



BROMLEY & CROYDON
WOMEN'S AID

Impact Report

2021-2022

Bromley
& Croydon
Women's Aid

Working to end domestic abuse

>> Table of Contents



01

Welcome
Message

02

The year in
numbers

03

Advice &
Support

04

Specialist
Services

05

NRPF
Service

06

Housing
Services

07

Supporting
Children

08

Young
People

09

Breaking
Down
Barriers

10

Equality,
Diversity &
Inclusion

11

Community
Volunteering

12

Funding &
Partnerships

>> From Our CEO

2021/22 was a busy year for Bromley and Croydon Women's Aid with many ups and downs. Coping with a second year of the COVID-19 pandemic was challenging, with the number of survivors needing help remaining at an all-time high, and more women needing support with mental health following increased isolation through the pandemic. We worked hard to develop our services to meet these needs and with the help of a COVID recovery grant and expert support from 'My Sister's Place' we started development of a therapeutic service to support the mental well-being of our service users, a service we hope to see fully established in the next financial year.

BCWA achieved registered provider status with the Regulator for Social Housing paving the way to the development of our housing services with a £2.75m loan from Social and Sustainable Capital for move-on accommodation, which we look forward to implementing in 2022/23.

Last, but certainly not least, we are proud to have been recognised for our impact by the prestigious King's Fund GSK Impact Award 2022, having been announced as one of their winners in March 2022.



"I feel much more relaxed and less anxious, I know I deserve to have the relationship I have now- a healthy relationship, thank you for checking up with me and not giving up"



- Outreach client



The Year in Numbers



Our services impacted
4,700
people

We assisted
768
women at high
risk of harm

We supported
91
women with No
recourse to
Public Funds

484
People visited
our One Stop
Shop for advice

Our frontline
services helped
2,427
women

We supported
86
BAME women
in Croydon

With the FJC
we accredited
23
GP Practices
in Croydon

We listened to &
advised
2,092
people on our
support line

We add value to all our
funded services, in 2022

2,388

women accessed
services we funded
ourselves from
donations & other
income

75
Clinicians were
fully trained by
Advocate
Educators

We grew our
income by
23%

253
Women attended
support groups
for peer support

➤ ➤ Advice & Support

It was a busy and challenging year for our Outreach services, with a big increase in both referrals and women with mental health issues coming forward for support. Additionally, bottlenecks in others services, especially housing, meant that assisting women into safe accommodation was difficult. However our team was able to work together to manage and intervene in high risk cases quickly to provide support and safety planning.

Our team were able to increase our support groups to add evening groups, giving more women the opportunity to attend, as well as staffing our support line to cover a 30% increase in calls across the year. We worked in partnership with the DRIVE perpetrator project as well as the FJC and local housing solicitors to provide direct advice to clients.



IRIS Project (Croydon)

BCWA continued to delivery the IRIS project throughout 2021-22 in partnership with the Croydon Family Justice Centre (FJC). IRIS (Identification and Referral to Improve Safety) provides primary care staff (GPs and practice staff) with domestic violence and abuse training & consultancy, easily accessible support and a referral service for women experiencing current or former violence or abuse from a partner, ex-partner or family member.

It is based on the understanding that primary care, as part of effective multi-agency working, has an important role to play in identifying women affected by domestic violence and abuse and facilitating their access to appropriate support. However, because primary care staff do not always have the knowledge and confidence to fulfil this role, domestic abuse frequently goes unidentified and opportunities to support women are lost.



I always thought it was normal what I was going through and that he had to have the power, thank you for opening my eyes and giving me options

