

SPEAKING OUT:

RECALLING
WOMEN'S AID
IN SCOTLAND



"Went for that job"
"What happened?"
"They said I wouldn't be able to
manage the heavy weights."

History Safe: A Toolkit for Preserving the History of Women's Aid in Scotland

Introduction

Women's Aid groups have carried out ground-breaking work and contributed much to Scotland's landscape over the last forty plus years. While the network continues to support women, children and young people, contribute to legislation and policy change, and transform attitudes around domestic abuse, the Speaking Out: Recalling Women's Aid in Scotland project has allowed us to take essential time to pause and reflect on the history of the movement. The project, running from January 2016 to December 2017, has sought to uncover, celebrate, and preserve the history of Women's Aid in Scotland through collecting oral history interviews, creating a travelling exhibit, cataloguing the Scottish Women's Aid archive collection, writing a publication, and producing a learning resource for young people.

The archive collection held at Glasgow Women's Library has underpinned the project and allowed us to take concrete steps in preserving the documentary history of Women's Aid in Scotland. It is important that we realise the crucial role of records in preserving this history and that we continue to add to it by collecting contemporary material so we have a record of what is happening now and into the future. This will ensure the next forty-plus years of the network's important work is remembered and recorded (although we hope there is no need for Women's Aid in forty years!)

This toolkit has been designed to help local Women's Aid groups identify material to be kept and added into the Women's Aid Collection in the Archive at Glasgow Women's Library. By bringing together material from all local groups, it creates a more complete and cohesive look at the movement and ensures that all perspectives are represented.



Why is it important to keep records?

'No documents, no history'

Mary Ritter Beard,
Historian and Archivist

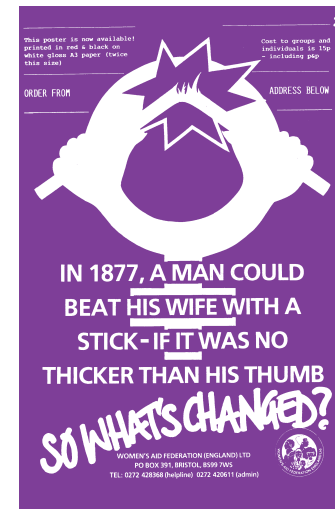
Women's Aid groups have always produced lots of different types of records. They tell the stories of the day-to-day work, the activities, the decisions, the struggles, and the achievements of each individual group. These materials reveal the complex history of the Women's Aid movement in Scotland and contextualise its current position – showing where we have come from and where we are now in the fight against domestic abuse. Continuing to collect and conserve Women's Aid materials will ensure that this history is kept and valued.

Women have largely been ignored in the historical record and are very much underrepresented in archives. Therefore, projects like Speaking Out that are dedicated to preserving our “herstory” are vitally important. Community groups and archives can work together to make sure that women are no longer ignored and erased from history by preserving history as we create it.



Items we would like...

- Annual reports
- Newsletters
- Promotional material such as posters, pamphlets, leaflets
- Press releases
- Press cuttings about your group, with name of newspaper and article dates
- Meeting minutes (such as AGM meeting papers and reports and minutes of executive and committee meetings with correspondence and other papers that have supported significant decisions by the group)
- Correspondence
- Oral history interviews that your group has conducted
- Artefacts such as badges and banners
- Photographs
 - Photographs are an interesting addition to archive collections but are only useful if they are accompanied by information about the people in them or the event where they were taken
 - There are also issues around privacy so only deposit photographs when you are certain it is okay for them to be accessed by the public



Items we do not want...

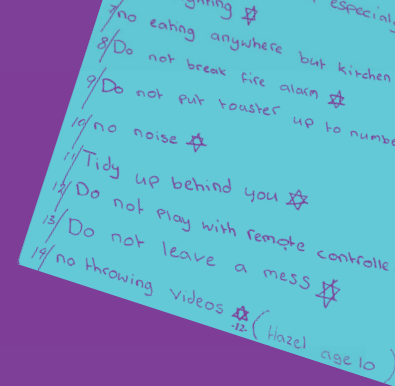
- Photocopied material
- Material printed from the Internet
- Service user records and anything you would consider sensitive or private
- Multiple copies of the same thing

How do you store the material before depositing it in the Archive?

There are some simple steps you can take to ensure that records created by your group are well looked after, allowing for their long term preservation.

- Put aside 2 copies of documents, if possible
- Avoid using staples and paperclips, as these erode over time and cause damage to paper, and place papers together in folders
- Do not store material in poly pockets, plastic binders, etc.
- Try to date material but don't write on material in pen (even on the back). Use pencil instead and write in an inconspicuous place, or, even better, keep a separate document that dates material and provides other important, contextual information

- Do not laminate material
- Limit handling
- Make sure material is clean and dry before putting into folders and boxes
- Place photographs in envelopes to avoid scratching and fingerprints
- Store material in its own dedicated box to avoid mix-ups
- Place boxes in clean, dry areas with a consistent temperature and avoid places that are humid and damp such as basements



How do you make a deposit to the Archive?

Depositing material into the Archive at Glasgow Women's Library is simple. There is a section on the website with information on how to donate including a link to the donation paperwork [www.womenslibrary.org.uk/explore-the-library-and-archive/donate-books-or-archive-material/]. Print it out, fill it in, and mail with the documents you are sending. If you have a lot of material, or you have oversized items, get in contact with us to discuss how to send it.

If you have any questions about the donation or are unsure in any way about anything discussed in this toolkit, the email address for the GWL archivist is on the website [womenslibrary.org.uk/about-us/our-team/library-staff/], or you can email the general email address info@womenslibrary.org.uk.