



solace

Impact Report 2020

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I would like to thank you for everything you did for me, words are not enough to express my gratitude to you. You changed my life completely for the better and got me out of the dark place I was in.



Our **vision is bold** and our values are at the core of what we do.

We're creating a world where women and children live their lives free from all forms of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG).

We work to prevent violence and abuse as well as providing services to meet the needs of survivors.

Our approach is holistic and empowering, working alongside survivors to achieve independent lives free from abuse.

A message from our Chair & CEO

It has been another really positive year for Solace. We have continued to grow our income and reach more people than ever before, supporting 27,414 women, children, young people and men across all of our services.

Being able to touch the lives of so many, be it in our core support services or through our prevention work, means that we have been able to live up to our vision to support more survivors, and at the same time, use the power of education and training to work towards ending violence.

The situation in London remains highly challenging with reports to the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) of domestic abuse escalating to over 88,000. This appalling number must be viewed in the context that on average 35 incidents of abuse take place before police involvement. To the women who receive our support that means they have lived with abuse for an average of 6 years and 4 months; something we must all fight to change and reduce.

We published a major report called Safe as Houses in light of the fact we have experienced a prolonged period of austerity, deepening housing crisis, and funding cuts to specialist services creating a bleak landscape for women fleeing abuse in London. Escapes are deferred, or become punishingly long and complex as women attempt to navigate opaque local authority systems and overloaded refuge networks. A shortage of social housing to move-on to means women and children face multiple moves, lacking a secure base from which they can begin recovering from abuse.

We were, however, extremely grateful to be able to launch the Casa Project, part of the Mayor's Move-on Programme, funded by the GLA. This project enables women to move-on from refuges and provides a vital contribution to housing survivors of abuse in London. This still leaves us with a massive problem where women frequently face homelessness and destitution.

Joining as CEO halfway through the year, Fiona's priority has been to ensure continuity of our services in difficult financial times whilst also laying the strategic foundations for the future.

We have successfully strengthened our Board this year. Our committed and knowledgeable trustees have the expertise and experience needed to lead a vibrant and growing organisation. The Board also better reflects the communities we serve.

The end of our financial year saw the UK plunged into a global pandemic and, during the last few weeks of March, we were consumed with ensuring we transferred our services on-line and continuity of face to face support in our supported accommodation services. It saw staff, volunteers and trustees of over 350 strong, come together to ensure women and children continued to receive the lifesaving help they needed. They never dropped a beat and we are forever grateful to them for their commitment and support.

In solidarity and sisterhood.



Helen Hughes
Helen Hughes
Chair of the Board of Trustees



Fiona Dwyer
Fiona Dwyer
CEO, Solace

Our year at a glance.

Our services touched the lives of 27,414 people

We supported 16,087 adults and children in our frontline services

We worked with 11,327 people in our prevention services.

Safe refuge accommodation for 920 women & children across our 22 refuges

We grew our income to over £11.5 million

We worked in partnership with 34 organisations across London

Our team of 230 Staff make our work possible

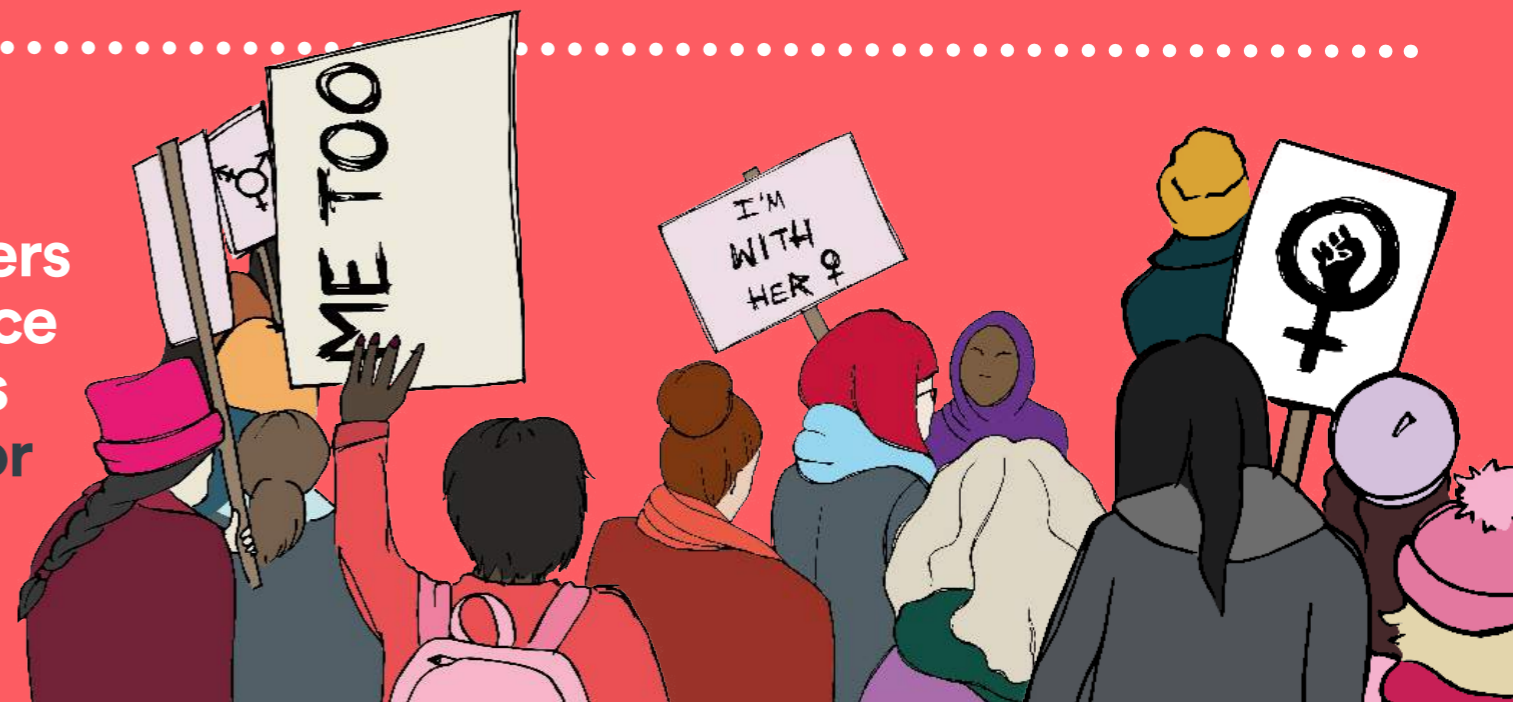
We trained 2000 people to recognise and respond to abuse

11,151 Volunteer hours that made all the difference

95% of service users would recommend the service to a friend or relative

83% of service users said that the service helped them to feel safer

91% of service users rated Solace services as excellent or good



1 in 3 women will experience abuse during her lifetime. This year London recorded over 88,000 cases of domestic abuse & over 20,000 sexual offences. We work tirelessly to ensure every woman and child can live safe lives, free from violence and abuse.

Experiences of abuse.

