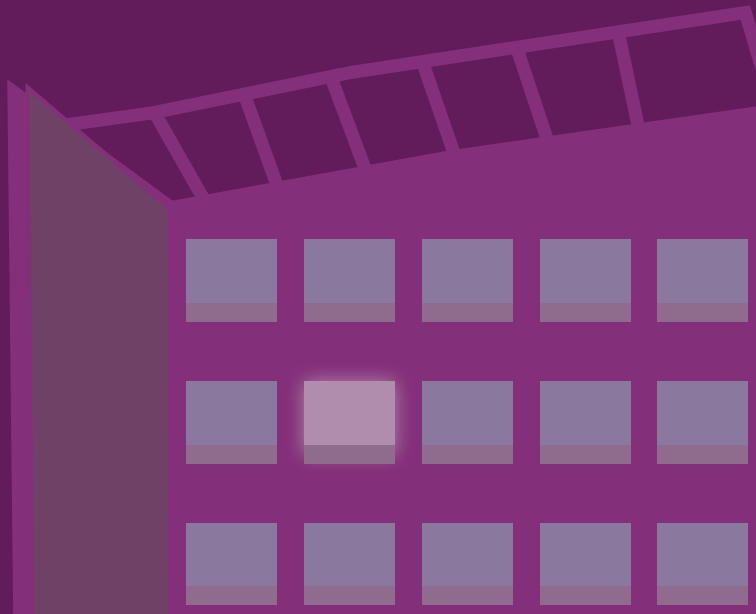




# Bromley & Croydon Women's Aid

Working to end domestic abuse

## Impact Report 2019/20



# WELCOME

In 2019/20 we expanded our reach for domestic abuse survivors and recommitted to pushing mental health and wellbeing for survivors up the agenda, as well as continuing to deliver our established, high quality services across the board. We developed the Surviving Well project in partnership with Bromley Well and BLG Mind to support more women who are at risk of 'falling through the cracks' due to the impact of domestic abuse and intersecting multiple disadvantage; we saw more women with complex needs accessing our services than ever before. We believe the right combination of support for a woman recovering from abuse is crucial, and good mental health and wellbeing underpins it all and enables her to start the recovery journey. Strong, accountable partnerships across the sector are also invaluable in the fight to end domestic abuse and we were fortunate to work with a great selection of businesses, local authorities, statutory services and voluntary sector organisations and other VAWG organisations this year including The IRiS Project, The Mayor's Office and Bromley Well.

## THE SUPPORT JOURNEY

### One Stop Shop

The One Stop Shop is a free drop-in service that BCWA offers to survivors of domestic and sexual abuse. We co-ordinated the services of other professionals such as family law solicitors, housing officers, the police and immigration solicitors within the community. In total, we had 392 survivors attending the service to seek free and confidential information and advice on domestic abuse, legal matters and housing issues.



### Support Line

Our support line provides free, confidential, non-judgmental advice, referral and signposting to women and young people. This service is run by experienced staff as well as trained volunteers, Monday-Friday from 9am-5pm. This year we had more than 550 calls from women and professionals calling our support line to seek guidance, advice, support and information.

## Outreach

We provided quality advice and support to 133 women and their children throughout the year via our Outreach service, which provides help and support to recovering survivors by phone or face to face. We aim to empower women in their recovery journey and offer emotional support along with referral and signposting to internal and external services to meet individual's needs such as solicitors, housing, counselling and health.

## Support Groups

We facilitate Support Groups under our Keys to Freedom programme which received 512 referrals in 2019/20. The groups provide peer support, work towards increasing self-esteem and gaining a greater understanding of power and control in abusive relationships, together with the effects of domestic abuse on their children. This is a crucially confidential and safe space for women to share their experience of domestic abuse in the group setting.



## Advocacy Service

We have three dedicated Independent Domestic & Sexual Violence Advocates who provided user-led, trauma-informed crisis intervention and advocacy to survivors at high-risk of domestic and sexual abuse across the London Borough of Bromley. We helped 466 women referred by the police, children and adult social care, the NHS and other voluntary and statutory organisations. The IDVAs provide high quality support by carrying out risk and needs assessment/safety planning as well as advocating on behalf of the survivors to external agencies using the empowerment model. They also support the survivors practically at family and criminal courts and represent cases at multi-agency meetings. Particular focus of this work is on survivors with additional needs and strategic co-locations with services across Bromley to facilitate easy access to the service.



