SPEAKING OUT:
RECALLING WOMEN'S AID IN SCOTLAND

Legacy, Learning and Evaluation Document

Contents

Introduction

The Project

Speaking Out: Recalling Women's Aid in Scotland was a two year Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) supported project created to record, preserve and celebrate the history of the Women's Aid movement in Scotland. The project was a partnership between Scottish Women's Aid (SWA), Glasgow Women's Library (GWL), Women's History Scotland (WHS) and the University of Glasgow Centre for Gender History (GUCGH) and was conducted over 2016-2017.

The core activity of the project was the collection of oral history interviews conducted with people associated with the Women's Aid movement in Scotland over its 40 plus years of history. These interviews have been deposited at GWL as part of the SWA archive collection (both original sound files and the accompanying transcripts of interviews have been deposited).

Work was also undertaken to properly catalogue the SWA archive collection and begin the process of digitising material thus making the collection more accessible to the public and far easier to use.

In addition to this, a variety of outputs were developed using the material gathered by the project. These included:

- A touring exhibition
- A young people's learning resource
- A publication
- A short documentary film
- A History Safe toolkit for local Women's Aid groups providing information on why it's important to preserve the history of the movement, what material is important to keep and how to deposit material with the SWA collection at GWL.
- An extensive programme of events was developed and delivered by the project team in locations all around Scotland.

Further information on all of the project outputs can be found on our website: speakingout.womenslibrary.org.uk

All of the above was completed with the involvement and efforts of a large group of volunteers. Volunteers conducted oral history interviews, both audio and film, completed transcription, collaboratively curated and installed the exhibition,

catalogued and digitised the SWA archive collection, assisted in development of the learning resource and publication, wrote blogs for the website, and participated in events, including giving talks and taking part in panels, all around Scotland.

The Legacy Event

Before the conclusion of the project, the steering group and project team gathered to discuss the successes achieved and challenges encountered in relation to particular elements of the project, including; the project outputs, volunteering and partnership working. We explored what contributed to the successes and what their impact has been and, for the challenges, how they arose, were then mediated and could potentially be avoided in the future.

We also considered what the legacy of the project is and reflected on the ongoing roles of the project partners in relation to the material gathered and produced and potential for further work to maintain, enhance and promote outputs. We also looked at opportunities for tying in future work and continuing volunteer engagement.

We revisited the original 10 objectives of the project, as outlined in the project's HLF Activity Plan, and evaluated whether we successfully achieved them, along with discussing any ideas about how we could have improved attainment of the project's aims.

Finally, there was a period of reflection where the steering group and project team shared any final thoughts about what the project has meant as a wider initiative and also its more personal impact for those involved.

Our purpose in holding the Legacy Event and creating this document was to distil learning from our experience of delivering Speaking Out, both for ourselves to contribute to end of project evaluation and for others to learn from our experience. Every project is an opportunity to refine the approach to the various tasks involved and learning from others is a key element of project planning. Through sharing this document we hope to pass on essential lessons learned and inform future development of practice.

Project Outputs

Successes

The number and quality of resources gathered and developed was identified as a success in its own right, but, in particular, those in attendance felt that the creation of such a fantastic archive of oral histories was a significant achievement of the project. The generation of such important primary sources, in keeping with the ethos both of Women's Aid and of feminist history, is something the steering group and project team were very proud of. Capturing women's voices and women telling their own stories is critical in the face of women's experiences being so often excluded from the historical narrative. We hope that the oral histories will be used for a wide range of purposes, from academic research to awareness-raising and training within the Women's Aid network.

Another success was having the time to devote to the SWA archive collection at GWL. Out project archivists said that it's often rare, without this type of specifically funded project, to have the luxury of an extended period of time to devote to making archive material accessible, in terms of organisation, cataloguing and digitisation. Working with the collection to hold events and engage the public with the material was also highlighted as particularly worthwhile.