- Client referred via IRIS

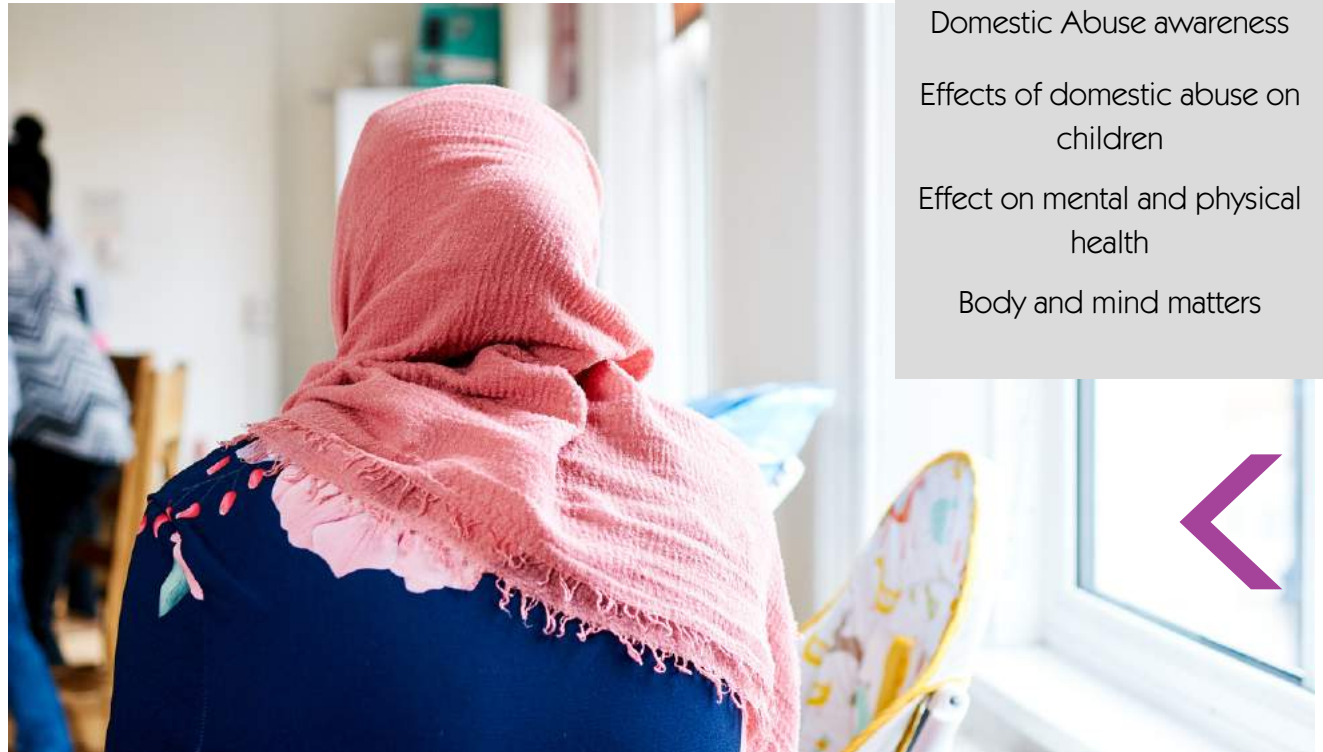


>> Specialist Services

BAME Project

Over the last six years, BCWA has worked tirelessly to remove barriers to accessing services for black and minoritised women. We focused on tailored support for BAME women in Croydon as this vulnerable group has the highest rates of domestic abuse in this borough in particular.

The project was set up following engagement with the local community and a successful pilot project ran in 2018/19, funded by the Mayor's Office. This resulted in 111 BAME women accessing 1-1 support and attending 'coffee morning' style support groups.



Sessions Included:

Self-esteem

Confidence building

Domestic Abuse awareness

Effects of domestic abuse on children

Effect on mental and physical health

Body and mind matters

Successful support groups were run for 86 women in the community, which helped them understand the recovery process and could make informed decisions regarding their own (& their children's) safety and welfare.

What we learned

That this client group needs consistent support and advocacy to counteract the numerous barriers they experience on a day-to-day basis. BCWA are keen to seek further funding and expand from a support group and to include one to one outreach provision.

>> No Recourse to Public Funds

BCWA's focus on supporting women with no recourse to public funds (NRPF) was a result of clients being turned away from multiple other refuge services. BCWA have established themselves as the first point of call for advice and refuge services for this service user group.

The service offered regular one-to-one support on various issues according to each individual's need. This also extended to practical support such as assisting and advocating at appointments and court.

Tailored support offered around:

Housing Education
Finances Mental & physical health
Employment
Immigration status

What we learned

BCWA have built up a wealth of knowledge and first-hand experience through working with this vulnerable group. This year we continued to spotlight the multitude of barriers that women with NRPF face and highlight how vital it is to find more efficient ways to support women and continue to provide the highest quality of service.

BCWA are working towards an OISC application in light of the complex needs this service user group face, to allow us to offer immigration advice to clients in future.



I couldn't leave my husband because he told me he would cancel my visa. His family in Afghanistan would find me and kill me. He told me there is no help for people like me in this country and the police want to send me back. BCWA and [my support worker] saved my life.

