



advance

A safe,  
just and  
equal  
world for  
women



ANNUAL  
REPORT AND  
ACCOUNTS  
2024

Annual Report  
and Accounts  
2024



advance

Advance  
Advocacy and  
Non Violence  
Community  
Education





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# MESSAGE FROM CHAIR

## Advance Chair, Christine Losecaat MBE



“Last year, Advance celebrated its 25th anniversary, and simultaneously launched our new three-year strategy at our event ‘Safety and Justice for Women and Girls’. It provided us with an opportunity to pause and have serious reflection on our founding, our reason for being, on our achievements individually and as a sector, and to look to the future at the work left to do. We were joined by our founders Bear Montique OBE and Beryl Foster OBE who were at the forefront of 50 years of the movement to end violence against women and who set up Advance to advocate for “the women and children living with domestic violence and abuse at home and in the community”.

It is easy to sometimes feel lost or pessimistic about the future in this current landscape. However, it is important to look back at the great achievements made by the women’s movement since Advance was founded. Since 1998, we have seen the introduction of vital community-based models such as Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA) and co-location rolled out nationally and the successful introduction of Specialist Domestic Violence (Abuse) Courts.

The implementation of the landmark Domestic Abuse Act 2021 gave domestic abuse a statutory definition, placed a duty on local authorities to support survivors of domestic abuse and their children in safe accommodation and created the role and office for the Domestic Abuse Commissioner to encourage good practice in preventing domestic abuse.

There have been important new initiatives in the criminal justice system, including the introduction of specific domestic abuse protective orders and Clare’s Law, as

well as new offences such as female genital mutilation, revenge porn, non-fatal strangulation, and, vitally, controlling and coercive behaviour. There has been other progress at a statutory level; the Home Office, police forces and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) have produced their own VAWG strategies and action plans. We are closely watching the range of policy and practice commitments including the Domestic Abuse Joint Justice Plan from the CPS, the National Police Chiefs’ Council (NPCC) and the College of Policing. In 2018 the Ministry of Justice published its Female Offender Strategy which recognised that abuse and other vulnerabilities can drive women’s offending.

There are many more successes to name, and many more opportunities to come to improve the wider response to women including within housing, social care and health. However, there is still much to be done, and the challenges women face continue to evolve and become more complex. Yet, we remain resolute in our mission.



This has been a transformative year for Advance as we said goodbye to Niki Scordi after seven years as Chief Executive. Under her leadership, Advance has expanded its services across the South and East of England, including Greater London. We launched services across our three areas of expertise: supporting women who are survivors of domestic abuse, women in the contact with the criminal justice system, and young women and girls who are at risk of, or experiencing domestic abuse. We work with women at different points of their journey, ensuring that we can support them at every stage from prevention and early intervention, crisis support and safety planning, as well as advocating for long-term change nationally and locally.

Niki's leadership also saw Advance develop new innovative service models and change initiatives, and grow exponentially, supporting more women a year nationally than ever before. Advance opened a further seven women's centres with our specialist partners across the South and East of England, including Greater London. On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I would like to thank Niki for her passion, dedication, and drive.

We would also like to thank the many supporters who make our services possible. Whether that is statutory commissioners, trusts and foundations, or individual givers; we simply couldn't do our work without this vital support.

We welcomed Liz Mack to Advance as Chief Executive at the start of 2024, bringing with her a wealth of experience and passion to change the lives of women and girls. On behalf of the Trustees, we look forward to working with Liz and the expanding team to ensure that women and girls receive the support they need for as long as they need.



**This has been a transformative  
year for Advance...  
Our services have expanded  
across the South and  
East of England, including  
Greater London.**





# MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



Advance Chief Executive, Liz Mack

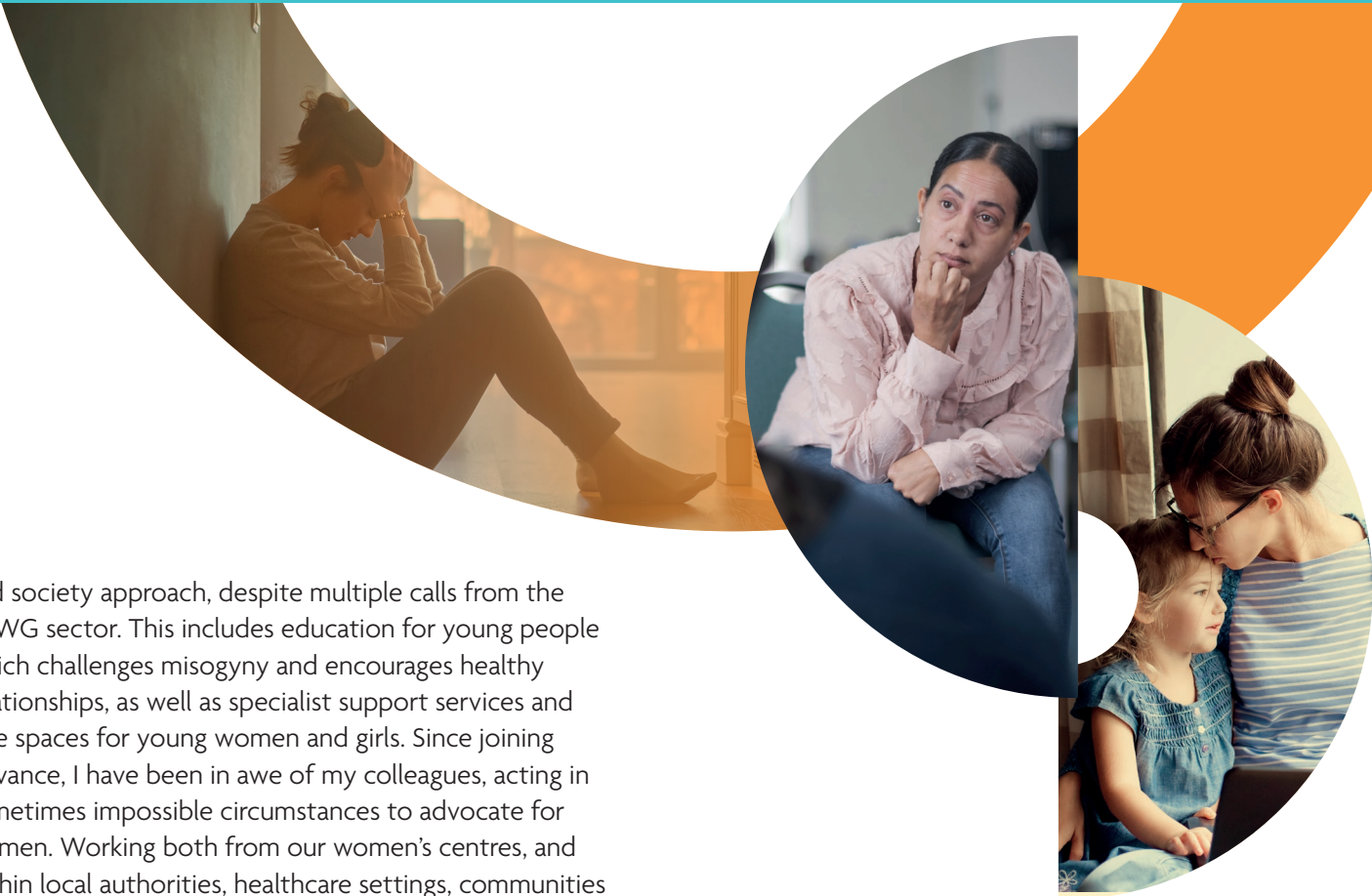


**“I have been thrilled to join Advance at a time of real change and growth. However, I am under no illusion about the challenges we and others in our sector face.**

Women and girls are facing increasing barriers to accessing support. This is compounded by the cost-of-living and housing crisis, set against a fiscal backdrop of local authority austerity, meaning VAWG services are still drastically under-resourced. The criminal justice system is failing women at every point. More women than ever are reporting abuse to the police, and yet the system’s response has deteriorated with prosecutions reducing by 42% in five years. When women do call the police, they don’t always feel protected; in fact, they often feel more unsafe. In many of the cases we see at Advance, women are criminalised themselves following counter claims from their perpetrators. Women are ending up in prison unnecessarily when we know that diverting them away from the criminal justice system provides better outcomes for them, better outcomes for society and is more cost-effective. Our criminal justice system is under increasing pressure, and measures to manage the prison population have a disproportionate impact on women. Probation services are already stretched impacting on their ability to identify and monitor perpetrators, and there are failures amongst police forces to follow up on breaches of protection orders. These compounded failures leave women and girls vulnerable to further harm and homicide. Women are dying needlessly, failed again

and again by the very systems and structures that should have protected them. Some are dying at the hands of their perpetrators, but also many are left feeling they have no other choice than to take their own lives. Last year, for the first time, more suicides following domestic abuse were recorded by police than intimate partner homicides, and this concerning trend is reflected in the mental health, self-harm and suicidal ideation of the women we support.

We will continue to champion the importance of community services in women’s centres, echoing with others in the sector the findings of Baroness Corston 17 years ago, calling for a radically different, visibly led, strategic, proportionate, holistic, woman-centred integrated approach to women’s involvement with the criminal justice system. We support women in our centres so they can keep their homes and stay with their children. We work with women to understand and overcome their experiences of abuse and trauma, and we support them to address it. Across society we have seen a lack of strategic prioritisation of this abuse epidemic. We are seeing increasing attitudes of misogyny amongst younger men and boys, fuelled by unchecked social media content by polarising figures such as social influencers. This has not been met with proper prevention and early intervention, and a whole systems



and society approach, despite multiple calls from the VAWG sector. This includes education for young people which challenges misogyny and encourages healthy relationships, as well as specialist support services and safe spaces for young women and girls. Since joining Advance, I have been in awe of my colleagues, acting in sometimes impossible circumstances to advocate for women. Working both from our women's centres, and within local authorities, healthcare settings, communities and police stations, they ensure that women affected by domestic abuse and the criminal justice system receive the support and advice they need. We stand with our sister organisations in the fight to end violence against women and girls, and I am privileged to continue to drive Advance's core values of collaboration and partnership. By working alongside specialist partners, we will continue to strive towards inclusion and diversity, understanding how both VAWG and the criminal justice system disproportionately affect Black, minoritised and migrant women.

Advance has been through various changes over the last few years, including building its Communications & External Affairs and Fundraising teams to enhance our influencing and reach. We have used our 25+ years of experience to influence both locally and nationally. We have developed policy, campaigns and events to support our ultimate goal of influencing vital change to our systems and institutions. This year, we launched our 'I Love My Loud Voice' campaign which highlights the need for a proactive, early intervention approach for young women and girls at risk of domestic abuse and contact with the criminal justice system. We created practical toolkits to help young women, parents, carers,

### Advocacy (Advance) providing direct support to women and girls by:

- **Advocating for women and girls** who are affected by domestic abuse and justice system inequality because of their sex and gender.
- Providing **specialist services and holistic, wraparound support** by women and for women, that meets their needs in their communities for as long as they need.

### Community Education (Advance) changing systems and social norms through:

- Leading a coordinated community response, working in partnership to support women and children and hold individuals and systems to account.
- Raising awareness and influencing systems to end domestic abuse and justice systemic inequality.



## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR AND CEO

educators and other professionals to have what are sometimes tough conversations. In February 2024, we released our report, 'Her Story, Her Justice', highlighting the 'Whole Justice Approach' which we deliver in partnership with Standing Together Against Domestic Abuse. The report sets out potential solutions to some of the failings of the criminal justice system. We worked closely with lived experience experts to develop our messaging and insights, which we shared at both a local and national level to improve understanding for both the public and professionals.

We continually share our evidence and expertise with local and national government and will continue to build local connections with other charities, small businesses, social enterprises, trusts, foundations and individuals passionate about women and girls.

We are cautiously positive about the future. We know that there are many people across society, and within our institutions who are fighting to change the systemic issues that perpetuate the violence women face. It is by working together, and by building a true coordinated community response that we believe we can make real change for women and girls.

We are incredibly thankful to all those that make our work possible from commissioners, to all of our donors, big and small, individual givers, our partners, to our incredible expert staff, and the lived experience experts who help make our work possible."

