

Solace Women's Aid The Way Forward

5 Year Strategic Plan 2016-2021

"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. My daughters are safe and I am more confident. Without the support of Solace, I could not have achieved any of these things. "

- Solace Service User

Executive Summary

Lead provider of Violence Against Women & Girls (VAWG) services in London.

With a dedicated team of over 150 staff and 80 volunteers, Solace Women's Aid provides specialist, tailored services to over 10,000 women, children and men across London each year. Solace aims to prevent violence and abuse as well as provide services to meet the needs of survivors so they can live independently, free from abuse.

"I no longer feel dead on the inside. I no longer want to be rescued. Through the support I've had at Solace I feel that I have choices and more tools to take care of myself"
- Solace Service User

The Way Forward 2016—2021 focuses on Solace's three key aims over the next five years:

Provision

To further develop our community and accommodation based services to reflect a holistic multi agency response to VAWG

Prevention

To develop further our approach to prevention work, expanding this each year over the next 5 years

Partnerships

In collaboration with statutory, voluntary and corporate agencies to achieve a coordinated response to VAWG

Supporting over

16,000

Survivors of domestic & sexual abuse each year

Solace manages

37

refuge & move-on accommodation properties that can house 168 women and families

We provide services across

all boroughs

in London

£6

of social value for every £1 spent

Specialist service provision across the range of VAWG practices



"Solace shows innovation and flexibility in their work. They have a proven track record of driving change to seek better outcomes for survivors and their families across services."

- Solace Stakeholder

92%

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

93%

of service users said that the service helped them to feel more confident

90%

of service users said that the service helped them to feel more in control of their future

Holistic & tailored services to support change and make a lasting difference

Services

Refuge Accommodation
Advice & Advocacy North
London Rape Crisis
Counselling
Targeted support Children
& Young People Prevention

Change

Outcomes

- Improved safety
- Increased stability, resilience & autonomy
- Better physical & mental health
- Better parenting & relationships with children₃

Our background

Thank-you

Thank-you to all our service users, staff and volunteers, trustees and stakeholders who have contributed to the development of this plan. We have held meetings, consultations and a strategic conference; we have listened to and included ideas from all who have contributed.

Solace Women's Aid was formed in 2007 following the merge of Camden, Enfield and Islington Women's Aid (Solace Anois, the Irish women's refuge had merged with Camden Women's Aid in 2005). Lambeth Women's Aid joined us in 2011, Barnet Domestic Violence Support Service and Haringey Refuges in 2012 when we also began working in Southwark, expanding our South London presence. In 2016, we began running services in Waltham Forest.

In 2008, Solace joined the London Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) consortium. Solace leads a consortium of 14 partners to deliver the Advice and Counselling service strand across all London boroughs. In 2015, we carried out a social return on investment (SROI) of the project, which found that for every £1 spent, we saved £6 in social capital. London Councils funding also supported us in opening a refuge for women with multiple needs, providing support for women with mental health and drug and alcohol issues.