- NRPF Client



>> Housing

Refuge | Move-On

Refuge

Our refuge services remained fully open throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, providing a safe place for women and children fleeing domestic abuse to restart their lives.

The easing of covid restrictions presented new challenges as other agencies to which many of our clients are referred (and many funders too) were still not operating at full strength. Waiting lists for housing and other services grew and pandemic related delays impacted legal proceedings, access to solicitors and GP/health care availability.

BCWA's team was able to provide enhanced practical support to clients arriving at refuge and get creative when advocating on behalf of clients, to ensure they could access the services needed to move forward.

Moving On

Our clients tell us that one of the biggest challenges for women leaving refuge accommodation is finding suitable, affordable housing ('move-on' accommodation). With council waiting lists unreasonably long, women and children are often forced into dilapidated, unsafe properties that can be miles away from the new support system they have gained through refuge and support.

As a result of seeing this for many years, BCWA took the decision to expand its' housing activities to include move-one accommodation, as well as refuge or crisis accommodation. BCWA's collective experience and local knowledge means we are well placed to offer follow up domestic abuse support in addition to living space.

Registered Provider

In summer 2021 BCWA became registered social landlord (with the Regulator of Social Housing) which brings with it increased opportunities for funding and development of our housing offer, and supports the expansion of our independent portfolio.

Safer Futures

In November 2021 BCWA secured a multi-million pound social investment loan to fund the purchase of 11 dispersed flats in Bromley & Croydon. These will help to provide move-on accommodation for families leaving refuge.



I was very depressed. I started to live here, I felt more confident and better about myself.

- Refuge resident



>> Support For Children

It was the best! we talked about our friends and feelings and had fun.

– Child participant, Helping Hands programme

The helping hands programme works with very young children who have witnessed abuse, empowering them to receive support and learn healthy conflict resolution & problem solving, as well as helping them learn how to express strong feelings without violence and understand the impact they have on others.



When a child arrives at refuge they are usually are very traumatized and frightened, and the impact of the domestic abuse they have witnessed is evident. Children will often start testing boundaries or present symptoms of depression, and it can be very difficult for them to express their real feelings.

Once they start to engage in the after-school activities and play therapy arranged by our team, they discover they are not alone in the experience. Our experience show us that this universal feeling is often first step in recovery. Moreover, the environment that we provide allows the children to feel safe and comfortable.

In addition to this, creative activities promote self-expression which can provide a path to understanding their feelings, which has a significant impact on their ability to recover emotionally.

Outings Included:

The Horniman Museum

Stansted Park

Kidz Zone

The seaside



>> Our Work With Young People

BCWA's young people's service supports young women aged 13-25 to rebuild self-esteem, after abusive situations, helping them recognise that the abuse is not their fault and that there is help available to support them. The programme supported 122 young women in 2021-22.

The Covid-19 pandemic created a barrier to providing support face-to-face, a real need for this client group, and the year saw our team find creative ways to see clients in the community or on wellbeing walks to provide the in-person experience that makes all the difference.

In partnership with the Attic theatre we ran a series of empowerment workshops, aimed at young women and girls who have experienced domestic abuse or unhealthy relationships. A skilled creative facilitator used games, creative writing and drama to increase confidence, self-esteem and celebrate identity with the group.



"[The staff] are not like teachers, they are more like friends. I wish the groups were longer because I really think they helped us to talk about things we don't want to discuss with caseworkers"

- 14-year old support group attendee

BCWA's pioneering 'Relationship Influencer' programme worked with 23 young women to teach them key facts about what is OK in a relationship and what to do if they are worried about someone; then raise awareness among their peers.

>> Breaking Down Barriers

This year we saw the 5 year-long Breaking Down Barriers Project draw to an end. This crucial funding allowed us to extensively investigate the barriers that vulnerable groups of women face, as we opened doors and created safe spaces for women and children who otherwise may not have been able to access support.

The complexity of these women's lives, the long-term impact of the trauma they have experienced and their vulnerability to further adversity, means that there are no quick fixes. BCWA will continue to advocate for vulnerable women fleeing domestic abuse, particularly those who fall through gaps and experience multiple disadvantages.

72 WOMEN WITH COMPLEX NEEDS

were assisted to move into refuge, provided with a variety of tailored support and assisted with moving into independent accommodation. This is more than double the number of women we aimed to support at the outset of the project.

340 YOUNG WOMEN AND GIRLS

were supported through outreach work and peer support groups. As the service became more established, the number of service users accessing support more than doubled from year 1 (44) to year 4 (99).