6 years & 4 months is the average length of time women in Solace services experienced their current abuse

87% of survivors experienced **emotional abuse**

43% of survivors experienced **financial abuse**

65% of survivors experienced **jealous or controlling behaviour**

36% of survivors experienced **harassment and stalking**

63% of survivors experienced **physical abuse**

23% of survivors experienced **sexual abuse**

Finding Solace

The most common referral sources

- 18% MARAC
- 16% Children's Social Care/ Early Help
- 14% Self Referral
- 12% Police
- 9% Other Specialist Agencies
- 5% Health Services inc. hospitals
- 4% GP
- 4% Mental Health Services /CAMHS
- 3% Statutory Housing
- 3% One Stop Shop



Survivors we help in London.

55% of women we supported have children

28% of child service users had children's service involvement

444 of women we supported had No Recourse to Public Funds

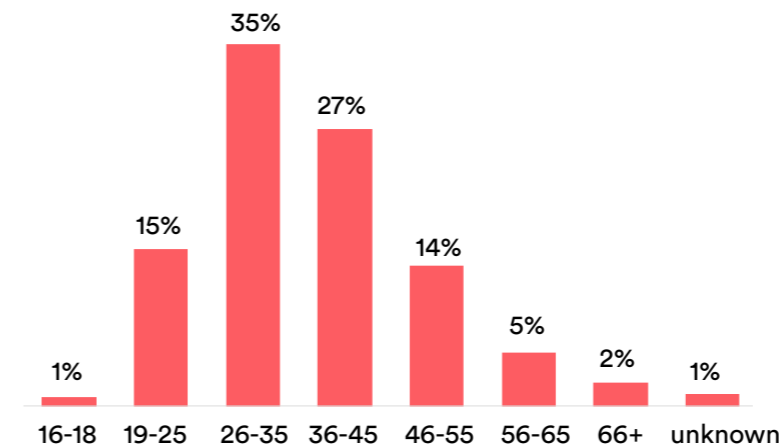
55% of children witnessed abuse to someone else

2131 survivors had mental health support needs

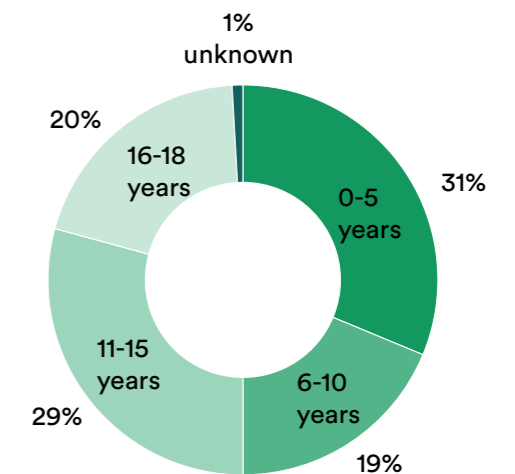
94 male survivors were supported through our services

14,695 adults supported in our services

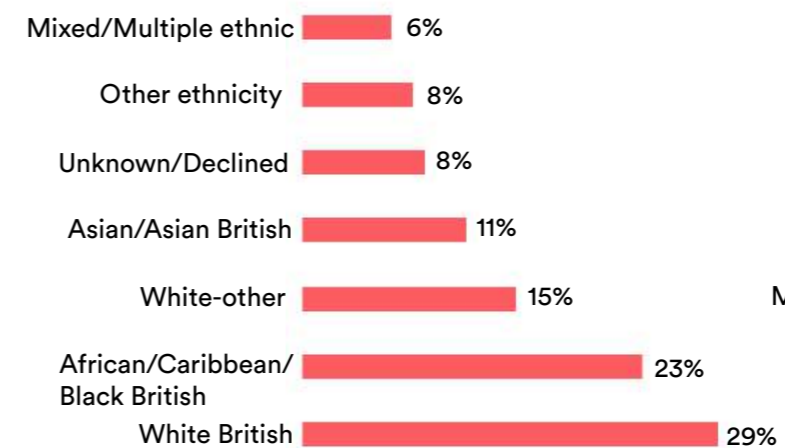
1,392 children supported in our services



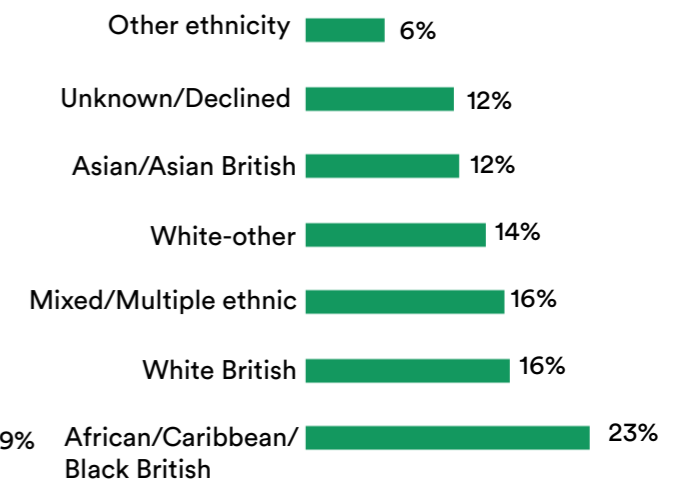
Ages of adults



Ages of children



Ethnicity of adults



Ethnicity of children





Changing lives through our holistic services.

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.

Rebuilding lives in the community.

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

Advice Line

Solace's dedicated London Advice line provides a first point of call for survivors. During the year the Advice line supported over 2,434 unique referrals and responded to 2886 calls and 5,127 email enquiries. 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. The team are able to refer to specialist services as necessary.

Our dedicated confidential helpline is available five days a week, including one evening and takes more than 160 calls a week. The team also manage one of the two advice hubs in London within the Ascent Advice and Counselling partnership of 14 organisations, which Solace leads.

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 to increase service users' safety and meet a range of needs – 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** supports women over 55 who have experienced domestic and/or sexual abuse offering intensive support and advocacy;

2886 calls to our Advice Helpline providing 1-1 support

130 of the most vulnerable women supported through our immigration service

- **The Irish Traveller project** provides a specialist outreach and resettlement service to Irish women, Irish Traveller women and their children delivered in conjunction with our partner, the Irish Traveller Movement;
- **The Identification and Referral to Improve Safety (IRIS)** programme, a GP based domestic violence training, support and referral programme for primary care staff;

“
We have come a long way

I cannot believe I was able to find the strength to do this, but I knew I had no option and I would not have done this without your help and support with everything. I mean you have helped me change my life, I don't know how much longer I could of gone on with the anxiety daily and stress and abuse. I just couldn't see a way out.

10,692 survivors helped through advice, advocacy & support



“

After experiencing verbal and emotional abuse for 3 years, I was very much in denial that this was in fact a form of abuse. I felt alone as a single mother and as if I was the only one experiencing this.

