



ANNUAL REPORT 2015-16

Working towards a world in which women and children lead safe, equal, violence-free lives so they can flourish and actively contribute to society

Introduction by our Chair of Trustees, Ruth Fuller Sessions

This has been an amazing and challenging year for Advance. We rolled out work across 9 partners with our very well received Angelou Partnership which delivers specialist support to women and girls experiencing violence in any form. Whilst Advance delivers the largest share of this work through our programme of support for 2,000 women annually at high risk of domestic abuse, other partners deliver equally vital work supporting women and girls who have experienced sexual violence, who may be at risk of FGM and who need a specialist approach including women who are Moroccan or Arabic speaking, lesbian, bisexual or transsexual and women from African heritage. Angelou has established itself as a highly effective pioneer of a partnership which has retained the specialisms and specialist approach of small community based organisations known to their community. This supports access to services and strong partnership working, wrapping the care and support around the women rather than asking them to move between services retelling their stories, something we know leads to women disengaging in services and being at much higher risk.

We remain poised to sign a contract which works across just over half all the London boroughs with women who have offended whether they have spent time in prison or through a community order. Women make up only 5% of the prison population. Around 60% serve sentences of only a few months, almost half are reconvicted within a year and the majority are in for non-violent offences. Women receive higher sentences, are more likely to lose their homes and children and need a specialist service when coming back into society to support them to reduce and end their offending. Our pilot programme Minerva, started 5 years ago is recognised as a “gold standard” model and it is this effective approach which has been adopted and will be funded by Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) and the Mayor’s Office for Policy and Crime (MOPAC). Our approach puts women at the heart of the service offering a women-only space for them to explore and address what led them to offend and works closely with probation, who are co-located at our offices and means we have a 57% record of ending offending in women. When this contract begins in 16/17, we will work closely with other providers to offer additional services funded by MOPAC to women in ten boroughs to evidence the impact this has on their offending rates. We will be growing the organisation by at least 33% and look forward to this exciting new period of our development.

Action for Change, our EU programme funded under the Daphne funding stream is now coming to an end. The programme worked closely with Romania, Hungary, Italy and coordinators in the UK in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea to work with 20 women who have had their children permanently removed into care. This highly neglected group of women have had their voices heard through the development of a parallel group running alongside this programme of work, feeding their experiences into the findings, making a film which will be used to influence funders and producing art which was shown at one of the London conferences. Members of the women’s shadow board travelled to the Hungarian conference to tell their stories and have been empowered by their experiences. One of the UK members has joined our board as the service user representative.

Advance continues to challenge policy, grow and provide the board with significant strategic decisions to make about our direction. The coming financial year will offer opportunities for growth development and increased profile. It only remains for me to thank wholeheartedly our excellent and incredibly committed staff team, our talented board, our volunteers who give their time and skills to our fundraising and most of all our service users who continue to inspire us to work harder and go further to combat domestic abuse and find innovative ways to support women offenders.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ruth Fuller Sessions', with a stylized, cursive script.

Ruth Fuller Sessions,
Chair, ADVANCE



Message from our Chief Executive Officer, Anna Smith

Advance continues to thrive in 2014/15 with our partnership Angelou exceeding expectations from our funders both as a successful partnership and in terms of the 3000 women we are reaching in west London. This year has seen an unprecedented rise in referrals to our Domestic Violence and Abuse service which is twofold; we are reaching more women through our partnership work and raising awareness but the incidences of violence and abuse are not reducing. So we have more work to do. Our work with women involved in the Criminal Justice System, called Minerva, has made the transition from being a pilot to a recognised service which successfully supports women to reduce and end their offending. Advance took the decision to become the prime agency to contract with the CRC,, a subsidiary of MTCNovo who contracted with the Ministry of Justice, to run a contract across central London using our successful model of good practice developed by Minerva. In the forthcoming year we will work with 950 women extending our service based in west London to centres in the south, east and north. Our work with younger women who have come to the notice of the police, funded by Barrow Cadbury has also been successful. We hope that ideas we are developing with Barrow Cadbury in 2015/16 will bring us a new project in partnership with the trust, also aimed at diverting young women from criminal activity. Advance has added a part time Fundraising Office and Finance Officer to our team, reducing the costs of consultants and bringing these functions in-house.

