



Impact Report

2022–23

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Foreword

Welcome to our 2022–2023 Impact Report, which shows how we are putting our strategy into action.

At the heart of our work is a belief that the voice of survivors can drive real, long-term change in the response to domestic abuse. We amplify their voices, combining them with the latest evidence and our deep practice expertise, in order to change the system that responds to survivors. We're always pragmatic, focusing on solutions, acting as an expert advisor and a channel for innovation right across the UK.

In this year's report, we highlight our role as a critical friend, walking alongside local areas to help them to take a systems-wide look at what's going on for those affected by domestic abuse right now, assessing risks and gaps, strengths and opportunities, and adopting a whole family approach to transform the response.

And we show how we are helping commissioners, services and practitioners to support young people who are experiencing

domestic abuse within their family or their own intimate relationships – or indeed on the verge of harming behaviour. Part of that is recognising we need to reach young people where they are – supporting young people themselves to recognise abuse and to know how to respond.

We know we won't end domestic abuse without challenging perpetrators to change and without building the confidence of frontline professionals to focus on those who harm. That's why we have continued to address this through our Drive partnership programme with Respect and Social Finance, and our Engaging with Those that Harm training, which is supporting social workers and early help teams.

It's been a tough year for many. As the UK moves into a post-Covid environment, survivors and the services who support them continue to face difficult times.

Statutory and philanthropic funders moved fast to provide support during the pandemic and we are hugely grateful to all those who reached in to offer help. As that funding comes to a close whilst the cost of living crisis bites, we – like many other charities – have needed to draw in our spending, whilst being very aware that caseloads are still growing and that survivors are struggling.

As we move forwards, we will prioritise our multi-agency work to ensure a coordinated community response to the whole family, increasing the capability of those at the frontline, making sure the authentic voice of survivors is integral in all that we do, and speaking out for better legislation and enforcement of victims' rights.

Despite the challenges, there are visible signs of change - thousands more frontline responders trained to understand controlling and coercive behaviour, a growing

awareness of the value of the small specialist services who support marginalised and minoritised survivors, and a recognition in new and proposed legislation of the value of Idvas / Idaas (independent domestic violence advisors / abuse advocates) and Maracs (multi-agency risk assessment conferences) in increasing survivor safety.

Every victim and survivor deserves the right response at the right time. SafeLives exists to make sure they receive that, and it's been a privilege to work with the team here and with our amazing SafeLives Pioneers, Authentic Voice Panel and Changemakers. As I hand back to Suzanne Jacob on her return from parental leave, thank you for your continued support.

Ellen Miller
Interim Chief Executive
SafeLives

About SafeLives

We are the UK charity dedicated to ending domestic abuse, for everyone and for good.

We work with organisations across the UK to transform the response to domestic abuse. We look at the whole picture for each individual and family, to get the right help at the right time, so families everywhere can be safe and well.

And we challenge perpetrators to change, asking ‘why doesn’t he stop?’ rather than ‘why doesn’t she leave?’ This applies whatever the gender of the victim or perpetrator and whatever the nature of their relationship.

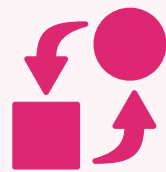
Last year alone:



Over **79,000 adults** and more than **99,000 children** at high risk of harm or murder were supported, through multi-agency interventions designed by us and delivered by partners.



25,000 professionals received our training.



Over **1,200 perpetrators** have been challenged and supported to change by interventions we created with partners.

Our approach

Our work always combines data, voice and practice:



Survivor voice is at the heart and start of what we do. Survivors of domestic abuse are experts by experience – their voices inform our work, so we can truly meet their needs.



All of the work we do is evidence-based. We break new ground and build knowledge about domestic abuse, constantly developing our understanding of what works to prevent, stop and safeguard people from harm.



We innovate, develop and champion best practice, using evidence and survivor voice to continuously improve the response to domestic abuse. This includes working with local systems and the professionals who work in them to review and transform the support they provide.



I got referred to the Idva service after I had to call the police. They have been with me since August, supporting me through escaping and divorcing my husband safely. Reassuring, non-judgemental and supportive.

—
Survivor



Without this work, we know that domestic abuse perpetrators will continue to enter new relationships, create more victims, and expose more children to harmful abusive behaviours. It’s about ending abuse for the victims of today - but also the victims of tomorrow.

—
Drive Case Manager



You completely bowled me over – I was expecting something about processes and instead your training taught me empathy.

—
Police Officer after Domestic Abuse Matters training

Our strategy and role

Our strategy sets out how we will look at the whole picture for the whole family.

Our strategic priorities:



1. Action before someone is harmed or harms others



2. Harmful behaviour is identified and stopped



3. Increased safety for everyone at risk



4. The ability for people to live the life they want after harm has happened

We act as an expert advisor and a pioneer of new ideas. Over the last year, this involved being:

A convenor – bringing stakeholders together and facilitating collaborations

Our [#FriendsCanTell](#) campaign was co-created with young people and 10 partners. It's reached 5.2 million girls, young women and non-binary people, providing information and tools to keep themselves and their friends safe, and to tackle the toxic behaviour that's commonly normalised in young people's relationships.