I was initially hesitant to attend the Domestic Abuse courses, as I felt ashamed and embarrassed about my past. But after attending the very first session and being around women who had experienced the same trauma - it was clear that this was what I needed to heal. Hearing the stories of others and talking openly made me realise that I was not alone and that it was important for me to heal from the abuse.

Solace has given me hope and the understanding that the situation was not my fault. I have gained confidence and friendships and moved on tremendously with my life.

solace

advice & support

- **Our Women's Resilience Awareness Project (WRAP)** delivers a variety of courses and groups in Islington, Enfield and Southwark that aim to increase resilience and wellbeing for women with children who have experienced domestic and/or sexual abuse; and
- **Southwark's Sanctuary Scheme** is designed to prevent someone affected by domestic violence from becoming homeless through the provision of security works to a home, ranging from changing locks to the installation of an internal 'safe room'.

Housing Advice Services

Women's homelessness (and their families/ children) is a deepening, 'hidden' national crisis that is strongly linked to VAWG. Recent estimates suggest 68,000 women live in temporary accommodation and emergency shelters in Britain and the Centre for Housing Policy (2018) found that domestic violence and abuse was a near-universal experience for homeless women, with 32% attributing it as the cause. Help with housing is one of the major areas of support we provide to women across all of our services and is a big concern for women fleeing violence.

Immigration Advice Service

Our Immigration service is an important part of our Advice Service and last year supported 130 women and some of the most vulnerable women in London.

We work with migrant women and EEA Nationals with No Recourse to Public Funds 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.

Our Immigration Solicitor provides representation for particularly complex cases at Tribunals and the High Court and so our free service is an absolute lifeline for women in highly dangerous and vulnerable circumstances.

Working with perpetrators

Solace Domestic Violence Prevention Programme (SDVPP) is for people who have had a history of being violent or abusive towards a partner or family member and are willing to work to change this behaviour. The main objective of the programme is to increase safety for victims and children through reducing perpetrator's abusive behaviours. The service is open to all perpetrators of domestic abuse, regardless of sexuality or gender, the majority of attendees are men who are abusing current or ex-partners.

Men attend a 26 week rolling group programme; there is also the option of one to one work where attending a group isn't appropriate. Victim/survivors of attendees are offered support via a linked partner service, this includes advocacy, safety planning and an update on his progress through the programme.

This year the perpetrator programme helped 23 men to address their abusive behaviour and the partner service supported 36 associated victim/survivors



accommodation

A safe place to start to recover.

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

Our staff provide skilled, specialist support for women and children across our refuges and accommodation services, enabling them to address both their practical and emotional needs during this difficult time of transition. Support is also provided to ensure women and children are safe and their core needs are met in relation to finances and welfare benefits, housing - especially move-on accommodation, legal matters, immigration issues, health, education, training and employment.

Refuges

We manage 22 refuges offering 178 rooms across seven London boroughs for women and children fleeing abuse who need a safe place to stay in a crisis in order to recover from their trauma and rebuild independent lives.

Our specialist multiple disadvantage refuge in Camden offers 24-hour support to women with mental health needs and problematic substance use.

The Amari & Rhea Project

We provide second stage dispersed accommodation and specialist support services across two projects with a total number of 17 flats: The Amari Project provides 2nd stage accommodation for women who have been sexually exploited through prostitution or trafficking and the Rhea project which provides immediate temporary, crisis emergency accommodation for women and children in Southwark.

Women's Hub

In November 2019, we opened a specialist accommodation hub in Southwark for women with multiple disadvantages and special needs leaving prison or at risk of street homelessness.

22 refuges in London

178 rooms for women & families

7 London boroughs with our refuges

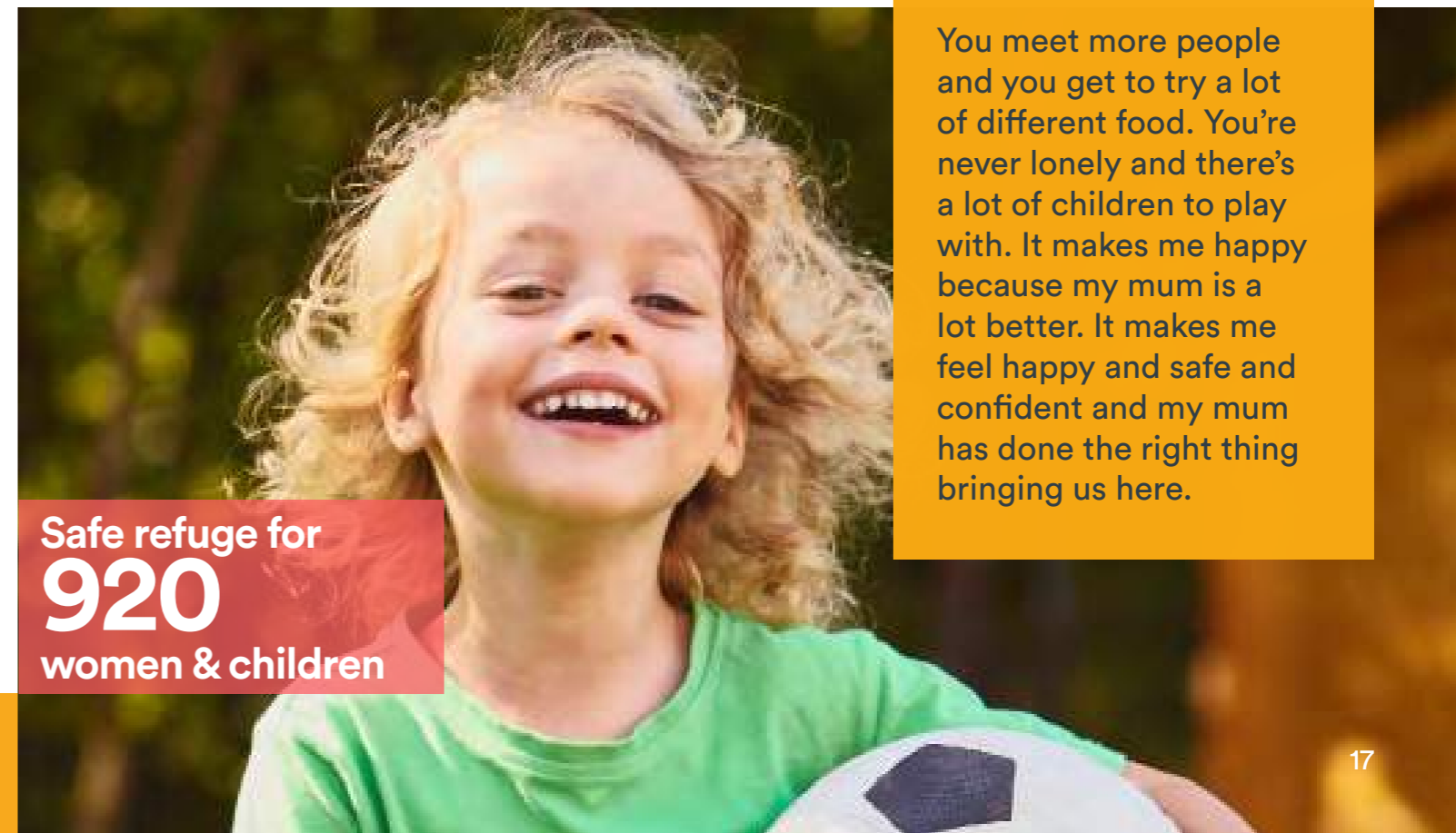
5 months

The average length of time women stay

“

Refuge is a place you come with your mum to be safe

You meet more people and you get to try a lot of different food. You're never lonely and there's a lot of children to play with. It makes me happy because my mum is a lot better. It makes me feel happy and safe and confident and my mum has done the right thing bringing us here.