38 WOMEN WITH NO RECOURSE TO PUBLIC FUNDS

were assisted to move into refuge, provided and holistic, trauma-informed support around immigration, integrating into society and assisted with moving into independent accommodation.

2532 PROFESSIONALS

were trained over 5 years, with an average of 32 sessions per year.

89% OF WOMEN

who were supported by the complex needs officer say they know more about domestic abuse now AND feel much more confident.

89% OF WOMEN

who were supported by the complex needs support officer have stated that they 'strongly agree' or 'agree' that they felt better about themselves at the end.

100% of the NRPf women supported by BCWA were moved on from refuge and went on to live independently

Feedback

"I just needed someone to listen. I wanted someone to help me figure out what I can do and make of myself. No one ever had faith in me and that pushed me back. [BCWA staff] looked past my addiction and saw me as a person".

- 31, alcohol dependent client

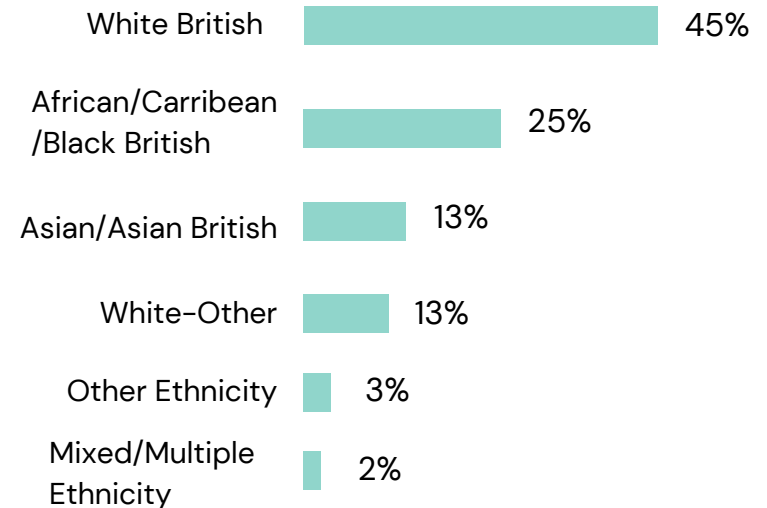
>> Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

Our work is based on building meaningful, supportive, enduring and respectful relationships with women from all cultures. We cannot do this without a strong commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. BCWA's approach is to try to make sure that EDI is central to everything we do and informs both our services and our organisational culture.

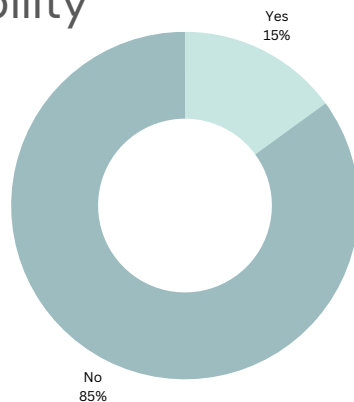
Our goal is to develop and deliver consistently inclusive programmes, projects and services that support and bring together survivors of domestic abuse and their children, and facilitate empowerment and recovery. We believe this enables best practice domestic abuse support, hope this will make everyone's experiences richer, and ultimately lead to more inclusive communities and sector best practice.

Service User Demographics

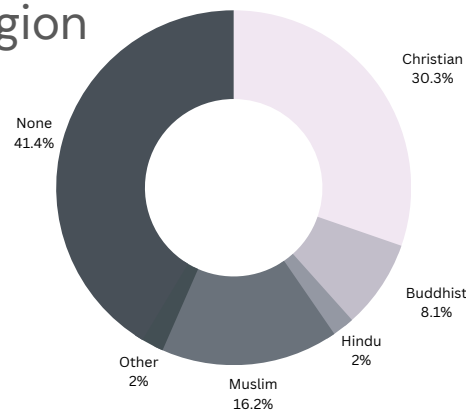
Ethnicity



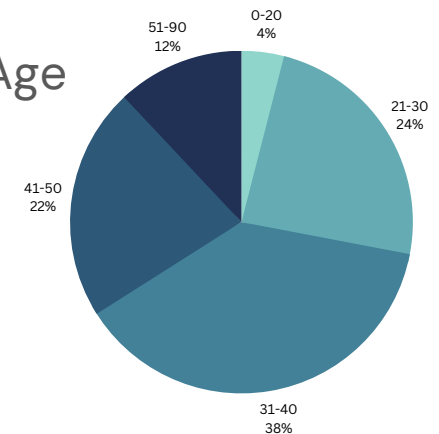
Disability



Religion



Age



Over the last 45 years, the support of the local community has been a central part of our story. We love it when churches, clubs and other local groups foster community spirit and support our work at BCWA with both financial or in-kind donations, and we look forward to developing relationships with new businesses and local groups in the coming year.

