



# PRESS RELEASE

**October, 2021**

## **DOMESTIC ABUSE CHARITY LAUNCHES NEW SERVICE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE**

A leading domestic abuse charity has launched a new service specifically for young people.

West Mercia Women's Aid received funding from The Ministry of Justice – following a successful bid from West Mercia's Police and Crime Commissioner who had identified the charity as a worthy recipient - to create four new positions to deliver an initiative targeted at 13 to 19 year olds.

Entitled YPIDVAs – Young Persons Independent Domestic Violence Advisors – these new roles complement the already existing IDVA service provided by the charity; however, this is the first time the organisation has introduced a dedicated team of advisors serving young people directly in this way.

The roles are initially for an 18 month period. Each of the four Young Person's Advisors covers one of the charity's four operating areas, Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin. They provide support to young people who are experiencing domestic or teenage relationship abuse and who are considered high risk.

Each YPIDVA provides a range of targeted therapeutic interventions and are part of a specialist and person-centred service that works with young people to promote their safety and resilience and to empower them to make positive relationship choices in the future.

Sue Coleman, Chief Executive Officer at West Mercia Women's Aid said: "We are so pleased to be launching this much needed service. Adding a dedicated IDVA service for young people comes at a time when abuse and violence against young people is at an all-time high. Protecting our young people and helping them make positive life choices regarding relationships is at the heart of this new service and we look forward to reporting on its success."

The statistics make for sobering reading:

One in two young women have experienced controlling behaviour in an intimate relationship;

- 41 per cent of girls aged 14 to 17 in an intimate relationship experienced some form of sexual violence from their partner;
- 59 per cent of girls aged 13 to 21 reported in 2014 some form of sexual harassment at school or college in the past year;
- 41 per cent of men aged 18 to 24 say a woman is totally or partly to blame for her sexual assault if she goes out late at night, wears a short skirt and gets drunk;
- 6.6 per cent of young men aged 16 to 19 experience domestic abuse; additionally 16 per cent of boys report some form of sexual abuse within their relationships.

West Mercia Women's Aid has a free, confidential and 24 hour helpline; the numbers are:

0800 783 1359 (Herefordshire, Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin)

0800 980 3331 (Worcestershire)

For further information call West Mercia Women's Aid on 01432 356146.