Safe refuge for **920** women & children



“

I came in as a broken woman who couldn't even stand up for herself, or even speak up for myself, but today I have gained confidence, through the freedom course that I have done it also contributed in me letting go all the pain and hurt I had inside me, and I started college thanks to your help, I have a solicitor who is there for me legally and I have just been housed with my little girl.

The key sessions that I had weekly made me the strong woman I am today.

No woman should ever have to choose between abuse and homelessness.

“

I feel safe and no longer in fear when I walk through the door

I have been in the Rhea project only for a couple of months. However, by having the support, I now have full access to all the benefits which I am entitled too. I have also been issued a National Insurance number which my husband never applied for me. I never knew I could access benefits, I now have enough money to feed and clothed my children.

I am not too far from my friend who I see on a daily basis. My children are so happy. I love seeing their smiley faces when I take them to school.

I feel safe and no longer in fear when I walk through the door. My children are more relaxed and we are all looking forward to the baby being born. This is the first time since I have been in the UK I can plan for the future. I want to improve on my English and to eventually go into education once the baby is born.

My health has improved and I have more energy to do daily tasks. I am very grateful for all the support from Solace and feel safe to know they will still be supporting me until I move on to a permanent property.

77%

of women had improved positive coping strategies and have seen a reduction in Trauma and Anxiety.

70%

of women felt an overall improvement to their wellbeing after accessing refuge.

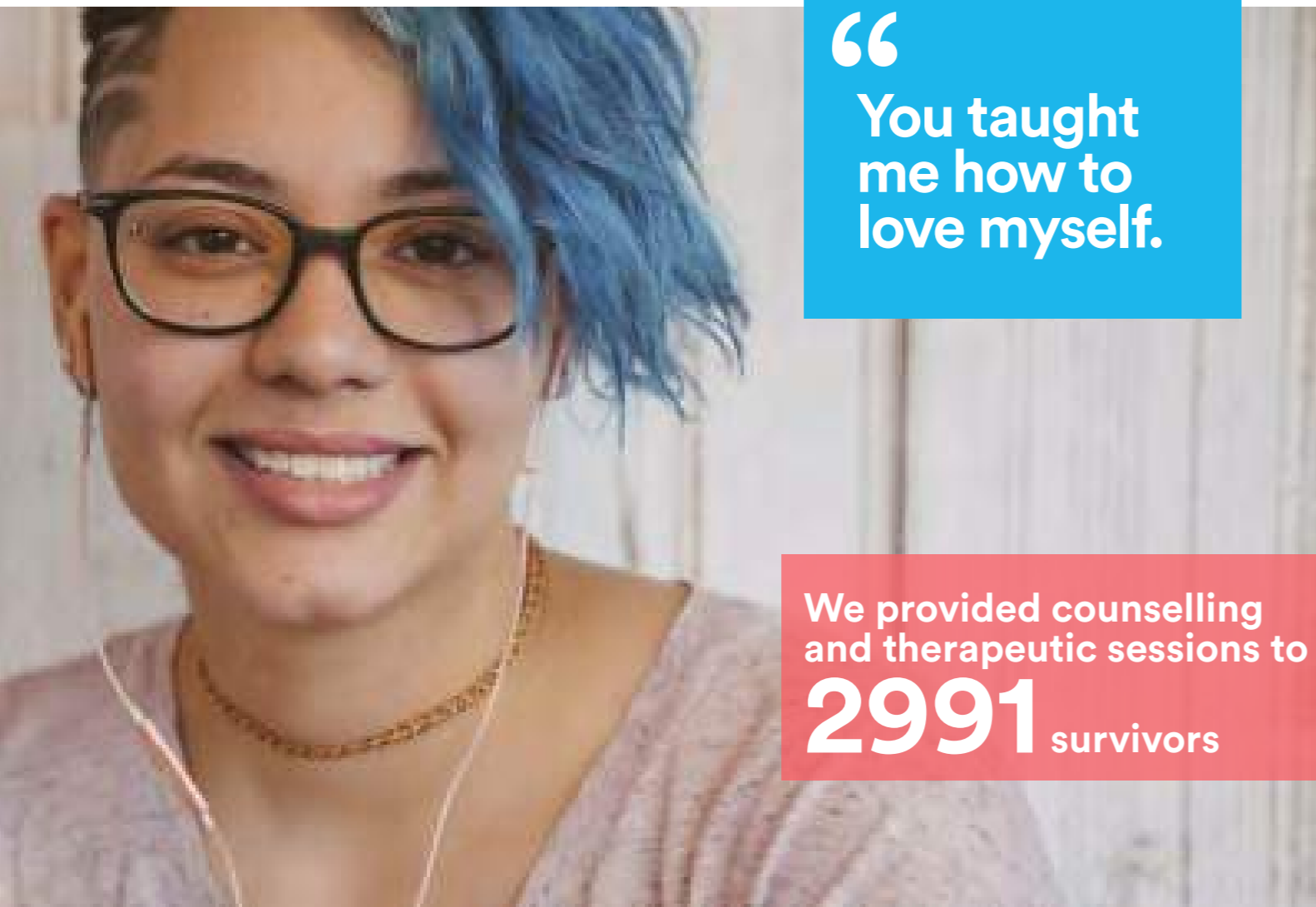
67%

of families were resettled through our support

Space to heal from Trauma.

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

Our therapeutic services use a person-centred, trauma-informed and strengths based approach to support service users to make choices for themselves. It ensures the full recognition of intersectionality and life experience and works within an anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive framework. The service supports women who have experienced domestic abuse and all forms of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG).



“
You taught me how to love myself.”

We provided counselling and therapeutic sessions to **2991** survivors

95% of women felt an increase in their confidence, wellbeing and self-esteem after attending counselling groups

3,825 of counselling hours provided

264 group sessions provided

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 Camden.

Ascent Counselling Service: Offers one-to-one counselling to victims/survivors of domestic abuse and all forms of VAWG. The service covers 1 assessment and up to 15 counselling sessions. We also offer 6 sessions of pre-trial therapy.

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. A safe space to talk, listen and be heard, while gaining emotional support. It gives women the opportunity to share

experiences and information, explore and understand the impact of domestic violence and/or sexual abuse, and the support to regain power and make positive choices.

Holistic therapies

We run a variety of groups, well-being classes and 1-1 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 were the most helpful and enjoyable part of the therapy process, which facilitated them processing and expressing feelings and memories that were hard to talk about.



rape crisis

For survivors of sexual violence.