An innovator – testing out new approaches and ways to intervene

Through our partnership perpetrator programme [Drive](#), we developed [Restart](#) – a pilot project providing earlier intervention for families at risk of experiencing domestic abuse. In partnership with frontline services and survivors in Bolton and Sheffield, our new [CADA](#) project is piloting and adapting evaluated interventions to meet the needs of children and young people from minoritised communities.

An influencer – shaping government policy and ensuring survivors are heard

We're ensuring Idvas gain a statutory definition in the Victims and Prisoners Bill, and we helped secure Scottish Government commitment to put Maracs on a statutory footing. Survivors - including our [Pioneers](#), [Scottish Authentic Voice Panel](#) and [SOS Changemakers](#) - have spoken out on multiple platforms to drive change.

An investigator – developing cutting edge research to inform new policy and practice

We undertook [the first ever research](#) for the Vision Foundation into the scale of domestic abuse experienced by blind and partially sighted people, showing more than 1 in 12 visually impaired people have been impacted.

An evaluator – collecting and analysing data to evaluate effectiveness and impact

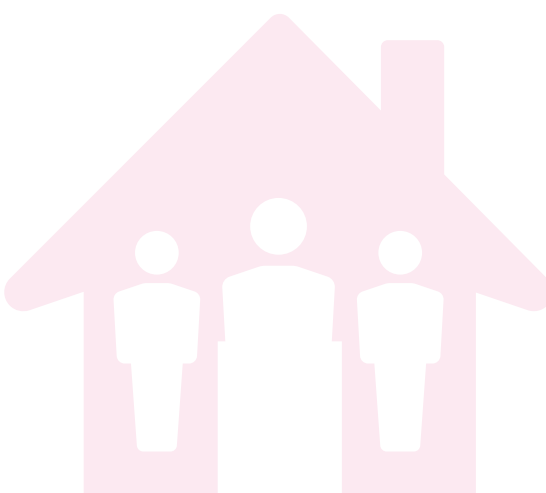
We hold the largest UK dataset on domestic abuse, collecting [data from around 300 Maracs](#) and from many [frontline domestic abuse services](#). This includes 50 services we accredit through our quality standards programme, [Leading Lights](#).

A trainer – supporting professionals to meet the needs of the whole family

This year we trained 25,000 people and have now reached 34 of 43 English and Welsh police forces with [Domestic Abuse Matters](#), our cultural change programme for the police.

An expert advisor – working with local areas to undertake systems-wide reviews

We worked with 15 local areas to undertake [systems-wide reviews](#) and to embed survivor voice in their domestic abuse response. This results in areas gaining a better understanding of gaps in provision and approach, and they are also generating a much better social return on investment (Social Value Engine pilots report £7.72 return for each £1 invested).



The size of the challenge

Domestic abuse is prevalent across all areas of the UK, and across all sections of our society.

There is rarely just one victim – it affects whole families, and whole communities. We also know the most vulnerable in society often find it hardest to access support. This includes racially minoritised and marginalised victims, LGBTQ+, disabled, and younger (13-17) and older (61+) victims. The size of the challenge, outlined below with the latest available figures, sets the context for our work.¹

In England and Wales



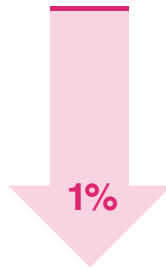
Domestic abuse affects **5% of adults** each year.



910k police recorded domestic abuse crimes in 2021–2022 (the most recent data) an increase of 7.7% compared to the year before.

¹ For full references, contact info@safelives.org.uk

In Scotland



65,000 police recorded domestic abuse incidents in 2021–2022, **a decrease of 1% compared to the year before**. This is the first decrease recorded in five years.

In the UK

Over

118,000

adult cases at highest risk of serious harm or murder were discussed at around **300** Maracs. These cases involved **149,000** children.

This is a **27%** increase compared to five years ago.



Our research shows that the systems that respond to domestic abuse are not always enabling people to get the right support at the right time:

85%



of victims seek help more than five times before they get effective support.

Fewer than **3%**



of perpetrators receive any specialist intervention to challenge their behaviour.

30%



of children in households supported by an Idva were not known to children's services.

23%

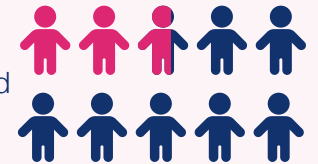
of young people exposed to domestic abuse are demonstrating harmful behaviour, 61% of the time this is against the mother.



72% of survivors have children yet only

28%

of these parents said their children were offered support.



Domestic abuse costs around

£66 billion

a year in England and Wales, in terms of human and economic costs.

Our research shows that domestic abuse interventions that respond to the whole family – adult victims, teen and child victims, and perpetrators – would cost **£2.2 billion**. This sum could turn the tide on domestic abuse, creating a society and culture where it ends over the long term.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1

Act before someone harms or is harmed

To stop domestic abuse, for everyone, for good, we must intervene sooner, and prevent harm being caused in the first place.