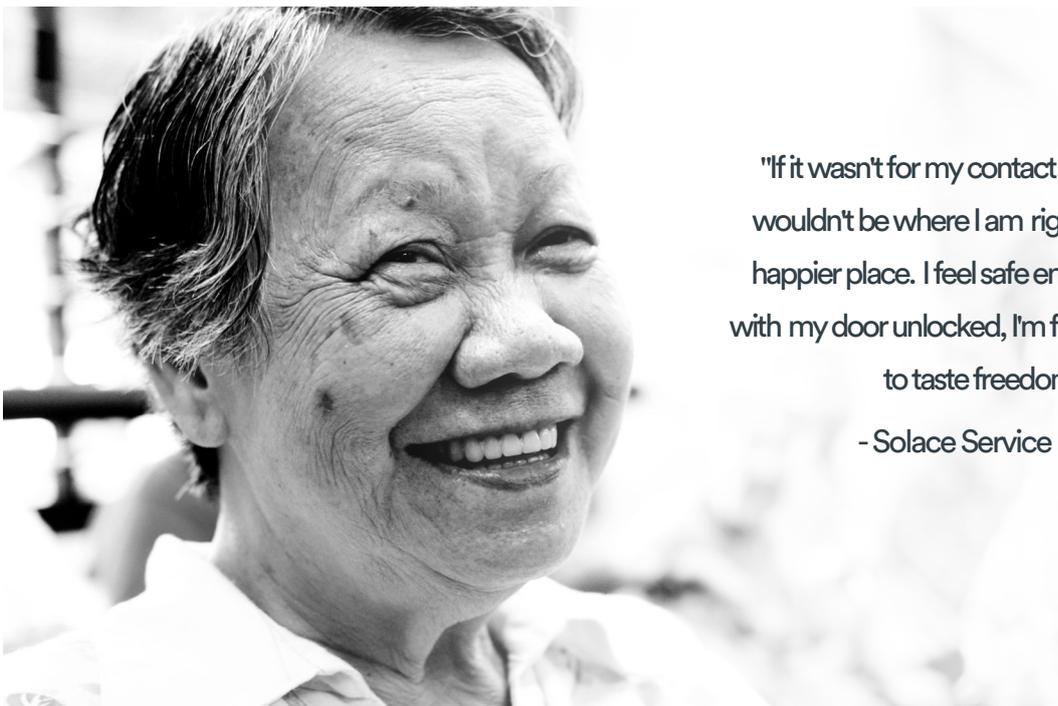
In 2009, Solace began supporting women affected by sexual violence and in 2010 secured a significant contract to deliver North London Rape Crisis, delivering specialist services in seven boroughs, including in partnership with the Angelou Project in the tri-borough. We continue to deliver North London Rape Crisis, working closely with London Rape Crisis and Rape Crisis England and Wales. Solace is an active member of National Women's Aid and our CEO is on their Board of Trustees.

Through mergers and winning contracts, we have grown significantly. We currently work across London with 10,000 women and children each year with a dedicated staff team of 150 and 80 volunteers. With over 40 years' experience of running innovative and high quality services we know what makes a difference. We understand and can deliver a range of specialist projects across the VAWG sector and uniquely have experience of leading a range of projects from small-scale pilot projects with key partners to large pan-London multi-agency projects. We are able to analyse the factors needed to support change and evidence the success of our cope-recovery-independence model. We offer both a high quality service and high value for money, raising additional funds and engaging people in active citizenship.

Whilst women and children are overwhelmingly the victims of domestic and sexual abuse, we recognise that men can also be victims. We work with male survivors of domestic abuse and have a perpetrator programme as part of our community response to VAWG in Southwark.

Our last strategic plan, 2013-2016, concentrated on building our service provision and in April 2016, we deliver borough-based services in 10 London boroughs. Our services include advice, advocacy and support, refuge services, therapeutic services and children and young people services. We also run a number of specialist projects for older women, Irish Travellers, Albanian speaking women and children and a support project for women and children with issues around their immigration status. In addition, we provide targeted group work for older women, LBT women who have experienced sexual violence and for young women who are vulnerable to abuse.

As a VAWG service provider, we offer support across the range of VAWG practices: The term VAWG encompasses domestic violence; rape and sexual violence; harmful practices including female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, honour based violence (HBV); sexual harassment, stalking, trafficking, prostitution and sexual exploitation. We work closely with other specialist providers offering support by and for impacted communities.



"If it wasn't for my contact with Solace I wouldn't be where I am right now, in this happier place. I feel safe enough to sleep with my door unlocked, I'm finally beginning to taste freedom"

- Solace Service User

Vision & Values 2016 - 2021

Solace Women's Aid grew out of the 1970's feminist movement when the first refuges provided a safe place for women and children who were escaping violence in their own homes. We have developed from those early days and are now an integral part of the co-coordinated, multi-agency response to VAWG in London. Our core values are rooted in our understanding that VAWG is a consequence of women's inequality in society. Our feminist values acknowledge this inequality whilst committing the organisation to working towards a more equal society as part of our core mission to end VAWG.

