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Sheffield women's charity will close end of March 2025

A local women's charity has announced it will finally close its doors at the end of March 2025 after fighting for the past 12 months to stay open.

Vida Sheffield offers specialist trauma focused therapy to domestic abuse survivors and in November last year launched a petition for emergency council funding after cuts put the service at risk of closure. The petition was presented at a Sheffield City Council meeting on 15th July 2024 containing 27,481 signatures.

The charity believes closure will be necessary at the end of March 2025 despite the written and verbal support received. The Charity needs to raise around £250k each year to maintain its services but this is proving impossible to do because grant funding and donations have become so competitive in recent years as there are many worthwhile causes vying for the same pots of funding.

Women who experience abuse can suffer symptoms of severe anxiety, depression, PTSD and suicidal feelings. Vida helps around 250 women and girls per year with free trauma-informed therapy. Gemma, a service user representative, said, "it was such a relief to learn that the Vida did not have to close its doors in January 2024, but it needs guaranteed multi-year grant funding to continue helping women survivors of abuse. We know that without Vida there will be more pressure on the NHS and it can't cope either. I am afraid for those women, like me, that need Vida."

The charity received public words of support from senior leaders in Sheffield City Council, SYMCA, ICB, The Domestic Abuse Commissioner, Women's Aid CEO, local Councillor Angela Argenzio and Louise Haig MP. Vida Chair, Marilyn Gregory, says, "It is so disheartening to find ourselves with no prospect of sustaining our services and it feels like we are letting down those women that have no alternatives".

Clinical Manager Jane McLaren explained: "Although it has been a very difficult year, we are very proud that we have continued to develop our service and we added two new groups to our pathway, The Wellness Recovery Group and the Chronic Pain support group. The incredible team of trauma-informed therapist have been amazing in keeping the service going over the last 12 months despite all of the challenges we've faced and I've found them and our service users inspirational in their drive to support our service. 1 in 4 women experience domestic abuse on average, and Vida receives 62% referrals via the NHS e.g, MAPPS, GP's and Talking Therapies. We know that other services addressing mental health receive direct funding but Vida does not."

Karen Hague CEO said, "it is shocking that long-term mental health recovery does not form part of any strategy going forward even though the Sheffield DACT report noted the shortage of therapeutic services for domestic and sexual abuse and that trauma impacts on emotional health and wellbeing with knock on effects on employment, relationships and the ability to positively contribute."

The figures speak for themselves, 6 out of 9 survivors of abuse who go through Vida's service, report a reduction in their trauma symptoms with 6 out of 7 improving their wellbeing.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Vida's service costs around £15-20k per month (some volunteer therapist hours are used)
Vida provides around 216 therapy sessions a month – [Vida Pathway](#)
Vida saves the NHS around £50k per month (based on published NHS data for specialist mental health services).

National domestic abuse statistics: www.ncdv.org.uk/domestic-abuse-statistics-uk/

Sheffield report on domestic abuse: www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-south-yorkshire-67489129

Costs for specialist NHS services: www.england.nhs.uk/costing-in-the-nhs/national-cost-collection/

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References:

<https://democracy.sheffield.gov.uk/documents/s64244/9a%20-%20Domestic%20and%20Sexual%20Abuse%20Violence%20Against%20Women%20and%20>
www.ncdv.org.uk/domestic-abuse-statistics-uk/
www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-south-yorkshire-67489129
www.england.nhs.uk/costing-in-the-nhs/national-cost-collection/

PTSD: *Post-traumatic Stress Disorder*

MAPSS: *Mood, Anxiety and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Psychotherapy Service*

SYMCA: *South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority*

ICB: *Integrated Care Board*

DACT: *The Sheffield Domestic Abuse Coordination Team*