To support this, we're developing our understanding of how harming behaviour begins. We're also equipping young people and adults with the knowledge and confidence to identify early warning signs of abuse, so they can enjoy healthier relationships.

Safe Young Lives UK programme

Safe Young Lives is our UK-wide programme that's working to prevent young people from being harmed – or harming – through domestic abuse. Since its inception in 2018, we've engaged with over 700 young people directly and garnered insights from another 2,000 via surveys and interviews to inform our work in this area, culminating in seven transformative projects.

Developments from 2022-2023 include completion of key projects:

Your Best Friend:

We concluded our [Your Best Friend](#) partnership project with our [#FriendsCanTell](#) campaign, giving girls, young women, and non-binary young people the tools to identify potential abuse in intimate relationships. With our 10 partners, the campaign had a cumulative reach of 5.2 million young people – five times our original target – and we disseminated £300k in grants to 38 grassroots organisations, supporting direct work with young people to build awareness of healthy intimate relationships. We also shared Peer Supporter packs, enabling more conversations between young people about toxic relationships.

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE):

We published new research, [‘I love it, but I wish it was taken more seriously’](#), which looks into relationship and sex education in English secondary schools, exploring the experiences of teachers and more than 1000 young people. Our findings revealed significant gaps. Only 24% of students recall learning about coercive control and 13% believed it was well-taught. 61% of LGBT+ students reported a lack of comprehensive LGBT+ relationship education, despite legal requirements. And our research suggests that RSE isn't meeting the needs of boys: 40% talk to other people about sex and relationships outside of school, compared to 51% of girls. In addition, 22% of boys find out information through watching porn, compared to 5% of girls. We are sharing our discovery work with partners, and working together to influence the Department for Education to review and change the curriculum.

The Care Journey:

Our Incubator team has looked at the [experiences of young survivors in the care system](#) who are affected by domestic abuse. We found that overall, current support is inadequate in relation to their experiences, and more evidence is needed. We're now collecting more data to enable further research in this area.

Verge of Harming:

Our latest Discovery report, [Verge of Harming](#), shows how and why young people start using harming behaviours. Alongside 10 practitioners, over 850 young people bravely shared their experiences; 30% of them said that they had used harmful behaviours. Of those, 41% said that they had used harmful behaviours in a romantic relationship and 47% with a family member.

Building on our past Safe Young Lives work, we've also:

- Developed a network of 40 expert organisations and individuals who can inform support for the wellbeing of boys and men, following publication of our [Men and Boys Voices research \(2019\)](#).
- Facilitated discussion between Changemakers from our Sound of Silence project in sessions with stakeholders, including Jess Phillips MP, the Shadow Domestic Abuse Minister, senior police officers and youth cadets from the Metropolitan Police, and other youth organisations, with a particular focus on police responses to young people and domestic abuse.

Key learnings from Safe Young Lives:

Over the last year we've drawn important conclusions from all of our Safe Young Lives work. We will actively use these to reduce the risk experienced by young people and to improve the care pathways they can access.

1 Young people experience coercive behaviour online, and are using tech to coerce others

Digital platforms are commonly used by young people as avenues for coercion and sexual harassment, and they report struggling with boundaries when it comes to online behaviour.



It's like a massive problem because every year when the children hit like, year nine... year ten, a group of boys make group chats to circulate nudes in.

—
Young person, Your Best Friend research

2 Young people normalise coercive and controlling behaviour in their relationships

Coercion and control, via emotional and psychological abuse, is normalised. Some struggle to differentiate between regular relationship dynamics and coercion or control. Compounding this, young people don't associate with the term 'domestic abuse', seeing it as an issue for older generations. This affects if and how they seek help.



Looking back I do feel some of my actions were manipulative and I worry that things could have become worse had the relationship lasted longer.

—
Young person, Men and Boys Voices research

3 Young people's experiences of abuse often intersect with other issues they experience

Domestic abuse isn't isolated: it's exacerbated by societal pressures around masculinity, patriarchal attitudes, poverty and racism.



My father was abusive towards our mother. He was violent, controlling and intimidating. When he left, I was left with learned behaviour patterns... When he went, I stepped into his role.

—
Young person, Men and Boys Voices research

4 Children and young people who experience domestic abuse in the family home suffer multiple health consequences

Young victims are facing significant physical and mental health consequences. Almost a quarter are also demonstrating harmful behaviour, most commonly against their mother.



I think one of my parents used those behaviours when I was little and I have echoed them.

—
Young person, Verge of Harming research

5 There's a need for clearer guidance and advice for children and young people

There's a pressing demand for clear, actionable guidance on cultivating healthy relationships, as well as for advice from trusted adults.



A few years ago I sought help for my own toxic relationship... and didn't receive any help in return. I told both my college and the police and they didn't do anything.

—
Young person, Your Best Friend research



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2

Identify and stop harmful behaviour

To stop domestic abuse, for everyone, for good, we have to tackle the behaviour of those who harm. We know that many move from one victim to the next, harming multiple families across different relationships.

To achieve this, we also need to change our societal narrative from ‘Why doesn’t she leave?’ to ‘Why doesn’t he stop?’. In the 21st century, it’s outdated and unjust to place the onus on women, who are disproportionately affected by all domestic abuse, to exit relationships and disrupt family lives. Addressing abusive behaviour directly is the contemporary response we advocate for.



