted for the time provided by these volunteers in the financial statements, however, based on London's Living Wage rate of pay, this is estimated at £50,697 (2021/21: £42,977).

The trustees would like to thank all our volunteers, supporters, and staff for their invaluable work throughout the year, as their support is essential to help Solace achieve its aims.

4,588
volunteer and professional hours



“ I would like to thank Solace for this amazing opportunity. I found my role as a Volunteer challenging and rewarding. This has driven my desire to want to do more to support vulnerable women. Solace gave me the breakthrough that I needed ”
(A Survivor)

Media & Communications

It's been a very busy year for the Media and Communications Team as we continue to look for diverse and innovative ways to reach the women and girls who need us, as well as promote Solace and our services and develop strong internal communications that are both informative and meaningful.

MVAWG has been high on the media agenda and the team have worked on nearly 200 media requests from TV, Radio, Print and online. We have worked closely with all services and teams – in particular working alongside Public Affairs, EDI and fundraising.

Much of the internal communications work has been on setting up the new EDI sections of the intranet and website and assisting with establishing inclusion networks and increasing engagement of staff on our intranet Solace Space.

Summer Lifeline and Good Guys

In the early part of the year we worked closely with Fundraising and Roll Nine films on the award winning Summer Lifeline campaign as well as continuing to raise awareness with the Good Guys Campaign (M&C Saatchi) – calling on men to reflect on their behaviour and become allies for women.



Virtual Assistant - Freya

We've made continuous improvements to the website in terms of accessibility and creating additional routes for help with the new virtual assistant that supported nearly 1500 people and adding new survivor stories of the women and girls we support. In the last year our website had nearly 250,000 unique visitors.



Are you worried about a friend or a family member?

Our virtual assistant Freya is here 24/7 to answer your questions.

solacewomensaid.org



250,000
unique visits to our website

30,000
followers across all of our social media platforms

1,500
people that our virtual assistant supported

200
media requests

London Challenge Poverty Week

Our social media following has grown to more than 30,000 across Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and Facebook and our posts reached over 4 million people. We have focussed on creating more digital media content to ensure our voice is heard and that more women and girls are aware of our services.

We've run a number of campaigns including a virtual art show of the works from children in our refuges for London Challenge Poverty Week.



Black Herstory Month

Our Black Herstory Month series featured inspirational women nominated by staff and volunteers



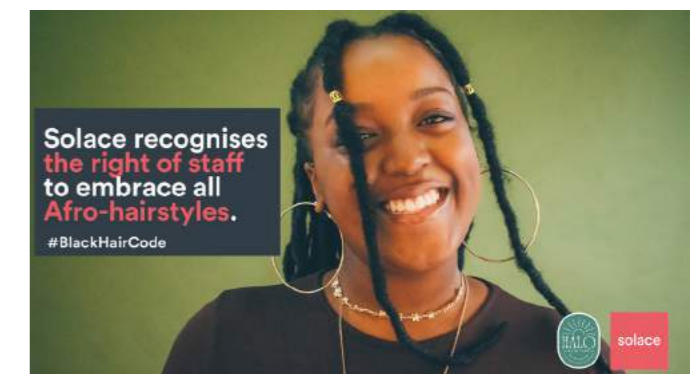
Read more about our campaigns here bit.ly/SolaceCampaigns

Halo Code

Solace recognises and acknowledges the right of staff to embrace all Afro-hairstyles. Afro-textured hair is an important part of our Black employees' racial, ethnic, cultural, and religious identities, and requires specific styling for hair health and maintenance.

Halo Code celebrated Afro-textured hair worn in all styles including, but not limited to, afros, locs, twists, braids, cornrows, fades, hair straightened through the application of heat or chemicals, weaves, wigs, headscarves, and wraps.

At Solace, we recognise and celebrate our colleagues' identities. We are a community built on an ethos of equality and respect where hair texture and style have no bearing on an employee's ability to succeed.