**We stand with our sister organisations in the fight to end violence against women and girls, and I am privileged to continue to drive Advance's core values of collaboration and partnership.**







## 2 OUR IMPACT

“ Our vision is a world where women and girls lead safe, just and equal lives.

# OUR IMPACT

## We are Advance

**Advance is an innovative charity supporting women and girls to lead safe and equal lives.**

We help women and girls who have experienced trauma through domestic abuse, exploitation and the criminal justice system to rebuild their lives. We do this by providing practical and emotional support, wherever and whenever a woman or girl wants it. They're often facing multiple challenges at once, such as housing, mental health and personal safety.

We run services across London and the south of England in safe, women-only spaces like our Women's Centres. We also work collaboratively in key locations, like police stations and housing offices, so that women and girls get help at the earliest opportunity. We work closely with a variety of partners offering specialist support, including for Black and minoritised women and those from LGBTQIA+ communities.

## Our Vision

**Our vision is a world where women and girls lead safe, just and equal lives.**

**We achieve this through our mission of delivering systems change and empowering women and children who experience domestic abuse, including those in contact with the criminal justice system, to lead safe, just and equal lives in their communities.**



**We know from our 25 years of experience what works to help women and girls rebuild their lives and prevent further trauma.**



# Why?

- We know that domestic abuse affects **1 in 4 women and 1 in 5 children** in their lifetime.
- **A woman is killed by a man every 3 days, and many more die through suicide.**
- **Over 60% of women in prison have experienced domestic abuse.**
- **We hope to become inconsequential; to see a world in which women and children are safe from domestic abuse. We will continue to support women, and fight for change until we see real progress.**



 [Read our strategy](#)

## Our three-year strategy 23-26

We listened to women and girls when implementing our new three-year strategy to ensure that we best meet their needs, and support them to lead safe, violence-free and equal lives.

- 1 Women and children in our communities have access to wraparound support across all their needs, for as long as they need it.**
- 2 Early interventions for young women and girls affected by domestic abuse and violence, so that they are empowered to make informed choices and access support at the earliest point.**
- 3 Raise awareness and campaign for systems change to address the prevalence and scale of the impact of domestic abuse and the criminal justice system on women.**
- 4 Support those working for and with Advance to be leaders, change makers and advocates for women and girls.**





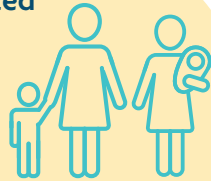
# 2024 OUR YEAR AT A GLANCE

## Last year Advance and partners supported thousands of women and children

Across Advance's services we supported

# 4,805

individual women



and carried out

# 220

group sessions, resulting in women telling us:



# 83%

felt safer



# 87%



felt more confident and independent

# 90%

felt they had improved wellbeing



We would like to note that over the last year we have improved and amended how we collect and record our data. This years data represents individual women supported rather than all referrals. We will often see multiple referrals for one woman.

We aim to contact every woman referred to us at least three times, though incomplete details can make this challenging, or a woman might simply not want to, or be ready to be supported by Advance - and this must be her decision. Women may be referred multiple times, either by different agencies, due to initial disengagement, or because the referred service isn't the best fit, requiring re-referral within our organisation or to specialist partners.



*"I am really thankful for your support. You have consistently been there for me whenever I texted or called even when you may have been busy with other work. I can't thank you enough. I wish you all the best. Thanks [key worker]. You will never be forgotten, and I am grateful for the journey together."*

Woman supported by DA services



## Domestic Abuse Services

**Domestic abuse has a devastating, long-lasting impact on the lives of women and children.**

By working with a range of partners and specialist organisations, we're there for women during and after abuse, offering help with safety planning, mental health, finances and more. Our aim is to support victims of domestic abuse at the earliest opportunity, which is why we have expert staff working alongside and directly within key agencies such as police, healthcare, social services and housing teams.



## Domestic Abuse Services

This year we received:

4,555



referrals into our domestic abuse services

73%

Of women were successfully contacted

77%

Of women engaged with Advance

The women engaged in our domestic abuse services tell us that our support led them to feel safer with an improved quality of life.



90%

Felt they were at reduced risk following the support provided by the service

95%

Felt more supported since working with Advance

94%

Said that they felt safer, as a result of the support provided



89%

Said that their quality of life and wellbeing had improved due to the support

### Services

- Angelou Partnership**  
 Led by Advance, the partnership brings together 9 organisations to support women and girls impacted by all forms of violence and abuse including domestic abuse, sexual violence and harmful practices. Find out more on page 25.
- Co-located criminal justice IDVA**  
 Working in police stations and courts to support women at every stage of the criminal justice process, including when they first report abuse. Find out more on page 26.
- Social Care IDVA**  
 Working closely with Social Care teams to support women who have had Social Services involvement due to domestic abuse, to improve outcomes for women and their children.
- Early Help IDVA**  
 Working closely with the non-abusive parent where their children have involvement with the Early Help team, or have been identified as experiencing domestic abuse.
- Housing IDVA**  
 Working closely with local authority housing teams to support women experiencing domestic abuse and have a housing need.
- Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation (Pan London)**  
 Delivered in partnership by Refuge, Advance supports women in safe accommodation to retain their housing
- London Whole Housing Services Partnership (LWHSP)**  
 A partnership supporting women experiencing domestic abuse with housing needs, by working within and alongside housing teams. Find out more on page 28.
- IRIS (GP Advocate Educator)**  
 A domestic abuse training, support and referral programme for GP practices to ensure that women have a safe place to go to where they can disclose abuse and receive support. Find out more on page 21.
- ADVISE (Advocate Educator in Sexual Health Clinic)**  
 Working in St Mary's Hospitals' Sexual Health Clinic to support sexual health clinicians to identify and respond to patients affected by domestic abuse, and signpost survivors to Advance and partner services. Find out more on page 21.
- Core services**  
 Advance is the core domestic abuse delivery organisation for a number of London boroughs, working closely with the local authority.
- Julia and Hans Rausing Trust Step Down Support**  
 As part of the Angelou Partnership, this service works to ensure that women get long term support, regardless of their level of risk to address the trauma and barrier they may be facing to be able to live independent and fulfilling lives
- Non-Crime**  
 The non-crimes worker works alongside IDVAs to prevent escalation of risk among standard-medium risk cases who would not otherwise meet IDVA service thresholds and may otherwise slip through the net.
- DRIVE & CIFA programmes**  
 Perpetrator behavioural change programme delivered by partner organisations.



# OUR YEAR AT A GLANCE

This year we had

# 2,642



referrals into our criminal justice services

# 68% 79%

Were successfully contacted

Engaged with the service they were referred into

## Criminal Justice Services

The women supported through our criminal justice services tell us that our support improved their lives...

# 82%

Felt more confident to manage their own wellbeing



# 89%

Felt feeling more confident in accessing support services

# 74%

Said that they felt safer

# 77%



Felt more confident in managing their needs independently

70% of women supported by our criminal justice services report experiencing domestic abuse, although this is likely to be an underestimate. Often their offending is a direct or indirect result of their experiences of abuse and trauma.

Every woman referred to our criminal justice services has a keyworker who provides practical and emotional support to help her break the cycle of offending. This includes therapeutic and creative activities at our women's centres where they can also access donated items, such as food and toiletries.

Our aim is to redirect women away from prison at the earliest opportunity to end the cycle of offending. We work with a range of partners and specialist organisations to ensure they can get the help they need, including support with substance use, mental health, housing and employment.

## Services

- **Minerva London**  
The service supports women across London through keyworker support, group-work, mentoring, and other specialist support. We work with women referred through their probation worker as well as those who self refer.
- **Newham Y2A Project**  
As part of our wider Minerva London service, we offer specialist support to young women and girls in the London Borough of Newham in contact with the criminal justice system.
- **Minerva Kent**  
Working in partnerships to support women across Kent who are on probation through keyworker support, group-work, mentoring, and other specialist support.
- **Minerva Essex**  
Working in partnerships to support women across Essex who are on probation through keyworker support, group-work, mentoring, and other specialist support.
- **Minerva Hampshire**  
Working in partnerships to support women across Hampshire who are on probation through keyworker support, group-work, mentoring, and other specialist support.
- **Minerva Thames Valley**  
Working in partnerships to support women across Thames Valley who are on probation through keyworker support, group-work, mentoring, and other specialist support.

- **Minerva Hertfordshire**  
Working in partnerships to support women across Hertfordshire who are on probation through keyworker support, group-work, mentoring, and other specialist support.
- **Minerva Bedfordshire**  
Working in partnerships to support women across Bedfordshire who are on probation through keyworker support, group-work, mentoring, and other specialist support.
- **Diversion**  
Working with the Met Police, Diversion is an early intervention initiative to divert women away from the criminal justice system at the point of arrest and into dedicated support services. Find out more on page 22.
- **Kent Diversion pilot**  
We partnered with Kent Police to deliver a short Diversion pilot where we were able to support women with conditional cautions.



*“I am so grateful for everything you have done for me. I feel like the woman I was before everything went wrong and I am so proud of myself for what I have achieved with your support. Thank you [key worker]”.*

– Woman supported by CJS services



## Young Women and Girls' Services

This year we had

# 293

referrals into our young women and girls' services, for those affected by domestic abuse and the criminal justice system:

**61%** Were successfully contacted

**78%** Engaged with the service they were referred into

The young women and girls (YWG) supported through our services tell us that they felt they had a better understanding of healthier relationships...

**72%**

of YWG supported by our Maia service felt a positive increase in making decisions and choices

**100%**

of YWG supported by our Courageous project felt safer



**100%**

of YWG supported by our Courageous project felt healthier and more positive

**100%**

of YWG supported by our Minerva project had an improved understanding, awareness and/or knowledge of healthy intimate relationships



Young women and girls are disproportionately affected by domestic abuse. This has a devastating, long-lasting impact on their lives, and the current system does not adequately meet their unique needs because there is a lack of specialist support.

When a young woman is experiencing abuse or is at risk of becoming involved with the criminal justice system, intervening early is crucial to address her needs and reduce the impact of potential trauma or criminalisation. Advance offers community-based support, enabling her to access information and support from specialist advocates and peers from safe spaces in their communities like women's centres.



*"I've felt like I learnt how to face my challenges with different perspectives, for example lately I've been hanging around people that give me so much motivation and advice to keep pushing forward, and they are able to describe me in a positive and reassuring way. It makes me doubt myself less knowing how others see me through their eyes, and I want to maintain that or improve more of myself."*

– Woman supported by YWG services



## Services

- Maia & Lift**  
 An early intervention service supporting young women and girls aged 13- 25 experiencing or at risk of domestic abuse, exploitation or other abuse.
- Courageous**  
 Supporting young women, as well as LGBT+ and disabled young people from Black and minoritised communities in London who are at experiencing or at risk of domestic abuse and other forms of exploitation.
- Minerva Young Persons Keyworker**  
 As part of our London Minerva service, we have two dedicated key workers who support young women from the age of 15 who are in contact with the criminal justice system.
- Angelou Young Persons IDVA**  
 As part of our Angelou service, we have a dedicated service which supports young women and girls at risk of domestic abuse and other forms of gender based violence.