Without the Drive Project there is no way he’d ever look at himself. I don’t know whether he’s going to go into the world, you know, a perfect person shall we say, which none of us are, but I do think he’ll be a bit better, and even if he is a bit better, then, you know, it’s helped massively, it really has.

Survivor, The Drive Project

Drive partnership outcomes

Since 2016:



Over **5,000** perpetrators challenged to change their behaviour



Over **15,000** adult and child victims supported

Independent evaluation shows:



82% drop in physical abuse



88% decrease in sexual abuse

Changing abusive behaviour through Drive

In collaboration with Respect and Social Finance, the [Drive Partnership](#) engages with local systems to challenge high-risk, high harm and serial perpetrators of abuse, focusing on transformative behavioural change. Since it started in 2016, its flagship project - the Drive Project - has expanded across 10 PCC areas, impacting almost 5,000 high risk perpetrators and supporting around 15,000 adult and child victims.

The [Drive Project](#) involves one-on-one interventions with perpetrators, focused on disrupting and challenging behaviour, and providing support where needed. Each local project links in with a range of agencies, including Idva support for victims, ensuring a cohesive and secure approach.

An [independent three-year evaluation](#) (2019) shows how effective this approach is, observing an 82% drop in physical abuse and an 88% decrease in sexual abuse. Marac data also confirms Drive’s effectiveness in decreasing high-risk serial and repeat perpetration.

In 2022, SafeLives secured further multi-year funding from the Home Office and the Lottery for the Drive Project. We also shared our insights at two Drive Partnership conferences, and a Restart event at City Hall. Building on our support for systemic change in this area, our Call for Action was acknowledged in the Government’s 2022 plan, Tackling Domestic Abuse.

Intervening earlier through Restart

2022 saw us continue our work on [Restart](#), a pioneering Drive partnership project that’s addressing domestic abuse in families at an earlier stage. The project – which is being delivered across five London Boroughs – enables earlier interventions that challenge perpetrator behaviour, alongside robust safety planning and multi-agency support for families. An innovative feature is its housing strategy, which looks into alternative accommodation for the perpetrating parent, promoting the safety of victim-survivors in their own homes. We are launching an independent evaluation of Restart in January 2024, supporting our commitment to family safety.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3

Increase safety for those at risk

Increasing safety for those at most risk from harm is where our work first began, and it remains at the heart of our strategic priorities.

Our risk and recovery framework of [Dash risk checklist](#), [Idva and Marac](#) has become the UK benchmark for identifying victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse. Through this way of working, local agencies can identify the risk of those experiencing domestic abuse, and mobilise help in a truly systematic way, ensuring tailored support that maximises safety.

Building on this, our [Whole Picture approach](#) looks at the entirety of an individual's experiences, recognising the broader impact on families affected by domestic abuse, and the wider system that responds to them. Only by looking at the Whole Picture can we effect lasting change for future generations.



Such an in depth training with a wealth of resources and knowledge that are so beyond a textbook. Hearing lived and personal experiences, other professionals' insight into domestic abuse and their practices - alongside all the course material - made the course so enriching and insightful.


Idva Foundation learner




Effective training to support capability

We offer [accredited training](#) across the UK that builds the capabilities and confidence of professionals, ensuring they recognise domestic abuse and intervene in a truly effective way. In 2022 – 2023, we trained 25,000 people, including:

19,000+ Police First Responders via Domestic Abuse Matters training 

Over 835 practitioners who completed our accredited domestic abuse training 

Almost 800 people who completed our training on domestic abuse in the workplace 

We've trained over 60,000 police officers to date through our cultural change programme [Domestic Abuse Matters](#) for the College of Policing. The programme aims to challenge and change the attitudes, culture and behaviour of the police when responding to domestic abuse. [Independent evaluation by Professor Iain Brennan at Hull University](#) shows positive and sustained impact with a 41% increase in arrests for coercive control.

To date, we've also trained over 325 professionals who work with perpetrators through our course [Engaging with Those That Harm](#). This builds competencies around holding perpetrators to account and assessing their readiness for behaviour change. An evaluation of this training is underway.

During the year, we also worked with H.O.P.E Training & Consultancy, supporting their leadership programmes to build capacity among professionals from racialised communities working across the Violence Against Women and Girls sector, and to increase cultural competency amongst white leaders.



SafeLives' DA Matters training really does deliver. It's slick, to the point and very impactful. Officers suggest it's some of the best training they've received. It's thought provoking and has certainly influenced officers to consider better questions around coercion and control.

Domestic Abuse Matters Police Lead

Securing support for the risk-led approach

In 2024, SafeLives will mark two decades since the introduction of the risk and recovery framework of Idva/Idaa and Marac. From a handful of Maracs, there are now around 300 operating across the UK and Idvas have been recognised as the highest valued form of support by survivors in the Government's [Domestic Abuse Plan](#). Despite their success, demand for Idvas still exceeds the supply, even with the Government's pledge to boost their numbers by 300 by 2025. Maracs also vary widely in terms of their function and delivery.