## NRPF & EEA Support

This vital service offers bespoke support to women with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) and EEA nationals fleeing domestic abuse across our communities. The project offers advice and support to the most marginalised survivors with no secure immigration status. We are proud to have supported a total of 90 women last year from these groups and with our help many have secured their and their children's immigration status in the UK to rebuild their lives.

## Surviving Well

In 2019, BCWA delivered a new and innovative project aimed at supporting women who were experiencing anxiety, stress or depression as a result of domestic abuse, in partnership with Bromley Well and Bromley Lewisham & Greenwich Mind. The pilot project provided one to one support as well as peer support groups to survivors to improve their self-esteem and confidence, manage their emotional and mental well-being and be able to create safer and healthier relationships in the future. We supported 102 referrals to this project which gave many women safe and confidential space to share their experience and skills with one another.

## Japanese Project

This unique BCWA project offers outreach advice in Japanese to survivors of domestic abuse who need help and support around domestic abuse, family law, immigration issues, child contact, housing, Hague Convention etc. in the UK. Working with the Japanese Embassy, this innovative project for Japanese women living in the UK supported, referred and signposted more than 44 survivors to local specialist organisations, solicitors, refuges, Children and Adult Social Care services.

## Complex Needs

We provide support to women and children with complex needs such as mental health and substance dependencies. This can include disabilities, health needs of children, drug and alcohol addictions, complex legal situations and child safeguarding needs, to name but a few. Through this vital work, we are able to offer a tailored and holistic service for women and children with high support needs who may otherwise struggle to access specialist help. The experience of sustained abuse has a profound and long-lasting impact on survivors. Many survivors present with mental health issues including depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder as a result of the abuse. Some present health issues due to the sexual and physical abuse suffered, others misuse drugs and alcohol as a coping mechanism.

## Safebeds

We offer unique safe temporary accommodation service to families with No Recourse to Public Funds who are fleeing domestic abuse, which allows a bed in a refuge to be funded temporarily in an emergency by a local authority – usually referred by social services. A specialist Refuge Officer follows up with bespoke support to women once in refuge as women with NRPF face many additional barriers to support and recovery.



## REFUGE

Bromley & Croydon Women's Aid have provided refuge accommodation in Bromley since 1975. Our 9 refuges are run by specialist, committed, experienced staff teams to very high standards, with the invaluable help of volunteers. We provide safe temporary accommodation for women and their children (boys under the age of 12) who are experiencing domestic abuse or who are at risk of abuse, and can currently accommodate up to 54 women and up to 66 children throughout Bromley & Croydon.

A specialist Refuge Support Officer provides help with independent living, life skills, emotional support, health and wellbeing, support for children, housing, education, training and employment. They will also assist in securing protective measures, provide support at court visits and signpost to specialist mental health and drug & alcohol intervention services; along with other issues relevant to each case. Typically, a woman stays in refuge 6 months, at which time permanent housing and moving forwards become the most crucial part of the process. Our Resettlement Officer is uniquely skilled and will meet with the women to provide support, advice and assistance on their journey when leaving refuge. This can include learning to manage their personal budgets, tenancy sustainment and general planning to live their lives independently and with the agency that was denied them by a perpetrator. Women often arrive at the refuge very traumatized due to what they have experienced, with many having suffered coercive control, physical violence and emotional torture for years. BCWA provides a safe refuge for them and their children, emotional and practical support, but most of all a home.

# CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICE

Our Child Support officers provide activities and support for children living in refuge who have been affected by domestic abuse. This includes one-to-one sessions for children to help them express themselves in a safe space, and in-house activities such as after school clubs and play sessions. These group activities encourage the children to develop strong friendships with other children living at the refuge.