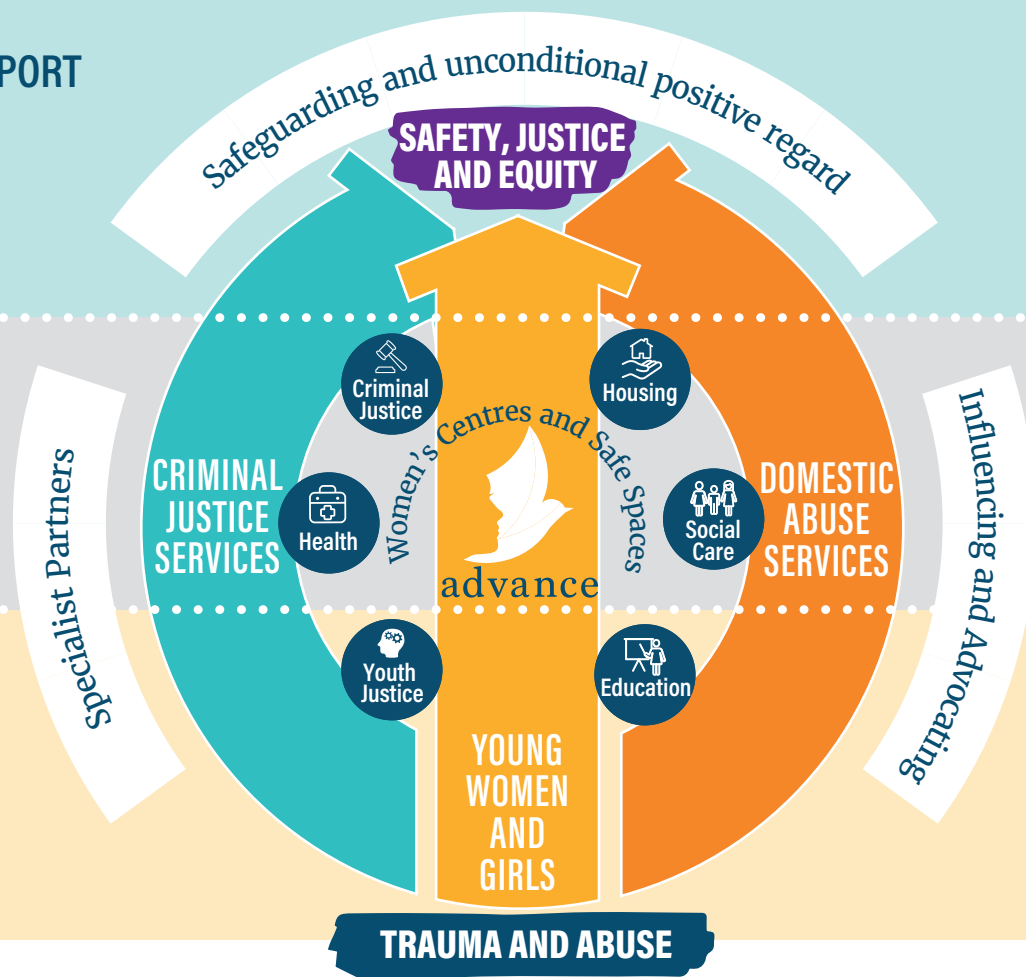
# ADVANCE THEORY OF CHANGE

We provide practical and emotional support, wherever and whenever a woman or girl wants it, at different stages of her journey. We work collaboratively in key locations, like police stations and hospitals, so that women and girls get help at the earliest opportunity and alongside a variety of partners offering specialist support.

LONG-TERM SUPPORT FOR WOMEN AND CHANGING THE SYSTEM

EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND SAFETY PLANNING

PREVENTION, DIVERSION AND EARLY INTERVENTION



Through our 25 years of supporting women and girls affected by domestic abuse, both from within police stations and in partnership with criminal justice agencies, we became uniquely aware of the specific relationship between women's experience of domestic abuse and their contact with the criminal justice system.

The 2007 Corston Report shone a light on this and became a catalyst for the creation of Advance's Minerva service in 2011, which supports women in

contact with the criminal justice system across all their needs, including their experiences of domestic abuse and other forms of violence and abuse.

Advance was created to challenge and change the systems that routinely marginalise the needs of women and children. To do this, we understood that early intervention and prevention must be prioritised alongside the provision of emergency and longer-term support, as well as campaigning on a local and national level for institutional change.





# **3 PREVENTION, DIVERSION AND EARLY INTERVENTION**



# PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION

## Young Women and Girls

### Supporting Young Women and Girls



**Y**oung women and girls (YWG) are disproportionately affected by **abuse and violence**. With nowhere to turn for support, many are left traumatised and can go on to experience further harm, including being excluded from school or getting caught up in the criminal justice system.

Yet there is a lack of specialist support for girls under 25 which meets their specific and unique needs.

An NSPCC survey of 13 to 17-year-olds found that a **quarter of girls** reported having experienced some form of physical violence from an intimate partner.

**12%** of young women under the age of 25 experience domestic abuse, compared to 6.6% of women over the age of 25.

Advance report 'A Place to Learn About Relationships' looked at the social factors which influence early sexual relationships among young women who have been involved in the criminal justice system, and the health impacts of these relationships. Within this research we found that:

**96%** of the young women had their first sexual experience (of any kind) before the age of 16

**57%** had been pressured into having sex with a romantic and/or sexual partner



**73%** of young women agreed that they ought to have known more about consent and how to say 'no' when they started having sexual experiences



## MAIA

Advance leads on the Maia service, which was specifically designed to support people aged 13 to 25 who are at risk of or are experiencing domestic abuse or other forms of disadvantage. We provide mentoring and support, both through group work and one-to-one sessions to young women and girls, and non-binary persons assigned female at birth. Maia is part of the wider Maia & Lift service which supports girls from age 9 alongside our partner Chance UK.

We walk alongside young women and girls to build their trust, self-identity and confidence, and increase their skills and ability to recognise when and where to go for support.



*“This has been the most consistent service, it has been flexible around my changing circumstances and has made it really easy for me to access. It’s made me be more open to engage with other services which I wasn’t before. I definitely feel like I’ve made improvements, I’m still working on it but I’m definitely getting better and putting in boundaries and speaking up.”*

Quote from a young women supported by Advance

## ‘I ♥ My Loud Voice’ film and campaign

No young woman or girl is the same; no two stories of domestic abuse are the same. **‘I Love My Loud Voice’ film and awareness campaign** represents young people’s experience of domestic abuse within their own intimate relationships, as well as familial abuse.

The five real-life stories, played by actors, explore their understanding of healthy relationships, their journey to accessing help, and the outcomes and impact of being supported in the community by a specialist organisation like Advance.

Topics covered in the film include love bombing, gas lighting and coercive control, which are all often little understood by YW&Gs, parents and teachers.

The film was created for the **UN’s 16 Days of Activism** from 23 November to 14 December 2023 and officially launched at an event hosted by law firm Paul Hastings. The event included a panel discussion which included Diana Nammi, Chief Executive of IKWRO, Melissa Altman, Director of Services at Advance, Ludovico Giannotti, Lived Experience Advocate and Advance Trustee, and Jahnine Davis, Co-Founder and Director of Listen Up. The panel explored the film’s themes around young women and girls’ experiences of safety and healthy relationships, their journey and the barriers to accessing support and how policy-makers and professionals can improve outcomes for them. The event also included a keynote speech by Lib Peck, Director of the Violence Reduction Unit who, at the event, announced the successful recommissioning of the Maia service for another four years.



Watch 'I Love my loud voice'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vIJJghMNsA>



# PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION Domestic Abuse Services



Part of the concept was to create practical engagement materials that Advance’s statutory, charity and corporate partners could use for their own audiences, so cascading the messages to new wider audiences. Briefings and a social media toolkit were included in the package for partners.

For example, the 25-minute film was used for Lunch & Learns, conferences and events hosted by local authority partners, police forces, the NHS and FE colleges to celebrate 16 Days of Activism.

## “I ♥ My Loud Voice” Toolkits for educators, youth leaders and parents

Building on the important themes raised in the film, we created a series of toolkits which comprise ‘conversation starters’ for teachers, parents and youth workers, discussion topics and five 3-minute films targeted at different audiences: 12-16 years; 16-25 years; parents/carers.

The “I Love My Loud Voice” toolkits have been used for interactive workshops in secondary schools and colleges kicking off for International Women’s Day on 8 March 2024.



## Support for survivors in health settings

**I**t is estimated that nearly half a million survivors of domestic abuse seek help from medical professionals every year. GPs, nurses, midwives and hospital doctors are often the **first point of contact**, placing them in a unique position to spot the signs of abuse and signpost survivors to specialist domestic abuse support services.



Domestic abuse is often connected to sexual health and gynaecological problems. It has links to an increase in sexually-transmitted infections, including HIV, and unintended pregnancies.

Pregnant women are particularly vulnerable to domestic abuse. 30% of domestic abuse cases begin during pregnancy, while an estimated 40% to 60% of pregnant women experience abuse at some point during their pregnancy.



## Advance's Whole Health Approach

In 2023, in partnership with IRISi, we launched **ADVISE** (Assessing for Domestic Violence and Abuse in Sexual Health Environments), a new service at the **Sexual Health Clinic at St Mary's Hospital Paddington**, part of Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust. Concurrently, we were also commissioned to deliver, in partnership with Asian Women's Resource Centre (AWRC), the **IRIS** programme, a domestic abuse training, support and referral programme for General Practices (GP).

Both our ADVISE and IRIS Advocate Educators are dedicated to creating better healthcare responses to domestic abuse, to ensure that more survivors are able to access the support they need earlier. The partnerships ensure survivors get increased support in familiar settings. We provide guidance and support to both survivors and healthcare professionals. By delivering training, we ensure that health care professionals are equipped with the necessary tools to respond to disclosures of domestic and/or sexual abuse, and provide referral pathways for survivors to access support.

### Across our health services we delivered:

**28** Training sessions to health staff professionals including reception and admin staff, doctors, pharmacists, health care assistants, nurses and specialist sexual health nurses.

**100%** of professionals trained by us, who gave feedback, reported an increase in the following:

- Knowledge of domestic violence
- Knowledge of health consequences of domestic violence and sexual violence
- Confidence to deal with a disclosure of domestic or sexual violence.



**Lib Peck, Director of London's Violence Reduction Unit (VRU):**

*“Our investment (in ADVISE) will provide vital support for healthcare practitioners to offer support for those affected by domestic abuse through targeted services. No one should suffer in silence, which is why this investment is so crucial as it will reach those who are not usually recognised or supported with the services they desperately need. Our partnership with the healthcare sector and domestic abuse specialists highlights that together we can prevent violence against women and girls.”*





# PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION

## Criminal Justice Services

### Diversion



**W**omen in contact with the criminal justice system are disproportionately affected by abuse and trauma. They are more likely to go to prison for a first-time offence, and most serve short sentences which disrupts their lives and the lives of their children. It leads to the loss of their house and job, and severely impacts their mental health. Because short sentences leave no time for rehabilitation, and due to the capacity crises within our prison and probation services, women are left without adequate support, becoming trapped in a cycle of offending.

**We know that there is another way. We can provide an alternative option for women at risk of prison, reducing the risk of longer-term trauma and building pressure on our criminal justice system.**

Advance’s Diversion Service diverts women who have committed low-harm offences away from the criminal justice system at the point of arrest, and into Advance’s dedicated support service. This support is tailored to their needs, with one-to-one help from expert keyworkers and Peer Mentors with lived experience, as well as access to groups and workshops in our safe women’s centres. The service is an operational and strategic partnership with the police and aims to break the cycle of criminalisation by addressing underlying drivers of offending behaviour. As well as offering vital help for women, the service also reduces overall demand on the police and criminal justice system.



*“My experience with your service has completely changed my perspective and I'm now always telling people that there is so much help out there. Having had help from you and then you referring me to other services has been such a powerful experience for me. I don't think I would be where I am now if it wasn't for you. There have been times when I have been completely helpless when you encouraged me, and I don't know what would have happened to me if you weren't there.”*

– Woman supported by Diversion

In 2023-24 Advance’s London Diversion service successfully engaged and supported 39 women throughout the year - 95% of all women referred.

Out of the 41 women referred on to our Diversion service, 32 were made by various partners including Together UK, Southall Black Sisters, the Women & Girls Network and the women themselves.

#### Of the women supported:

- 79%** felt an improvement in their relationships
- 74%** felt an improvement in their mental health and well being
- 74%** reported that they were using their time in a more positive manner
- 68%** reported an improvement in their living skills and self-care



## The Kent Women's Diversion service trial

In March, we were thrilled to partner with Kent Police to deliver a short diversion pilot, resulting in 32 referrals over a four-week period. Diversion Keyworkers were able to successfully contact 16 women, 88% of whom we were able to engage. This is a strong result, particularly given the short-term nature of the project. In this limited period, we were able to support 9 women to successfully complete their conditional caution.

### Of the women supported:

- 100%** felt more confident in managing their own wellbeing
- 100%** felt safer
- 100%** felt more confident in accessing support services
- 86%** knew what to do or how to reach out if they experienced violence or abuse
- 86%** felt more confident to manage their needs independently

The women supported also cited that the service was “friendly and helpful”, and that it “would be nice to have more sessions”.



