



Cardiff Women's Aid supports survivors of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence (VAWDASV) and they are one of the 100 UK charities to be awarded a £100k donation from Barclays, which will help them to support women and children who have experienced violence and abuse in Cardiff.

Barclays launched their 100x100 UK COVID-19 Community Relief Programme to support COVID-19 relief work in local communities, and charities from across the UK were invited to apply to become a recipient of one of these donations. The programme, which forms part of Barclays' wider COVID-19 Community Aid Package, focuses on supporting UK charity partners who are meeting the immediate needs of people in our communities, including low income families, those facing financial hardship, isolated elderly people and key workers.

Cardiff Women's Aid provides a 24/7 crisis service including emergency accommodation (refuge), support and advocacy, aftercare and recovery through ongoing support to survivors of domestic abuse and sexual violence to reclaim their lives and reach their full potential.

Women and girls who have experienced any form of VAWDASV are at increased risk of abuse and trauma during the pandemic. Those who are trapped at home with their abuser experience increased risk of physical, mental and emotional harm with no relief through usual sources such as work, social activities, or education. Survivors of abuse who have escaped remain at risk of further trauma due to the removal of safety nets and support networks, and lockdown replicating the effects of abuse.

Deb Bannigan, Interim CEO for Cardiff Women's Aid also said: "As predicted by many women's organisations, we saw an increase in women reaching out to us during the COVID-19 pandemic. Reports rose of intensified abuse, increased control and the virus being used as a tactic of gaining and maintaining power. In 2020, we also saw a greater number of women who are high risk and/or high need, meaning they require more intensive and longer-term support from our crisis support service. Domestic abuse and violence against women doesn't stop for a pandemic - and neither do Cardiff Women's Aid, or our partners, Bawso and Llamau. We were able to adapt our service incredibly quickly under extreme circumstances and we haven't stopped supporting women and children. We are incredibly fortunate to have received this donation from Barclays, who are providing us with a lifeline that will make it possible for us to continue to be there for women and their children at a time when they need us more than ever before."

Cardiff Women's Aid will be using this grant from Barclays to sustain and grow their online aftercare and recovery services as they become increasingly important to women who have experienced trauma, poor mental health and anxiety. They will continue to provide and improve online services, enabling access to flexible online therapeutic recovery and advocacy services at the point of need. These services include: maintaining and developing a range of online therapeutic activities, such as yoga, mindfulness, creative writing and fitness; peer support groups and developing and expanding our online survivors' forum whilst continuing to explore accessible digital solutions.

Women who have attended our workshops have told us how much they enjoy them, that they hope the classes continue long term, that it is helping them during a difficult time, and that the classes have helped them to restore confidence and self-esteem. Here are some quotes:

'Thank you ever so much for getting me through lockdown'.

"Thank you for the workshops. Being on my own, it will be a life-line. Look forward to Wednesdays"

Local MP, Jo Stevens, provided the following quote of endorsement: "I'm really pleased to hear that Cardiff Women's Aid have been awarded a grant from the Barclays Community Relief Programme. This funding will go a long way towards supporting Cardiff Women's Aid and ensuring they continue their critical work in providing essential services to women across Cardiff."

To find out more about Cardiff Women's Aid please visit <https://cardiffwomensaid.org.uk/> or follow us on social media: Facebook - @CardiffWomensAid, Twitter - @cardiffwaid, and Instagram - @cardiffwomens\_aid, and download our iOS/Android App - 'Cardiff Women's Centre'.