We also provide outings during the holidays, encouraging mothers and children to actively participate and reduce isolation. These are also a great opportunity for the families to enjoy places and activities that they have never visited or done before. For example, our beach day was something that the children had wanted to do for a long time and had never had the chance. Our ethos is centred around play so having fun, new experiences is essential to help children to develop emotional strength and resilience.

We give emotional and practical support to young women who are survivors, or those at high risk of experiencing domestic abuse. We advocate on behalf of the young woman, support her to attend appointments, or simply provide a listening, non-judgmental ear. Our work with young women aims to raise awareness about domestic abuse and toxic relationships, and helps them to realise that the abuse is not their fault. We work with them to encourage the belief that they deserve respectful, healthy relationships; and empower them to make safe, informed choices.

We also focus on prevention through educational programs in schools and youth settings. We believe that raising awareness is essential to try to prevent the occurrence of domestic abuse. Our programs reflect on the experience that often blame is put on the survivor for what they could have done differently, rather than holding perpetrators to account, which is crucial to tackling domestic abuse in society.

# CHAIR'S REPORT

2019/20 was a busy and challenging year for BCWA and its staff have worked exceptionally hard to continue to deliver its services and support victims of domestic abuse. This was particularly true for February/March 2020 when the charity prepared for a global pandemic, which would not halt domestic abuse. In fact, the impending lockdown and restrictions of movement would have a devastating effect on women and children living with perpetrators of domestic abuse resulting in growing demand for services towards the end of the reporting year. The needs of individual women continue to guide BCWA to provide valuable and tailored support throughout the year.

The challenge of delivering services in 2019/20 against a backdrop of decreased public spending and a highly competitive funding landscape has seen BCWA continue to develop its partnerships and deliver targeted interventions to those experiencing multiple disadvantages, including women with mental health support needs, those with no recourse to public funds (NRPF) and women from BAME communities. In February and March 2020, the Charity worked swiftly to make unprecedented adjustments to its work to end domestic abuse. BCWA has been able to promptly and efficiently adapt its approach to ensure the consistent delivery of services, whilst keeping service users, staff and volunteers safe, moving many of its community-based services online and implementing safety measures and support mechanisms for families residing in our refuges.

BCWA has continued to recognise the particular needs of women who experience intersecting inequalities including those with no recourse to public funds and BAME women. We piloted targeted interventions over the past year and are pleased that the successful pilot has resulted in longer term funding for targeted BAME support services in Croydon. Our NRPF support services have meant that we have continued to support and accommodate a high number of women from this client group in our refuges compared to the London average.

As we enter a new year, we continue to focus on ensuring the delivery of our services despite the unfolding pandemic. We are mindful that the long-term impact of the pandemic on survivors and the sector will be significant. At BCWA we are buoyed by our achievements in 2019/20 and are positive about what we can and will deliver in the following year. Stepping into Jane Ward's position as Chair of Trustees during this period and supporting BCWA during such a challenging time has been a privilege. As Co-Chairs we would like to thank Jane, all Trustees, the Executive of BCWA and all staff and volunteers, and all of BCWA's funders for their commitment during an unprecedented year.

Amy Wareham and Elaine Esteen, Co-Chairs of Trustees



# TRAINING & AWARENESS

2019/20 saw the continued development of our stable of specialist training sessions on all levels of domestic abuse, coercive control and elder abuse, alongside our work training professionals for the London Borough of Bromley. Our Training & Awareness Officer was able to deliver sessions to a range of community groups, local partners, voluntary sector organisations, businesses and partner agencies.

*“Being given the opportunity to move to a safe place to live for both myself and my son has been life changing. If this service wasn’t available I wouldn’t have found the courage to leave my ex-partner and would have lived in fear and pain my whole life.”*



