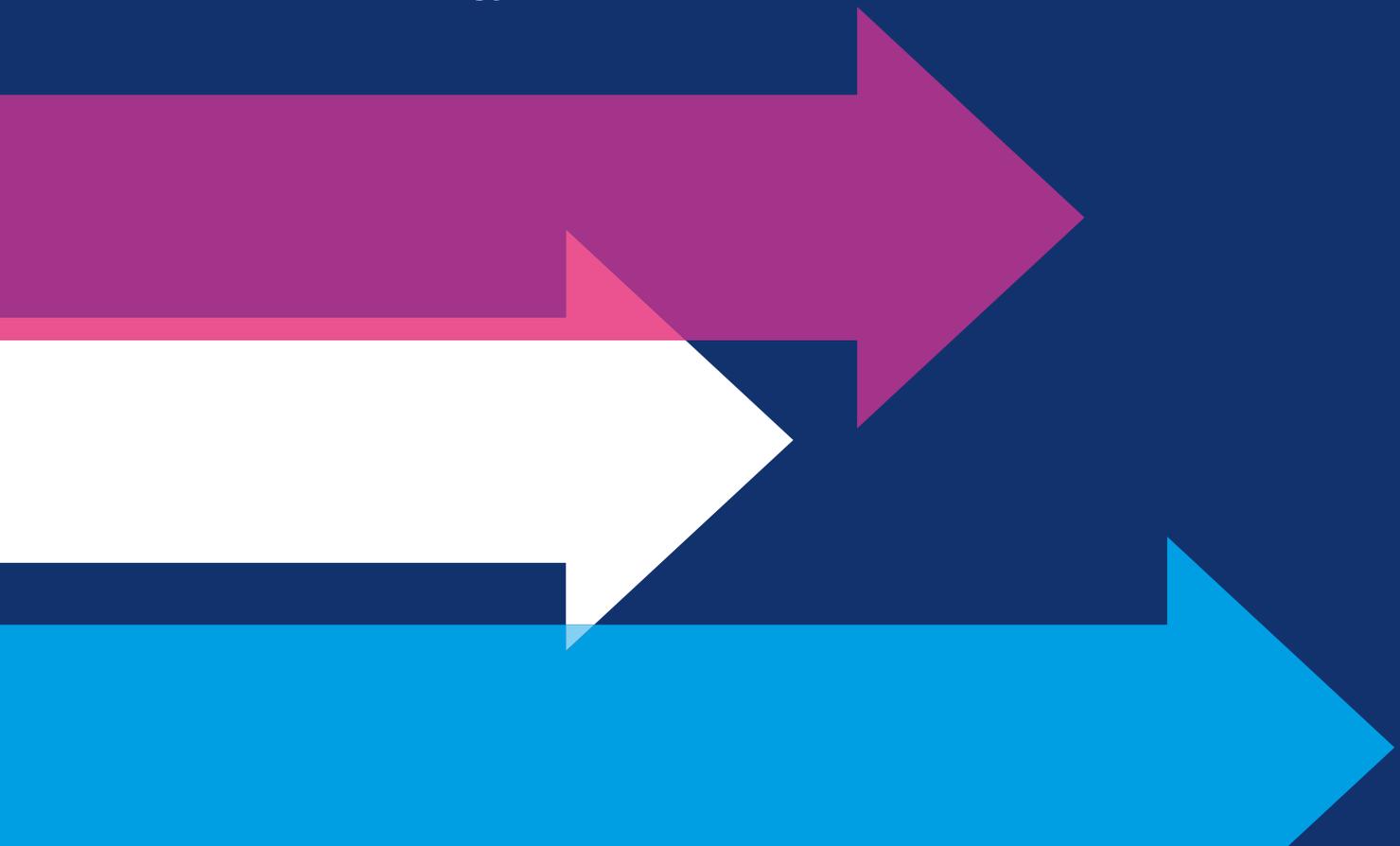




Ending domestic abuse

Getting it right first time, for every victim and every family

SafeLives strategy 2015-18



We are SafeLives, a national charity dedicated to ending domestic abuse. Previously called Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse (Caada), we chose our new name because we're here for one simple reason: to make sure all families are safe.

Our experts find out what works to stop domestic abuse. Then we do everything we can to make sure families everywhere benefit. It works: after getting the right help more than 60% of victims tell us that the abuse stops.



Executive summary

Ten years ago, we set out to transform the response to domestic violence in the UK.