The level of engagement at events all around Scotland, including the level of engagement with local Women's Aid groups, was recognised as another central achievement. The exhibition was viewed by over 44,000 visitors across Scotland and this was, in part, due to careful selection of venues. For example, Dundee Central Library hosted the exhibition for only two weeks but it is the most visited library and Scotland and saw almost 18,000 visitors during the period of display. Connecting with local groups to create artistic material for inclusion in the exhibition was also instrumental as this fit in with what a number of service user support groups regularly plan as part of their programme. The large number of events delivered and participated in around Scotland was also key to engaging diverse audiences and creating networks helped with this, for example with Soroptimists International.

A further key strength of the project has been its success in connecting history with the present by effectively using a historical perspective, and historical material, to address a pressing *current* social issue. By highlighting what has been achieved in Scotland through the efforts of Women's Aid workers and volunteers, the huge social importance and personal significance of these achievements has been very clearly demonstrated and has underlined the need to maintain these efforts and further consolidate this vital work in the future.

Finally, the project outputs were successful in engaging and garnering recognition from powerful people in Parliament and elsewhere, galvanising support, which

translates into influence and, most of the time, an opportunity to advocate for the rights of women. This was a specific target audience the project identified and events were delivered in locations to maximise attendance (e.g. Parliamentary reception to launch project film).

Challenges

The oral histories were also identified as a major challenge of the project in terms of their processing. Volunteers were originally given the option of completing either a summary or a transcript when, realistically, transcripts were needed for all interviews. It also would have been beneficial at the beginning of the project to acknowledge that volunteers would be unlikely to complete all transcription and set aside funds to have this finalised professionally. Formatting was also a tricky part of this volunteer activity as the project team did not want to put people off by imposing a rigid style guide, however, this resulted in the situation of transcripts all looking completely different, making them more difficult to use. This was handled by night shift staff from Scotland's National Domestic Abuse and Forced Marriage Helpline agreeing to take on formatting of transcripts but the project team felt a more moderate approach could have been taken in providing volunteers with a few guidelines. Additionally, it was suggested that perhaps there could have been a volunteer pool devoted solely to transcription, although this does raise ethical issues around transferring of interviews, and also would mean that the time involved with the project for volunteers conducting interviews would be significantly shortened.

There were also issues around getting those interviewed to sign off on their transcripts. Despite consent forms being signed at the time of the interview this was an extra step that those involved in the project felt was very important and in-keeping with feminist principles. Quite often women wanted to edit or redact parts of their interview and in three cases decided they wanted to withdraw their interviews altogether. There were also a number of women who simply stopped engaging and never signed off their transcript. The project team felt this was likely due to the length of time between the interview and transcription being completed (sometimes over a year) and a shorter lag time would have helped with the above problems. We felt it was also important to stress with those interviewed that 'thorny issues' are a part of the story and that having three women (out of 61) decide not to deposit their interviews was not a disaster and that, while there is certainly learning to be gained from this, there is a strong likelihood it would have happened anyway.

Reaching audiences not traditionally associated with the Women's Aid movement was also a somewhat challenging aspect of the project. The project team tried to include diverse individuals in events to overcome this and all those in attendance felt the learning resource for young people will be key in reaching large numbers of people who otherwise would not engage with the themes of the project and that we

might see even more engagement beyond the life of the project. Of the large number of individuals who visited the touring exhibition, obviously not all were associated with the Women's Aid movement. Going forward, the exhibition will be used by local Women's Aid groups and it was agreed it would be a good idea to encourage groups to select, if possible, venues for display that receive a lot of visitors from the community (e.g. community centres, libraries etc.) or a lot of passing foot traffic (e.g. disused shops that can be used as pop-up venues). We also had a discussion around the importance of asking how this issue relates to the outcomes we were seeking and why we were actually trying to reach specific audiences. Were we trying to reach them to discourage domestic abuse, to go and support their local Women's Aid group? We felt we were primarily sharing women's stories with the goal of bringing women to the movement, whether that is bringing new women such as the project volunteers or bringing women back who may have been engaged in the past and drifted away, and in this we felt we had succeeded.

Delivering outputs by agreed deadlines was raised by the project team as a challenge, however, the steering group reiterated that it's important to realise that dates in the Activity Plan can sometimes be arbitrary and will most likely shift for very legitimate reasons. For example, it made more sense for the publication and project conference to be moved to later in the delivery timeframe as we needed to wait for material to be gathered.

