

# Women's Aid and SafeLives: Theory of Change

Jointly endorsed evidence based recommendations to change policy, practice and funding in our sector and to transform women and girls' lives

# The Problem

Domestic abuse is central to many of the most intractable societal problems including – but by no means limited to – drug and alcohol misuse, mental illness, homelessness and harm caused to children within the family. Its human and financial costs overwhelm the criminal justice and health services. Its impact on victims is severe and long-lasting and it frequently leads to long-term complex needs and dependency on services. Yet in terms of solutions, it appears intractable.

Both long-term recovery and earlier intervention are chronically under-resourced and, despite the undoubted existence of excellent practice, lack a formal and comprehensive evidence-base.

Given the impact of domestic abuse on the full range of public sector agencies, and the inadequacy of current responses, systemic change is needed.

# Our Solution

There is consensus both within and outside the women's sector that a whole system change is needed to better support both earlier intervention, better range and quality of interventions, and longer term recovery.

Women's Aid and SafeLives have both developed innovations in service delivery that have evolved in response to the current problem, which we believe will make things better for women, but in order to do that we need to overcome all the barriers to systems change.

This project brings together the understanding and solutions developed by the two leading national organisations in the field, in a partnership which transforms the ability of either organisation to deliver the commitment of all relevant stakeholders and policy-makers. Only this partnership can recommend radical systems change supported by sufficient evidence, unified voice and stakeholder support to make it happen.

# Approach

Through this project, in partnership with survivors and dedicated women's services, we will develop, test and evaluate new community and agency responses to facilitate system change in an environment of continuous improvement and learning.

This project has the central involvement of survivors at its core and through all elements of the planning and delivery of the project. Survivors of abuse have helped to identify the need for change and supported the development of ideas to inform proposed new responses, including this theory of change.

We will help ensure that the quality of our response is as high as possible and is sensitive to the experience of those with lived experience of domestic abuse.

We will develop new evidenced based social innovations that can be replicated across England and combine these with community awareness raising and training to create real change to the way every woman impacted by domestic abuse is offered and receives support and ultimately reduce the overall levels of domestic abuse.

# Approach continued

- This project will test and demonstrate the strengths and challenges of two approaches to service delivery - risk-led and needs-led, and of two approaches to systems change: one based on transforming the structures within which professionals operate, and the other aiming for behavioural change in practitioners and professionals.
- Women's Aid is addressing the cultural and attitudinal barriers to behaviour change and SafeLives aims to address the current structures and silos. As learning emerges about each approach, and is shared and discussed with service users, practitioners and commissioners - those directly involved and external advisors - practice and strategy in all sites will evolve, newly emerging theories will be tested, and all sites will work towards a shared vision.

# Women's Aid and SafeLives: Theory of Change

OVERAL  
IMPACT

The lives of women and girls are transformed by a systemic change to policy, practice and commissioning that promotes early intervention and reduces the prevalence, impact and tolerance of domestic abuse (DA)

BLF  
OUTCOMES

*Increased provision of holistic, integrated, person-centred approaches for women and girls at risk*

*Increased role and voice for women and girls in co-producing services*

*A greater number of women and girls are supported through the provision of improved specialist support*

*Better quality of evidence for what works in empowering women and girls*

OUTCOMES

Women and girls experiencing DA are supported by coordinated holistic approaches that increase safety, early intervention and resilience

Local communities mobilised to challenge DA and advocate for good quality support for survivors

Evidence based national and local strategies for responding to DA are informed by survivors

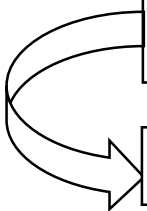
Survivors take a greater role in co-producing the services they want and need

Reframed state, private and specialist sector response to DA that creates positive change for women and girls

Better quality evidence of what works influences policy, practice and commissioning decisions

Joint learning and evaluation from both approaches that governs project development