Solace provides an integrated and holistic service addressing the needs of survivors and their children from the point of crisis through recovery and onto independent lives. Our key underlying principle is to work holistically alongside survivors in their recovery from the trauma they have experienced; helping to build resources through a strength based approach so that survivors are able to build safe and independent futures.

This plan is the result of consultations and a strategic development conference, which has included service users, staff and key stakeholders and agreed with our Board of Trustees. It provides the rationale, vision and focus for our business planning over the next five years.

VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

Vision

Solace Women's Aid's vision is of a world where women and children live their lives free from all forms of VAWG.

Mission

Solace Women's Aid exists to end the harm done through Violence against Women and Girls. Our aim is to work to prevent violence and abuse as well as providing services to meet the needs of survivors particularly women and girls. Our work is holistic and empowering, working alongside survivors to achieve independent lives free from abuse.

Values

Solace Women's Aid's core values reflect our history and were developed in consultation with staff service users, and trustees. We are:

- Feminist in our understanding of Violence against Women and Girls
- Women and children focused and empowering
- Diverse and anti-discriminatory in all its forms
- We are committed to:
 - Social justice and human rights
 - Service users having a central voice within the organisation
 - Working in collaboration with other agencies to develop a community wide response to Violence against Women and Girls
 - Continuous improvement

Core Approach to our development 2016-2021

Solace will work to prevent VAWG across London through raising awareness and developing prevention and early intervention programmes. We will deliver life-saving services so survivors and in particular, women and children, have a place of safety and support to enable them to recover from the trauma and harm they have experienced.

Solace will continue to build our base as the lead provider of VAWG services across London, working in multi-agency partnerships to achieve change at a community as well as a pan-London level. We currently run services in 10 London Boroughs as well as pan-London work.

Individually we will work with each survivor and her children to resettle from the trauma they have experienced. We work to meet basic needs, prioritising safety and support to ensure women and children cope and recover from the trauma they have experienced and are able to lead independent lives free from abuse. Much of our work is practical, supporting women through the legal system, ensuring they have access to financial support, health and wellbeing services and housing. Underpinning all our work is the recognition of the impact of the emotional harm abuse has on women and children's lives. We will continue to develop a trauma recovery model, increasing our understanding of the impact of trauma and the positive impact of a holistic, strengths based approach to recovery. Our support offer includes advice, 1-1 advocacy and support, group work and counselling and aims to reduce isolation, improve self-esteem and self-confidence and develop skills and resilience to enable women and children to live fulfilled and independent lives.

Solace has identified three core aims for our work the next five years

1. Provision

- We will develop further our holistic community and accommodation based services working primarily with women and children to ensure safe futures and recovery from the trauma they have experienced in order to live fulfilled and independent lives
- We will develop an integrated response to VAWG, recognising the dynamics of abuse and their impact on individuals and family members in the past, present and into the future

2. Prevention

- We will develop further our approach to prevention, through building awareness of and opposition to VAWG whilst encouraging earlier reporting and access to support across the communities we work in
- Prevention currently represents a small percentage of our current income. We will expand this each year over the next five years, by including prevention in all areas of our work. We are currently developing our work with perpetrators of VAWG, in particular young people

3. Partnerships

We will continue to work in collaboration with other agencies, statutory, voluntary and corporate in order to achieve:

- Greater access to support from a range of specialist and generic partners including the Police and CJS, children and adult social care, health and other statutory services. We will work towards improving access to affordable housing for our service users. We will seek further partnerships with health services, working towards a better understanding and response to VAWG
- An improved response to VAWG ensuring that trusted leaders in the community including faith groups, community and neighbourhood groups, employers and statutory services have an increased understanding of the impact of VAWG . We will monitor this response through stakeholder and service user surveys over the next five years