A further challenge was the appropriateness and logistics of getting the touring exhibition to rural areas. Mid-project the steering group requested the project team look at getting the exhibition to one of the Scottish islands but at this late stage it was not feasible in terms of locating a venue. We feel this was a missed opportunity and if thought had been given to this at the beginning of the project it could have probably been achieved. We also discussed that what is suitable to do in the Central Belt of Scotland is not always the right thing for rural areas and that relying on population centres for disseminating your message is a default model that needs to be examined more closely. Other methods that do not depend on someone physically walking through the door should be explored, for example more developed online resources or connecting with mobile libraries. While the steering group and the project team feel the exhibition was very much a success we would encourage others to think carefully about building projects around outputs that work in all locations.

Our final challenge was the concern that without dedicated staff in post the resources created by the project will be underused. Those in attendance thought ways to address this would be to make sure that resources are easily accessible, either physically or online, and ensure there is a clear outline of who has responsibility for resources and procedures regarding any associated logistics (e.g. the touring exhibition). We also felt it was critical to make the connection with wider project partner staff as to why the project is important and how it relates to ongoing work in order to ensure promotion of resources is seen as a priority.

Volunteering

Successes

One of the main successes of the project has been the engagement, enthusiasm and passion of the volunteers and their involvement and commitment is worthy of particular recognition. Their accounts of their experiences of the project will, undoubtedly, be inspiring and instructive for those considering participation in similar projects in the future. Clearly defined roles and flexibility in terms of time commitment were both contributing factors to the success of the volunteering programme.

In addition, feedback from volunteers told us that they felt very supported in their roles. This is extremely positive as there were concerns that, due to the large number of volunteers and their geographic dispersal around the country, volunteers would not experience a high level of support. The fact that this was not the case is a result of the project coordinator making volunteer coordination a major priority and being willing to engage with volunteers outside normal working hours.

Challenges

Volunteers fed back that they would have liked more frequent opportunities to come together with other volunteers. Volunteer development was certainly a challenging aspect of the project and most likely suffered because it was a huge job but only part of a much broader role. Ideally, volunteer coordination would have been a role in and of itself and it is important for the HLF to recognise that if volunteer involvement is to be included in projects resources must be provided to ensure that support is in place for volunteers.

Organisational responsibility of volunteers was also a challenge as it was split between two project partners, SWA and GWL. This resulted in volunteers having somewhat different experiences and, to an extent, non-standardised evaluation. Feedback from the archive volunteers at GWL showed that they felt quite separate from the project. Bringing all volunteers together more frequently may have helped with this divide. Volunteer recruitment faced additional challenges due to SWA not having a volunteer policy in place at the beginning of the project. In such an instance, it is important to seek advice from project partners with more experience, as we did from GWL. There was a lack of clarity around how involved the project coordinator should be with project volunteers at GWL as they were recruited at a later stage and GWL has a dedicated volunteer coordinator. There was a feeling of not wanting to interfere but, in hindsight, a concern that this may have slightly dampened the archive volunteers' experience of the project. More frequent contact between the volunteer coordinator at GWL and the project coordinator may have helped to address this issue and, in retrospect, recruiting volunteers for the archive

specifically for the Speaking Out project, as opposed to existing GWL volunteers and new general GWL volunteer applicants being asked to join the project, may have been a more appropriate method of recruitment. We need to recognise that people are motivated to volunteer for a variety of different reasons and the original perception that archive volunteers were more interested in volunteering because of GWL as an institution rather than because of Speaking Out specifically might have been flawed.

Volunteer expectations and expectations of volunteers was another area where challenges arose. For the most part we met the expectations of volunteers very well. One exception to this was around the film volunteers, a couple of whom fed back that they would have liked more time and hands-on experience using the camera equipment before beginning the filmed interviews. The project team thought it was important learning to acknowledge that any training involving technology is likely to take longer to build up confidence in using equipment. The project film was also somewhat rushed as it was required for the launch of the exhibition and, in hindsight, it might have been better to shift this output to the second year of the project as it would have been more beneficial in terms of volunteer development to have a longer period over which to work on it. In relation to our expectations of volunteers, very clearly laying out the time commitment and experience as regards transcription and pushing volunteers to really think about whether they would be able or want to undertake this would have been helpful for planning around transcription and avoiding the situation of volunteers agreeing to transcribe and then either not doing so or taking extensive periods of time to complete transcripts. As previously mentioned, creating a transcription specific volunteer role may have been a possibility that could have helped with this. Having a wide menu of volunteer roles for people to choose from is important.