Over 14,000
visits to our social media over London Challenge Poverty Week

Nearly 90,000
people reached during Black Herstory Month

Nearly 2,000
engagements during Black Herstory Month

Media & Communications

16 Days Of Activism

For 16 Days of Activism we launched a new Toolkit for Supporting Older Survivors. We hosted a webinar for more than one hundred guests and a further 250 subscribers to discuss domestic abuse and older survivors with an incredible panel of experts, including:

- Frank Mullane (AAFDA)
- Carrie Bower (Age UK)
- Alison Bird (Solace)
- Monsura Mahmud (Solace Silver Project)

Over the course of the 16 days we also shared survivor stories from women from each of our services.



Read the full summary here bit.ly/OlderSurvivorsToolkit

Do Something Christmas Campaign

For our Christmas Campaign we worked again with Roll Nine films and the Fundraising Team to come up with the 'Do Something' Campaign, raising awareness of domestic abuse and calling on neighbours and bystanders to 'Do Something' if they believe that someone is being abused. The campaign was featured on Channel Five News amongst other media.



Charity Film

In March, we launched our brand new charity film promoting Solace and the work we do and the issues facing women and girls, and highlighting the stories of a number of our services users. We're exceptionally proud of the women who stepped forward to help with this, and know that both their bravery and their stories will help many more women. We shared the film at our International Women's Day event at Rich Mix.

Watch the film here bit.ly/CharityFilmSolace



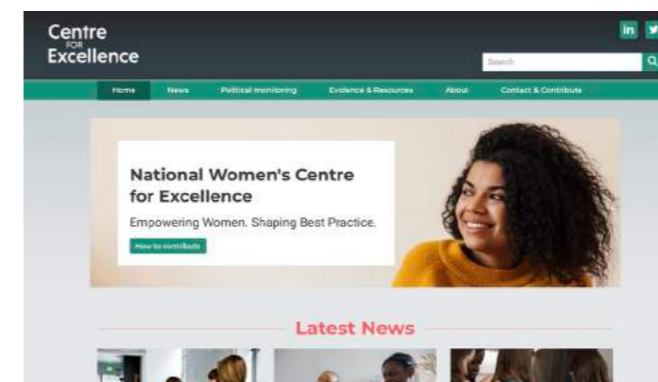
It's Not Love

Our 'It's Not Love' Valentine's Day campaign highlighted toxic behaviours that are often seen as being 'romantic,' but are actually abusive.



Centre For Excellence

We worked with Labyrinth to create and launch the Centre for Excellence bit.ly/CentreForExcellence which we intend to continue to grow and develop. We supported on the design and launches of reports from Ascent, Casa, See Change and Women's Development Unit, amongst others.



Daddyless Daughters

Over the course of the year, we also worked with Aliyah Ali from Daddyless Daughters to create a series of video podcasts interviewing a range of women around their experiences of issues such as abuse, control, addiction and recovery. These podcasts are now available here bit.ly/DirtyWaterPodcast



1,200,000
the reach and impact of the Do
Something Christmas Campaign

4,300
impressions on social media from the It's
Not Love campaign

250
subscribers to the Older Survivors
Webinar

100
guests at the Older Survivors webinar

Fundraising & Income Generation

Solace is a member of the Fundraising Regulator. Our income is generated predominately thanks to the support of individual fundraisers raising funds at our events or their own. We do not employ the services of any fundraising agencies or third parties, nor have we run a telephone or door to door fundraising campaign. Our relationship with our supporters is especially important to us and the charity does not wish for our supporters to feel under any pressure to donate.

We have a close relationship with our fundraisers and support them in delivering their events and complying with relevant codes of practice. Where we work with commercial participators, contracts are exchanged so that we can ensure compliance with the code of fundraising practice, applicable laws, and adherence to best practice.