*“Thank you so much for your support and for being so nice. It meant so much being able to speak to another woman who I knew would understand and advocate for me. I honestly don't know how I would have got through this without you!”*

– Woman supported by Diversion

*“I felt very different a few months ago and it is amazing, and I feel in control of what I can be in control of for the first time in a long time – I am just getting on with life and I haven't felt like that in the longest time. It's a massive change for me.”*

– Woman supported by Diversion





# 4 EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND SAFETY PLANNING





## Angelou Partnership



**A**dvance leads on the **Angelou Partnership**, a collaborative approach to supporting some of the most vulnerable women and girls in our community, many of whom are facing impossible circumstances. The partnership contains ten specialist organisations who came together to support women and girls affected by domestic abuse and sexual violence. We understood that the ‘whole is greater than the sum of the parts’ in responding to abuse and violence. This included working closely with one another, as well as with the statutory services within the local authorities we worked in.

Named after Maya Angelou, her strength inspired us to create a partnership that understands that women are multi-dimensional. Their lives are influenced by many different things, and affected by a million unique life experiences, which sadly might include violence and abuse. But she inspired us to know that survival is possible and a new life utterly achievable, and the Angelou Partnership is here to do that.

Each partner offers a different kind of specialist support, such as services tailored to marginalised communities, to Black, minoritised and migrant women and LGBTQIA+ communities – because every woman’s experience is multi-faceted and unique. Both through training and co-located and collaborative working, the partnership helps professionals and practitioners, including doctors, midwives and police officers to identify domestic abuse and refer to our specialist domestic abuse services.

**Advance and partners provided individual and culturally appropriate support to 2035 women and girls across the London Boroughs of Hammersmith & Fulham, Westminster, and Kensington & Chelsea.**

**Advance supported 1466 women and girls.**

**87%** felt increased safety and feelings of safety after receiving support

**80%** felt a reduction in abuse due to support received from services

**82%** were at reduced risk at case closure, following the support of services, as measured by professional judgement



The Angelou Partnership



**Next year we will celebrate Angelou’s 10th year of service. This is an important time to reflect on the importance of its creation, and the need for a joined-up approach to tackling violence against women and girls. To commemorate the people who came together to start this innovative project, the teams who deliver the vital support, and the thousands of adults and children we have collectively supported.**



# EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND SAFETY PLANNING



## CASE STUDY

*Sarah\**

“ From my earliest memory, I was abused by my family, both of my parents and my sister. There was physical abuse, but also all kinds of abuse apart from sexual abuse. I started reporting the abuse when I was 14, to social services – they didn’t do anything, closed my case without investigating. Then I told the police, who didn’t believe me and treated me like a silly little girl. I also told doctors, school, children’s services, tried to do homeless shelter, refuge, things like that. I didn’t get rejected, but basically got longlisted and never got contacted. Nothing came of it.

I escaped home when I was 18, went to university where I was referred to Advance. Even though I was away from my family, they were still harassing me. I am so grateful for Advance and the work the charity does that has made such a difference to my life.

Speaking to Advance was first time that I was immediately believed, listened to. People were actually trauma-informed, they weren’t asking inappropriate questions, they weren’t saying ‘oh if you’re not going to give us the full level of detail of abuse then I’m not going to see you’.

When I started with my keyworker, I started talking about getting a non-molestation order in place. She made me aware of that process and then immediately when I was ready to, was there to help organise it and actually get it started. Then my keyworker was emotional support through all of that stressful process. She was just exactly what was needed at each step because it wasn’t straightforward at all.

It made me feel a lot safer talking to her. Advance couldn’t be doing a better job, they’re just all-rounders and have helped with a lot of different things.”

*\* Not her real name*



## Mental Health Support

Unsurprisingly, across all services, **mental health** is the most prominent area of need reported by the women and girls we support, requiring emotional support from key workers and advocates as well as counselling and specialist mental health support.

Poverty, homelessness, ill health, substance use, and criminalisation of women can be driven and exacerbated by experiences of domestic abuse, and is a key factor in women’s self-harm, and suicide.

The cost-of-living crisis has exacerbated the challenges women face, leaving them feeling as if they must choose between abuse, or deprivation and homelessness.



**More women are dying from suicide than ever before, many as a direct result of domestic abuse and other forms of trauma, including their experience of the criminal justice system.**

Many of the women are stuck in state of limbo. For some, this is because the waiting lists for counselling are as long as a year in some circumstances. For others, this is because they are bounced between mental health and substance use services, both requiring them to address one before the other. **Advocates play a key role in supporting women and girls who are navigating these challenges.**

**Across all of Advance's services:**

**51%** of clients had a mental health or wellbeing needs:

- Across DA services, 50% recorded a mental health or wellbeing need
- Across CJS services, 61% recorded a mental health or wellbeing need
- Across YWG services, 42% recorded a mental health or wellbeing need

**42%** of clients disclosed a mental health condition – ranging from anxiety and depression to suicidal behaviour

**Keyworkers** reported that 1528 women needed support with their emotional wellbeing

However, we are also aware that mental health is likely to be underreported and therefore these statistics won't be truly reflective of wellbeing need.



*"I still have bad days, but I now have more support around me including a psychologist thanks to the advocacy from Minerva. I am learning ways to manage my mental health and do not get as many suicidal thoughts. I used to have to call 999 every weekend and this is no longer the case."*

– Woman supported by Mental Health IDVA



**In 2019, as part of the Angelou Partnership, and in response to the growing mental health needs of the women we support, Advance developed the Mental Health IDVA role who works specifically with women affected by domestic abuse and have mental health needs.**

To help offer further support, in February 2024 we received funding to set up the Domestic Abuse Health Advocate (DAHA) service in Ealing, which offers support to women specifically who have a mental health need.



*"A key part of being a mental health IDVA is understanding complex needs and how trauma affects the mental health of women experiencing domestic violence. We ensure that women are heard, and their rights are understood."*

–Mental Health IDVA

Addressing mental health needs and the wider impact of abuse and trauma takes years – we believe that women should receive long-term, consistent support to effectively address their individual needs, rather than simply crisis interventions.



# EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND SAFETY PLANNING

## Supporting survivors to secure housing



**A** lack of safe and stable housing can have a big impact on various parts of a survivor's life. For many, it can make them feel that their only option is to return to the perpetrator. Women will often face complex structural barriers to accessing safe and stable forms of accommodation, specifically in the context of an increasingly volatile housing crisis. These barriers are then compounded by a woman's intersecting identity of race, religion or ethnicity, as well as their sexuality, or disability.

### London Whole Housing Services Partnership (LWHSP)

Our Whole Housing Approach, based on a model developed by Standing Together Against Domestic Abuse and the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance, provides support to survivors of domestic abuse who need safe accommodation.



*"I was fearful to share my story because I felt embarrassed, but you listened to me without any judgement, and you understood."*

– Woman supported by LWHSP

We lead on the London Whole Housing Services Partnership (LWHSP), alongside specialist domestic abuse partners including those for Black, minoritised and migrant women, and LGBTQ+ people to increase safety and choice for all women and children, and where possible help them remain in their own homes.

We work within and alongside Local Authority Housing teams, directly supporting women to remove immediate harm and to increase safety and choice for victims and their children. We provide safe, holistic and borough-specific support around housing needs so that ultimately women can recover from their trauma and feel safe to move on with their lives in their homes. We support women with all levels of need - whether that is homelessness prevention and advice with debt and finance, identifying housing options including social housing and private rental markets, mental health support or rough sleeping outreach.

Our expert Housing Advocates stand side-by-side with survivors to champion their needs and help to educate statutory services on the dynamics of abuse.



*"f it wasn't for you there would be so many cases that are not identified as domestic abuse."* – Feedback from Housing professional



recovery from domestic abuse



Housing needs for those experiencing domestic abuse are extensive. Across Advance's services, 1349 women needed support with their housing – equivalent to 38% of all engaged clients.

415 of these women were supported specifically by Advance's LWHSP staff.

### They told us that:

**100%** felt safer

**94%** felt their quality of life had improved

**94%** felt more aware of their long-term housing prospects

**94%** felt more supported since working with Advance

**88%** felt confident to navigate their own housing needs



*"You're brilliant ...Every single time I've contacted you -you have answered. You have saved me..."*

- Woman supported by LWHSP



## CASE STUDY

*Iris\* 69*

“My husband left me in a lot of debt. That is how I ended up living with my youngest sister.

We may be sisters, but she treated me as anything but that.

I pretty much lived in the room next to her kitchen, trying to avoid her. I had a bucket for a loo and would survive on sandwiches.

She would turn up her music full blast to drive me mad and put her dogs' poo outside my door. It was awful.

When I came out of the room, she'd say 'Eurgh what is that horrible smell?'

She would also control who I could see. I wasn't allowed to go to family parties. There are nine of us siblings, so you can imagine a lot of family do's. She also wouldn't let me be involved with her grandchildren.

I put up with this for seven or eight years because I had nowhere else to go.

Then things escalated to the point where I couldn't take it anymore and tried to take my own life.

I survived and told the hospital staff what had been going on with me to make me attempt suicide and they encouraged me to call the police.

The police put me in touch with Advance and with their support, I am now living in a nice place where I'm happy and independent again.”

*\* Not her real name*



# 5 LONG-TERM SUPPORT FOR WOMEN AND CHANGING THE SYSTEM



## Domestic abuse Step Down support

**W**e are incredibly thankful to the **Julia and Hans Rausing Trust** that generously funds Advance's stepdown and recovery service for the Angelou Partnership. This support focuses on ensuring that all women referred to the Angelou Partnership can benefit from long-term support regardless of their risk level and beyond crisis- intervention. We work to address the deep-rooted trauma they may be experiencing to overcome the barriers they may be facing to be able to live independent and fulfilling lives. Through this service we provide women with one-to-one support to address individual needs as well as facilitate independence and connection for long-term recovery.



*"I feel more empowered"* – woman supported by Advance

**We received 66 referrals into this service, of which we 97% successfully engaged with Advance with positive outcome:**

**83%** felt safer

**80%** experienced improvements to their quality of life

**100%** were more able to participate in any education, training and employment

**67%** felt less isolated

**100%** felt supported through the court process

**100%** felt that their risk level has reduced since their case went to court.

We know that the need for longer-term, ongoing support for women who present as 'low-medium risk' is staggering across our domestic abuse services, and the generous funding of Julia and Hans Rausing Trust has allowed us to demonstrate the significant positive impact we can have on women's lives long term.



*"I feel very happy that there are companies like you to help and I am speechless, and I do not really know what to say. There are so many women that need that help. It has not been easy to speak about what I have gone through, but I felt very empowered by the social workers and you as well. It made me much stronger."* - woman supported by Advance.



## LONG-TERM SUPPORT FOR WOMEN AND CHANGING THE SYSTEM



### CASE STUDY

*Carmel\* 29*



I am a filmmaker and up until late 2020 was living in New York, travelling a lot with my work.

On a trip to London, I met a man, fell in love and ended up getting married. I suffered low self-esteem for most of my life, and he was the first man who appeared to care about me.

Before I left NY to come to England to live with him, it was all hearts and flowers.

But in the relationship, I was expected to be the perfect wife at home. This included having dinner on the table when he came home and then clearing up the dishes. The relationship quickly became one in which I never felt good enough, with my husband often telling me that I was 'only thinking of myself'. I constantly questioned whether I was being over-emotional and walked on eggshells all the time.

Things deteriorated to the point where I felt suicidal. Living away from my friends and family, I felt isolated. He also made me live with him in the same house as his brothers and mum.

We had a daughter together and there were so many times when I would ask for me and my daughter to be prioritised. Every time I asked, he'd make me feel selfish. He wouldn't really want to collaborate with me in terms of raising our daughter but resented that she was closer to me than she was to him. Of course she was – I was the main carer. He said I'd sabotaged their relationship. Because he wasn't doing his share of parenting, it was difficult for me to do any freelance work. He'd also spend the child benefits we received on himself.

I didn't recognise that my husband was emotionally abusing me until I saw a counsellor and she pointed out that that was what was going on.

We were married for three years before we got divorced, which my husband dragged out, delaying every step, as a means of keeping control of me.

I heard about Advance through a playgroup that I took my daughter to. Advance has been incredible, especially with supporting my emotional and mental wellbeing. I honestly feel like my keyworker has saved my life, time and time again. My daughter is three now and I've started freelancing again. We live in temporary accommodation, and I just hope that we can stay here."