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.

90% of women reported improvement in coping strategies and techniques

93% of women reported improvement in expression of feelings and dealing with problems

1655 calls to our Rape Crisis Helpline providing 1-1 support

“

Solace has taught me what being a “Survivor” really means. Solace is not just an organisation that helped me overcome my horrible experience but they are the people who stayed and walked with me in my darkest times.

I am eternally grateful to everyone of them. I saw a glimmer of hope ever since the day I stepped into Solace and you will forever be in my heart. Thank you!



622 survivors supported with counselling, advocacy & group work

The Gateway is led by the Women and Girls Network and is a partnership between the four London Rape Crisis Centres (including North London Rape Crisis run by Solace) Galop, SurvivorsUK and the Havens. Solace provides specialist complex needs support: with our Independent Sexual Violence Advocate (ISVA) supporting 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.

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. On average the helpline handles 32 calls a week with 50% of calls lasting an hour. The Rape Crisis Service employs five Independent Sexual Violence Advocates (ISVAs), co-located 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.

Raising women's voices and introducing our first Patron.



“

The passion is what keeps us going

It is so important to remember the value of the work that we do. I couldn't even imagine what the impact of not having a service like ours would be. Abuse would just be everywhere, women would just be living in silence with no support.
Meera, Solace



“

Together we are powerful

As a mother, I am passionate about the well-being of children and young people. As a woman, I care deeply about vulnerable women who have been subjected to trafficking and sexual exploitation, and I am committed to helping them rebuild their lives and overcome the trauma and harm they have been subjected to.

**Simrin Choudhrie,
Solace Patron**



We wanted to amplify the voices of women who have survived violence and abuse and those that make our life-saving work happen - our staff, our volunteers and our supporters.

This year we hosted our flagship International Women's Day event at the Curzon Bloomsbury, inviting the public and highlighting the work of women in London who go above and beyond to support Solace; including Judy Kawaguchi, ex-Trustee and founder of e-Cubed and STACK Agency who have supported Solace campaigns for the last 2 years.

At the event we introduced our first ever Patron; Simrin Choudhrie, a successful entrepreneur, philanthropist and mother who is passionate about the well-being of young people and the effects of abuse on vulnerable women.

The event marked the start of an exciting phase for Solace. We will be supporting thousands more children and young people during the forthcoming year, thanks to Simrin, who through the Alara Foundation is helping to scale up our support to the most vulnerable children and young people in London.



multiple
disadvantage

Reaching more women in need.

Providing specialist, tailored services for women with multiple disadvantages and needs.

Outreach

We support women who face multiple issues in their lives, which can include significant mental health and/or problematic substance use, exiting prostitution, potential involvement in the Criminal Justice system leading to additional barriers in finding and maintaining housing and/or No Recourse to Public Funds, with finding safe accommodation and getting their immigration status regularised.



“
My life has completely turned around

I felt like I didn't have anything to wake up for in the morning, it was disappointing when I woke up each day. Since being at the refuge and moving on I feel like I have everything to live for and everything is exciting now.

66% of women accessed various health services and were better able to manage

Specialist Refuge

Our specialist multiple disadvantage refuge in Camden offers 24-hour support to women with mental health needs and problematic substance use.

Housing First

Our Housing First Project in Islington in partnership with Fulfilling Lives in Islington and Camden (FLIC) supports women with multiple disadvantages. Solace Housing First is the first project of its kind to be run by a specialist VAWG provider whereby Solace provides the specialist support to this group of women and FLIC allocates and manages the flats. Since August, we have also been funded for a Housing First Project in Westminster, funded by Westminster Council.

The Mia Project

The Mia Project works with women and with children to assist engagement in services where there are repeat MARAC and Children's Social Care referrals.

WiSER

The Women's 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 disadvantage.

The project is delivered in partnership with Against Violence and Abuse (AVA), Fulfilling Lives Islington and Camden (FLIC), Hopscotch, IMECE Women's Centre, nia and Women at the Well using assertive outreach in a trauma and psychologically informed way.





for young people

Futures free from abuse.

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

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. Young people in schools and youth clubs complete 10 AQA accredited workshops on the topic of Violence against Women and Girls. The programme engages young people in creative ways with a Champions programme supporting young people to take learning back into their communities.

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

three 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.

Lighthouse

We are part of the first innovative ChildHouse 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 is led by University College Hospital and NSPCC with Solace providing a vital role in the Advocacy team.

46% of children and young people experienced emotional abuse

1 in 4 children and young people experienced physical abuse

55% of children witnessed abuse to someone else

28% of child service users had children's service involvement

“

If it were not for you and the POW programme you delivered, I would not have had the courage to leave my abusive partner. I did not realise that I was in an abusive relationship but knew I was very unhappy. You give it a name for me and said there was support out there. Now I am staying in a Solace refuge with my children we are all safe and well.



1392 child service users were supported in Solace services



for young people

“

Consent is like asking someone for permission

It can be asking to kiss someone, touch them or have sex with them. Either way, consent should be part of them all.

Growing up safe from violence and fear.

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 Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG).

The project is led by a steering group of young women who meet regularly to decide on project priorities. The project also provides support to young people through workshops, assemblies and one to one advocacy work for those who have experienced, or are at risk of, violence and abuse.

Young Change Makers

On the back of the invaluable work with the steering group, a Young Change Maker group of young people has been set up to raise awareness of VAWG

through empowering young people 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).

CouRAGEus

We have joined together with a number of partner organisations (led by Women and Girls Network) to support BAME children and young people (CYP) 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 VAWG as well as raising the profile of VAWG with them.



We worked with **7461** young people to prevent violence & abuse

In partnership we can do more.

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

Solace works in partnership with a broad range of cross-sector stakeholders across the whole of London.

Solace has been played a leading role around VAWG and Housing in London, establishing and co-facilitating the London VAWG and Housing Group and in October 2019 we launched our research report 'Safe as Houses' at City Hall, highlighting the continued disadvantage that women fleeing VAWG face when trying to access safe, suitable accommodation in the Capital. Access to safe, suitable housing remains one of the biggest challenges for women fleeing abuse. We work in partnership to influence policy; to remove the barriers to housing; to identify solutions to women fleeing abuse being able to access safe, suitable accommodation.

Solace has continued to build upon our existing successful partnerships, as well as developing new ones, such as:

- Solace and Southwark Housing Solutions secured MHCLG funds to create a 'Women's Hub', crisis accommodation for women in Southwark affected by VAWG and street homelessness to receive safe housing with specialist support.
- Working with Connection at St. Martin's to secure funding from the Evening Standard to set up a Women's Development Centre to help identify and address the needs of homeless women at risk of VAWG.
- Securing MOPAC Tranche 4 funding for the Ascent Advice Plus to extend and enhance our existing Ascent A&C partnership
- Leading discussions with MOPAC around Covid-19 Crisis response, in partnership with Southall Black Sisters and other Ascent partners, to acquire crisis accommodation for women and children to safely flee abuse during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Ascent Advice & Counselling (A&C) Partnership

Our Social Impact Analysis identified that the Ascent A&C partnership created £6 social value for every £1 spent on its services.

