# Newcastle Women's Aid Refuge is set to close

**Monday 23 May, 2016**

Staff at Newcastle Women's Aid (NWA) are bracing themselves for the closure of their Refuge. In 2014 Newcastle City Council embarked on an arduous 18 month procurement process to enable them to contract with an organisation to manage a new integrated domestic abuse service. The result is the award of a new contract to the fledgling Thirteen Care & Support Company, established only 2 years ago, and which is predominantly a provider of social housing.

The decision has shocked all those connected with Newcastle Women's Aid. For over 40 years the Refuge has provided both short and longer term accommodation together with outreach and individual support to many thousands of women and children – all of whom have fled domestic abuse. Those working within the refuge are some of the most experienced and specialised staff in the country and are fully equipped to deal with the many complex needs of those affected by domestic abuse.

Justine Massingham, Chair of Newcastle Women's Aid said ***"This is extremely disappointing news for NWA not only for staff who have shown dedication and commitment to the service but also for the women and children whose lives this service has changed over the past 40 years".***

Elaine Langshaw, Service Director said ***"Everyone here at NWA is shocked and upset with the outcome. During the long tendering process we have continued to provide high quality services to women, children and young people whose lives have been affected by domestic abuse. Our specialist expertise has evolved over 40 years to meet the changing needs of our clients including assessing risk level and safety planning. The work we do is vital! We are sad for the City of Newcastle and concerned about the impact this decision may have for women, young people, children and our partner agencies".***

A service user said ***"I dread to think what would have happened and where I would be without Women's Aid. In fact, I don't think I would be here. Women's Aid has given me the strength to carry on".***

Although NWA were not successful in their quest to run the new service they will continue to provide a range of services including resettlement support, campaign to create awareness of domestic abuse, promote healthy relationships and hold a wide range of training workshops on subjects such as Virtual abuse, Effective action planning, Freedom Programme, Recovery Toolkit, parenting and life skills.

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