

Amendment by the Administration

City of Edinburgh Council

20 March 2025

Item 8.5 – Motion by Councillor Staniforth – Edinburgh Women’s Aid and Support for Trans Women

Delete all and replace with;

1. Notes that Edinburgh Women’s Aid (EWA) exists to support women and children affected by domestic abuse in Edinburgh and has been doing this successfully for more than half a century, with more than 2,000 women and more than 250 children supported each year.
2. Further notes the wide range of services they offer includes telephone, court advocacy, drop-in and 1:1 support, and over the years they have successfully campaigned to improve rights to housing, to services and to justice all over the city.
3. Understands that EWA provides housing in a small number of shared refuges and as part of their homelessness contract with the Council, they are required to provide single sex spaces, which is the same criterion applied to all single sex homeless shelters in the city.
4. Further understands that EWA runs single occupancy refuges which are not subject to the same conditions mentioned previously and as such are available to trans women.
5. Gathers that the EWA policy on groupwork rests on the feedback from survivors that they would self-exclude from groups that included trans women, with women from vulnerable and minoritised communities most likely to voice this concern and that all policies are in line with the provisions of the Equality Act and are part of a trauma informed approach.
6. Understands from officers that Edinburgh Women’s aid is currently complying with the terms and conditions of their contract and their service specification and there have been no concerns reported with the quality of the service provided.

7. Notes that EWA remains the leading provider of domestic abuse support to all women in Edinburgh and that within the remit of their service, they regularly and effectively provide support to the LGBT community, being the largest and most comprehensive service to LGBT women affected by domestic abuse in Edinburgh.
8. Requests a briefing note for all elected members within one cycle setting out the current support that is available for trans and non-binary people facing domestic abuse in Edinburgh.

Moved by: Councillor Jane Meagher
Seconded by: Councillor Mandy Watt

Amendment by the SNP Group

City of Edinburgh Council

20 March 2025

Item 8.5 – Motion by Councillor Staniforth - Edinburgh Women’s Aid and Support for Trans Women

Deletes all and replaces with:

“Council

1. Recognises and fully supports the vital work of Edinburgh Women’s Aid in providing essential services and funding for victims of domestic violence, ensuring that all service users, including cis and trans women, receive the support they need and are able to access services through Women’s Aid. Therefore, Council remains committed not to defund these vital services.
2. Affirms the rights and dignity of trans people, who while representing a small minority of the population, are valued members of our community. The Council acknowledges the need for inclusive and respectful services that address their specific challenges while balancing the rights and needs of all groups.
3. Recognises the importance of protecting single-sex spaces as defined in law to ensure dignity and protection from potential risks, including harassment or violence.
4. Commits to ensuring that the rights of all women, including cis and trans women, are protected. The Council supports clear, compassionate policies that uphold safety, dignity, and fairness for everyone.”

Moved by: Councillor Lesley Macinnes

Seconded by:

Amendment by the Liberal Democrat Group

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Council deletes paragraph 3) and 4), and inserts:

"3) recognises the vital importance of Edinburgh Council continuing to fund support services for those facing domestic abuse and sexual violence, and in line with our position on LGBTQ+ equality, believes this support must be available to all those who depend on it, including trans people.

4) agrees that the Leader of the Council should write to Edinburgh Women's Aid to set out the importance of providing services to trans women and to ask how the organisation intends to do this.

Moved by: Cllr Fiona Bennett

Seconded by: Cllr Sanne Dijkstra-Downie

Addendum by the Green Group

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Insert after paragraph 3

- 4) Resolves that the above review should not result in an overall reduction of Council funding of services for people facing domestic abuse and sexual violence.

Renumber following paragraphs accordingly

Moved by: Cllr Chas Booth

Seconded by:

Amendment by the Conservative Group

City of Edinburgh Council

20 March 2025

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Council: deletes paragraphs 1, 2, 3, and 4 and replaces with and renumbers;

- 1) Notes that Edinburgh Women’s Aid has decided to exclude all males from adult group work services and shared refuge spaces in order to provide an environment where women feel safe, while mitigating any risk of them being further traumatised as they seek the help they need and deserve.
- 2) Notes that Edinburgh Women’s Aid ensures anyone who has experienced domestic abuse has somewhere supportive to turn and will provide a supportive and empathetic response to anyone who contacts them. Such a response can include signposting to the most appropriate service for their needs.
- 3) Welcomes the recent decision by Edinburgh Women’s Aid, which prioritises the safety of women and girls, and recognises the vital role it plays in supporting those experiencing or who have experienced domestic abuse.
- 4) Notes that the Equality Act 2010, which applies in Scotland, allows for the provision of single-sex services and permits organisations such as Edinburgh Women’s Aid to exclude individuals who have the protected characteristic of gender reassignment from certain spaces where this is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
- 5) Supports Edinburgh Women’s Aid in their decision, acknowledging that recent legal cases, including the For Women Scotland Supreme Court ruling and the ongoing NHS Fife Employment Tribunal, reinforce the need for existing law to be followed and care to be taken to ensure single-sex provision is maintained for appropriate services and

facilities to best service the needs of clients and to protect the Council and its service providers from legal challenge.

6) Affirms that it is the right of Edinburgh Women's Aid to make such assessments, ensuring that the needs of women and girls who have experienced domestic abuse remain the utmost priority.

7) Acknowledges that while the needs of individuals who have the protected characteristic of gender reassignment must also be considered, this should not come at the expense of the safety and well-being of biological women and girls.

8) Recognising concerns expressed about the access to services for individuals who have the protected characteristic of gender reassignment, agrees that a briefing note for all Elected Members is prepared within one cycle setting out the current support that is available for people facing domestic abuse in Edinburgh who identify as trans and non-binary.

Moved by: Councillor Jo Mowat

Seconded by: Councillor Marie Clair Munro