



# **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.



#### CWA. A Brief Heretory

MAALE LE	Dition free	i Stot y
in 1973 a number of women came together to discuss the need to provide	came into the refuge returned to their abusive partners because they couldn't	hostile, attitudes from the Police, DHSS and Housing officials, and Hosbit Senice
sale, supportive space to women and		servison
	But there was nowhere else for	By 1980 Clasgow Women's Aid was
of that meeting grew the Interval House	abased women in Clasgow to tarn to	affiliated to the Scotlish Women's Aid
Croup which, within the space of a year,	for help and, for the next three years,	
were able to establish Claspow's first	Interval House continued to straight on	
return for abused worsen.	without adequate space or funding.	
Incheir early attempts to gain support	Throughout this period the refuge was	
	run entirely by unpaid workers, with the	Funding had incressed dramatically with
	exception of a social worker (a founding	G.D.C.'s Housing Dept. and the Social
	members who was only employed part-	Work Dept contributing £11,000 and
	time for a few months due to the lack of	£11,570 respectively, although this was
wife buttering, and were even inhed	financial resources. In 1977 a Housing	ist worfully inadequate. With the
why they were not setting up a refuge.	Co-ordinator was employed and the	opening of a new office and the
forbatteredimes. The level of ignorance	search for new premises began.	
around the issue of domestic violence,		
and lack of concern for women who	the mildir agends and tome local	
were being abused, was quite deunting. However, drawing inspiration from	authorises were beginning to recognise	
the recently established Chirwick	and appreciate the work being done by	
	organis such as Chlorick Women's Aid	
	and interval House. In 1975 the Select	full-time, and four partitime, paid
for a temporary refuge which would be	Committee on Domestic Violence, set	
are on a set bein back and interval	up by the Covernment, received a	
	aubmission from the Interval House	
its dears to women in February 1974.	group which had be then, become	
Withtheastissecrofa £1,500 Glasgow	Clasgow Worsen's Aid. CWA made.	600 worsen weking accommodation
	several proposals to tackle the problem.	were turned away due to lack of space.
rabed through fundrabling, litterval		
	+the removal of the source of violence	educating the public and gave 60 talks
62 women and 143 children in its first.	*removing women and children from	to a variety of groups during the year,
yest.	Violent situations	but an application for funding for an
It was clear from the outset that the	*providing/undoto intablish adequate	information/publicity worker was
need for refuge far esceeded the space.	refuge space	Akhaush COSIA's recommended
available. By the end of 1974, the	*providing women in reluge with secure permanent accommodation	Source for refuge space showed that
original 3 apparament house had been	vimpreving financial provision for	
connected to the vacant flat next door to create a seven roomed refuge with	women and children	places, by 1984 GWA had only 53, less
	<ul> <li>-hvising the children plabused women</li> </ul>	
telet. Although this was a major		year the 84 women and 137 children
	In to findings, the Select Committee	admitted to refuge were being catered
escape rouge for women fleeing violence.	recommended a minimum of 1 refuge	for by # paid workers and a dozen or so
the retage was far from satisfactory.	space per 10,000 population and this	
Sted in a building in the Corbets	figure was subsequently accepted by	secure and workers were encouraged to
that was due for demolition. It was	the Consection of Scottish Local	
located underneath a relivery line in an		to ensure that they had a sound
area intested with rate. The living	Women's Aid groups throughout	
	Britain had been instrumental in	rights.
	lightlying Government for lightation	By this time the workers had
	selorin to protect the rights of abused	established fairly good working
were 10 women and 29 children in the	women, and children, le, The	relationships with Hausing, DHSS and
relage and numerous crises occurred,	Matrimonial Homes Act (1975) - Bull	Social Work staff yet, despite the

violen epinion in the community of California in the california in	who are allenging to scope or being 2000 consequently and consequently and content and the con	The control of Control of the contro	controlled of a server of reference controlled on the controlled o
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REPRINTED FORM HAMILTON WOMEN'S AID NEWSLETTER

Kate Gowl

sent by a US







### What kinds of records are archival?

Records that are archival are often called documentary heritage and this covers a wide range of materials that may be in many different formats. Photographs, annual reports, newsletters, pamphlets and leaflets, press cuttings, meeting minutes, correspondence, videos, sound recordings, and electronic files are all worthy of preservation.

## What items should you collect now?

Original copies of materials created by your Women's Aid group should be retained and deposited into the archive. Photocopies are not usually kept, neither is material that could be found elsewhere. For example, publications from other organisations that are likely held by another institution or could be found online should not be kept. Documents that have personal information, such as names and addresses, of service users should not be deposited, due to privacy issues.

#### Items we would like...

- Annual reports
- Newsletters
- Promotional material such 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









New hope for women drinkers

### 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.