The work negotiating this large, new contract with CRC has taken up a great deal of my time this year and will involve major expansion for the organisation next year, with at least 13 new staff to join our current team of 35. However I have also had time to working with partners in our European Project, Daphne - Action for Change. Along with Italy, Hungary and Romania, we have developed projects which work with women who have had children removed permanently into care, hearing about their experiences and looking at how well the systems operated in each of our countries. Next year we will gather all of the good practice from this project and hope to influence the way systems work so that we can intervene earlier, support women to keep their children and support this much neglected group. We also placed two of our Individual Domestic Violence Advisers in the social care team in Hammersmith, training and raising awareness of the dynamics of domestic abuse with social workers. This has had excellent results; it supports our drive to develop a coordinated community response to domestic abuse, equipping non-specialist staff to identify and support women as early as possible in their experiences and, in this case, to look at the needs of the whole family.

As well as the challenges outlined above in expanding next year, we aim to build a funding base through approaches to the corporate sector, led by myself and supported by the Fundraising Officer and some interns we are recruiting. Some inroads have already been made to support this work, as we were named as the first recipient of the Institute for Insurers Charity Foundation's fund and have formed a link with this partnership of insurance companies based in the city. Advance will also be at the forefront of new approaches to reducing domestic abuse in partnership with two national domestic abuse challenges, Safelives and Women's Aid which we hope will be educational and bring new models to the whole sector.

The staff team have been through a great deal of change and should be commended on their ability to continue to offer services of a very high quality to the women. The board continue to offer invaluable expertise and support to some wide ranging strategic decisions and our strategic plan which we agreed this year. The commitment of the staff and the board never wavers and is the cornerstone of our success

Anna Smith –CEO of Advance

About Advance

ADVANCE aims to prevent domestic violence against women and children and the causes of women's offending. We deliver high-quality services for women, children, young people and communities, including:

- **Advocacy, support and advice** for women and girls who have experienced violence and abuse, or have other complex needs;
- **Support and help** through the justice system;
- **24-hour crisis support**, risk management and safety planning for women experiencing domestic violence;
- **Holistic support** for women with complex needs across all of our services;
- **Emotional and practical support** in our women's centre for women who have committed crime, and young women at risk of committing crime, in order to reduce offending and divert women from custody;
- **Specialist advice** sessions and surgeries run by partner agencies around alcohol counselling, drug testing, welfare benefit advice;
- **Group-work programmes** focusing on empowerment, building resilience, improving problem-solving and assisting recovery from abuse;
- **Diversions activities** to reduce social isolation and increase women's self-esteem and self-confidence; Specialist housing, maternity, criminal justice and young women's advocates and keyworkers; Specialist support for children, young people and their families affected by domestic violence.

2453 women referred to ADVANCE

74% of women engaged with the service

94% of women reported feeling safer after being supported by ADVANCE

89% of women reported an improved quality of life after being supported by ADVANCE Angelou

90% of women were at reduced risk at case closure following the support of the service provided by ADVANCE Angelou

55% reduction in rearrests of women who served short prison sentences

Some of our achievements in 2015-16:

PREVENTION

Our Young Women's keyworker has successfully advocated for women aged 18-25 years at Court, Housing, Health and Childrens' Services, amongst others, to divert them from entering the Criminal Justice System and assist them to obtain the support they need to avoid committing crime in the future. We have been working on a similar project for older women with the police triage pilot, offering our support to women residents in the three borough area at the point of initial arrest, in order to try to help them at the earliest opportunity and prevent re-offending. We have trained police teams across the three boroughs in the gender differences in offending, the specific needs of female offenders, and the particular vulnerabilities of young women at risk of committing crime.

We were commissioned to run a pilot project with Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Social Services and the research group Inclusion to support at least 20 women who have had at least one child removed and have experienced domestic violence. The pilot is EC funded and is part of a greater project with 3 other countries and will include a best practice toolkit.

During 2015-16 we were accredited by Safelives as a Leading Light. We have also acquired the Women's Aid Stage One national Quality Mark for excellence in local service delivery.