Recognising the crucial need to demonstrate the effectiveness of this approach, last year we organised a 'mock' Marac for Government officials. The session vividly showcased the profound challenges and complexities victims face. In 2022, the Home Office reaffirmed its trust in the risk-led approach by confirming funding for our core Marac activities and national practice guidance from 2023 to 2025.

Embedding this approach in Scotland

It's been a decade since we launched [Idaa training](#) in Scotland, and to date we've trained more than 450 professionals, across 80+ organisations. Following collaboration with the Scottish Government and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, 2022 also became the first year that every local authority area had a functioning [Marac](#) in place. We've been commissioned by the Government to map this provision in depth, sharing our findings with Scottish Government at the end of 2023, to inform the future development of Maracs in Scotland. We've also been funded to establish national standards and training for domestic abuse court advocates.

All of this means that the risk-led approach is now firmly embedded in Scotland. Across every area, victims at high risk of harm can expect multi-agency support, and an Idaa to walk side-by-side with them as they access safety.

Improving local responses through a public health approach

During the year, we worked alongside 15 local authorities across England and Wales, looking in depth at their response to domestic abuse, through the lens of a [Whole Picture public health approach](#).

This approach puts our strategy into action at a local level, seeking to improve the health and safety of whole communities by addressing underlying factors that could contribute towards individuals becoming a victim or a perpetrator. The work aims to radically improve support, and enable survivor participation, so areas make a tangible difference to local families.

We take a four step approach, building on our existing frameworks around risk and recovery, and earlier pilots, including our One Front Door and Beacons programmes.

In the spring, we launched our [first report on our public health approach](#) at an event in Parliament hosted by the Safeguarding Minister. We shared a unique national dataset drawn from research with survivors, services and commissioners across 12 local authority areas, revealing significant gaps in provision, including:

- Survivors flag mental health as a pressing concern due to trauma but find limited long-term support.
- Only 28% of affected families receive specialist support for children, and only 3% receive specialist behavioural change support for perpetrators.
- Courts and legal professionals show insufficient understanding of abuse dynamics, resulting in retraumatisation.
- There's a strong call for a holistic public health approach, better training for professionals, and more efficient multi-agency collaboration to truly address this complex issue.



Public health approach recommendations

The report also includes a series of strategic recommendations aimed at local areas and national policymakers, calling on them to:

- Embed the expertise of survivors into every aspect of the local area’s response, through a formalised survivor strategy.
- Improve communication and information sharing at a multi-agency level.
- Provide clear mental health pathways and trauma-informed support for victim / survivors.
- Place community and specialist domestic abuse service support on a statutory footing, and ensure local authorities build such support into joint commissioning strategies.
- Provide a robust response to perpetrators through a strategic response, increased behavioural change support and training for professionals.
- Ensure there is dedicated court support for affected families.
- Provide specialist support for children affected by domestic abuse, including improved multi-agency working, trauma-informed recovery services and training for professionals.
- Embed a domestic abuse training framework in each local authority area.

Our approach is already having a positive impact in local areas, which are:

- Strategically prioritising domestic abuse and getting a better understanding of gaps around multi-agency working, specialist provision, and levels of professional awareness around domestic abuse.
- Placing the authentic voice of survivors at the heart of strategies, to shape a more effective response. Every area we’ve partnered with now includes survivor representation on their Domestic Abuse Partnership Boards.
- Working more efficiently and making better use of the resources they have. [Preliminary pilots](#) undertaken by the Social Value Engine show a £7.72 return for every £1 invested, demonstrating both the social and economic value of this approach.



Sometimes when working in partnership with health... it can feel as though barriers and negative responses are the default position. It was refreshing yesterday to have you... as fresh eyes putting forward recommendations and us coming up with our own actions in a multi-agency way. That’s my passion and I feel as those some of those barriers are getting lower as a result of you presenting your findings yesterday.

Public health workshop participant

Our Whole Picture public health approach process:

Our approach involves a continuous cycle of learning and quality improvement across the system. Authentic Voice is present in each step through the involvement of our pioneers.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4

Support people to live the lives they want after harm occurs

Even when relationships end, many victims of domestic abuse continue to be harmed.

Too often, perpetrators continue abuse through stalking, harassment and child contact disputes. Money worries and the effects of trauma can take its toll on mental health. For parents harmed by adolescent or adult children, there is no 'end' moment to a family relationship. Our work in this area

mitigates these challenges, emphasising the importance of sustained support for recovery so lives can be transformed. We also support survivors to drive the change they want to see for others going through the same experience.



Being part of something where I, as a survivor, can help a fellow survivor seems like a no brainer to me. I feel I have grown in confidence. Being valued and my opinions listened to is absolutely amazing, as is having the ability to give back in some way.