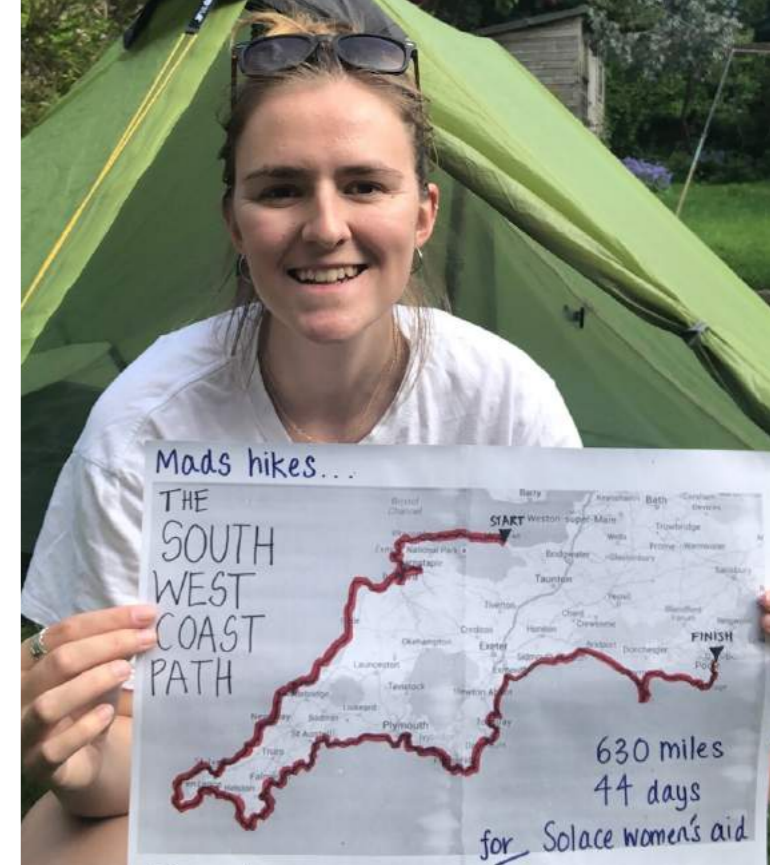
We received no complaints about our fundraising practices in 2021/22.

Some highlights...

Our supporters took part in lots of events throughout the year, including Hackney Half, Royal Parks Half and the iconic London Marathon. Our Solace 40 challenge returned for its 3rd year in January. We asked supporters to walk, run or cycle 40 miles to raise money for our 40 safe accommodation sites across London.

Rock Against Violence was back for its 10th year, organised by the amazing eCubed volunteers raising over £10,000 for our vital services at a night to remember at the Oslo, Hoxton.

In December, we ran our annual gift drive. Thanks to our incredible supportive community, we collected over 3,000 presents bringing Christmas joy to the women and children in our services.



Over £10,000
raised from the 10th year of Rock Against Violence

Over 3,000
presents collected over the Christmas period



Our thanks.

We would like to thank all of our supporters during 2021/22, including those who have chosen to remain anonymous.

3i
Akin Gump
Alara Foundation - Grants
Anglo American Fund - Grants
Anissa Kermiche
Artemis Charitable
Foundation
Banham
Bella Freud
Brookfield Properties
Brooks MacDonald Group Plc
Brown Rudnick
Bruno Schroder Trust
Cara Delevingne Foundation
Cloudesley
CLW Art Limited
Community Fund
Community Pardner CIC
Compass Wellbeing
Cosaporto
Coupland Cardiff Asset
Management LLP
Crane & Kind
De Beauvoir WI
Dunelm
eCubed
Embassy of Ireland - Grants
F Foundation
Fidelity International
Fitch Ratings
Genesis Cinema
Generation Foundation
Glasspool Charity Trust
Gothic Valley WI
Haringey National Education
Union NEU
Hastings Household
Heathside Charitable Trust
Hollick Family Foundation
Intercontinental Exchange
(ICE)
Invesco Cares Foundation
Irish Government Emigrant
Support Programme
Irish Youth Foundation
Jack Sealey Ltd
James Hambro & Partners
Karen Bryson

Kate Hughes
Klaviyo
LEWIS Global
Communications
Lloyd's Market Association
Lord Barnby's Foundation
M&C Saatchi
Masonic Charitable
Foundation
MBA Stack
McKinsey
Norton Rose Fulbright
Olwyn Foundation
Orla Kiely
Pace Integration Ltd
PlaNet Cares Foundation
Property Hub
Roll Nine Productions
Showcase Group Limited
Squint \ Opera LTd
Stone Rangers WI
Taylor Vinters
TCC Global
Tetra Tech

The Big Give
The Childhood Trust - Grants -
14/02/2022
The Firebird Foundation
The Greater London Authority
GLA
The Hendonian Charitable
Trust
The Jealous Gallery
The Shoebox Project
The Wogen Anniversary Trust
The Worshipful Company of
FanMakers
Trust for London
Tudor Capital Foundation
Upton Primary School
Urban Flower Company
Veritas Asset Management
LLP
Vitol
Walcot
Walcot Foundation - Grants
Walthamstow Secret Santa
Wavemaker

Financial Review

Income

For the financial year 2021/22, total incoming resources was £16,361,422 comparable to the previous year of £16,265,804. Enlarged contracts from statutory funders for our community and specialist work to meet continued high demands offset the lower voluntary income which was boosted by the Emergency Appeal in the prior year.