## FINANCIAL SUMMARY

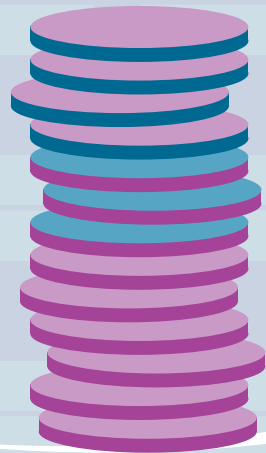
# £1,339,245

Total Income

Statutory Funding: £423,634

Trusts, Foundations  
& Voluntary Income: £281,513

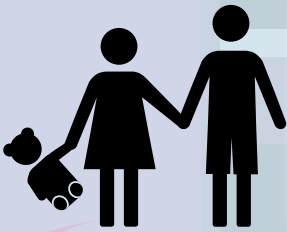
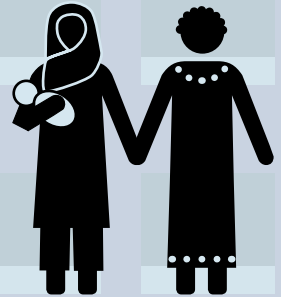
Rental Income: £634,098



# OUR PEOPLE

What we do simply would not be possible without the incredible team behind it, that continues to work together to support women, grow the organisation and end domestic abuse. Our staff team bring a huge range of experience and skills to the team, with a dizzying tally of years in the sector among them, and a huge commitment to what they do – be it providing top notch support, care and advice, teaching and empowering or developing the organisation.

Our volunteers are a highly valued part of BCWA, giving their time and resources tirelessly to assist our clients and staff. They play an invaluable role in our community and refuge-based services, as well as helping with administrative work, fundraising, coordinating donations and helping with resettlement. In 2019/20 we continued our volunteering programme with 35 volunteers supporting us. Through this they helped us offer accompanying and befriending services to our clients; and we gave them an opportunity – as survivors of domestic abuse – to give back, utilising their unique insight to support other women.



*"The Child Support Officers have helped me rebuild my children's confidence and self-esteem, and helped me set boundaries as a parent. They have gained so much happiness and confidence while being in the playroom."*

*"I am a new person compared to when I first entered refuge and BCWA had a big part to play in that."*



## OUR IMPACT

# 3,930

young people  
attended workshops



# 1,572

clients supported

356 women attended  
our One Stop Shop

134 clients accessed  
specialist services

270 women & children  
in refuge

54 bed spaces

429 women at high risk  
supported

168 women attended  
support groups

779 women supported in  
the community

51 families resettled

## Kim's Story

*"I was referred to BCWA via the police after unfortunately being in a particularly bad relationship which ended up in the police being involved, it was something that I never would have willingly sought help for or even acknowledged the situation I was in, I was hiding a problem from everyone.*

*BCWA first called me to offer a support mechanism away from the police, from then on my IDVA has helped to rebuild me and make me believe that things will get better. Knowing I had her always at the end of the phone or a weekly coffee meeting kept me going, she listened so patiently to everything I had to say and reassured and validated my feelings, before this I felt I was going insane.*

*Without the support of my IDVA at BCWA to get me to where I am today I suspect I may have slipped back into the old relationship, I would have felt there was no other option and also that how I felt and things that were happening were not a real problem, this would have ended very badly for me, I'll be eternally grateful for everything she has done."*

# THANK YOU

We firmly believe that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world, so we'd like to say thank you to those committed people, who have given to BCWA in myriad ways this year: The London Borough of Bromley and the London Borough of Croydon for their ongoing support and trust placed in us; our grant funders, the National Lottery Community Fund, BBC Children in Need, MOPAC, The Mayor's Young Londoner's Fund, The London Community Foundation, The Tracey Emin & Deutsche Bank Centenary Fund and the Japanese Embassy – as well as countless community groups and individuals who have supported our work through the year and beyond.



**CROYDON**



Embassy of  
**Japan**

**MAYOR OF LONDON**  
OFFICE FOR POLICING AND CRIME

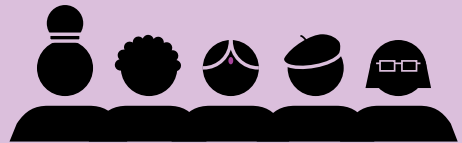


**The London  
Community  
Foundation**



## Bromley & Croydon Women's Aid

Working to end domestic abuse



[www.bcwa.org.uk](http://www.bcwa.org.uk)

020 8313 9303

[info@bcwa.org.uk](mailto:info@bcwa.org.uk)



@bromleycroydonwomensaid



@BromleyWA



@bromleycroydonwa

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