*\* Not her real name*



# LONG-TERM SUPPORT FOR WOMEN AND CHANGING THE SYSTEM



**Our vision for women's centres is that they are open to women, whenever and for however long they need support. They are community hubs providing long-term and long-lasting support for women and girls.**

In October 2023, we opened two new Advance Women's Centres in Essex and Berkshire. These safe, community spaces offer women a sanctuary where they can access emotional support and practical help from expert Keyworkers, specialist partners, and Peer Mentors with lived experience. Women are supported with needs including domestic abuse, accommodation, education and training, substance recovery, mental health and emotional wellbeing.

Our new centres joined a network across London and the South-East, made up of nine Advance Women's Centres and three more through partner organisations. Through the centres, women and girls can receive direct one-to-one support and

access wellbeing-focussed activities in groups, where women with similar experiences can come together to support one another.

Statutory partners, including probation practitioners, social workers, and other professionals, can use our Women's Centres so that women can have their appointments in more welcoming and neutral spaces where they can also access other services and support. This can also reduce the need for women to retell their trauma multiple times, further enables joined-up, multi-agency working and communication and can lead to better outcomes for women and their children.

**Looking to the future, we aim to grow our network through co-locating in regional hubs, working with partners such as local authorities to access existing community spaces. Using recently conducted research, we will continue to raise awareness of the value of the women's centre model and advocate for more centralised statutory funding to support these vital resources for women and girls.**

## Women's centres



### CASE STUDY Mary\*

Advance kept me and my family safe forever, helping me take a stand against DA.

The organisation is a much-needed shoulder to cry on, believing us survivors and listening to us. Understanding every aspect of what we have been through and giving specialist advice and support with life skills that help us to move forward.

Advance taught me that there is a wonderful life to be lived in the aftermath of abuse and the women's centres play such a big role in that.

They offer unique, educational and creative workshops in a positive and safe environment.

Providing crucial 1 to 1 and group therapy. Enabling women to support one another and learn to trust again.

Empowering and encouraging us to reclaim our identities and our lives once more.

This productive positive foundation helps us regain courage and confidence within ourselves.

Learning how to be kind to ourselves through mindfulness classes. Easing the traumatic, emotional pain and guilt that a parent carries indefinitely for every one of her children who has experienced domestic abuse.

Advance builds survivors trust and faith in humanity once more, strengthening our mindset; building communities where women understand and support one another wholeheartedly, making lifelong friends.

The trauma, triggers and memories are forever embedded in our minds but with Advance supporting me all the way, I was able to make new friends creating new memories."

*\* Not her real name*



# LONG-TERM SUPPORT FOR WOMEN AND CHANGING THE SYSTEM

## Lived experience ambassadors

### Peer Mentors

Our Peer Mentors use their lived experience of the criminal justice system to support, empower and inspire women to look beyond their experiences, towards their futures. They work in collaboration with Keyworkers to better support women and girls, by providing emotional and practical support through caring, listening and encouraging mentees with small steps.



### CASE STUDY

*Lee-Anne\**



I was in my early 20s in love and happy when I fell pregnant. Then he hit me for the first time. And he carried on. The abuse escalated. He threatened me with a knife, a gun and even threw me out of a window.

I reported him to the police, and they fitted a panic alarm. The number of times I pressed that panic button, and the police were called – they said to me ‘What is the point of us coming out time and time again, when you keep letting him back in your life.’

The final time he hit me, I took my little girl and hailed a cab to the police station where an officer begged me, “If you don’t leave him – he is going to kill you.”

His words hit home and my daughter and I went into a refuge. I pressed charges against my abuser and he was convicted of GBH.

Seven years after I got out of that relationship, I met someone else. Another abusive man. A man I’d marry and have a son with. This time the abuse didn’t start when I was pregnant, but when my little boy was two years old. I put it down to jealousy about how much attention and love I gave my son.

This time, my abusive husband would always throw the first punch but I’d hit back and so many times, it would be ME in trouble with the police.

When I discovered that my husband was cheating on me as well as beating me, the state of my mental health got so bad that I made a very serious attempt to end my life.

Eventually, my husband was convicted of two counts of common assault.

It took a lot of recovery, therapy and strength to find myself again. But when I hit my 40s, and the kids were young adults, I was desperate for a sense of direction. I contacted the Royal Voluntary Service and when they heard a bit of my story they suggested Advance might really suit me for volunteering. So, I did and I’m now a Peer Mentor with the charity. It is so rewarding to be able to put my experiences of abuse and everything that I’ve learned since to such good use. I only wish I had access to a fantastic service like Advance all those years ago when I was suffering abuse.”

*\* Not her real name*



## Here are examples of where lived experience voices have been heard in the national press.

Our Lived Experience Ambassadors, including our Peer Mentors, will often also work closely with our Communications & External Affairs team, using their experience to provide insights into the challenges women face. Using their voices they work with the team to influence and change local and national policy. This will include providing evidence for research and consultation, talking with politicians, statutory agents such as local authorities or police, and speaking with journalists.



**Shadow Cabinet visit Advance to talk about the 'silent plague that ruins lives'**

## METRO

**Despite 2 million victims of domestic abuse less than 40,000 cases end in conviction - can a new scheme change that?**

“I was worried my jaw was broken, I couldn't speak, my lip was split, my jaw was shaking and I was in so much pain. He hit me so coldly, with no emotion. I was shocked and my daughter had seen it happen. I was worried I would have to go to hospital, but I didn't want to leave my children with him. The doctors would ask what happened and I didn't know how to explain”.

Domestic Abuse Support

## BIG ISSUE

**Woman became homeless after fleeing domestic abuse. Nobody helped when she slept on streets**

“I was having anxiety attacks for over a month, every single day. I was checking number plates just to make sure it wasn't him. Sometimes I even saw his face”.

Domestic Abuse Support

## sky news

**Projected surge in female prison population is 'incredibly worrying', says charity**

“I think if the courts kind of knew my history and what was happening around me to committing the crime, they would kind of understand why I did it in the first place. I'm not saying that I'm not guilty for what I've done, but at the same time it was out of desperation as well”.

Criminal Justice System Support

## MailOnline

**Despite 2 million victims of domestic abuse less than 40,000 cases end in conviction - can a new scheme change that?**

“I remember [the social workers] speaking to my parents, reassuring them and then leaving.' .. 'Advance were the first organisation of any kind to believe me about my story and about the crimes that had taken place at home”.

Young Women & Girls Maia Service

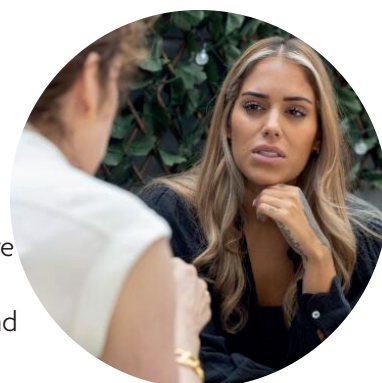


# LONG-TERM SUPPORT FOR WOMEN AND CHANGING THE SYSTEM

## Influencing and policy



Throughout 2023 to 2024, we continued to share our unique frontline evidence to influence political and statutory systems. We welcomed ministers, from both the government of the day and the opposition, to visit our Hammersmith centre where they met with survivors of abuse and expert frontline staff to hear about the impact of abuse and the criminal justice system.



Malin Andersson, Influencer and Activist

We shared our insight into providing community-based support to women with national and international politicians. Notably, as the largest specialist provider of support to women on probation in England and Wales, we were invited to give evidence to the House of Lords Justice and Home Affairs Committee on effective community provision. We attended roundtables with officials from the Council of Europe and the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, where again we discussed the range of challenges faced by women in the UK and emphasised the innovative community-based solutions we provide to mitigate these.

In February 2024, we published our landmark report **“Her Story, Her Justice: improving the criminal justice system’s response to women and girl survivors of domestic abuse”**. This report was shared widely with politicians and statutory agencies, highlighting how our expert co-located Criminal Justice IDVAs and our presence in the Westminster Specialist Domestic Abuse Court can radically improve outcomes for victim-survivors and hold perpetrators properly to account.



[Read the report](#)

## Research

We conducted two key pieces of research to further explore the value of community-based support for women. Our Evidence & Insights team demonstrated how co-located Advance IDVAs and statutory agencies, such as housing teams and social workers, can collaborate to best support victim-survivors of domestic abuse. Our multi-disciplinary teams have used the findings from this research to shape funding

proposals and service design, and further develop the understanding of and relationship with statutory commissioners.

Advance’s Evidence & Insights team also initiated a research project to demonstrate the social and financial value of our Women’s Centres, the recommendations from which will be used to influence strategic and operational policy.

# 6 LOOKING TO THE FUTURE



**O**ur vision is rooted in a commitment to supporting women and children in their communities, centring them and their needs. This support cannot be piecemeal; it must be long-term and tailored, responding effectively to the realities women face. Unfortunately, short-term and competitive commissioning has pitted expert organisations against one another, resulting in staffing crises and unstable services for women.

To achieve lasting change, we urgently need a foundation of long-term investment. Committed partnerships, especially with specialist organisations that are "led by and for" marginalised communities, bring strength and resilience to our sector, and we will continue to work closely with expert partners throughout our service delivery and advocacy work.

## Supporting women and girls in their community

We will always put women at the heart of our work. We will continue to deliver and advocate for coordinated, community responses which are built on holistic, non-judgmental support to women, meeting them where they are and continuing that support as long as they need it. Independent, specialist women's services must be protected and recognised as cost-effective, safe, accessible spaces for support. These are places where women can meet with other essential agencies including probation, social care and mental health, as well as have access to keyworker, peer, and group support that addresses both practical and emotional needs.

Long-term support that centres on women and girls is essential to break cycles of abuse and trauma. We will hold the government to their promise to halve violence against women and girls over the next ten years, and to deliver on their commitment to reduce the number of women in prison.

## Early intervention to prevent abuse and trauma

Early intervention is vital to reduce the need for emergency responses and ease the burden on services such as police, healthcare and prisons.

Education for all children and young people which truly embeds healthy relationships can lay the groundwork for safer communities. We urge the government to mandate a national rollout of specialist services for young women under 25 affected by trauma. Women must be diverted into support services and away from the criminal justice system as soon as they come into contact with it.





# LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

## Campaigning for change in the systems that harm women and girls

We remain steadfast in raising awareness and pressing for systemic reform in the criminal justice system's response to domestic abuse. Our report, *'Her Story, Her Justice'* presents recommendations to the government that are essential for change.

We will continue advocating for robust mental health support for women. It's unacceptable that women in crisis face long waiting lists or are turned away because they are expected to resolve other issues first. Too many women end up in prison "for their own protection" or as a "place of safety". We will work with partners across parliament and the third sector to ensure that forthcoming reforms to the Mental Health Act address these issues.

## Developing leaders and change makers

We are committed to creating an environment where our staff are empowered to become leaders and changemakers, making us an employer of choice. Our approach to work will continue to support our team in realising their full potential through a positive, strengths-based focus on accountability, underpinned by our competencies framework to ensure high-quality services. We are dedicated to fostering a diverse, equitable, inclusive, and anti-racist environment, where staff and volunteers feel engaged, valued, and encouraged to lead and advocate in support of our mission. By prioritising wellbeing and mental health, and developing our people around core values of innovation and collaboration, we aim to drive meaningful change together.

Too many women in the UK live in fear, too many see justice fall out of reach, and too many lose their jobs, homes, and sometimes their lives due to a system that does not meet their needs. Despite these challenges, we remain hopeful. We are committed to advocating for substantial investment in long-term, community-based support that is so essential to build a safe, just, and equal world for women.



# THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS & SUPPORTERS



We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the many individuals, organisations, and companies who contributed to Advance this year.

Your generosity, commitment, and partnership have been instrumental in helping us pursue our vision of a world that is free, just, and equal for women and girls.

In particular, we would like to thank:

- Barings
- T&J Meyer Family Foundation
- The Aurum Charitable Trust
- Trowers and Hamlins LLP
- Anglo Doorstep Collections
- Julia and Hans Rausing
- Our staff, trustees, and volunteers for their tireless dedication and hard work, which form the backbone of our efforts.
- Our individual donors, whose personal contributions, big and small, power the programs and initiatives that transform lives.