86% of women report a reduction in abuse due to support and advice received from DV service as measured by closing assessments

97% of women report improved confidence in reporting abuse and/or where to access help and support as measured by exit interviews and evaluations

PROVISION

We were the lead partner in the Angelou Partnership which is a partnership of 9 organisations. The Angelou Partnership service covers all forms of violence against women and girls and supports women and girls aged 13 years and older across Westminster, Kensington and Chelsea and Hammersmith and Fulham.

We developed a domestic violence Social Care project in Hammersmith and Fulham where we train and upskills social workers on domestic abuse in addition to supporting women who come through their service.

We also set up a domestic violence mental health project where in addition to having a specific mental health IDVA; we trained mental health practitioners on domestic abuse and they trained VAWG workers on mental health.

In addition to supporting women on probation and women subject to short prison sentences from the three borough area, we also worked with women serving any prison sentences at HMP Holloway, supporting them in custody until the day of release, then meeting them at the gates, and continuing to support them to resettle in the community.

We continued to work on our project for young women at risk of committing crime from the three borough area, offering training to the Police about working with young women, and intensive support to the young women they referred as early as possible to try divert them from the criminal justice system. This work is part of the national Transition to Adulthood Alliance (T2A). An initiative of the Barrow Cadbury Trust's criminal justice programme which aims to develop and promote evidence of effective policy and practice for young adults and women at all stages of the criminal justice system and to enable the voices of those directly affected to be heard.

80% of women who served short prison sentences successfully completing drug treatment

PROTECTION

Advance aims to reduce the risk posed by perpetrators of domestic violence through timely safeguarding and justice system interventions. We deliver crisis intervention for women and children that maximises their safety and well-being whilst ensuring perpetrators of violence are held accountable.

Co-located advocates and family support workers continued to support women, children and families alongside Housing Services, Children's Social Services, maternity units, A&E departments, and the Police.

We also provide a holistic approach to the prevention of violence and women's offending by supporting women with complex needs.

Just under 5% women committed an offence whilst engaging with ADVANCE Minerva services

PARTNERSHIP

We support women and children to help shape our services by providing feedback to us at regular opportunities.. We implemented a new engagement and evaluation project where the post holder holds service users forums, focus groups and one to one feedback sessions with service users. The results of these are then compiled into a report which is shared with the partnership to improve our own and the partnership response. In addition to this project, we also developed a service user representative project. The service user representative attends and provides valuable input to the children and health operational group that spans the three boroughs.

As part of the Action for Change project we developed a women's shadow board, comprising of women who were the subject of the project. They are providing feedback on the pilot and helping to shape it in addition to raising awareness of domestic violence and the barriers faced by women who have had a child removed.

This year we participated in events for the International Day to Eliminate Violence Against Women and the International Women's Day.

We continue to build networks locally, regionally and nationally to help achieve our aim of supporting and empowering women. This includes being represented on the Home Office Violence Against Women and Girls Strategic Board , the MOPAC VAWG Board, the London Reducing Reoffending Board and other local, regional and national partnerships.

We were the lead partner in the Angelou partnership which is breaking ground in violence against women and girls by delivering an extensive range of specialist support through one service across Hammersmith, Fulham, Kensington, Chelsea and Westminster

84% of women who reported a positive change in their support needs as a result of using our service

PROFILE AND PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY UPDATE

Advance has representation at local and national domestic violence partnerships, and we deliver training and information sessions for professionals and communities to raise awareness of how best to support women with complex needs, and women at risk of breaking the law.

We gave evidence at the Justice Select Committee hearing on Young Adult offenders about the needs of young women at risk of offending, informing the panel about the importance of a safe, women-only space, the need for trauma-informed practice, the lack of understanding around the needs of young women at risk in the Criminal Justice System, the value of the role of keyworkers as advocates in Courts to assist sentencers in understanding the needs of young women, the “blindness” about young women involved in gangs, the significance of building a relationship with women at risk that allows them to talk about their experiences of abuse and trauma and develop coping strategies to manage their emotions, and the individual approach necessary to support them with issues such as homelessness, debt, self-harm and addictions, which then encourages assertiveness and helps them develop healthy relationships.