Partnership Working

Successes

An important success for the continued positive relationship between the project partners over the project timeframe was an equivalent amount of investment from the two main partners, SWA and GWL. Both partners were equally committed to ensuring objectives were delivered and to the ethos of the project. This is down to careful selection of project partners, making sure they share the same values and clearly defining each partner's roles at the beginning of the project.

Collaborative projects, such as *Speaking Out*, allow for the development of connections and networks amongst organisations and this is one of the big successes of the project. Through bringing together partners who had not previously

worked together the project has laid a foundation for future work and conversations around this have already started to take place. Each project partner brought their own area of expertise to the mix, strengthening the framework and adding valuable ideas. We were also able to draw inspiration from one another and everyone in attendance felt that there was no question that building a partnership to deliver the project was incredibly worthwhile.

Challenges

While, overall, the steering group and project team felt that engagement from the project partners had been good we also acknowledged that it often comes down to individuals, and that if those individuals move on it can be challenging to retain those levels of involvement. Tying in with this, the project team felt that over the course of the project it became increasingly difficult to arrange meetings where all project partners were in attendance and available to be part of decision-making. There were concerns that this decrease in representation may be been indicative of partners beginning to drift from the project. The steering group pointed out that it is important to be clear about where decision-making sits, whether this is with the steering group or with organisational management, and that there was never a point where decisions could not be made because of a lack of engagement on the part of one of the partners. There was also significant work on the part of steering group members on particular project outputs, such as the learning resource and the publication. Additionally, while steering group involvement at the beginning of a project is natural there is also a process of confidence growing in the project team which can lead to a 'backing off' which should be seen in a positive light rather than a negative one.

Recognition that while the partnership was strong it was not an equal partnership and was never designed to be such is also critical. WHS and GUCGH were always to hold a slightly less active role and their involvement was centred around more specific time periods within the project timeframe. The project team highlighted that there were instances where they would have liked to see more steering group attendance at events and two suggestions were made regarding this. The first was that a standing item on the steering group meeting agenda could have been added for upcoming events to let the steering group know what was coming up in the next couple of months and it could have been decided amongst the group who was available to attend specific events. The second was that relying on email to invite steering group members was perhaps not the most effective method to promote engagement and that calling members when attendance was important would have been helpful.

Staff turnover on the project was a major challenge. Over the course of the two-year project delivery phase, amongst a project team of four, there were four changes in staff. This was due to staff moving on to other jobs or deciding not to return from

maternity leave. Each of these changes, while managed well, led to an inevitable period of anxiety for the other project team members. However, on the whole, these staffing changes had a minimal impact on the delivery of the project. Practices that made these transitions much easier included extended handover periods (e.g. there was a one month handover period for maternity cover of the engagement officer), seconding from within the project team (the engagement officer was seconded into the project coordinator post) and recruiting project volunteers for posts as they are already familiar with the project. The steering group also pointed out that the quality of work completed by those leaving meant it was easy for new staff to pick things up and the willingness and competence of new staff coming in to hit the ground running should not be underestimated. It is also important to credit the HLF for their willingness to be flexible regarding recruitment and in recognising that, with a number of these staff changes occurring in the final six months of the project, recruiting externally would have been extraordinarily challenging. It is almost inevitable that short-term contracts such as those offered as part of HLF projects will experience these kinds of staffing changes as people need to think ahead in terms of job security and thought should be given as to whether there is another way to design and organise staffing. For example, the possibility of organisations recruiting internally and seconding current staff into HLF project positions might be a way to address this. Based on the experience of a previous project team member, the steering group and project team also believe it to be vital to do as much forward planning as possible in terms of how situations such as maternity leave and job sharing could be handled.