Your support has allowed us to advocate for systemic change, provide vital services, and amplify the voices of women and girls in need. Together, we are making a real and tangible difference in communities near and far.

***The Advance Team***





# 7 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the Year Ended 31 March 2024

The Trustees (who are also the Directors of the charitable company for the purposes of the Companies Act) present their combined Directors' report and Trustees' annual report, as required by company law, together with the audited financial statements of Advance Advocacy and Non Violence Community Education (the Charity) for the year ended 31 March 2024.

The Trustees confirm that the annual report and financial statements of the Charity comply with the current statutory requirements, the requirements of the Charity's governing document and the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) "Accounting and Reporting by Charities" applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

## Governing document and Objectives

Advance is a charitable company limited by guarantee and is governed by a Memorandum and Articles of Association which was incorporated in August 2000, after its founding in 1998. Advance was registered as a charity in September 2000.

Our vision is a world where women and girls can live safe, just and equal lives.

The objects of the charity for the public benefit in 2023/24 are:

1. The relief and support of persons, including children, who have suffered or are in danger of suffering domestic violence;
2. To advance the education of voluntary and statutory agencies and the public in all aspects of domestic violence, including without limit, its causes and prevention and the relief of its consequences;
3. Divert women from the Criminal Justice System at the earliest opportunity, reduce re-offending amongst women and encourage desistance amongst repeat offenders; and
4. Reduce the number of custodial sentences imposed on women by the Courts and prevent families breaking down as a result of offending.

The Trustees have complied with the duty in section 17(5) of the 2011 Charities Act to have paid due regard to the guidance published by the Charity Commission on public benefit. In particular the Trustees consider how planned activities contribute to the achievement of the Charity's objects.

## Recruitment and appointment of new Trustees

The Directors of the company are also the charity Trustees. Trustees are appointed for the skills and experience that they bring and their ability to assist Advance in meeting its charitable objects. In 2023/24, Advance's Trustees brought diverse experience and a wide skill-base to the Board at a time of significant growth.

All new Trustees are provided with Advance's Memorandum and Articles, strategic plan, quarterly management accounts and relevant reports, as well as access to all policies via a secure online shared resource. All new Trustees are also provided with the Charity Commission's 'The Essential Trustee' and invited to discuss any queries with the Chair.

The Articles of Association state that each year one third of the elected Trustees shall retire from office and shall be those who have served longest in office. A retiring Trustee shall be eligible for re-election. The Board is able to decide how many vacancies there are subject to a minimum of three persons. Where a vacancy exists, the vacancy is openly advertised on Advance's website and networks, and applicants are interviewed and appointed by delegated Trustees.

Trustees are responsible for the overall direction and strategic development of the organisation. This involves overseeing the strategic plan, monitoring performance against set objectives, agreeing the annual budget, monitoring reserves, reviewing and developing policies and procedures, the recruitment of staff and managing other personnel issues that may arise.





In Q1 of 2023-24 the Board of Trustees met quarterly and was supported by two Trustee sub-committees which also met quarterly in-between full Board meetings, focussing on: Finance, Fundraising & Business Development; and Governance, Risk & Human Resources.

A new governance structure was implemented effective from 01 July 2023 which meets quarterly and is supported by three Trustee sub-committees which also meet quarterly in-between full Board meetings, focussing on: People, Finance & Operations, Fundraising, Development & Communications; and Services and Safeguarding.

## Organisational structure

The Trustees delegate the management and delivery of services to meet the charity's objects to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), and to the Senior Leadership Team consisting of the Director of Finance and Operations, the Director of People, the Director of Development and Insights, the Transformation Lead Director (interim) and the Director of Services.

The senior staff remuneration at the levels below the CEO is set by the CEO in close consultation with the Board, particularly with reference to the People, Finance & Operations sub-committee which includes the Chair and also in relation to market rates. A salary scale is used to ensure consistency in similar roles. The salary of the CEO is set by the Board and all staff are eligible to receive an annual increment up to the top of the scale.

Employees are responsible for delivering the outputs and outcomes in line with funder requirements and Advance's objectives. This includes service delivery, training, consultancy, and other core areas related to administration, fundraising, finance and human resources.

Advance values diversity and welcomes applications from all sections of the community for its roles. In line with this we have developed policies to ensure that we have fair and transparent recruitment and selection processes in place that meet our equality and diversity policy.

Advance enjoys a strong working relationship with a number of partnerships, organisations and individuals and is represented on a number of working groups in order to further its charitable objectives.

## Delivering public benefit

Advance positively impacts the lives of women and their families, by reducing or diverting women from offending, reducing domestic violence incidents and risk of harm, increasing the safety and improving the quality of life of women, young women and children supported by our services.

During the year we were also able to deliver public benefit through further development and innovation, by extending our services across new geographic areas and offering new services to women and children, as well as sharing best practice with practitioners, policymakers and organisations working with women and children affected by violence and abuse.

We continue to build our partnership working and deliver a coordinated community response to violence and abuse against women and girls, by participating in strategic and operational networks, locally and nationally, and developing and leading service delivery partnerships in London and nationally.

## Risk management

The Board of Trustees has conducted a review of the major risks to which the charity is exposed. A risk register has been established and is updated quarterly, overseen by the Trustee sub-committees with a focus on services and governance, finance, fundraising and people. Where appropriate, systems or procedures have been established to mitigate the risks the charity faces. The Board reviews the risk register quarterly through the year.

Internal control risks are minimised by the review of financial management procedures and implementation of procedures for authorisation of all transactions and projects. Procedures are in place to ensure compliance with health and safety of staff, clients and visitors. The implementation of National Service Standards for domestic violence services and review and implementation of safeguarding children and adults at risk procedures ensure a consistent quality of delivery for all operational aspects of the charity. These procedures are periodically reviewed to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of the charity.



## FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The Board has agreed and oversees a three-year strategic business plan 2023/26. This sets out plans to allow for the diversification of funding and activities and an action plan is refreshed annually.

### The main risks identified and the mitigating responses to manage these risks include:

Risk identified	Response to Risk
<p>Challenging climate post Covid-19 pandemic, the cost-of-living crisis, public sector cuts, leading to increasingly competitive tendering.</p>	<p>Advance continues to build on its high-quality services through continuous innovation; aims to reach more women and girls across new geographic areas and broaden access to its services; engages with local and central government to influence provision of services needed by women; develops new services aligned to its mission and policy frameworks; develops hardship and flexible funding to support women and children affected by the crisis; collaborates with statutory and voluntary service providers to develop best-practice partnerships.</p>
<p>Increasingly competitive funding and commissioning environment.</p>	<p>Advance has built the capacity of its fundraising resources; developed and launched a new fundraising strategy; is diversifying its funding streams; continues to build and strengthen relationships with commissioners; is building on its specialist local experience and understanding of needs; ensuring continued improvement and value for money of tender proposals; monitors key performance indicators and reports regularly to the Board of Trustees.</p>
<p>Recruiting and retaining sufficient and highly skilled staff to maintain quality of services and capacity for growth.</p>	<p>Advance has built the capacity of its human resources, finance and data insights team; developed its recruitment and people development processes; grown its service delivery management structure and team; continues to invest in training; engages and responds to team feedback through a bi-annual staff survey and frequent team days; has been accredited for Investors in Volunteers and Disability Confident Employer.</p>
<p>Sufficient unrestricted reserves to enable sustainability and support significant growth.</p>	<p>Advance has implemented its fundraising strategy to diversify its funding streams; continues to ensure full-cost recovery for funded services; is developing proposals to fund capacity building and core costs; is building relationships with individual donors and events with communities to raise awareness and support for its activities; monitors reserves and reports regularly to the Board of Trustees.</p>
<p>Information and systems security breach.</p>	<p>Advance uses a cloud-based data environment; has encryption in place for its systems and devices; has expert advice for its data protection processes and systems; has clear policies on confidentiality, privacy and data protection; regularly reviews systems security; has been accredited at IASME standard.</p>



**Following another year of significant funding pressures and challenges in the commissioning landscape faced by the women's sector which were exacerbated by the cost of living crisis, we have benefited from the work undertaken by the charity to strengthen our financial management systems, policies and procedures, enabling us to maximise opportunities that arose in 2023/24.**

## Funding sources

Our success in securing existing contracts and obtaining additional funding to extend service delivery into new areas demonstrates the confidence commissioners and funders have in our delivery and approach. Our fundraising strategy complements our success in achieving restricted funding by targeting designated and unrestricted funding towards our business services and other core costs.

The principal funding sources for the charity in 2023/24 were from the following:

London Borough of Brent  
London Borough of Ealing  
London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham (LBHF)  
Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea (RBKC)  
Westminster City Council (WCC)  
Bi-borough Family & Children's Services (RBKC, WCC)  
Ministry of Justice domestic abuse services  
Ministry of Justice probation community services  
Mayor's Office for Policing & Crime (MOPAC) and the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU)  
Islamic Relief  
Julia and Hans Rausing Trust  
Refuge (Greater London Authority)  
Women in Prison  
Health IRIS Advocacy

Additional financial donations and contributions to help us support families using our services have been received from other donations.

## Financial Review

The Trustees consider the financial performance by the charity during the year to have been satisfactory given the initial reserves position of the organisation, the funding environment and the expansion of services undertaken. The financial statements are set out on pages 49-61.

The annual income for 2023/24 as shown in the Statement of Financial Activities was £8,232,444 (2022/23: £7,722,628), an increase of 7%, with annual expenditure of £8,311,941 (2022/23: £7,616,090), generating an overall annual deficit of £79,498 (2022/23: surplus of £106,538).

Despite a challenging funding environment, the increase in income has been a result of new grants and contracts from statutory and independent funders, aimed at supporting charities through the difficulties brought about by Covid-19 and the cost-of-living crisis. The increase in annual expenditure was due to the provision of new services and programmes.

The total funds at the year ended 31 March 2024 stands at £1,088,309 (2022/23: £1,167,808) of which unrestricted funds are £984,329 (2022/23: £1,158,713) and restricted are £103,982 (2022/23: £9,095). Cash balances at the year-end were £499,611, (2022/23: £933,147).

## Reserves policy

The Board of Trustees reviewed Advance's Reserves Policy in response to the charity's main risks and the current funding environment and agreed that unrestricted funds held should be equivalent to up to two months of staff costs, three months of premises costs and one month of running and activities costs for all projects.

In 2023/24, Advance continued to expand its services and income, and unrestricted reserves are needed to meet the charity's working capital needs and support further development of its services.

The Board has agreed a plan to increase unrestricted reserves to a target of £1,275,000 over the next 3 years. This is deemed realistic and will be achieved through effective financial management, focusing on boosting unrestricted income and improving the agreed level of future contributions from restricted projects towards core costs and unrestricted reserves.

Total funds on 31 March 2024 were £1,088,309 (2022/23: £1,167,808) of which unrestricted funds are £984,329 (2022/23: £1,158,713) and restricted are £103,982 (2022/23: £9,095). Free unrestricted reserves on 31 March 2024 amounted to £928,246 (2022/23: £1,132,243). The Board consider that Advance can continue its current activities with existing reserves.



# STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

**Registered Company number** 04064660 (England & Wales)

**Registered Charity number** 1086873

**Registered office** Advance Advocacy and Non-violence Community Education  
c/o Knox Cropper LLP, 65-68 Leadenhall Street, London EC3A 2AD

**Auditors** Knox Cropper LLP, 65 Leadenhall Street, London EC3A 2AD

**Bankers** CAF Bank Ltd, 25 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent ME19 4JQ

## Trustees

Christine Losecaat MBE Chair  
Christine Mullin Treasurer  
Emily Midwood Chair, Services and Safeguarding Sub-Committee  
Meeta Luthra Chair, People, Finance and Operations Sub-Committee  
Anita Hamilton Chair, Fundraising and Communications Sub-Committee  
Karthik Mahadevan  
Michelle Nightingale (resigned 31 January 2024)  
Susan Lesley Fennimore (resigned 5 October 2023)  
Ludovico Giannotti  
Kate Parsley  
Charmian Sedman  
Prof. Susan Edwards  
Elly Crawford  
Abundance Temile  
Deborah Cartwright (resigned 31 December 2023)  
Dr Carole Easton OBE (resigned 24 September 2023)  
Geraldine Berg (appointed 26 March 2024)  
Deboarh Parkin (appointed 26 March 2024)  
Dr Michael Shortt (appointed 26 March 2024)  
Helen Soulsby  
Tracey King (appointed 26 March 2024)

## Senior Management

Niki Scordi Chief Executive Officer (resigned 7 January 2024)  
Elizabeth Mack Chief Executive Officer (appointed 8 January 2024)  
Melissa Altman Director of Services (resigned February 2024)  
Dr Summer Alston-Smith Director of Development and Insights  
Vicki Osunde Director of People (appointed 9 October 2023)  
Vanessa Penzo Director of Finance and Operations (appointed 14 September 2023)  
Dali Kaur Director of Services for Criminal Justice & Young Women and Girls (appointed 22 July 2024)  
Amy Glover Director of Services for Domestic Abuse (appointed 22 July 2024)  
Judi Braddock Director - Transformation Lead (appointed October 2023)

# STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES RESPONSIBILITIES



The Trustees (who are also the directors of Advance for the purposes of Company law) are responsible for preparing the Report of the Trustees and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice) including Financial Reporting Standard 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland".