Not content with holding CAADA *Leading* accreditation, we also worked hard to achieve the new Women’s Aid National Quality Standard (awarded in June 2014).

women’s aid
until women & children are safe



STAFF TEAM 2015/16

Business Support Unit

- CEO
- Operations Manager
- Administration & Finance Manager (from June 2015)
- Finance Officer (from November 2015)
- Project Administrator
- Monitoring and Evaluation Officer
- Evaluation & Engagement Officer
- Fundraising Officer (from October 2015)
- Executive Support & Communications Officer (to March 2016)
- Daphne Caseworker (from October 2015)
- Daphne Caseworker (to September 2015)
- Fundraising Intern (from March 2016)
- Fundraising Intern (from March 2016)
- Fundraising Intern (to August 2015)
- Fundraising Intern (to November 2015)
- Fundraising Intern (to January 2016)
- Fundraising Intern (to March 2016)

ADVANCE Tri-Borough Domestic Violence Service

- Project Manager (to March 2016)
- Team Leader
- Team Leader
- IDVA
- Assistant Support Worker
- VAWG family support worker
- IDVA
- Substance Misuse IDVA
- Housing IDVA
- Social Services IDVA
- Young Person's IDVA (from October 2015)
- Floating Support Worker (from November 2015)
- Floating Support Worker (from January 2016)
- Duty Worker / IDVA (from October 2015)
- Substance Misuse IDVA (from February 2016)
- IDVA (from September 2015)
- Family Support IDVA (from September 2015)
- Family Support IDVA (from July 2015)
- Family Support Worker (from July 2015)
- CJ IDVA (from March 2016)
- Family Support Worker (to September 2015)
- CJ IDVA (to January 2016)
- DV Prevention Worker (to March 2016)
- Maternity IDVA (to December 2015)
- IDVA (to March 2016)
- Duty IDVA (to November 2015)

ADVANCE Minerva Service

- Project Manager
- Team Leader (from August 2015)
- Team Leader (to July 2015)
- Keyworker
- Young Women's Keyworker
- Keyworker
- Keyworker
- Keyworker (from September 2015)
- Keyworker (from February 2016)
- Keyworker (from February 2016)
- Keyworker (from March 2016)
- Keyworker (to November 2015)
- Volunteer receptionist (to September 2015)
- Volunteer receptionist (to November 2015)

ADVANCE Trustees

Ruth Fuller-Sessions	- Chair (from February 2014)
Pamela Blamey	- Vice Chair
Polly Payne	- Treasurer (from September 2014)
Sejal Amin	
Emma Burrows	from 2011
Caroline Copeman	to February 2015
Christine Losecaat	from July 2013
Nicola Sharp	to September 2014
Rebecca Egan	from July 2013
Yasmin Rehman	to October 2014
Rosie Vora	to November 2014

SERVICE USER QUOTES

"I experienced domestic violence for a number of years which led to my daughter being removed from my care. I felt ashamed and abandoned, and I drank to cope but I wasn't coping. I knew I had to heal and repair myself so I went into treatment for alcohol abuse and steadily began to move forward. Advance was instrumental in helping keep me safe and I began to feel less worthless and took control of my life. It's been a long journey, but I am stronger now and have the confidence to work with others, and although it was very tough, I like who I am today!"(DV Service)

*"I give full consent for my keyworker to have full access and control regarding anything to do with my health and mental health as she is the only person who is fighting my corners with me!"
(ADVANCE Minerva)*

"The women in the group are like a little family to me. We sit and talk about our experiences, but we don't just focus on the negatives – we help each other build our confidence. At first I was reluctant to talk about my experiences because I'm shy. So I just listened. But gradually I began to talk to the women individually, until I felt more able to talk to the whole group. It's a safe space where we can talk as friends and has meant so much to me" (DV Service)

"Minerva is amazing, I have told the refuge they are the best organisation I have worked with, I have been in and out of prison so many times and not engaged with support before, I keep being shocked myself at how well I am doing" (ADVANCE Minerva)