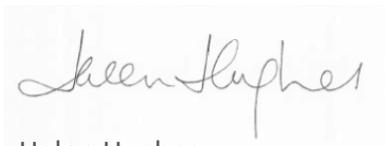
***Prevention** includes both primary and secondary prevention. Primary including working to preventing Violence against Women and Girls in the first place and secondary prevention meaning preventing further harm. Our aim is to ensure earlier support so that the harm to survivors is minimised.

Conclusion

Solace is immensely proud of our work and the progress we have made, of the professionalism and dedication of all our staff and the enthusiasm of our volunteers. Over the next 5 years we will build on our strengths and increase our standing as a sector leader of VAWG services.



Mary Mason
Chief Executive Officer



Helen Hughes
Chair of Board of Trustees

What we will do

Provision. Prevention. Partnership working.

In order to ensure the consistent delivery of our strategy we have put in place a framework from which we will develop our annual plans.

Provision

In developing our service provision, we will:

- Communicate our successes and network with other VAWG agencies to ensure we learn from others and share good practice on an individual/regional/national basis
- Work with commissioners to promote our service delivery model and Theory of Change, encouraging the inclusion of prevention and early intervention in contracts
- Ensure we are aware of the impact of VAWG on all family members and in particular on children. Include an understanding of perpetrator behaviour in our approach to casework
- Work with children and young people (CYP) in the community who have been/are at risk from domestic, sexual abuse and other forms of VAWG. We will learn from successful delivery models and consider a range of interventions. We will ensure that we consult with CYP on all interventions, which involve them. In particular, we will develop responses, which focus on:
 - a) Working across different age groups including pre-school age
 - b) Building the self-esteem, knowledge and understanding of both parent and child
 - c) Peer role models and support
- Address the issue of male violence through:
 - a) Prevention work with all young people including an understanding of healthy relationships
 - b) Consider male role models in working with children in refuges
 - c) Develop our approach to perpetrator work especially with young men
- Ensure an individualised response to service users, which builds on their strengths and increases their resilience. In particular, we will address issues of equality and diversity across our services and between all those involved in Solace
- We will seek to deliver a specialist response to the following groups experiencing VAWG:
 - a) Newly arrived black and minority ethnic (BME) groups, seeking support to address VAWG. We will work with communities to develop capacity
 - b) Those with no recourse to public funds (NRPF) and with insecure immigration status
 - c) Those with mental health issues and/or problematic substance use
 - d) Older women and in particular those with health difficulties
 - e) Women with disabilities including and in particular, learning difficulties

Prevention and early intervention

We will work consistently to increase our income to enable us to pursue a Prevention agenda that runs alongside our service provision. To achieve this we will:

- Develop a community based approach through:
 - a) Champions programmes involving key members of communities in each borough, to challenge negative stereotypes and support referrals to specialist support
 - b) Working with statutory services including Health, Housing, Social Care to develop a positive early response to VAWG through training, establishing referral pathways, champion's programmes and co-location of staff
 - c) Working with CYP to increase general awareness and consistency of approach to VAWG
 - d) Working directly with girls who are vulnerable to abuse and with boys who are vulnerable to abusive behaviours. This includes care leavers, young people involved in the criminal justice system (CJS), those with learning difficulties and CYP in refuges
- Work with perpetrators of VAWG with a particular focus on young men and a male based prevention response
- Work in schools to a whole school approach to VAWG
- Corporate sponsorship of awareness raising programme e.g. in sponsoring a prevention approach in supermarkets, local football clubs and local shops and centres

Partnership working

We will further develop our partnership working to:

- Develop a multi-agency approach to VAWG to enable the best possible response to our service users support needs. We will prioritise working with the police, housing, health and adult and social care
- Assist in meeting our overall aims and enable us to evidence our impact
- Enable us to extend our reach and influence, in particular in our priority areas

Develop and share best practice

We will collect, collate and provide evidence of our impact and the public benefit of our work on an annual and ongoing basis. This will include:

- Evidencing a mixture of soft and hard outcomes e.g. increased self-esteem and self-confidence (soft) and increased access to employment, training and education (hard)
- Ensure we evidence our service outcomes, keeping commissioners and external agencies informed of our work and sharing good practice across London, nationally and internationally
- Ensure we measure lasting impact via a variety of methods, which are interlinked and can provide information for SROI

Income generation

Public sector cuts will continue to challenge service delivery over the next five years. We will develop a strategy to enable us to increase our unrestricted income to allow us to develop our prevention agenda and innovative services, whilst working to achieve full cost recovery in our contracts and funded services.

We will achieve growth in unrestricted income through developing:

- Our individual donor base
- Community fundraising working with community organisations
- Social Enterprise:
 - a) Through offering training and spot purchase of services
 - b) Through exploring the potential for meeting housing need by providing rented accommodation at affordable rents

Growth in restricted funds through:

- Ensuring we retain current contracts in Year 1 and aim to acquire a minimum of one major new project per year over the next five years
- Increase our prevention work with an element of prevention work developed in each of our Boroughs over the next five years
- Ensuring all income from trusts and foundations is targeted at our priority areas with full cost recovery

Communications

Develop our communications strategy and annual plan to meet our priorities:

- Support our income generation strategy
- Position Solace as a leading London provider of VAWG services
- Ensure earlier access to services for survivors
- Influence decision makers to support specialist VAWG services
- Communicate shared learning and best practice

To achieve this we will continue to resource our communications work and develop our branding.

Linked strategies/plans

We have developed this overarching strategy to guide the direction of Solace over the next five years. Our strategic framework includes the following plans, aligned with and supporting this organisational strategy:

- Strategy and Operations plan to include communications plan
- Workforce plan
- Finance, Resources and Fundraising plan

Delivery plan 2016 - 2021

Provision: To further develop our community and accommodation based services to reflect a holistic multiagency response to VAWG		
Target	Actions	Progression
Continue to deliver 100% compliance with contracts	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure 100% compliance with contract outputs and outcomes 	2016-2021
Provide a strengths based response in assessing service user's needs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop our understanding of strengths based approaches and ensure this is built into all staff training and service delivery 	2016-2021
To further develop our holistic approach to VAWG, recognising the impact of trauma and developing our approach to recovery from trauma.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Further develop our longer term holistic services and secure funding to deliver in a minimum of two additional Boroughs 2. Secure funding for a Head of Psychological services for women and children at Solace 3. Secure BACP accredited status for Solace 4. Roll out our Psychologically Informed Environments (PIE) model across all services 	2016-2021
To consolidate a family and community approach to VAWG based on the individual woman, her children and her family and friend networks, including the impact of the perpetrator, absent or otherwise	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop and deliver staff training on this approach 2. Ensure all our systems reflect this approach 	2016-2018
To ensure a response to the needs of children and young people who have experienced VAWG is embedded in to all our services	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure access to specialist support for children who have experienced VAWG in all boroughs 2. Working directly with girls and young women who have or are vulnerable to abuse including care leavers, young people involved in the CJS, those with learning difficulties and CYP in refuges 3. Ensure service delivery is accompanied by prevention work with CYP 4. Explore good models for the development of a peer support service for CYP 	2016-2021

Provision: To further develop our community and accommodation based services to reflect a holistic multiagency response to VAWG