The final challenge around partnership working involved the project team being split over two organisations with two staff based at SWA and two staff based at GWL. While the benefits of having two main project partners outweighed any difficulties, this did, at times, lead to the project team feeling a bit fragmented. Staying in regular contact via email and telephone helped, as did the project coordinator (who was based at SWA) working, on average, one day a week from GWL (this was only a result of living location). Events where all project staff were in attendance were beneficial and having regular, monthly team meetings was very important.

Legacy

What is the project legacy?

Those in attendance discussed how the project offered a practical way of addressing women being written out of history, and how reclaiming women's stories can contribute to changing the future in terms of attitudes towards domestic abuse and support for women, children and young people experiencing domestic abuse. We felt

the testimonies gathered by the project create an evidence base that will allow Scottish Women's Aid and the Women's Aid network, and hopefully other organisations, to continue advocating for projects that amplify women's activities and voices. It was also pointed out that part of the project legacy is the vindication of choosing this methodological route and this way of preserving history as it had been hugely successful – women telling their own stories in their own voices are incredibly powerful. The purpose, method and process all fit together and all stemmed from feminist principles that are the bedrock of the Women's Aid movement and we all felt strongly that the way in which the project was conducted was true to this spirit.

Local Women's Aid groups have also had the opportunity to develop their sense of their own history and there has been a definite sense of workers reconnecting with the history of the movement and a renewed interest in campaigning and activism. The project has helped to show, both within and outside the network, the practical edge of feminism as opposed to the view that Women's Aid is merely a service. It has enabled conversations amongst diverse audiences around feminism, what it is and what it has achieved. And, finally, the project has helped to put the local picture of the fight against domestic abuse into the larger, more national context, while also highlighting that the Women's Aid movement is and has been a community resource, challenging power at both the local and national levels.

Going Forward

WHS has started to develop links with local Women's Aid groups interested in uncovering and preserving their history. There is lots of enthusiasm amongst newer and younger members to try and facilitate this and WHS are currently working with North Ayrshire Women's Aid to bring together and share the group's story. Members see this as an opportunity to contribute in a practical way to preserving women's history. The feeling amongst the steering group and project team was that this is a fantastic opportunity that should be built upon and that we should look at formalising this relationship between WHS and SWA and create a structure and process for this kind of work. In the future, those in attendance hope that oral histories will continue to be added to the SWA archive held at GWL and WHS members and GWL volunteers might be able to assist with undertaking interviewing.

It was stressed that, for the Women's Aid network, it is essential that workers know these processes are in place and who to contact in relation to them. This is also very important regarding the touring exhibition as it is key groups interested in hosting the exhibition know who to contact in terms of facilitating this. Publicity throughout the network is also vital and mechanisms are in place, such as the monthly bulletin, to enable this.

The steering group and project team also thought GUCGH could encourage researchers to develop projects drawing on the SWA archive at GWL and that

funding could be sought in support of these. Project partners will also do their best to make sure their research connections know the archive exists and promote its potential uses. Welsh Women's Aid have put in an application for funding for a heritage project beginning next year and Women's Aid Federation of England are also considering conducting a heritage project in the future and we believe the successes and lessons learned during *Speaking Out* will be of great benefit to both organisations going forward.

Continued Volunteer Engagement

GWL has plans for volunteers in the archive to continue digitising content from the SWA collection and there will be opportunities for volunteers to enhance the catalogue as well as undertaking any new work created by donations to the collection (which we are encouraging from local groups with distribution of the History Safe Toolkit). The steering group and project team also discussed linking up project volunteering with their local Women's Aid group, although we would need to be careful to manage expectations around this as not all local groups have the capacity to provide volunteering opportunities. In such cases, it would be useful to compile a list of other women's organisations in the area which take on volunteers. This would also result in project volunteers taking their knowledge of Women's Aid into new spaces. We thought volunteers could potentially continue to act as advocates for the project after its conclusion, for example through contacting local Women's Aid groups, asking them if they had thought about hosting the exhibition and offering to act as liaisons with SWA to facilitate this.

Objectives Achieved

The steering group and project team revisited the original 10 objectives of the project as outlined in the HLF Activity Plan and, as a group, evaluated whether we felt they had been achieved.