—
Scottish Authentic Voice Panel Member



Amplifying the authentic voices of survivors

We are committed to amplifying the voices of survivors, supporting them to influence meaningful change. We achieve this by working with our internal and external [SafeLives Pioneers](#), our [SOS Changemakers](#) and our [Scottish Authentic Voice Panel](#). These experts by experience have directly engaged with key decision-makers, as well as shaping our own priorities:

- Last year, our Pioneers met with representatives from the Home Office, the Ministry of Justice, the Labour Party's Shadow Frontbench, and the Central Criminal Court. Pioneer Annie Gibbs provided a powerful contribution to the Home Office's Violence Against Women and Girls campaign, and Pioneer Shana Begum met with the then Queen Consort at Chelsea and Westminster Hospital.
- The Director General of the Defence Safety Authority described Pioneer Shana's presentation at a top 100 event as one of the most compelling he had encountered in two decades.
- In Scotland, our Authentic Voice Panel has been instrumental in providing expertise to numerous organisations and projects, including the recent Independent Funding Review for Violence Against Women & Girls, commissioned by the Scottish Government. Panel members were also pivotal in the creation of specialised training for Police Scotland on racialised communities, and worked with Public Health Scotland on an inclusive system design for marginalised groups.



I feel they should form a core part of any civil and criminal justice consultations on change, both now and in the future. They were articulate, considered and passionate about using their experience to change things for others.

—
Feedback on our Scottish Authentic Voice Panel by Gemma Fraser, Head of Restorative Justice & Recovery

Distributing the NatWest Circle Fund to support recovery

Thanks to the [NatWest Circle Fund](#), we have distributed c. £800K in small grants to around 4,000 survivors through frontline domestic abuse services. The fund has been used to support families in crisis, to enhance their safety, and to foster recovery and resilience amongst survivors.

Collaborating with around 140 frontline services across the UK, the funding has been pivotal for families in need. The money has been used to buy basic necessities like clothing, food, and heating during the cost of living crisis, as well as safety and recovery measures such as CCTV, ring doorbells, assistance with family relocations and counselling for children.



I was avoiding putting the heating on and the children were having to sleep fully clothed... I felt so guilty I was going to go back to their dad who was begging me to return. I feel now like a weight has been lifted from me.

A survivor who received a grant from the Circle Fund

Influencing the Victims and Prisoners Bill

We have continued to influence the Victims and Prisoners Bill as it journeys through the UK Parliament, outlining the important role of Idvas in supporting the ongoing recovery of survivors, and championing the value of community based services.

As part of this work, we have collaborated with key sector partners and the Domestic Abuse Commissioner's Office to raise the profile of community domestic abuse services, highlighting their life-saving work which helps victims to get safe and recover. The coalition is focused on ensuring sustainable funding for these services, to address the postcode lottery provision experienced by survivors. We also want the Government to address the barriers faced by marginalised survivors around disclosing abuse and seeking support.

Ellen gave oral evidence at committee stage of the Bill, calling for legislative frameworks which would require local areas to commission community-based services in line with local needs. This evidence also supported work to produce statutory guidance on the impactful Idva role.

Supporting a trauma-informed family court system

Survivors have told us loudly and clearly that the family court system is retraumatising and is frequently used by perpetrators to perpetuate abuse.

Recognising the pressing need for change, we've [trained over 360 family legal professionals](#) in England and Wales, enhancing their understanding of the dynamics of coercive control and supporting them to provide trauma-informed services. We've also initiated a secondment to the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS), to facilitate positive change from within and improve responses to survivors.



I will have more empathy and give clients more time to provide information if they appear to be struggling... The course has given me a greater depth of understanding how they are likely to be feeling when they open up to me. I may be the first person they have opened up to and I must respect that.

Family legal professional

Supporting professionals to evidence non-fatal strangulation

Our data shows that every year, 20,000 women experience non-fatal strangulation. Around 32% of Idva caseloads involves a client who has experienced this highly dangerous form of physical abuse.

Collaborating as a partner in the new [Institute for Addressing Strangulation](#), we've developed training to equip police, prosecutors and practitioners to support victims and evidence this new offence, introduced under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. In April, we launched the first in a series of non-fatal strangulation webinars for these professionals. Of the evaluations received, 92% found the webinar beneficial, citing an increase in understanding from 29% to 93% post-webinar. 97% also felt the webinar would support their work in this area.

Over the last few years, our data has contributed to pivotal discussions on non-fatal strangulation across various platforms, from the House of Lords to Radio 4's Woman's Hour, supporting policy decisions, legislation and funding for the Institute itself.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 5

An effective and sustainable organisation

We are thankful to work with an amazing team of staff, Pioneers, Authentic Voice Panel members, Trustees, associates, partners, funders and supporters.



I've seen just how much I have to offer and how much difference I can make. With SafeLives my voice matters, my experiences matter and I matter. Something I have never experienced ever before in my life.

SafeLives Pioneer



Championing equity, equality, diversity and inclusion

We are committed to fostering a culture underpinned by equity, equality, diversity, and inclusion and to being consciously inclusive in all our work. Over the last year we've taken active strides to improve, shaped by hard hitting findings and recommendations from an expert independent review. This has included introducing a new post of Director of People and Culture to guide our work in this area. We welcomed Dawn Codrington into this role in summer 2023 and she is beginning a listening exercise this autumn. We've started the journey of supporting our anti-racist practice through sharing tools and resources across teams, to enable a transformation in our thinking and organisational culture.