Target	Actions	Progression
<p>Provide a programme of support to challenge boys and young men (BYM) working with them to end their use of violence and abuse in familial and/or interpersonal relationships</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explore good practice in working with BYM and develop a delivery model for this work 2. Explore ways of developing good male role models for working with boys in refuges 3. Further develop our work with perpetrators in an integrated community based model enabling: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Early identification of perpetrators b) Early access to 1-1 work and programmes c) Explore good models for the development of a peer support programme 	<p>2017-2021</p>
<p>Deliver a specialist response to those groups who are furthest from support and have the highest support needs</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with newly arrived BME communities to develop capacity in dealing with VAWG, including those with NRPF and insecure immigration status 2. Provide dedicated support for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • women with mental health and problematic substance use issues who are experiencing VAWG • older women and in particular those with health difficulties • women with disabilities including learning difficulties 	<p>2016-2021</p>
<p>Ensure Solace addresses issues of equality and diversity (E&D) across our services and between all those involved in Solace</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Deliver high quality staff training on E&D 2. Continue to run an E&D Champions programme with an annual plan across Solace 3. Ensure E&D is part of our work with service users and embedded into our service user programmes 	<p>2016-2021</p>
<p>Ensure Service User Involvement in the delivery of services</p>	<p>Develop and implement an annual Service User Involvement Plan via Women's Voices Groups to ensure Service User involvement in service planning and delivery.</p>	<p>2016-2021</p>

Prevention and Early Intervention: develop further our approach to prevention work expanding this each year over the next 5 years

<p>Building awareness of the negative impact of VAWG, encouraging prevention and early reporting</p> <p>Expand this work over the lifetime of this strategy through including prevention in all areas of our work</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a community based approach to prevention through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Champions programmes involving key members of communities in each borough, to challenge negative stereotypes and support referrals to specialist support b) Working with statutory services including Health, Housing, Social Care to develop a positive early response to VAWG through training, establishing referral pathways, champion’s programmes and co-location of staff c) Working with CYP to increase general awareness and consistency of approach to VAWG d) Working directly with girls who are vulnerable to abuse and with boys who are vulnerable to abusive behaviours. This includes care leavers, young people involved in the criminal justice system (CJS), those with learning difficulties and CYP in refuges • Work with perpetrators of VAWG with a particular focus on young men • Work in schools, implementing a whole school approach to VAWG • Corporate sponsorship of awareness raising programme <p>e.g. in sponsoring a prevention approach in supermarkets, football clubs and shops and centres</p>	<p>2016-2021</p>
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Partnership working in collaboration with statutory, voluntary and corporate agencies to achieve a coordinated response to VAWG

<p>Develop a multi-agency approach to VAWG in all our Boroughs building an improved response to VAWG</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure an excellent working relationship with commissioners, partners, stakeholders and local representatives • Continue to work with the pan London VAWG consortium • Work with smaller BME and other specialist groups to provide targeted support to service users • Seek local and London wide partnerships to enable us to extend our reach and influence 	<p>2016-2021</p>
<p>Capacity Building with partners working to a coordinated community response to VAWG</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable us to influence agendas and build a coordinated community response, in particular in our priority areas: housing, police, health and adult and social care sectors. • Extend the impact of our approach, in particular to recovery from the trauma of abuse, encouraging an early response and increasing the understanding of VAWG between partners and the impact on different groups of survivors 	<p>2016-2021</p>

Develop and Share Best Practice

<p>Collect, collate and provide evidence of our impact and the public benefit of our work on an annual and ongoing basis</p>	<p>This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidencing a mixture of soft and hard outcomes for our service users including the cost benefits of our interventions • Embedding evaluation tools within the organisation to enable ongoing impact evidence and reporting • Ensuring the continued development of evidence based models, which showcase our good practice. • Ensure shared learning from the experience of survivors where practice in other agencies needs improving 	<p>2016-2021</p>
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Linked strategies and plans

<p>To develop linked overarching strategies and annual plans</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy and Operations plan to include communications plan • Financial and Resources and fundraising plan • Workforce plan 	<p>2016-2021</p>
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