We started with those victims at highest risk of murder or serious harm. Ten years on, we've achieved a lot. But the response to domestic abuse is still not good enough, despite huge efforts. It's piecemeal, underfunded, doesn't help all victims or their children effectively and doesn't challenge perpetrators to stop abusing.

We need another massive shift.

At SafeLives, we've set out the change we need in our new SafeLives blueprint. To create it, we talked to those who work every day with victims – and with survivors, their friends and families too.

Our vision is this: if we create a model response to domestic abuse in every area, all families will get safe more quickly, and stay safe in the long-term. Victims will know that they can ask for help and can be sure that they – and their children – will get it. The right support will be there until they no longer need it. Services will focus on what victims and their children need to become safe – not just on their professional silos. And domestic abusers will be



challenged, and helped to change. In short, the response to domestic abuse will be transformed – so that every family can get safe and stay safe.

And so this SafeLives strategy is all about how we bring it to life.

We'll build on the work we did to create a risk-led response to high-risk victims – work that still isn't complete. And we'll develop new interventions to fill the gaps.

It's a ten year project to implement our blueprint nationally. But that's what will make sure every victim and every family get the

right help. So we're starting with projects to fill the three biggest gaps:

- an intervention to challenge high-risk perpetrators to change
- a One Front Door model to identify all the risks to each member of the family together, and make sure each of them gets the right help fast
- specialist Idvas to help medium-risk victims become safe

And alongside this, our national programmes will help our partners across the country to get better at what they do – building on our existing risk-led model and developing a stronger response to domestic abuse in every area. And we'll make the case more loudly than ever before for a well-funded, sustainable, evidence-based and risk-led domestic abuse sector.

Everything we do is alongside our partners – voluntary and statutory agencies who are as passionate about ending domestic abuse as we are. And everything we do is for victims of domestic abuse and their children – so that one day, every family will get safe and stay safe.

“As the kids got older he started behaving the same way to them as well – making them run around after him like servants. But I just didn’t understand that I was experiencing domestic abuse. I thought that domestic violence involved being seriously beaten up all of the time. I didn’t realise that his controlling behavior and verbal attacks were forming a pattern of abusive behaviour.”

Louise*

“If it wasn’t for the service I honestly don’t know where I would be now (my family would probably say six feet under)... My Idva took so much time determining how I felt and what I wanted to achieve – in a way it was my first opportunity in a long time to speak about how I actually felt, and also to know that my voice was being heard.”

Asma*

SafeLives: the first ten years

SafeLives was founded in 2005.

At that time, there was a number of specialist charities offering tailored one-to-one support to victims of domestic abuse. But dedicated services like these didn't have a straightforward way to link up with other agencies, like the police, social care and health. This meant that, all too often, the help women received was fragmented and inconsistent – requiring them to navigate many services in order to get the support they so badly needed.

By working with local areas, SafeLives helped to build a model which combines the specialist support and trusted relationship that those charities offered, together with the resources of large public services. The model had great potential: a tailored intervention responding to the risks and needs of the victim, not one-size-fits-all. It was what you would want for your best friend if she were living with domestic abuse.

SafeLives (then Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse – Caada) developed this into a new risk-led system, prioritising high-risk victims – those at high risk of murder or serious harm. This complements existing services such as refuges and outreach.

The risk-led system has three steps:

1. All agencies have a shared understanding of domestic abuse risk, use the same tool, and know how to refer to an Idva.
2. Victims develop a trusting relationship with an Idva – a single specialist professional who can help with everything they need to become safe
3. The Idva works with a multi-agency team (the Marac) to make the victim and their children safer – and all the agencies focus only on that

In the past 10 years SafeLives has trained more than 1800 Idvas. We have set up 288 Marac teams – one in every area of England and Wales, and many in Scotland and Northern Ireland too. We have made sure practitioners, commissioners and policymakers have everything they need – from one-to-one advice through to practical tools, training and resources. In 2014, our work supported more than 50,000 adults parenting around 70,000 children all of whom were living with high-risk abuse.

And, most importantly, it works. Over 60% of victims receiving Idva support through this approach reported that the abuse stopped at the point of case closure. And victims tell us that their Idva was invaluable in helping them escape abuse – and in some cases saved their lives.

A wider approach – building on the risk-led response to help every family

We are very proud of the difference SafeLives' approach has made for victims of abuse across the UK.

We still believe that a risk-led approach is right to make sure victims at the highest risk of harm are helped fast. But the quality of implementation of the high-risk pathway across the country is uneven. And there are just 50% of the Idva numbers needed to support all high-risk victims.