Over the 8 years of the Ascent Advice and Counselling partnership we have achieved great success, working with 63,096 new users, achieving a huge range of positive outcomes such as advice and support in obtaining secure immigration status, positive living situation, improved health and well-being, increased safety and reduced risk for service users across London. We have worked in partnership with stakeholders to identify and respond to unmet needs and to provide vital, and often life-saving services to women and girls.

£6 social value for every £1 spent

“
You're my guardian angels

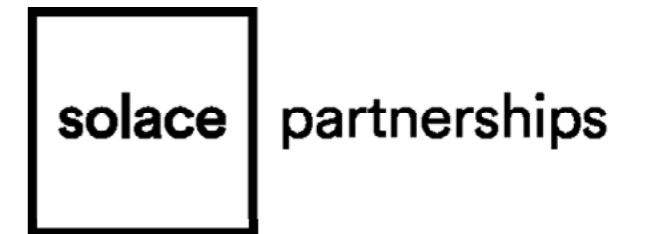
I feel so supported and loved and it's saved my life. My life was over before and now it's changed completely. I just want to say thank you to you all over and over again, you're my guardian angels.



63,096
survivors supported through the Ascent A&C partnerships



**By working together
can harness our joint
and complementary
expertise for the benefit
of women and children.**



The services provided under this strand have enabled service users to access therapeutic support, bespoke group work, specialist advice and support; in recognition of the fact that each survivor recovers at their own pace and require access to specialist services led by and for those groups, to aid women's recovery. In these times of austerity where cuts have had a major impact, it has been vital that these specialist services have been protected and have been available to all women regardless of post-code or borough connection. Our focus on standard to medium risk service users plugs an important gap as many local services are targeted towards high risk cases.

Our success in delivering this project over the first four-year London Councils Grants cycle, led to the award of another, enlarged four-year grant commitment from London Councils from 2017-2021.

During the year 2019/20 the partnership delivered the following outputs:

- Assisted 7,860 new users to access advice, counselling and support;
- Approximately 13,000 individual counselling sessions were delivered, enabling women to have increased self-esteem, confidence and wellbeing in order to move towards independence;
- 7,311 users received 1-1 advice, advocacy and casework support;
- 16 women with no recourse to public funds were assisted with accommodation and living expenses to enable them to be safe after fleeing violence/ abuse.

and achieved the following outcomes:

- 4,509 service users reported reduced fear/ greater feelings of safety;
- 1,988 women accessed legal advice and/or had an increased understanding of the law and their rights following abuse;
- 2,629 women with improved self-esteem, motivation and confidence to rebuild their lives;
- 97% of service users (SUs) were satisfied or very satisfied with the services they received.

7,860
women and
girls supported

13,000
1-1 counselling
sessions

97%
of women were satisfied
or very satisfied with the
service

Advice Line Plus

We have also secured funding via MOPAC Tranche 4 for Ascent Advice Plus, which increases the capacity of the Ascent Advice partnership and added four consultancy partners that work with LBT+, D/deaf and disabled (including learning disabled and/or autistic) women. This funding not only increases capacity but also enables women to receive support for longer thus helping them move towards Independence. The project began in January 2020 and delivered the following outputs in the final quarter of the year, as the project mobilised:

- An additional 356 calls were taken by the advice hubs,
- Casework support was provided to 124 service users,
- 32 LBT+, deaf or disabled service users were supported.

The Casa project

Launched in October 2019, the Casa Project is part of the Mayor’s Move-on Programme, funded by GLA. This project 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, to longer-term secure accommodation.

The Casa Project is a partnership within the London Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) Consortium, led by Solace, with resettlement support provided by the following members of the London VAWG Consortium: 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 a number of Registered Providers.

- Since the launch in October 2019, the Casa project has supported a total of 13 women and 8 children into 2 year tenancies with support.
- All of the women taking part in the project have ongoing support needs and are receiving 1-2-1 support from a specialist VAWG organisation.
- The Casa project is a Pan London Project which currently supports women and children across nine London boroughs.
- There are four women supported by the Casa project that have maintained employment over the pandemic / lockdown period.
- This Project helps women with ongoing support needs receive the longer term support they need in high quality, self-contained accommodation which also helps free up crisis bedspaces in refuges.

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 and attend MARACs (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences) across a number of boroughs and work closely with local services and stakeholders.

We work in partnership with Jewish Women’s Aid to deliver advocacy and support services in Barnet.

Refuge accommodation is provided through leasing agreements with Housing Associations and other partnerships. We have a partnership with Barnet Homes Ltd in Barnet to provide refuge services to women and with Asha in Lambeth to provide refuge accommodation for South Asian women.

We have continued to build on our relationship with Commonweal Housing through the Amari and Rhea Projects.

We work in partnership with Single Homeless Project (SHP) and FLIC on a Housing First service Islington and continue to work in partnership with Redthread to provide specialist support to young people affected by VAWG in three major trauma centres in London.

Solace is one of the partners on the newly launched ‘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. The project commenced in January and is expected to continue till 2022.



**We worked with
34 partners**

“ Thank you so much for my 16 weeks of counselling. I found the therapy really helpful for coming to terms with the trauma and helping me understand the effects of sexual trauma in the body and mind. I really feel your counselling has helped me understand who I am today from childhood experiences.

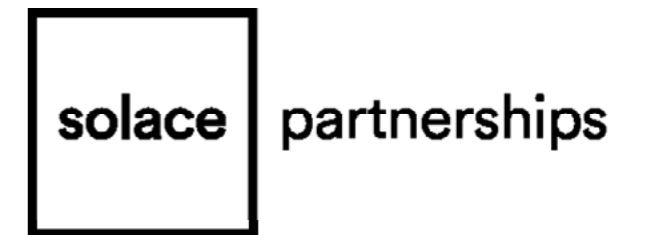
The counselling has also given me a focus to listen to myself, to be aware of when people are trying to suppress my voice and be conscious of when I feel my boundaries are being crossed.

Thank you for helping me and listening to me and for your kind words to me.



Some of our best work has been achieved by working in partnership with other organisations both big and small.

Proudly working in partnership with:



Expert training for safer lives.

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

Solace training is informed by our wealth of experience delivering innovative and holistic frontline services for survivors of domestic and sexual abuse. From helping professionals build their knowledge and skills to support survivors, to supporting organisations to better support their staff, our training ensure that more survivors will be able to get the support they need, sooner.

Last year we trained over 2000 people in key topics, such as trauma informed practice, sexual abuse, consent and healthy relationships, being a positive bystander, responding to domestic abuse in the workplace, and supporting young people affected by domestic abuse.

Our champions network continues to grow, welcoming 76 new champions who will take the lead on matters related to domestic abuse in their organisation, strengthening their

organisational response. We ran 3 networking events last year, bringing our champions together to meet, mingle and update their learning on areas around supporting survivors who have experienced complex trauma and multiple disadvantage and supporting older survivors of domestic abuse.

