

Cheshire Freemasons' £30,000 Donation Provides Critical Boost in Fight to Save Services of One of UK's Longest-Running Domestic Abuse Charities

Thursday 6 February, 2025

Cheshire, UK – 6th February 2025: A £30,000 donation from Cheshire Freemasons, made in their 300th year, marks a vital first step in securing the future of MyCWA (known as Cheshire Without Abuse), after the domestic abuse charity was given less than 10 weeks' notice of complete council funding withdrawal from April 2025.

The Freemasons' donation, combined with over £28,000 raised through community efforts over the past two weeks, represents an important milestone in an urgent emergency appeal. MyCWA, one of Britain's longest-running domestic abuse charities, has provided life-saving support to families across Cheshire since 1977. Last year alone, it helped almost 4,000 adults and children impacted by domestic abuse. Now, with just weeks to secure alternative funding, essential survivor services face potential closure.

Freemasons Step Up to Support a Critical Cause

Senior Cheshire Freemason Chris Renshaw said: *"Visiting MyCWA's support centre showed us why specialist domestic abuse services are so crucial to our community. We saw first-hand how their dedicated team provides emergency support, safety, and hope to families in crisis. As Cheshire Freemasons mark our 300th anniversary, we're proud that our 3,500 members across the region can help ensure some of these vital services continue."*

"Supporting our local communities is at the very heart of Freemasonry, and there could be no more important cause than protecting vulnerable families in our area."

MyCWA must raise £500,000 to sustain its full range of specialist services beyond April 2025. Despite strong financial management and efforts to become more self-sufficient—for example, through training and consultancy services—the sudden loss of council funding puts essential programmes at risk.

Thanks to recent community fundraising and the Freemasons' generous donation, the first £50,000 milestone has been reached. This ensures that support groups for survivors and children's group sessions can continue—though potentially in alternative locations if funding is not secured for MyCWA's Crewe support centre and Macclesfield community hub.

However, many critical services remain under threat, including:

- **Emergency refuge accommodation** (with MyCWA one of only 5% of UK refuges that accept families with pets)
- **Emergency provisions** for families fleeing abuse
- **Specialist trauma recovery programmes** for adult survivors and children
- **A multi-agency support hub** hosting police and specialist services
- **Behaviour change programmes** aimed at breaking the cycle of abuse

Saskia Lightburn-Ritchie, Chief Executive of MyCWA, said: *"We're incredibly grateful for this generous donation from Cheshire Freemasons and deeply moved by the outpouring of community support over the past two weeks. After nearly 50 years of supporting families in Cheshire, this generosity shows just how much our community values these essential services."*

"Our Crewe support centre and Macclesfield community hub are safe havens where people can access food, warmth, and specialist support when they need it most. These services can mean the difference between safety and returning to danger, and we will do everything in our power to keep our doors open for those who need us."

To support MyCWA's emergency appeal, visit: www.justgiving.com/campaign/savemycwa

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