



Joint Foreword Suzanne Jacob, Chief Executive, SafeLives, and Farah Nazeer, Chief Executive, Women's Aid.

Five years have passed since we started the Roadmap project. During this time there have been significant developments, opportunities and challenges. The ongoing global pandemic has had a huge impact on how organisations are able to respond to survivors and on our ability to run our organisations. During this testing time the racist murder of George Floyd took place resulting in the impact of the Black Lives Matter movement which sparked an important moment of reflection in our sector, with charities striving towards change and centring anti-racism in their approach. This continues to be both important and difficult work, which challenges the power dynamics that exist across all our working environments. The report has highlighted that our sector has a long way to go, but we are committed to making important changes. The [VAWG sector anti-racism charter](#) is vital in bringing charities together with a consistent approach to anti-racist practice.

We are very proud of our teams, and the staff working for frontline local organisations, for their resilience and determination during the pandemic. They have worked relentlessly to deliver change for survivors of domestic abuse. The ambassadors, professionals and local area representatives for our projects have also demonstrated huge commitment to end abuse against women and girls during this time, and much has been achieved despite the many challenges of the past couple of years. In May 2021, we were both delighted to finally be able welcome the Domestic Abuse Act, which was a critical step forward in the response to survivors. Of course, it still does not go nearly far enough to deliver protection for all women, particularly migrant women. Reforms are also still urgently required to ensure the Act is accompanied by a sustainable funding future for all specialist domestic abuse services. Our organisations will continue to campaign on both of these issues.

We started this work and end it with a commitment to transform the lives of women and girls by a systemic change to policy, practice and commissioning that promotes early intervention and reduces the prevalence, impact and tolerance of domestic violence and abuse. Women's Aid's approach - [Change that Lasts](#) - comes from a needs-based perspective, placing the survivor at the heart and building responses around her needs and the strengths and resources available to her, acknowledging that if services listen to what women say they need and build on their strengths, outcomes are often better and sustained. SafeLives' approach – [the Whole Picture](#) - works from a risk-led perspective, tailoring responses to all family members who are at risk, or who pose a risk. A Whole Picture approach provides focused support to the whole family - from identification of concerns through to step down and recovery, to respond more effectively to families living with different kinds of abuse and adversity.

We thank UCLan and colleagues for their hard work in conducting this evaluation, and the findings that they have produced will provide valuable learning for ourselves and the wider sector. The Evaluation found that the Roadmap interventions resulted in a number of positive achievements, at the individual, community and systemic level. We

have not met all of our ambitions, and some barriers have been challenging – from budget constraints to our local interventions not being as diverse and inclusive as we had intended. We also had a lack of engagement from some who do not consistently see domestic abuse as their business, with national health and education services proving difficult to engage with. However, we were able to engage with some local health agencies, which was important, and we have learned a great deal from this journey.

Despite the hurdles, we celebrate some significant positive outcomes. In all sites, respondents to surveys and interviews said they better understood the value of having victim/survivors involved not just in ‘rating’ the response they received, but in strategic design and creation of the response. In one site, the concept of having survivor voice even in the most sensitive commissioning decisions is now understood and welcomed, which is a huge step forward. In our teams, survivors of abuse were at the heart of the work, and it was important for us to work with women and girls of different age ranges and demographics. Both organisations engage with men and boys in a range of different ways, however due to the gendered nature of domestic abuse this evaluation, supported by the National Lottery, focused on the impact on women and girls. System change is a lifetime’s work and even five years is just a blink of an eye on the way, compared to the scale and nature of domestic abuse. Knowing from the start that an ‘end date’ is looming is always fraught in terms of embedding change, and life always intervenes in the shape of local disruptions such as restructure or inspection of statutory agencies, as well as challenges in commissioning cycles and funding for voluntary services. The programme clearly demonstrates the need for long-term, equitable funding with streamlined reporting requirements, so that services can be delivered in a planned, sustainable, and efficient way.

While our approaches are clearly different, we are united in being committed to system change. Working together on this important programme has brought us together as organisations, and identified clear need in three important areas: for there to be a gendered approach at the heart of service provision; for the services provided to have evidence based quality standards; and for there to be sustainable, secure funding for specialist domestic abuse response. Through this collaboration we have already submitted our first ever joint submission to the Government’s spending review and continue to work closely together on this area.

Our huge thanks go to everyone involved. We will take this important learning back to our organisations, and it will inform how we now build and develop our work to provide the best possible outcomes for women and girls living with domestic abuse, who inspire all parts of our work.