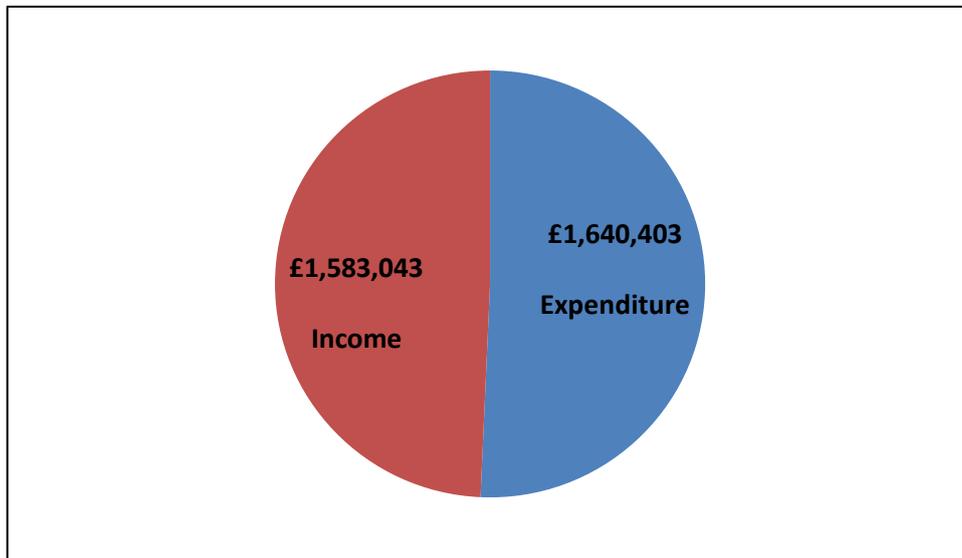
"I will always remember it and am grateful for your help on May 2nd - this was the start of this extraordinary journey and your advice on that day helped give me confidence that I could deal with it. Thank you." (DV Service)

"Thank you very much for all your support and it was really supportive and Make me feel like a new good start now. I wouldn't know where I would be if I have not come to Minerva for all the support. I really found the Minerva service helpful, doing the stone and roses exercise first thing really showed me what I needed to move on from and I really liked the fragrances we used and I feel much more able to do things now." (ADVANCE Minerva)*

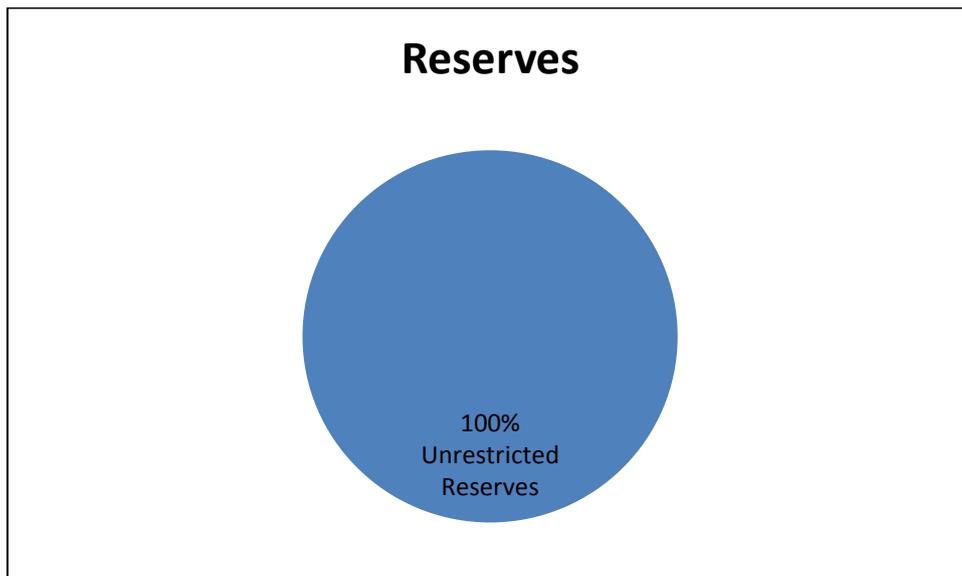
**This is a tool we use at the beginning and end of each session and which emphasises self-care and being in touch with your senses and how you are feeling.*

OUR FINANCES:

2015-16 Income and Expenditure



2015-16 Reserves



With Thanks
To all of our funders, including:



Ministry of
JUSTICE



THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF
**KENSINGTON
AND CHELSEA**



City of Westminster





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