Our work with housing teams continues to grow, and we were pleased to work with Islington Housing, Southwark Housing and Tower Hamlets Homes to help them shape and develop their response to survivors within their community.

We also developed a new, bespoke training package on how to effectively support older survivors of domestic abuse, training 90 social workers from across North London on how to identify and effectively support elderly survivors, who are often hidden victims of abuse.

141 training courses delivered

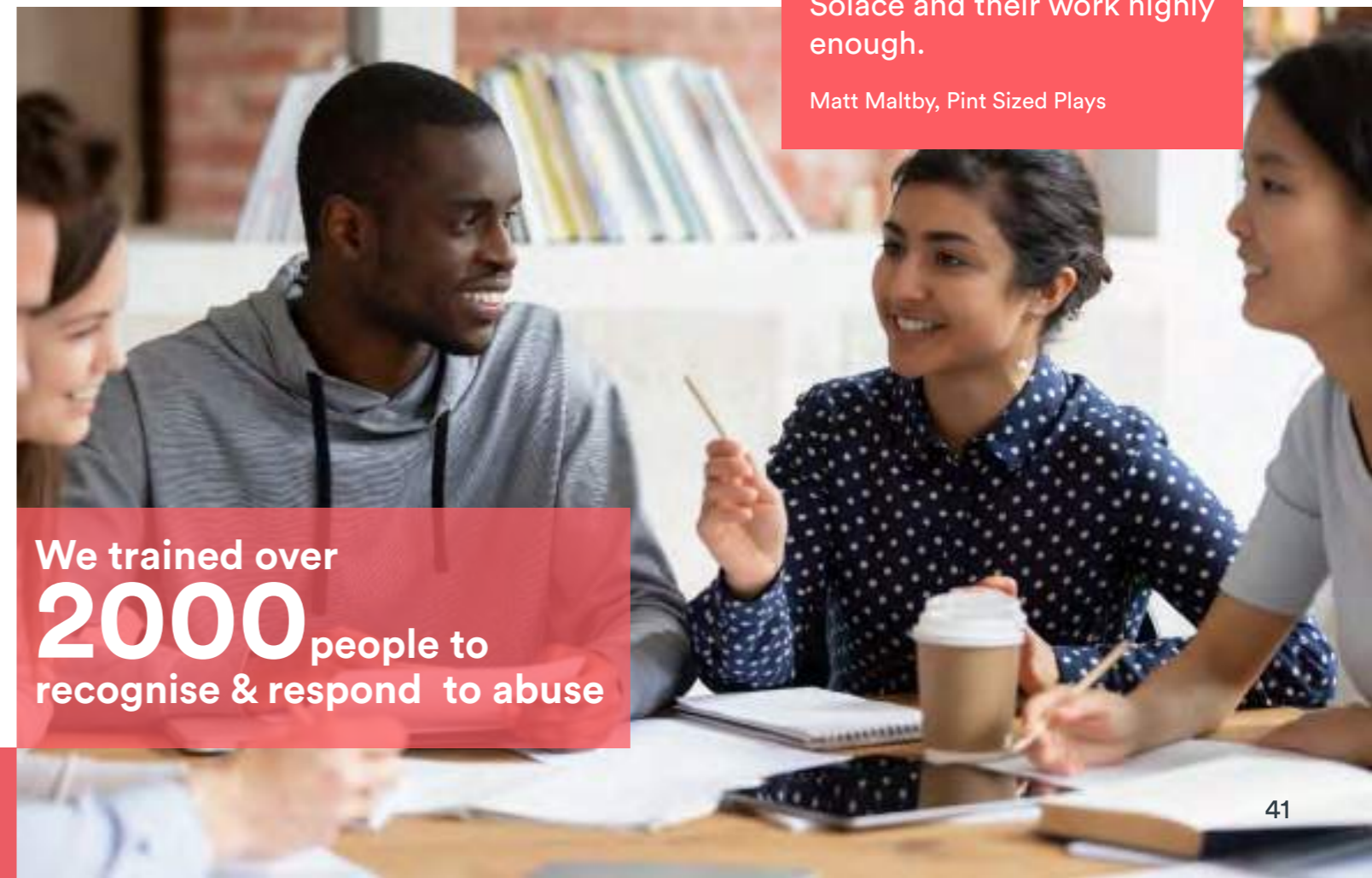
76 new champions in our network

90 social workers trained on elder abuse

“

Get involved with Solace as soon as you can. Training around violence can seem intimidating, but Solace make it feel like the most natural thing in the world. Our confidence in preventing sexual violence has risen enormously, and every step of the process with Solace was smooth, filled with kindness, patience and fun. We can't recommend Solace and their work highly enough.

Matt Maltby, Pint Sized Plays



We trained over **2000** people to recognise & respond to abuse

Raising awareness. Raising vital funds. Making change happen.



With your support we raised a combined value of £336,432 in voluntary income

Our work is made possible by the generous support and donations from individual donors, community groups and companies over the past year. We continue to receive the support of eCubed who are dedicated to ending violence and host the Rock Against Violence fundraiser and other important initiatives. We also took part in The Big Give, supported by the Childhood Trust and with the support of STACK we ran our most successful Christmas Campaign ever. We also received generous donations from James and Miriam Douglas £5000, Helen Ladele £10,000, Tudor Capital Foundation £25,000, Garfield Weston £50,000 and others who have chosen to remain anonymous.

'Nothing' Christmas Campaign

Thank you to all our donors who contributed to the Nothing Christmas campaign, which was developed by STACK Agency. STACK has supported Solace's work by developing exciting and engaging campaigns which highlight areas of Solace's work.

The 'Nothing' campaign was Solace's most successful campaign and shone a light on the fact that many women and children are forced to flee to our refuges with absolutely nothing, they only have the small amount of supplies that we can give them. Karen Bryson lent her voice to the campaign which really bought to life the issues that women fleeing abuse face.



For women with nothing your donation means everything

#WomenWithNothing



Exposing Hidden Abuse with Twitter & STACK

We ran a high profile awareness campaign with Stack Agency and Twitter, Hidden Abuse, to expose the dangers of emotional abuse and coercive control. Through ground-breaking use of the Twitter platform technology we shone a light on what is often the hidden nature of domestic abuse, raising awareness and helping people spot the signs of abuse to get the right support, sooner.

We offered information, help and support to anyone affected by hidden abuse through a dedicated web page. Through the campaign we reached over 15million people and engaged 2.5million. In response to the campaign more than 700 women reached out and spoke up on twitter about the abuse they had suffered, many for the first time, and many more got in touch with our Advice Line to get vital support.

Shows for Solace

Our staff also make a huge contribution to raising funds and our Immigration Solicitor organised two fantastic comedy fundraisers for Solace raising valuable funds for our work. Both evenings had brilliant female comedians playing to packed houses. Supporters Alison David and Sarah Michael produced two stunning sold-out performances of the Vagina Monologues. They worked with their incredible cast who have supported Solace for the last 3 years.