Company law and Charity law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the Trustees are required to

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charity SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records, which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

In so far as the Trustees are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditors are unaware; and
- the Trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditors are aware of that information.

## Auditors

The auditors, Knox Cropper LLP, will be proposed for re-appointment at the forthcoming Annual General Meeting. This report has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

## On behalf of the board:

Christine Losecaat MBE, Chair

26 November 2024



# INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF ADVANCE

## Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Advance (the 'charitable company') for the year ended 31 March 2024 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, Statement of Cash Flows and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

### In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2024 and of its income and expenditure for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

### Basis of opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charitable company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

### Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

### Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The trustees are responsible for the other information.

Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements, or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

### Opinion on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the Report of the Trustees, which includes the directors' report prepared for the purposes of company law, for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared, is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the directors' report included within the Report of the Trustees has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.



## Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the directors' report included within the trustees' report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.
- the trustees were not entitled to prepare the financial statements in accordance with the small companies regime and take advantage of the small companies' exemption from the requirement to prepare a Strategic Report or in preparing the Report of the Directors.

## Responsibilities of Trustees

As explained more fully in the Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities, the Trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

## Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements. Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below:

- The Charitable Company is required to comply with both company law and charity law and, based on our knowledge of its activities, we identified that the legal requirement to accurately account for restricted funds was of key significance.
- We gained an understanding of how the charitable company complied with its legal and regulatory framework, including the requirement to properly account for restricted funds, through discussions with management and a review of the documented policies, procedures and controls.
- The audit team, which is experienced in the audit of charities, considered the charitable company's susceptibility to material misstatement and how fraud may occur. Our considerations included the risk of management override.
- Our approach was to check that all restricted income was properly identified and separately accounted for and to ensure that only valid and appropriate expenditure was charged to restricted funds. This included reviewing journal adjustments and unusual transactions.



# INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF ADVANCE

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: [www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities](http://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities). This description forms part of our auditor's report.

## **Use of the audit report**

This report is made solely to the charitable company's member in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and the charitable company's member for our audit work, for this report or for the opinions we have formed.

## **Richard Billinghamurst FCA Senior Statutory Auditor**

for and on behalf of Knox Cropper LLP  
Chartered Accountants and Registered Auditors  
65 Leadenhall Street  
London. EC3A 2AD

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Date: 12 December 2024





# STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

(Incorporating an Income and Expenditure Account)  
For the year ended 31 March 2024



	Notes	Year ended 31 March 2024 Unrestricted Fund £	Year ended 31 March 2024 Restricted Fund £	Year ended 31 March 2024 Totals £	Year ended 31 March 2023 Totals £
<b>Income:</b>					
Charitable activities	2	84,198	8,133,252	<b>8,217,450</b>	7,717,567
Investment income – Interest receivable		14,994	-	<b>14,994</b>	5,061
<b>Total incoming resources</b>		99,192	8,133,252	<b>8,232,444</b>	7,722,628
<b>Expenditure:</b>					
<b>Costs of Raising Funds:</b>					
Fundraising costs	3	-	334,188	<b>334,188</b>	198,474
<b>Expenditure on Charitable Activities:</b>					
Total Charitable Activities	3	273,578	7,704,175	<b>7,977,753</b>	7,417,616
<b>Total expenditure</b>	3	273,578	8,038,363	<b>8,311,941</b>	7,616,090
<b>Net income / (expenditure) for the year</b>		<b>(174,386)</b>	<b>94,889</b>	<b>(79,497)</b>	106,538
Transfers between Funds	10	-	-	-	-
<b>Net Movement in Funds for the year</b>		<b>(174,386)</b>	<b>94,889</b>	<b>(79,497)</b>	106,538
<b>Reconciliation of Funds</b>					
Total Funds brought forward		1,158,713	9,093	<b>1,167,806</b>	1,061,270
<b>Total Funds carried forward</b>	9-10	<b>984,327</b>	<b>103,982</b>	<b>1,088,309</b>	1,167,808

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.



# BALANCE SHEET

Advance Advocacy and Non Violence Community Education

Charity no. 1086873 Company no. 4064660

	Notes	Year ended 31 March 2024 £	Year ended 31 March 2023 £
<b>Fixed assets</b>			
Tangible assets	5	120,001	68,074
<b>Current assets</b>			
Debtors	6	1,873,343	1,335,686
Cash at bank and in hand		499,611	933,147
		2,372,954	2,268,833
<b>Liabilities:</b>			
Creditors falling due within one year	7	(1,404,646)	(1,169,099)
<b>Net current assets</b>		<b>968,308</b>	<b>1,099,734</b>
<b>Net assets</b>	11	<b>1,088,309</b>	<b>1,167,808</b>
<b>Funds:</b>			
Unrestricted income funds	9	984,327	1,158,713
Restricted funds	10	103,982	9,095
<b>Total Funds</b>		<b>1,088,309</b>	<b>1,167,808</b>

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small charitable companies. The notes on pages 52-61 form part of these accounts.

Approved by the Trustees and authorised for issue on 26 November 2024, and signed on their behalf by

Christine Losecaat MBE, Chair

Christine Mullin, Treasurer

# STATEMENT OF CASHFLOWS

For the year ended 31 March 2024



	Year ended 31 March 2024 £	Year ended 31 March 2023 £
<b>Net Movement in Funds</b>	<b>(79,496)</b>	106,538
<b>Adjustments for:</b>		
Depreciation of tangible assets	<b>26,969</b>	14,121
Interest received	<b>(14,994)</b>	(5,061)
(Increase) / decrease in debtors	<b>(537,659)</b>	(411,219)
Increase / (decrease) in creditors	<b>235,547</b>	193,600
<b>Net Cash generated from Operating Activities</b>	<b>(369,633)</b>	(102,021)
<b>Cash flows from investing activities:</b>		
Purchase of tangible fixed assets	<b>(78,897)</b>	(65,226)
Interest	<b>14,994</b>	5,061
<b>Net cash from investing activities</b>	<b>(63,903)</b>	(60,165)
<b>Cash flows from financing activities</b>		
Interest paid	-	-
<b>Net cash used in financing activities</b>	-	-
<b>Net increase / (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents</b>	<b>(433,536)</b>	(162,186)
<b>Cash and cash equivalent at beginning of period</b>	<b>933,147</b>	1,095,333
<b>Cash and cash equivalent carried forward</b>	<b>499,611</b>	933,147
<b>Cash and cash equivalents can be analysed as follows:</b>		
<b>Cash in hand</b>	<b>499,611</b>	933,147



# NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

For the year ended 31 March 2024

## 1. Accounting policies

The principal accounting policies adopted, judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty in the preparation of the financial statements are as follows:

### a. Basis of Preparation

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, and in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities, applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), the Companies Act 2006 and the Charities Act 2011.

The charity constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102.

Advance is a charitable company limited by guarantee (company number 04064660 and charity number 1086873). The registered office is Advance Advocacy and Non-violence Community Education c/o Knox Cropper LLP 65-68 Leadenhall Street, London EC3A 2AD.

The presentation currency of the financial statements in pound sterling (£).

### b. Key Judgements and Assumptions in applying Accounting Policies

There are no key judgements or assumptions used in applying the accounting policies.

### c. Preparation of the Accounts on a Going Concern basis

The Trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue as a going concern. The charity has cash resources and has no requirement for external funding. The directors have a reasonable expectation that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. They continue to believe the going concern basis of accounting appropriate in preparing the annual financial statements.

### d. Incoming Resources

All income is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities on an accruals basis once the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the items of income have been met, it is probable that the income will be received, and the amount can be measured reliably. For unsolicited donations this is when received.

In particular, revenue grants are recognised as income at the earlier date of when they are received or when they are receivable, unless they relate to a specified future period or the completion of unmet performance related conditions outside the control of the charity, in which case they are deferred. Deferred income is released to income in the reporting period in which the performance-related or other conditions that limit recognition are met.

### e. Resources Expended:

All expenses are accounted for on an accrual's basis.

#### i. Fundraising costs

These costs are incurred in seeking voluntary contributions. Direct fundraising costs consist of external direct costs and a proportion of direct salary costs calculated on the basis of estimation of time spent on fundraising activities.

#### ii. Allocation of Support costs

Support costs are those functions that assist the work of the charity but do not directly undertake charitable activities. Support costs includes costs and services, such as finance, payroll and governance costs which support the charity's work. Support costs have been allocated directly against charitable activities.

### f. Staff Pensions

Advance operated a defined contribution pension scheme (DCS) during the year. Contributions payable to the charitable company's pension scheme are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities in the period to which they relate. At 31 March 2024, Advance had 126 (2023: 123) active members in the scheme. Total contributions to the DCS for the year were £86,739 (2023: £75,568).



## g. Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are stated in the balance sheet at cost less depreciation. These items are depreciated on a straight-line basis so as to write off their cost over their estimated useful lives. The rates used are as follows:

Buildings and Refurbishment	10% or the length of the lease, whichever is shorter
Computers	33%
Fixtures & Fittings	20%

Items costing less than £500 are written off in full in the year of acquisition.

## h. Debtors

Debtors are recognised when the charity is legally entitled to the income after any performance conditions have been met, the amount can be measured reliably, and it is probable that the income will be received.

## i. Cash and cash equivalents

Cash is represented by cash in hand and deposits with financial institutions repayable without penalty on notice of not more than 24 hours. Cash equivalents are highly liquid investments that mature in no more than 3 months from the date of acquisition and that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash with insignificant risk of change in value.

## j. Creditors

Short term creditors are measured at the transaction price. Creditors are recognised when the charity has a present legal or constructive obligation resulting from a past event to make payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably.

## k. Restricted funds

Restricted funds are accounted for in accordance with the particular terms of trust arising from the express or implied wishes of donors in so far as these are intended to be binding on the Trustees. Where any such wishes are not intended to be legally binding, they are taken into account and recognised in appropriately designated funds.

## l. Unrestricted funds

Unrestricted funds are those which are not subject to any special restrictions and they are classed within the General fund.

## m. Foreign exchange

Transactions denominated in foreign currencies are translated into sterling at the rate of exchange ruling at the date of the transaction. Exchange differences arising in the ordinary course of business are included in incoming resources or resources expended. Assets and liabilities denominated in foreign currencies are translated into sterling at the exchange rates ruling at the balance sheet date.

## n. Operating Leases

Rentals under operating leases are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities on a straight line basis over the lease term.



# NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

## 2. Income from Charitable Activities

	Year ended 31 March 2024 Unrestricted Funds £	Year ended 31 March 2024 Restricted Funds £	Year ended 31 March 2024 Totals £	Year ended 31 March 2023 Totals £
Grants: Community-based Advocacy & Support	75,330	8,133,252	<b>8,208,583</b>	7,703,051
Donations & gifts	8,617	-	<b>8,617</b>	14,385
Other income	250	-	<b>250</b>	131
	84,198	8,133,252	<b>8,217,450</b>	7,717,567
Grants received, included in the above, are as follows:			Year ended 31 March 2024 £	Year ended 31 March 2023 £
<b>Unrestricted Grants</b>				
Prism Trust			-	45,000
Barings			<b>15,000</b>	-
T&J Meyer Family Trust			<b>10,000</b>	20,000
Aurum Charitable Trust			<b>30,000</b>	30,000
Benevity			<b>2,400</b>	-
Trowers & Hamblins			<b>503</b>	-
Anglo Recycling			<b>16,246</b>	8,000
The Talisman			<b>400</b>	-
			<b>74,459</b>	103,000
			Year ended 31 March 2024 £	Year ended 31 March 2023 £
<b>Restricted Grants</b>				
London Borough of Brent			<b>495,955</b>	456,450
London Borough of Ealing			<b>108,817</b>	89,633
London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham (LBHF)			<b>428,771</b>	399,604
Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea (RBKC)			<b>293,000</b>	346,241



**2. Income from Charitable Activities (Continued)**

	Year ended 31 March 2024 £	Year ended 31 March 2023 £
<b>Restricted Grants Continued)</b>		
Westminster City Council (WCC)	390,547	320,661
Greater London Authority	1,153,708	1,249,850
Bi-borough Family & Children's Services (RBKC, WCC)	52,500	52,000
Ministry of Justice domestic abuse services	310,000	214,975
Ministry of Justice probation community services	3,644,927	1,912,841
Mayor's Office for Policing & Crime (MOPAC)	158,850	1,519,337
Violence Reduction Unit (VRU)	572,258	589,190
Islamic Relief	35,778	42,000
Julia and Hans Rausing Trust	50,000	20,833
Health IRISi Advocacy	181,503	-
Women In Prison	10,400	-
Refuge (Greater London Authority)	247,020	247,520
Standing Together (Tampon Tax)	-	117,300
Get Connected	-	8,333
Turning Point	-	12,500
Other	-	783
<b>Total Grants Received</b>	<b>8,133,252</b>	<b>7,600,051</b>



## 3. Analysis of total expenditure

	Direct Costs £	Staff Costs £	Support Costs £	Year ended 31 March 2024 Total Costs £	Year ended 31 March 2023 Total Costs £
<b>Expenditure on Charitable Activities</b>					
<b>Cost of generating funds:</b>					
Fundraising costs	19,385	314,803	-	<b>334,188</b>	198,474
<b>Charitable activities:</b>					
Community-based Advocacy & Support	2,058,755	5,250,527	618,664	<b>7,927,946</b>	7,360,044
Governance Costs	-	-	49,807	<b>49,807</b>	57,572
<b>Total Charitable activities</b>	<b>2,058,755</b>	<b>5,250,527</b>	<b>668,471</b>	<b>7,977,753</b>	7,417,616
<b>Total Expenditure 2024</b>	<b>2,078,140</b>	<b>5,565,330</b>	<b>668,471</b>	<b>8,311,941</b>	
Total expenditure 2023	1,934,493	5,188,374	493,223		7,616,090
<b>Direct costs include:</b>					
<b>Direct costs related to community-based activities</b>					
Partners' activities costs				<b>1,594,174</b>	1,508,974
Service-user activities				<b>36,146</b>	45,714
IT & Telecommunication Costs				<b>319,254</b>	286,781
Other Direct Costs				<b>109,181</b>	86,448
				<b>2,058,755</b>	1,927,917
<b>Support costs include:</b>					
HR & payroll				<b>10,497</b>	9,788
Premises & storage				<b>80,688</b>	53,841
Lease costs				<b>358,189</b>	250,793
Staff related support costs				<b>102,822</b>	88,576
Other Support Costs				<b>39,500</b>	18,591
Depreciation				<b>26,967</b>	14,061
				<b>618,663</b>	435,560





### 3. Analysis of total expenditure (Continued)

	Year ended 31 March 2024 £	Year ended 31 March 2023 £
<b>Governance costs</b>		
Legal & Professional fees	37,194	40,991
Auditors' fees	5,400	5,454
AGM / Annual Report	3,301	4,545
Trustee and Board meeting expenses	3,912	6,583
	<b>49,807</b>	<b>57,573</b>

### 4. Trustees and employees

	Year ended 31 March 2024 £	Year ended 31 March 2023 £
<b>Staff costs:</b>		
Salaries	4,525,726	4,119,524
Social security costs	415,817	391,538
Pension scheme contributions	86,739	75,568
Consultants & Agency staff	339,729	486,202
Recruitment and training	197,320	115,542
	<b>5,565,331</b>	<b>5,188,374</b>
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Number</b>
The average number of persons employed during the year was:	150	140

The charity considers its key management personnel to comprise the Trustees, the Chief Executive and the Directors. The total employment benefits including employer pension contributions and national insurance contributions of the key management personnel were £123,314 (2023: £107,907).

Two key management employees were on long-term unpaid leave during 2022/23. There was no redundancy payments in 2023/24 (2023: £nil).

The Trustees and persons connected with them have not received or obtained any remuneration or other financial benefits as a trustee for the period directly or indirectly from Advance's funds. The aggregate amount of expenses reimbursed to Trustees to cover travel expenses during 2023/24 was £nil (2023: £nil).

#### Key Management were:

Salary	No. of Employee	
	2024	2023
£60,001 - £70,000	0	0
£70,001 - £80,000	0	1
£80,001 - £90,000	2	0
£90,001 - £100,000	1	0
£100,001 - £110,000	0	1



## 5. Tangible fixed assets

Cost	Buildings £	Fixtures & Fittings £	IT Equipment £	Totals £
Balance at 1 April 2023	122,345	20,322	83,897	226,564
Additions	12,000	-	66,897	78,897
Balance at 31 March 2024	134,345	20,322	150,794	305,461
<b>Accumulated Depreciation</b>				
Balance at 1 April 2023	56,267	19,096	83,127	158,490
Charge for period	15,029	833	11,108	26,969
Balance at 31 March 2024	71,296	19,929	94,235	185,459
<b>Net book value at 31 March 2024</b>	<b>63,049</b>	<b>393</b>	<b>56,559</b>	<b>120,001</b>
Net book value at 31 March 2023	66,078	1,226	770	68,074

## 6. Debtors

	At 31 March 2024 £	At 31 March 2023 £
Accrued income and grants receivable	1,632,264	1,270,906
Prepaid expenses	198,740	24,189
Other debtors	42,339	40,591
	<b>1,873,343</b>	1,335,686

## 7. Creditors amounts falling due within one year

	At 31 March 2024 £	At 31 March 2023 £
Trade Creditors	596,375	277,793
Taxation and social security	116,909	123,478
Accruals and Other Creditors	456,130	641,602
Deferred Income	235,232	126,226
	<b>1,404,646</b>	1,169,099

Deferred income reflects grants received during the year for which performance conditions have not been met at the year end. Deferred income recognised at 31 March 2024 was recognised in full in the current financial year.



## 8. Operating Lease Commitments

	Land & Buildings	
	At 31 March 2024 £	At 31 March 2023 £
<b>Minimum Lease Payment Falling Due:</b>		
Within 1 year	333,694	312,247
Within 2 to 5 years	391,626	552,820
	<b>725,320</b>	<b>865,067</b>

The Hammersmith office lease contains a break clause in year three which, if exercised, would reduce the overall commitment falling due within 2 to 5 years by £231,725.

## 9. Unrestricted Income Funds

	Balance at 1 April 2023 £	Incoming/ (Outgoing) Resources (£)	Transfers (£)	Balance at 31 March 2024 £
<b>Advance General Fund</b>	1,158,713	(174,386)	-	<b>984,327</b>

	At 31 March 2024 £	At 31 March 2023 £
The Unrestricted Income Funds are classified as follows		
Free Reserves (incorporating General Fund)	928,246	1,132,243
Tangible Fixed Assets in use	56,081	26,470
<b>Total</b>	<b>984,327</b>	<b>1,158,713</b>

	Balance at 1 April 2022 £	Incoming/ (Outgoing) Resources (£)	Transfers (£)	Balance at 31 March 2023 £
<b>Unrestricted Income Funds Comparative</b>				
Advance General Fund	907,341	122,577	128,795	<b>1,158,713</b>

	At 31 March 2023 £	At 31 March 2022 £
The Unrestricted Income Funds are classified as follows		
Free Reserves (incorporating General Fund)	1,132,243	898,072
Tangible Fixed Assets in use	26,470	9,269
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,158,713</b>	<b>907,341</b>



# NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

## 10. Restricted Funds

Restricted funds are accounted for in accordance with the terms of trust arising from the express or implied wishes of donors in so far as these are intended to be binding on the Trustees. Where any such wishes are not intended to be legally binding, they are taken into account and recognised in appropriate alternative funds, as indicated as transfers below.

	Balance at 1 April 2023 £	Incoming Resources £	Transfers £	Resources expended £	Balance at 31 March 2024 £
Domestic Abuse services	169,570	4,349,207	-	(4,268,178)	250,599
Criminal Justice services	(160,475)	3,784,045	-	(3,770,186)	(146,616)
<b>Total</b>	9,095	8,133,252	-	(8,038,364)	103,982

**Domestic abuse (DA) services:** Services are provided to twelve boroughs in West and Central London, including core services in Brent, Ealing, Hammersmith & Fulham, Kensington & Chelsea, Westminster, and through a number of programmes including the Angelou Partnership VAWG Services, Social Care DA services, Health DA services, Housing DA services and the Criminal Justice and Police DA services.

**Criminal Justice (CJ) services:** Services are provided pan-London and in eight counties in South and East of England through our Minerva and Diversion programmes, including our collaboration

with Ministry of Justice, National Probation Service, the Metropolitan Police and the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC).

**Young women and girls (YWG) services:** Services are provided across West and Central London through our Maia and Courageous services, including our collaboration with the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime MOPAC and the London Violence Reduction Unit.

Restricted Funds Comparative	Balance at 1 April 2022 £	Incoming Resources £	Transfers £	Resources expended £	Balance at 31 March 2023 £
Domestic Abuse services	147,929	4,260,780	-	(4,239,139)	169,570
Criminal Justice services	6,000	3,339,271	(128,795)	(3,376,951)	(160,475)
<b>Total</b>	153,929	7,600,051	(128,795)	(7,616,090)	9095

## 11. Analysis of the charity's net assets by Fund

Fund balances at 31 March 2024 are represented by:	Unrestricted Fund (£)	Restricted Funds (£)	Total Funds (£)
Tangible fixed assets	56,081	63,919	120,000
Debtors	241,081	1,632,263	1,873,344
Cash at bank and in hand	736,279	(236,668)	499,611
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	(49,114)	(1,355,532)	(1,404,646)
	<b>984,327</b>	<b>103,982</b>	<b>1,088,309</b>



## 12. Taxation status

Advance is a registered charity and no taxation is payable on its income arising in the United Kingdom.

## 13. Related party transactions

There were no connected charity transactions during the year.

During the year, one Trustee resigned their office to provide finance and operations services to the charity, for which they received payment. No payments were made whilst they were still Trustees. There were no related party transactions during the year. None of the Trustees receive remuneration or other benefit from their work with the charity.

## 14. Comparative 2023 Statement of Financial Activities

Year Ended 31 March 2023

Statement of Financial Activities	Unrestricted Fund (£)	Restricted Fund (£)	2023 Totals (£)
<b>Income:</b>			
Charitable activities:			
Domestic violence advocacy projects	117,516	7,600,051	7,717,567
Investment income – Interest receivable	5,061	-	5,061
<b>Total incoming resources</b>	<b>122,577</b>	<b>7,600,051</b>	<b>7,722,628</b>
<b>Expenditure:</b>			
<b>Costs of Raising Funds:</b>			
Fundraising costs	-	198,474	198,474
<b>Expenditure on Charitable Activities:</b>			
Total Charitable Activities	-	7,417,616	7,417,616
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>7,616,090</b>	<b>7,616,090</b>
<b>Net income / (expenditure) for the year</b>	<b>122,577</b>	<b>(16,039)</b>	<b>106,538</b>
Transfers between Funds	128,795	(128,795)	-
<b>Net Movement in Funds for the year</b>	<b>251,372</b>	<b>(144,834)</b>	<b>106,538</b>
<b>Reconciliation of Funds</b>			
Total Funds brought forward	907,341	153,929	1,061,270
<b>Total Funds carried forward</b>	<b>1,158,713</b>	<b>9,095</b>	<b>1,167,808</b>

All income and expenditure derived from continuing activities.

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**Advance Advocacy and Non Violence Community Education**