Organisational development

In the face of a changing operating environment with a decline in emergency Covid funding and a rise in cost of living pressures, we have taken tough decisions this year to reduce our cost base closer to pre-pandemic levels. This has included making efficiencies in running costs and reducing, in some cases, the size of our teams.

We are grateful to our team members for their understanding during this difficult time, and remain committed to supporting colleagues by prioritising their learning, development, and wellbeing. Our employee assistance programme and clinical supervision provides robust support in this area.

We are fortunate to receive ongoing pro bono guidance from a management consultancy firm, focusing on business development, developing our training strategy and enhancing our practice consultancy. We also invested in a new website which is set to launch in late 2023.

In December 2022, Suzanne Jacob, our CEO since 2017, started parental leave. We extended Isabel Boyer's tenure as Chair and welcomed Ellen Miller as interim CEO in January 2023.

Financial performance

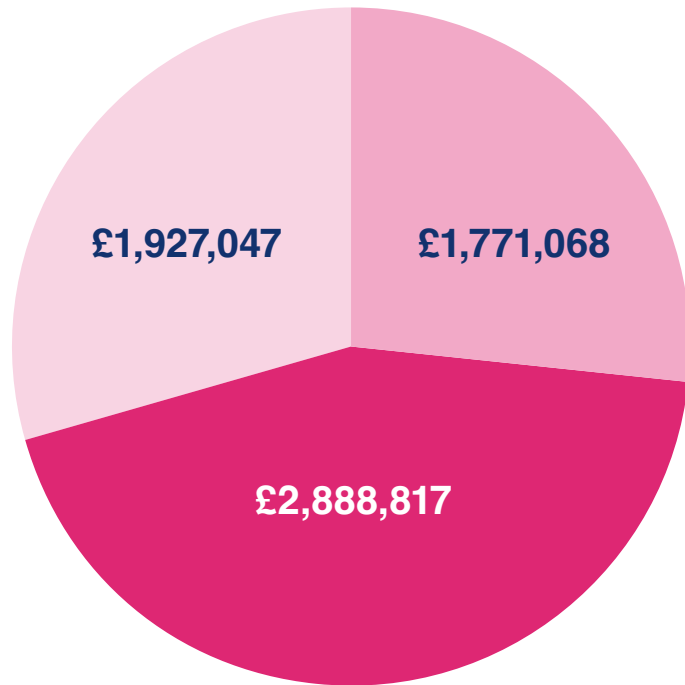
In the wake of a robust performance in 2021-22, we are using accumulated reserves, as planned, in 2022-23 and 2023-24, to ensure stability. Two new Home Office grants support our whole family work, with a focus on children from racially minoritised backgrounds, and the creation of the new Institute for Addressing Strangulation. The landscape post-Covid,

coupled with inflation, continues to bring challenges, with increased costs and potential constraints on statutory funds in 2023-24. Nevertheless, as SafeLives approaches its 20th anniversary, our 2023-24 Operational Plan remains committed to championing our core risk-led response, whilst also looking ahead and investing in our future business development.

How we were funded

Excluding income paid out directly to partners/grants:

- Statutory income
- Charitable trusts, foundations and donations
- Fee earning income



How we spent our funding:

