

THOUSANDS AT RISK AS LIFE-SAVING DOMESTIC ABUSE SERVICES FACE CLOSURE IN CHESHIRE AFTER 50 YEARS

Friday 17 January, 2025

KEY POINTS:

- Life-saving domestic abuse charity centre and support services facing closure after almost 50 years of service
- Almost 4,000 vulnerable adults and children used services last year
- Emergency £500,000 needed to fund support centre and services for next 12 months
- Closure threatens 24/7 crisis line that handled over 1,000 out of hours emergency calls last year

Cheshire, UK – Friday 17th

January 2025: One of Britain's longest-serving domestic abuse charities faces closure of its vital support centre and survivor services after nearly five decades of life-saving work, following confirmation that Cheshire East Council cannot fund services beyond April 2025.

MyCWA (Cheshire Without Abuse)'s support centre in Crewe, and its Macclesfield store and community hub, will close without urgent funding intervention; ending critical services that have been a community lifeline for generations.

"For almost 50 years, people have fled abuse and we'd be there waiting for them. Not just to keep them and their children safe, but to help them heal and break the cycle of abuse," says Chief Executive Saskia Lightburn-Ritchie. "I can't quite articulate how catastrophic the impact of this funding decision is going to be. It will be felt for generations to come."

CRITICAL SERVICES AT RISK:

- 24/7 crisis helpline
- Emergency refuge accommodation for families and their pets
- Specialist trauma recovery programmes for children
- Community outreach services
- Survivor support groups

The financial context is stark: "£500,000 would maintain these life-saving services for a year," notes Lightburn-Ritchie. "Compare that to the £11 million spent on a struggling car park in Crewe - we must ask ourselves what price we put on human life."

This crisis comes as domestic abuse cases surge nationally, with the ONS reporting 200,000 additional cases last year. MyCWA supported nearly 4,000 adults and children in Cheshire East alone last year, never turning away anyone in crisis.

"When someone finds the courage to flee abuse, they often leave with nothing," Lightburn-Ritchie explains. "Our centre provides emergency food, clothing, and safety. These aren't just services - they're the difference between someone staying safe or returning to danger."

Survivor Abi Blake, who received life-saving support from MyCWA after suffering critical injuries from her abusive husband, emphasises the stakes: "This charity didn't just save my life - they gave me a future. They gave me and my sons hope. Losing these services now, when so many need them, is unthinkable."

"Our centre and services are the difference between life and death for many," Lightburn-Ritchie concludes. "Without intervention, we face preventable tragedies."

Media:



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