Volunteers are vital to our charity and to the victims and survivors we support, and as such, we truly value their commitment, skills, experience and enthusiasm. We rely on volunteers in all areas of the organisation from supporting clients in refuge, assisting at the One Stop Shop, facilitating Support Groups, accompanying clients to court/other appointments and answering BCWA domestic abuse helpline.

The COVID-19 pandemic reinforced the importance of community and how small acts of kindness can make a really big difference. The level of commitment shown by all our volunteers has been just amazing.

Community <<

Case Study

Foresters Financial employees lend a helping hand

Using a grant of £2,000 offered by their employer's corporate responsibility scheme, employees of Foresters Financial lent a helping hand to the victim-survivors of domestic abuse leaving our refuges into unfurnished housing.

The group of colleagues purchased essential items, such as cooking utensils, bedding and toiletries and then met at St Peter & St Paul Church in Bromley to sort the donations into 'Resettlement packs' for the women and children supported by BCWA setting up home.

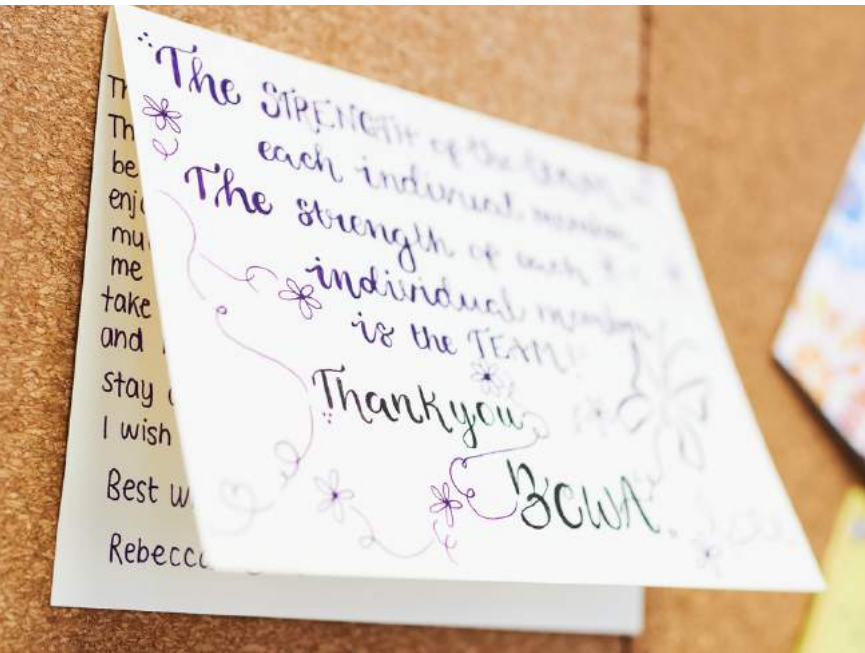


I had such a great time fundraising. It was my way of giving back to a charity close to my heart and I made friends whilst doing so!




- Fundraising volunteer



>> Funders & Partners



Income

-  **Statutory income**
£610,088
-  **Rental income**
£648,698
-  **Trusts, foundations & Voluntary**
£297,088

Partnerships

This year, more than any other, has stood out as being a year of collaboration.

Bromley & Croydon Women's Aid is a member of the Women's Aid Federation of England, we attend MARACs (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences) across both boroughs of Bromley and Croydon and also work closely with many local services and stakeholders, including the DASV partnership board and Bromley Homelessness Forum.

Partnerships are central to our approach to provide a comprehensive range of specialist support to meet the diverse needs of women and children experiencing domestic abuse. A big thank-you to all of our partners who have helped us to make a positive impact to the lives of hundreds of women and children this year.

Thank you to our funders:



CROYDON

**GREAT
LONDON
AUTHORITY**



Embassy of
Japan



MAYOR OF LONDON
OFFICE FOR POLICING AND CRIME




Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Bromley Well



**The London
Community
Foundation**

Photography
by Lisa
Bretherick

lisaimages.com/