Total: **£7,305,430**

Capacity Building: **£3,767,942**

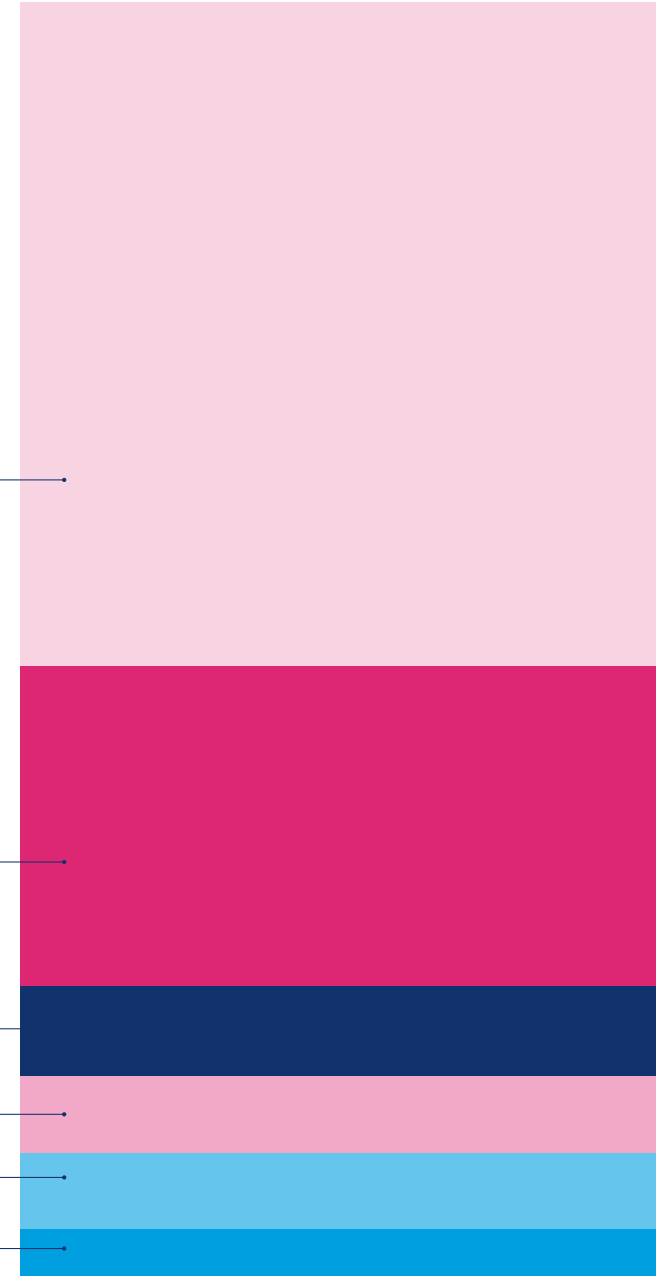
Innovation: **£1,841,558**

Support / governance: **£556,456**

Influencing: **£463,319**

Research: **£418,205**

Fundraising: **£257,950**



Thanks to our funders

SafeLives is extremely fortunate to have the support of many generous individuals and organisations, many of whom have funded us through multi-year and repeated grants. We are indebted to them for their generosity and support.

- Aurum Trust
- Bleu Blanc Rouge Foundation
- Charles Russell Speechlys Foundation
- City Bridge Trust, the funding arm of The City of London Corporation's charity, Bridge House Estates
- Department for Culture, Media and Sport Tampon Tax Fund
- Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
- Dulverton Trust
- Epic Foundation
- Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
- Firebird Foundation
- Garfield Weston Foundation
- Greater Manchester Combined Authority
- Home Office
- Julia and Hans Rausing Trust
- Kate Wilkinson & Harry Gaskell
- Legal Education Foundation
- National Lottery Community Fund England & Wales

- National Lottery Community Fund Scotland
- NatWest
- Orr Mackintosh Foundation
- Peter Cundill Foundation
- Private family foundation managed by Greenwood Place
- Queen Anne's Gate Foundation
- Rayne Foundation
- Scottish Government
- Welsh Government
- All other donors who wish to remain anonymous

Thanks to everyone who raised money for us including:

Amelia Hockey £3,000

Sarah Crown £1,000

Kat Sattin £2,500

Employees of Lloyds Banking Group £784.75

Hugo Burnand Ltd £3,000

Employees of Bank of Scotland £630

If you'd like to support our work, please get in touch – we'd love to hear from you fundraising@safelives.org.uk.

Thanks to our partners

We extend our thanks to the many partners who have collaborated with us over the past year, strengthening our efforts to end domestic abuse for everyone, and for good.

Thanks to the many survivors we work with

We would like to offer our heartfelt thanks to our SafeLives Pioneers, our SOS Changemakers and our Scottish Authentic Voice Panel, as well as all the other survivors we've worked with over the last year. Thank you for your wisdom, for bravely sharing your stories, and for helping us to change the world.

Our priorities for the future

Looking to the future, we have identified the following priorities for 2023 – 2024, enabling us to achieve the most impact with the resources available to us:

- Develop models of multi-agency work to improve domestic abuse understanding, prevention and response.
- Increase capability of frontline professionals through training, quality frameworks and improving relationships.
- Make sure that the voices of survivors are integral in how domestic abuse is understood and responded to.
- Speak out for better legislation, regulation and enforcement of victims' rights and the development of an effective whole picture response.
- We will also ensure we are an effective and well-managed organisation, to support delivery of these workstreams.

Closing remarks from Isabel Boyer, our Chair

Huge thanks to all our staff, Trustees, Pioneers, Authentic Voice Panel members, associates and partners for another year of strong impact.



Isabel Boyer, SafeLives Pioneer Trustee Shana, and Her Majesty The Queen – photo © Chelsea & Westminster Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

Thanks too to all our supporters and funders without whom we could not continue. We're very grateful to Her Majesty The Queen for continuing to bring this issue into the light. It's not an easy subject to talk about and it's vital that victims and survivors have the space to be heard. They are the experts in their own experience and they can bring a powerful new perspective to drive improvements in the systems which respond to them.

The work done this year by all the survivors we work with has been phenomenal and we are seeing the ground shift, with better recognition of the need to look at the whole family, address perpetration, the growing awareness of the value of co-creation, and a renewed focus on how we can better reach



Over the years, in my previous role, I had the privilege of meeting many survivors of rape and domestic abuse; and of sharing in the sorrow of people who had lost family members to violence. And again and again, I heard that two of the most powerful ways in which to help were to remember and to listen.

—
Her Majesty The Queen

people who are marginalised by virtue of their identity or circumstance. Everyone should get the right support at the right time, and we are seeing positive results in many of our programmes.

I'm proud of what we've achieved together and the way we have continued to deliver through Covid and beyond. Like lots of charities we have faced challenges but have always responded with openness, pragmatism and a willingness to reach out to partners – new and long-standing – to keep working together to end domestic abuse. We will keep listening and learning, and raising up the voices of those who might not otherwise be heard.



Donate to help end domestic abuse, for everyone and for good.

SafeLives

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