

PRESS RELEASE

Domestic Violence Law Reform Campaign achieves criminalisation of coercive control

The Domestic Violence Law Reform Campaign is celebrating a significant breakthrough today, as the Government announced a new domestic violence law criminalising patterns of coercive, controlling and psychological abuse. The announcement is designed to clarify and strengthen the law on abuse, to drive a culture change ensuring that no form of abuse can be perpetrated without criminal sanction. The Campaign by Women's Aid, the Sara Charlton Charitable Foundation, and Paladin National Stalking Advocacy Service, has been calling for this change, to better protect women who experience domestic violence.

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

"We welcome the Home Secretary's announcement that the Government will criminalise the patterns of coercive, controlling, and psychologically abusive behaviour which lie at the heart of domestic violence. We hope the new law will signal that a culture change is needed in responding to the abuse so many women experience. We look forward to working together with the Home Office to ensure the new law is effective as it can be, and that the police and criminal justice system are able to receive specialist-led domestic violence training so that they are able to fully utilise the new legislation.

Rhea Gargour, and Antonia Packard for the Sara Charlton Charitable Foundation said:

"We are thrilled that our campaign has been successful and that finally victims of domestic violence have a real chance to be properly protected by our legal system. We hope that this will lead to effective training of the police and a culture change where domestic violence is recognised as an unacceptable crime. We thank the Home Secretary and the Government for their commitment to helping victims of domestic violence and their children."

Laura Richards, Chief Executive of Paladin said:

"It is important that our laws reflect the reality of domestic violence. It is about power and control and the psychological impact is significant. Too many have had their lives ruined and many women have been murdered. Victims' voices have been at the heart of our campaign and we are delighted that the Government has listened and that domestic violence will become a crime. This will send a clear signal that domestic violence must be taken seriously"

Franki Hackett

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1.About Paladin, National Stalking Advocacy Service

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 aims of Paladin are to:

- 1.advocate on behalf of high risk victims
2. provide training
3. scrutinise the new stalking laws
4. campaign on behalf of victims
5. raise awareness of dangers and risks of stalking
- 6.develop a victims network of support

For further information contact Paladin 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 and 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. 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

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. Sara Charlton Charitable Foundation is a registered charity no 1139056