The continued overwhelming support from our statutory partners, trusts and foundations, corporates and the public at large have helped us to maintain essential services including extending the emergency crisis accommodation for a further six months this year.

Voluntary income from donations contributed 4.5% of our funding base through the support of the public, corporates and trusts and foundations.

Expenditure

Growth through new activities has correspondingly increased resources expended by 9% from £15,592,165 to £16,927,412. The increase in staff to deliver our charitable services has resulted in an increase in staff costs of £1,456,269 from £8,907,668 to £10,363,937 and similarly, delivering specialist support with partners increased partnership costs by £132,689.

£16,361,422

total income for the financial year 2021/22

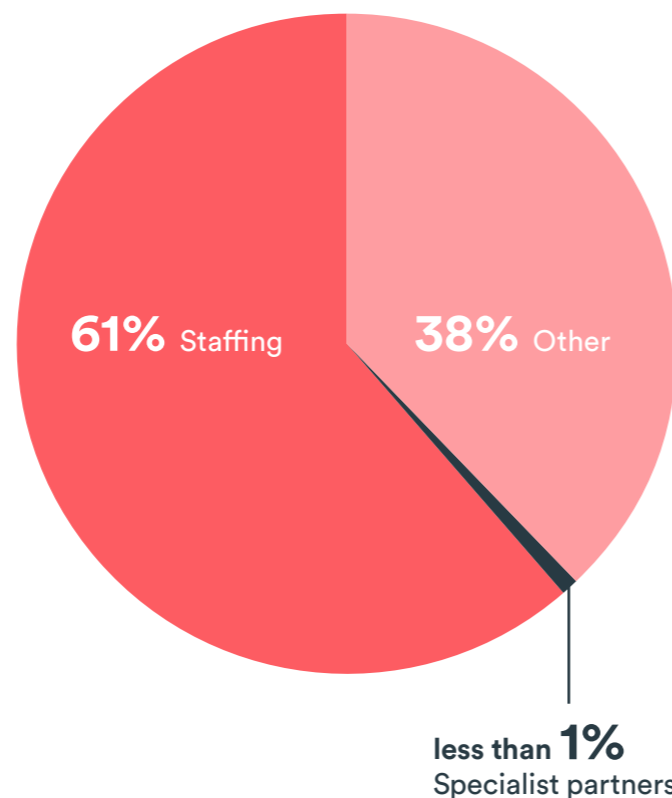
£132,689

the staffing costs to deliver specialist support with partners

£10,363,937

the staffing cost

Total expenditure **£16,927,412**



Our Trustees



Kirsty Telford
Interim Chair



Kerri Hartwell
Interim Treasurer



Jasbir Kaur Sandhu
Trustee



Maureen Hopcroft
Trustee



Yasmin Becker
Trustee



Vivien Ma
Trustee



Emily Florence Hutchings
Trustee

Our Directors



Judith Banjoko
Interim CEO



Retna Thevarajah
Chief Operating Officer



Jennifer Cirone
Interim Director of Services



Jane Jutsum
Director of Business Development



Male violence against women and girls ends here.

Solace Women's Aid
Registered Address
Moore Kingston Smith LLP,
9 Appold Street,
London, EC2A 2AP

Advice line freephone | 0808 802 5565

Administrative phone | 020 7619 1350

For press and media email | media@solacewomensaid.org

Website | solacewomensaid.org

Social media | @SolaceWomensAid



Professional Advisors Auditors | Moore Kingston Smith
LLP Solicitors | Anthony Collins LLP

To protect our service users, names & photos
of service users have been changed.

Solace Women's Aid is a charity registered in
England and Wales. Charity number 1082450.
Company number 03376716

solace