More widely, the clarity of the national approach to high-risk domestic abuse victims has not been matched by a similar systematic focus on the range of risks faced by other victims – especially the 130,000 children living in high-risk domestic abuse households and the wider group of families living with other levels of domestic abuse.

Apart from SafeLives' high-risk pathway, how the UK supports victims of domestic abuse has not changed in decades. Victims and children are still living too long with domestic abuse. And still the UK does not hold perpetrators accountable for abuse, and work to stop them abusing further.

Few local areas take a strategic overview of what needs to be available to make victims and families safe. Despite national political commitment, the governance and funding structures are not fit for purpose. It is rare to find commissioners who link up services for victims, children and perpetrators – and even rarer to find those who address domestic abuse, mental health and substance misuse in an integrated way. And in recent years, there have been cuts to funding which have meant that many domestic violence services have closed, are turning away victims or are operating with unsafe caseloads.

So now the time is right to look at how SafeLives can build on our work to date, and transform the system further – for all victims and all children.

Our vision: together we can end domestic abuse. We won't stop until all families are safe.

Our goal for this strategy, 2015–18

We will transform the UK's response to domestic abuse by implementing the SafeLives blueprint, so that we:



double the number of families who become sustainably safe



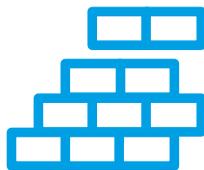
halve the average time it takes families to get help

Our strategic priorities, 2015–18

We will implement the SafeLives blueprint by:



1. Developing new interventions and ways of working to fill the gaps in the UK's response to domestic abuse



2. Building on SafeLives' existing approach to helping high-risk victims



3. Giving a platform to victims, and their families and friends, to demand change



4. Using our evidence to convince stakeholders, get the right public policy and win sustainable funding for services



5. Increasing SafeLives' sustainability as an organisation

The SafeLives blueprint for a transformed response to domestic abuse

We have to transform the whole system to achieve sustainable safety from domestic abuse for all victims and all children.

And it needs to be an end-to-end approach, not just isolated interventions struggling in an unreformed system. Over the coming decade, SafeLives will work with our partners to create or recommend a set of interventions and new ways of working to meet each point of our blueprint. We believe that the impact of this will go far beyond domestic abuse, enabling easier identification of children and young people at risk and supporting victims and their families to get help with complex needs as well as domestic abuse.

The system we propose:

- 1. Victims and their families need to be at the heart of the system.**

They need to know how to get help for themselves – or what to do if someone tells them about domestic abuse. And they should know that services in every area are of high-quality, and focussed on meeting their needs and making them safe.
- 2. We need to identify all victims, their children, young people at risk and perpetrators earlier.** Early identification is the responsibility of every public service. Then we need to assess the risks they face jointly and separately, and get each member of the family the right intervention fast.
- 3. There must be quality services for all victims.** Victims at high- or medium-risk of murder or serious harm must get help in the community from a qualified Idva, working as part of a robust multi-specialist team. This help must not be predicated on them leaving their relationship. High-risk victims must get help from a high-quality Marac. Victims at high- and medium-risk with complex needs must get specific help with those needs alongside help to become safe from abuse. Victims at standard-risk need to get the right support, often from universal or volunteer-led services.
- 4. Children living with domestic abuse must get high-quality services** that help them be safe and develop their resilience. Children's services must link to support for the primary victim as part of a whole-family model.

5. **Perpetrators should get the right challenge alongside the right help to stop abusing.**

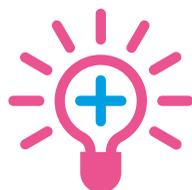
A specialist worker should proactively secure the engagement of every perpetrator of high-risk abuse, seek to change their behaviour and link them to other services or to voluntary perpetrator programmes. This will reduce the risk to the current victim, and prevent abuse to future victims and children.

6. **Once families are safe, there should be a clear pathway of support** for the victim and their children to recover from the abuse and live a life sustainably in safety – including peer support.

7. **There must be a supportive policy and funding environment.** Politicians should set the right policy framework and commissioners should align their budgets and fund services according to jointly-agreed outcomes that address risk and need in their local population.



SafeLives strategic priorities, 2015–18

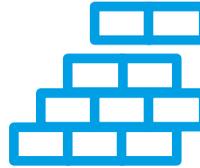


We will implement the SafeLives blueprint by developing new interventions and ways of working to fill the gaps in the UK's response to domestic abuse.