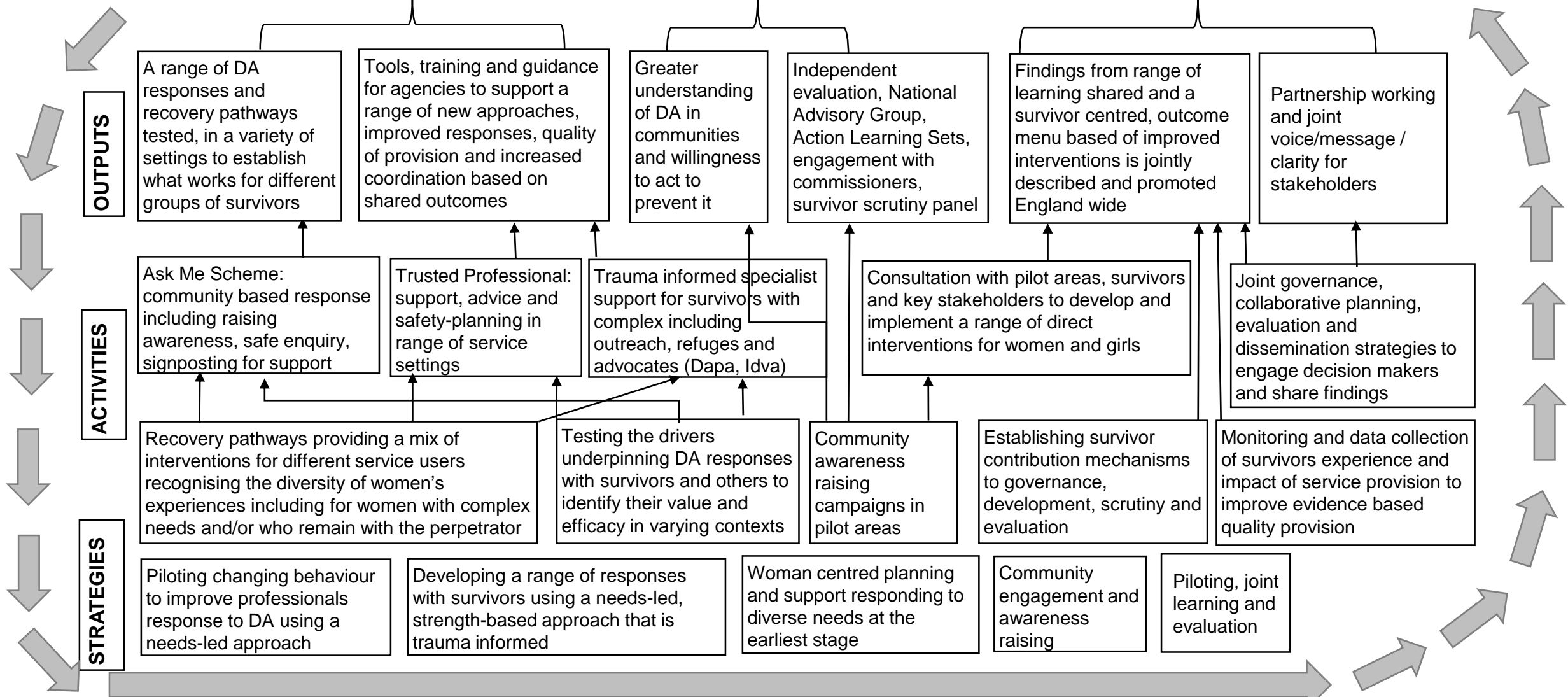
Interventions



# WA Change that lasts: activities

A strengths-based, needs-led model that supports domestic violence survivors and their children to build resilience, and leads to independence

Joint learning and evaluation from both approaches that governs project development



# SafeLives: Getting it right first time: activities

Building on the risk-led model, underpinned by survivors views, to design a system and high quality services to support every stage of the journey to safety and independence

