

Edinburgh Women's Aid marks fiftieth anniversary with a year of activity

The charity which created its own niche in Edinburgh half a century ago was fêted at the City Chambers with a civic reception hosted by the Rt Hon Lord Provost, Robert Aldridge.

At the civic reception the Rt Hon Lord Provost welcomed the charity board and supporters, some of whom began their association with EWA as clients, to an evening in the European Room. He said: "We are here to celebrate the life-changing and mitigating impacts of Edinburgh Women's Aid and the tens of thousands of women and children who have been supported into new lives over the past 50 years."

This marked a year of activities during which the charity reflected on its work and also discussed how to make changes so that domestic abuse becomes history.

Edinburgh Women's Aid has been in existence for fifty years. Usually longevity is a cause for celebration, but some have remarked that it would be only a good thing if the organisation was not needed in another half century's time.

The charity opened its first refuge in 1973, and now has 30 refuge spaces in the city with a new one acquired last year. The funding for the property came from the charity's reserves

built up over the years, and it will now create an income for the charity as at least some of the residents will be entitled to housing benefit.

The [@Edinburgh_CC](#) and the [@LordProvostEdin](#) hosted a civic reception for [@EdinWomensAid](#) to mark their 50th anniversary pic.twitter.com/jtQ5HhE0cU

– Edinburgh Reporter (@EdinReporter) [March 12, 2024](#)

The properties enable the work EWA does to cover all four localities in Edinburgh providing safe spaces where women with or without children can escape abusive situations. The latest refuge will be aimed at one family or one person with children only, but the charity is responding to the desires of its clients many of whom would rather live in their own home.

The EWA staff of 50 help around 2,000 women a year, with some requiring a safe place to stay and others a different range of support needs. The help can be as simple as going to the supermarket with the client for the first time and helping them to settle into a new home. All refuges are classed as temporary accommodation but will be home for at least several months.

Last year St James Quarter the billion pound shopping and lifestyle district adopted Edinburgh Women's Aid as one of its chosen charities for a two year period.

Linda Rodgers, Chief Executive Officer at Edinburgh Women's Aid said: "In our 50th anniversary year, we are absolutely delighted to be partnering with St James Quarter. Both Edinburgh Women's Aid and St James Quarter are key actors in life in Edinburgh.

"This amazing partnership creates an opportunity for us to jointly signal that supporting women and children to live safely and free from abuse is at the heart of Edinburgh's

community values.”

The charity will provide guidance and training to enhance the skills of the St James Quarter team, equipping them to identify and sensitively deal with issues surrounding domestic violence or mental wellbeing in the workplace. St James Quarter will also leverage its existing partnership with retail and hospitality academy, FUSE, to offer support and to individuals who benefit from the charity’s work and are looking to get into work.

The charity has marked the five decades with a string of activities in the past year, which included a seminar at the University of Edinburgh when they discussed how to change the landscape against domestic abuse.

At the seminar Council Leader Cammy Day said: “Nobody should have to suffer abuse, whatever form it takes. Over the last 50 years, Edinburgh Women’s Aid has been unwavering in their commitment to help and support victims and survivors of domestic abuse. We know that there is still a way to go before we live in a world where domestic abuse is history. Our policies, such as the Multi-Agency Domestic Abuse Policy, is designed to provide an understanding and supportive service to those affected by this issue and to those who work to help them stay safe.

“We know that there is more that we can do to offer support, as an organisation and as individuals. As a Council we’re part of the Equally Safe Edinburgh Committee which is working to make the city safe for women, children and young people and recently I became an ambassador for White Ribbon Scotland to encourage men to play their part and stand up and speak out against violence against women. Working together we can make sure we provide the very best safeguards that we can to anyone at risk of harm.”

<https://www.edinwomensaid.co.uk>



Linda Rodgers, CEO, Lord Provost, Robert Aldridge and Morag Waller, Chair, Edinburgh Women's Aid. © 2024 Martin McAdam



Sofia McArdle, Malcolm Chisolm and Oscar Evans at the Edinburgh Women's Aid 50 year Celebration. © 2024 Martin

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Anna Hawkes-Cumming, Urska Ozimek and Margaret Patrizio,
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The Right Honourable Lord Provost of Edinburgh, Robert

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Edinburgh Women's Aid