

## Press release

For Immediate Release, Wednesday 4 June 2014

### **Government silence on domestic violence leaves women at risk of being killed**

A coalition of organisations campaigning for changes in the law to protect women from domestic violence has lambasted the Government for failing to include the issue in the Queen's speech. The Domestic Violence Law Reform Campaign, comprising Paladin, the Sara Charlton Charitable Foundation, and Women's Aid is warning that the Government's failure to act on the issue is leaving women at risk of harm or even death.

**Laura Richards, spokesperson for Paladin said:**

"It's important that domestic violence is taken seriously and the government's failure to act sends a very dangerous message. It's vital that this criminalisation gap is closed and coercive control is recognised for the dangerous behaviour that it is. This is where most women and children are more likely to be harmed and killed and criminalising this behaviour will ensure better protection along with early identification, intervention and prevention opportunities to keep victims safe."

**Polly Neate, Chief Executive of Women's Aid said:**

"The Government has missed the opportunity provided by the Queen's speech to protect women at serious risk from domestic violence. As well as destroying lives, coercive control including psychological abuse poses a serious risk of death: in fact some women killed by their partners experience no physical violence before their murder and three women a week

commit suicide to escape the abuse they are experiencing. By failing to act, the government is leaving scores of women at risk of being killed by their partners or ex-partners.”

**Antonia Packard from Sara Charlton Charitable Foundation said:**

“It is worryingly clear that women experiencing domestic violence feel they are not being properly protected, believed and supported. The Home Office domestic violence definition was amended in March 2013 to include psychological abuse and coercive control. Without a legal framework to support it, this definition is unable to have the impact it should and isn't yet meaningfully impacting women' lives. The Government must act now to ensure domestic violence is recognised as a pattern of abuse that leads to two homicides every week.”

**Ends**

**Notes to editors**

**1. About Paladin**

Paladin are a not for profit organisation (CIC Number 8361675) founded after the successful All Party Parliamentary Stalking Law Reform Campaign which led to the new stalking law.

The main aims of Paladin are:

1. To provide victim advocacy to individuals at high risk of harm.
2. To provide training
3. To scrutinise the new stalking laws to ensure consistency of application to better protect victims
4. To continue to lobby Parliament for further changes to Law and Practice including: reform of the Family Courts, the strengthening of restraining orders and campaigning for Domestic Violence Law Reform to criminalise coercive control
5. Raise awareness of dangers and risks of stalking

For further information contact Paladin [www.paladinservice.co.uk](http://www.paladinservice.co.uk)

**2. About Women's Aid**

Women's Aid is the national domestic violence charity that co-ordinates and supports an England-wide network of over 300 local services working to end domestic violence against women and children. Keeping the voices of survivors at the heart of

its work, Women's Aid campaigns for better legal protection and services, providing a strategic "expert view" to government on laws, policy and practice affecting abused women and children. In partnership with its national network, Women's Aid runs public awareness and education campaigns, bringing together national and local action, and developing new training and resources. Women's Aid provides a package of vital 24 hour lifeline services through its publications (available in 11 languages including English), websites ([www.womensaid.org.uk](http://www.womensaid.org.uk) and [www.thehideout.org.uk](http://www.thehideout.org.uk)), and running the Freephone 24 Hour National Domestic Violence Helpline in partnership with Refuge. Women's Aid is a registered charity no 1054154.

0808 2000 247: Freephone 24 Hour National Domestic Violence Helpline (run in partnership between Women's Aid and Refuge).

The Women's Aid Website can be found at: [www.womensaid.org.uk](http://www.womensaid.org.uk). This is a comprehensive website about domestic violence and its impact on women and children. The website has help sections for women experiencing domestic violence, as well as policy briefings and research findings. Women's Aid also runs a website for children and young people experiencing domestic violence [www.thehideout.org.uk](http://www.thehideout.org.uk)

### **3. About Sara Charlton Charitable Foundation**

The Sara Charlton Charitable Foundation is dedicated to helping victims of domestic abuse in the UK. They have a clear understanding of what the sector desperately needs, funds IDVAs (trained workers who work with high risk victims of domestic abuse - those who are in danger of serious harm or death) across the UK and improve IDVA services at a local as well as national level. The SCCF also funds Prevention Workers, who are trained to educate children and young adults (male and female) on healthy relationships and domestic abuse. They work with schools and youth groups and can also act as a point of contact for those experiencing abuse in the home. They believe that it is fundamental to teach 12-18 year olds about the issue in order to break the cycle of abuse. For more information, visit [www.sarachariton.org.uk](http://www.sarachariton.org.uk). Sara Charlton Charitable Foundation is a registered charity no 1139056