Digital Transformation Launch

In 2019 Solace identified the need to increase digital communications and connect with women to provide the essential support they need. We launched Solace Futures; a campaign which emphasised the impact of domestic abuse and the need to change our services so we can help more women access support, faster.

Mayor of Camden's Charity of the Year

We were proud to be the Mayor of Camden's Councillor Maryam Eslamdoust's choice of Charity of the Year. She is the first Iranian-born woman to be elected to public office in the UK, and the first Camden Mayor to give birth in office. During her time as a Councillor she has seen lives damaged by domestic abuse, whether physical or emotional, while in office she challenged the stigma of domestic violence and encouraged people to speak out.

Thank you to Maryam for raising over £7,500 in support of our Camden Services!



Safe as Houses Exhibition

This collaborative exhibition looked beyond bricks and mortar to investigate stories of survival from unsafe homes around the world.

The project took place in a derelict South London house during International Women's Month, and showcased vital work by three female photographers documenting issues of domestic abuse across Italy, Turkey and Brazil. Produced in collaboration with survivors, their projects share stories of resilience that have emerged from unsafe homes.

The exhibition raised awareness of the crucial services that Solace provide to survivors of domestic abuse.

Campaigning for safe, secure & suitable housing for survivors

As part of Solace's long-term commitment to putting housing at the top of the agenda for women fleeing violence and abuse, we published The Safe as Houses Report in 2019. This pivotal research showed how London's housing and homelessness systems are dramatically failing women and children. We called on London change-makers to commit to 3 key actions that would materially improve the situation of all survivors made homeless through abuse.

The Safe as Houses report was successfully launched at a City Hall conference hosted by the Mayor's Office for Police and Crime (MOPAC) with a keynote address from the Mayor's Office and the Domestic Abuse Commissioner. The conference was a collaboration with key partners including Southall Black Sisters, Latin American Women's Aid, Public Interest Law Centre, Hopscotch Asian Women's Centre, Stay Safe East, Safer London, Southwark Council and Commonweal Housing.



London Mayor visits our Casa Project

"Leaving an abusive relationship takes a huge amount of courage and strength, so the last thing victims of domestic violence should face after making that decision is homelessness. That's why I'm proud to be working with Solace, One Housing and other partners to help survivors access the homes and the support they need to rebuild their lives. I want every woman and girl to be safe and to feel safe wherever they are in our great city – and the Casa Project is a key part of making this a reality." Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London



Our thanks.

We would like to thank all of our supporters during 2019/20, including those who have chosen to remain anonymous.

Amanda Abbington – ITV Catchphrase
BBC Children in Need
Barclays
Benesys
Box
Cloudesley
Coveo
Deloitte
eCubed
Enfield Chase Rotary
FreakBoutie
Garfield Weston Foundation
Genesis Cinema
Global Women's Summit
Haringey Small Grants Programme
Hollick Family Foundation
Irish Government Emigrant Support Programme
Irish Youth Foundation
K & L Gates
Karen Bryson
London Brewing Company
Mayer Brown
Mayor of Camden
People's Pieces
Safe as Houses Exhibition
Sikisa - Stand Up 4 Wwomen
Sister & Co Skincare
Spencer Charitable Trust
St Mary's Church Islington
Stepstone
Taylor Vinters
Team Umbrella & the Alliance of Independent Events Agencies
The Childhood Trust
The Play that Goes Wrong
Trust for London
Tudor Capital Foundation
V-Day Camden: Alison and Sarah
Women's Institute De Beauvoir

And thanks also to our commissioners without whom we could not deliver our life saving services for the women, children, young people and men across London.



Our income & expenditure.

In the face of a challenging and uncertain funding landscape, we've successfully grown our income and continue to be in a stable financial position.

Income

For the financial year 2019/20, total incoming resources grew by 20.8% from to £9,595,443 to £11,586,962. This is primarily due to new contracts and additional funding secured during the year across our provision, prevention and partnership services. The charity has also been successful in retaining its multi-year contracts and grants despite the continued difficult financial landscape with public sector contracts.



Income grew 21% to over £11.5 million.

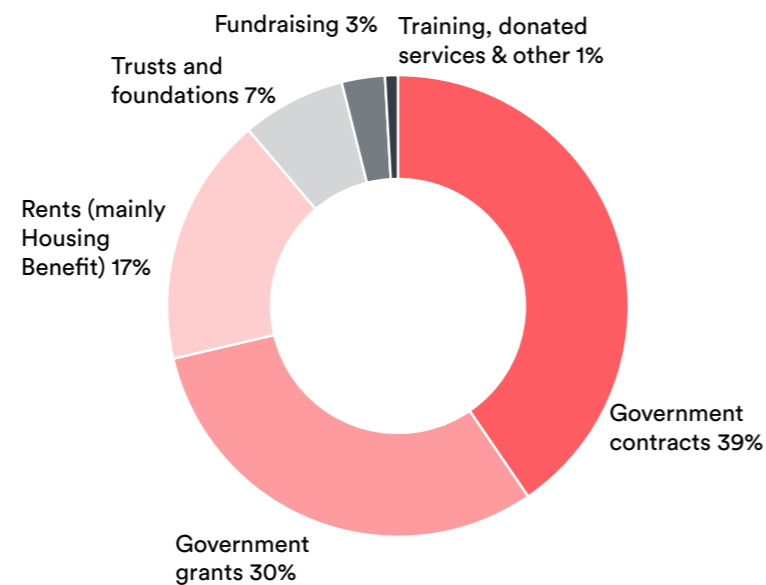


£424 is the average cost for each service user

Expenditure

Growth through new activities has correspondingly increased resources expended by 22.3% from £9,506,892 to £11,626,761. The staff needed to deliver these services has resulted in an increase in staff costs of £1,168,458 from £6,200,701 to £7,369,159 and represents the core resources needed to deliver charitable activities.

Solace remains focused on tight cost management and supplier contracts are reviewed periodically for better value for money propositions. The blended average annual cost per service user remains competitive at £424 (2018/19: £417).



Read our full financial report here: solacewomensaid.org/finances

Our Trustees.



Ms. Helen Hughes
Chair



Ms Natalia Schiffrin
Interim Secretary
Interim Vice Chair



Ms. Jennifer Bosiaci
Treasurer
Retired 12/12/19



Ms Jasbir Sandhu
Appointed 26/09/19
Treasurer Appointed
12/12/19



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25/06/19



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Resigned 30 /05/19



Ms. Heather Mah



Ms. Margaret Osimen
Co-opted 27/06/19
Appointed 12/12/19



Ms. Elizabeth Rawlings
Resigned 27/06/19



Ms. Kirsty Telford

Violence against women and girls ends here.

Solace Women's Aid
Registered Address
Moore Kingston Smith
Devonshire House
60 Goswell Road
London, EC1M 7AD

Advice line freephone | 0808 802 5565
Administrative phone | 020 7619 1350
Email | info@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 3376716

solace