1. **To capture the testimonies of those involved from the earliest days before those voices are lost.** – We felt we had achieved this. The project has recorded a range of women associated with the Women's Aid movement, from the very early 1970s when Women's Aid groups were first being established right up to current workers. We, of course, recognise that there are many, many more voices to hear and the project has compiled a list of women we were unable to interview for various reasons during the lifetime of the project. This would be a good starting point for any future efforts to add to the oral history archive at GWL.

2. **To create a first-hand record of our history on an ambitious Scotland-wide scale.** – We felt we had achieved this. The project collected interviews from across a large geographical area, from the Highlands to the Scottish Borders. It would be beneficial if any future efforts could attempt to capture testimonies from the islands (Western isles, Orkney, Shetland etc.).

3. **To pull together the currently dispersed heritage of the movement into a single accessible archive.** – We felt we had achieved a very good start to this, as much could be expected during a two year project, and that this is work that will need to be ongoing as history continues to be made by SWA and the Women's Aid network. An archive has now been established and made accessible. It can be easily added to and the History Safe Toolkit gives clear instructions to local groups on how to do this.

4. **To coordinate and consolidate previous small-scale and piecemeal initiatives to record, preserve and disseminate the history of Women's Aid in Scotland.** – We felt we had achieved this, having incorporated material gathered by the SWA 30th anniversary oral history project into the archive and *Speaking Out*'s outputs.

5. **To share and celebrate our history with the widest possible audience.** – We felt we had achieved this as much as could possibly be expected with the resources and capacity available. A large number of people around Scotland, far more than either the steering group or project team anticipated (more than 44,000), saw the touring exhibition, and over 50 events were delivered across the country.

6. **To raise awareness of the movement and dispel some of the stereotypes and misinformation held by the wider public.** – We felt we had definitely raised awareness by the sheer number of people reached. It is difficult to capture information around dispelling stereotypes, although we thought the learning resource for young people would continue to play a key role in the ongoing achievement of this objective. Piloting of the learning resource certainly showed we were successful in addressing stereotypes and misinformation about domestic abuse and changing the ideas and attitudes of the young people who participated.

7. **To build on the opportunities presented by partnership with GWL, which will be able to catalogue and promote the newly accessible SWA archive.** – We felt we had achieved this and even during the lifetime of the project were seeing increased interest amongst researchers in the archive and more people accessing the material.

8. **To bring fuller recognition of Women's Aid's continuing contribution to the safety and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities throughout Scotland.** – We felt we had achieved this through the project outputs, along with media coverage of the project in newspapers and on the radio and television, and the reception held at the Scottish Parliament to launch the project film.

9. **To provide volunteer, training and learning opportunities to audiences including to women who are most likely to experience marginalisation and exclusion, and who face additional barriers to fulfilling potential due to domestic abuse.** – We felt we have, for the most part, achieved this, although we felt we may have missed an opportunity in specifically trying to recruit the exhibition volunteers from marginalised groups or through working with service users from a local Women's Aid group. We singled out this volunteer cohort as the most suitable for working with women facing the barriers mentioned above as it was the smallest group, the role was for a very defined period of time and, while supported by the project coordinator, this group also received very hands-on and direct support from the engagement officer. We felt these factors would have been important in ensuring women facing marginalisation and exclusion would have the high levels of support required to ensure a positive volunteering experience and the achievement of development goals. Despite not capitalising on this chance we felt the project's work with service users from Edinburgh Women's Aid, Shakti Women's Aid and Glasgow East Women's Aid to create artistic material for the exhibition addressed this objective and was very successful. Additionally, statistically, for the overall number of volunteers engaged with the project, there will have been women with experience of domestic abuse involved, whether they felt comfortable disclosing this or not.

10. **To inform and strengthen commitment to dynamic future developments.** – We felt we had achieved this through the archive being a very valuable resource, the other project outputs being available to local Women's Aid groups and other organisations to draw upon, the building of partnerships and the development of project staff and volunteers.

Lessons to Pass On

The steering group and project team reflected on the key lessons learned throughout the project, either things that worked particularly well for us or things that, with hindsight, we would do differently. We thought about what we would want to pass on

to other organisations considering or embarking on a similar project. While there have been suggestions and recommendations included in the various different sections of this document, the advice below comprises the major points that we felt to be instrumental in delivering a highly successful project.