Over the coming three years, SafeLives will undertake a programme of pilot projects, consultation with victims and research to understand how to bring our SafeLives blueprint to life. We will create or recommend a set of interventions and new ways of working, and then start to roll them out to every area of the country (though we will not finish this work during 2015–18). Everything we do is in partnership with others who are innovating to help families become safe, whether in the voluntary or statutory sector.

In 2015–18, we will

- work in a small number of local areas to create and pilot new processes and interventions for early identification, including a One Front Door approach to finding every family where there is domestic abuse, and, in partnership with Social Finance and Respect, a model intervention for perpetrators of high-risk domestic abuse
- create and pilot training and ways of working for Idvas working with medium-risk victims
- support a number of local areas to begin to adopt aspects of the SafeLives blueprint in their response to domestic abuse
- review interventions in the multiple needs, family and children and domestic abuse sectors to discover those that work, make recommendations and inform our future development programme



We will implement the SafeLives blueprint by building on SafeLives' existing approach to helping high-risk victims.

Integral to the blueprint is a strong system to help those victims at the highest risk of murder or serious harm. But despite ten years' work, a high-quality response to these victims is not embedded in every area. There is just half the Idva capacity needed to support all victims of high-risk domestic abuse. And whilst we have tried to help local areas follow best practice, implementation is still variable, with inconsistent use of risk assessment and some Maracs not operating effectively to make victims safe.

In 2015–18, we will

- deliver a SafeLives knowledge hub – a single port of call for any professional looking for the best advice about how to respond to domestic abuse, and how to run an effective Marac
- run high-quality training for Idvas, and put in place a continuing professional development plan to ensure that the role of Idva remains distinctive and is not diluted
- support services and commissioners to show impact, by developing the Insights system to cover all types of domestic abuse service and increasing the number who use it
- help domestic abuse services raise their quality and become sustainable through training service managers and accrediting great projects through Leading Lights
- support commissioners to raise the quality of their local response through information and advice, and an expanded bespoke consultancy service
- increase our bespoke training offer to support a wider set of professionals



We will implement the SafeLives blueprint by giving a platform to victims, and their families and friends, to demand change.

Too often, victims don't get the right help. They can't choose the option that's right for them, and not all services are available in every area. Sometimes, victims aren't listened to about what would make them safe. This makes them less likely to achieve sustainable safety. Over the coming three years, we'll work with victims and with their families and friends to make sure they are part of how we develop and evaluate the blueprint. And we'll put victims' voices and experiences at the heart of our influencing – amplifying their stories to stop more domestic abuse.

In 2015–18, we will

- continue to work with victims, families and friends as part of setting SafeLives' plans for the future
- build victims' experiences and views into the development, design and evaluation of our pilot programmes, working alongside them to make sure that they shape the interventions
- create opportunities for victims, families and friends to tell their stories and speak about what needs to change so every family is safe
- make sure that victims who contact us for help are referred to the right service from our partners around the country



We will implement the SafeLives blueprint by using our evidence to convince stakeholders, get the right public policy and win sustainable funding for services.

As Caada, we had a high profile and were trusted by those involved in delivering and funding Idva services and Maracs. And we were known for our expertise and innovation by the wider domestic abuse sector. As SafeLives, we want to have strong relationships with those who already know and trust us, and also win over new ambassadors for our blueprint amongst commissioners and policymakers and in the wider policy and political sphere.

In 2015–18, we will

- work with key stakeholders locally and nationally to build the leadership, funding and governance necessary to implement the SafeLives blueprint nationally
- create a proactive influencing programme, rooted in our evidence and advocating for the widespread adoption of the blueprint through outputs such as reports, blogs, events, speeches and media work
- complete our rebrand as SafeLives, building our awareness and trust amongst all key audiences
- publish our Themis research into locating Idvas in health settings



We will implement the SafeLives blueprint by increasing SafeLives' sustainability as an organisation.

SafeLives is a young organisation which has grown quickly in response to the domestic abuse sector's enthusiasm for more effective ways of working. We have significant support from the Home Office and from grant-making trusts, and we earn considerable income from our training, products and consultancy. Over the coming period we need to diversify our income streams, and develop our people and our infrastructure to put us in a position to respond to future opportunities.

In 2015–18, we will

- deliver a new website and stronger digital presence, supporting all programmes
- establish new work streams and redesign existing activities to support the implementation of the blueprint, including finding new partners
- develop new funding streams to support ongoing activities and development work



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SafeLives

CAN Mezzanine,
32–36 Loman St,
London, SE1 0EH

0117 317 8750
info@safelives.org.uk
safelives.org.uk

Charity no: 1106864
Company no: 5203237

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www.soapbox.co.uk