1. If you are planning on substantial volunteer involvement, as we had on *Speaking Out*, it is essential to have a project staff role devoted primarily to volunteer coordination. This is a task that takes up a large amount of time and is not something that should be compromised on. Proper policies and procedures must be in place and followed. High levels of support for volunteers must be available and volunteer development should be a significant project priority.

2. It is absolutely worth seeking out partners with whom to collaborate on a project, although it is crucial that partnership agreements are in place and everyone is very clear on each partner's role within the project. For all the minor issues and things that do not work perfectly, it is so valuable to have a variety of expertise. If your organisation is not from the cultural sector it is very worthwhile trying to find a partner who works in this area and shares the same values as you.

3. Whatever your chosen methodology – for *Speaking Out* it was oral history – seek advice from experts in the field. The ethics of setting up an oral history project and dealing with quite sensitive information were, at times, complicated. However, consulting specialists who were able to offer guidance made the project team feel far more confident setting out. Additionally, at the beginning of the project, think about the detail of your methodology and any processes that can put in place to make things easier come the end of the project.

Reflections

The steering group and project team took the occasion as a chance to reflect on what the project has meant to them personally and on an organisational level. The impact of *Speaking Out* on those involved has been positive and far reaching.

- 'Being involved in the project as a staff member has politicised my feminism in a way it wasn't before.'

- 'As a staff member, I've had the opportunity to gain experience of things like recruitment which I might not have had the chance to in other roles.'

- 'I've definitely gained in confidence in terms of overcoming challenges, like the staffing turnover, and being able to deal with those types of things more calmly.'

- 'One of the big learning things, for me, is about how you do a project, in all of its facets, that reflects your organisational values, and how you create processes that reflect how you want the world to be.'

- 'I've learned so much about the capacity of volunteers and value they bring and what they are able to achieve.'

- 'Seeing something that was an idea become a reality, such a well-fulfilled reality, is so gratifying.'

- 'You learn so much about process and working with people and persistence.'

- 'To see the project outcomes and the number of people reached is just beyond my wildest dreams.'

- 'I feel really excited for the future and that this is an incredible resource for the network and I think there's so much potential for us to use the resource.'

- 'We have so many examples of how the project has changed women's lives.'

Where to Find Out More

The Speaking Out project produced a number of resources which continue to be available after the conclusion of the project and which the steering group and project team would like to encourage the use of. Information and access to all of these resources can be found on our website: www.speakingout.womenslibrary.org.uk
The resources include:

- Oral history interviews (transcripts and select recordings) with individuals associated with the Women's Aid movement in Scotland since its beginnings in the early 1970s up to present day. Transcripts can be accessed via GWL's online collections catalogue. Select recordings can be accessed by contacting the archivist at GWL.

- A 30-minute documentary film comprised of filmed interviews with eight Women's Aid workers (past and present). The film is available for viewing on the project website.

- A touring exhibition containing information panels exploring the history of Women's Aid in Scotland and an iPad listening station featuring audio extracts of the oral history interviews. We are keen to encourage local Women's Aid groups and other organisations to host the exhibition. The first point of contact to arrange to borrow the exhibition is info@womensaid.scot.

- A young people's learning resource covering themes of women's inequality, domestic abuse and activism using material gathered by the project. The resource is aimed at secondary school age young people and is tied in with the Modern Studies curriculum, although is easily adaptable for use by other organisations. All resource materials can be downloaded free from our website.

- A comprehensive and accessible archive containing materials from Scottish Women's Aid and a number of local Women's Aid groups across Scotland. The SWA archive collection is held at GWL. Contact the GWL archivist to arrange access.

- A History Safe Toolkit for local Women's Aid groups which aims to continue preserving the history of the Women's Aid movement by outlining what materials are important to keep, how to best preserve them, and how to add them to the SWA archive collection held at GWL. The toolkit is available to download from our website and as a hardcopy booklet available free of charge through SWA.

- A publication telling the story of Women's Aid in Scotland using material gathered by the project. The publication is available to download from our website and as a hardcopy booklet available free of charge through SWA or GWL.