

Oral History Interview Transcript

Interviewee: Sinead Daly

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Interviewer: Morag Allan Campbell

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Groups: Cumnock and Doune Valley Women's Aid, East Ayrshire Women's Aid, Glasgow Women's Aid, Fife Women's Aid, Dundee Women's Aid

Roles: Refuge support worker (Cumnock and Doune Valley WA), manager (Fife WA)

Ok, so that should be us recording. So, what I've got ... Sarah sort of drafted out ... The team has drafted out a set of questions that I'm going to, kind of, sort of, work through, but what I've found is that I've asked the first one, and then people have just answered them all, but, I'll keep looking back and maybe sort of, em, ask a few more if it ... But, the first one ... Yep, my first one is: what was your connection to Women's Aid, how did you become involved in it, and why?

Well, eh, I was living in Glasgow, actually, at the time, em, and, so it would have been 2000, em, working for NTL part time and happened to see ... In fact, no, I wasn't living in Glasgow, I'd just moved to Kilmarnock, and saw that a job had come up at Cumnock and Doune Valley Women's Aid for a refuge support worker, and, em, I thought, 'Oh, I quite fancy that'. Because, em, before moving here I have always been involved and interested in, eh, women's rights issue. I campaigned for abortion rights in the south of Ireland when I was 14, you know, eh, walked out of school for the right to choose during the X-case, and things like that. So, em, I would have very much, kind of, been coming from a feminist, em, socialist feminist point of view. So, when this came up I did a lot of, em, research in it. I'd also had experience of working in a women's, em, hostel in Limerick for, working with older homeless women, many of whom had, em, experiences of high levels of domestic abuse, and, em, even in their old age, and that's why they ended up in, em, **[location anonymised]**, eh, was the name of the place, so, **[name anonymised]** in **[location anonymised]**. Em, so I happened to go

for interview, em, not thinking I would have a chance in hell of getting it, em, and, em, bought ... I spoke to friends, I did a lot of research, and I, kind of, used my passion for, em, and knowledge around women's rights to try and get me the job. And I think at that time it was easier. I wouldn't have got the job today, with the same level of experience, for Women's Aid, em, and, em, yeah, 'cause I was only 24, I think, eh, 25, so it was my first, kind of, proper job, so to speak. Not that ... Working in a call centre, but it was part time, and my baby was young and all of that, so, yeah. So, I was absolutely thrilled to bits to have been offered the post.

00:02:39 *And that was in, what Women's Aid did you say that was?*

Cumnock and Doune Valley in East Ayrshire. So, it was a wee mining town, em, eh, just, what, about 15 minutes away from Kilmarnock at that time. So, it was, eh, that was quite an interesting experience as well, just, em, the, the, em, the set-up of the place. It was ironic in terms of it being a mining town, just from my family history of supporting the miners' strike, all of that, so I was dead curious as to what kind of place it would be and of course it was ravaged with, em, unemployment and, you know, high of levels of poverty. It was a shame to see actually, you know, the devastation that it caused, you know, but, em ... And the refuge itself, em ... So, the office was in Cumnock and Doune Valley and the refuge was in, in another another village, in **[location anonymised]** and, eh, it was just two, em, two council houses knocked together. So, there was eight spaces in the refuge, one large living room and one small kitchen, so it was quite a challenge, actually, for folk that were living there, actually, to, em, cope, em, especially if you'd be there for a long time, because of, eh, the lack of space, actually. That was one of the, you know ... You had, kind of, three couches but when you've got ... eight spaces, em, some of whom were ... One of the rooms was two rooms knocked together a bit like in a hotel, you know, em, so that you could have ... The ... If you had more than, em, two children, so that, the beds were like ... There was two single beds but there was always one of the beds that had a pull out, kind of, bit that went into a double so a mum with two children would fit into one room, em, and to try and, kind of, deal with some of the difficulties, each room had a TV, and that was the, the luxury item in the, in the bedroom just to try and ... And there was two bathrooms, you know, so you could imagine the sort of, the difficulties that that, em, in terms of making the decision to leave at that time. So, that was quite, em, yeah ... So it was an interesting experience, and a huge geographical area we covered as well, em, you know, in terms of, you know, Ochiltree and, you know, it was little [the refuge] but it was huge, absolutely huge [the

area], you know. But, yeah, so it was interesting.

00:05:03 *So, can you describe what an average day was like, when you were working in there?*

Well, we usually started the morning, kind of, going to the office, em, in, eh, Cumnock. So, there was only, eh, let me see, there was me, one other, one refuge worker, one other refuge worker, and we had a children's worker, and then we had an office based worker, so she did most of the appointments and office-based support, and a part time admin/ finance [worker]. So, we would, kind of, meet in the morning and then go from there then back to, to the refuge. So, we ... At that time you didn't have, probably, we didn't have, like, a case load as you would now, it was much more fluid, so, depending on who was in the office as to who you would get, em ... Although saying that, practically, like, em ... Because you would meet a woman, you know, know her story, you would tend to try and arrange to see her again, but it wasn't like a case load as was, as would be now, where you've got, like ... Following feedback from women, actually, was that they didn't want to have to keep telling their story and to a different person so the importance of establishing those relationships. But at that time that didn't exist, so it was, em, just really responding to the needs of the day. So, every day you didn't know what you'd be, kind of, faced with, do you know? So, you'd just go, em, to the refuge, see where women were at. You could have to take them to the benefits agency, which was in Cumnock, so you'd transport them from there, do you know, in terms of making sure their benefits were sorted. Em, there was lot around just ... I mean, we didn't have cleaners, so we were trying to keep the refuge cleaned as well and, em, obviously, the emotional support of women, a lot of dealing with, eh ... When you've got people in a small cramped place, tensions can get high, em ... If somebody's food, you know ... They'd bought mince and tatties for their tea and it wouldn't have been unknown for them to have suddenly disappeared, you know, things like that, but then on other times then you would ... People were bunching their money together and do one meal for everybody because, eh, you know, there were, and that was fantastic, you know, that you, you had that kind of camaraderie and that kind of thing. So, it very much varied. I don't think there was a, kind of, a ... like a typical, a typical day, you know...

00:07:35 *No such thing as an average...*

Yeah, yeah, em, I mean, there was one woman, eh, always sticks out, well there was two particular things that always stuck out for me. One was, em ... I suppose with being Irish ... There was a

woman, young woman, had come in, she'd had a child under one and then she had another toddler, maybe, I canna remember but maybe two or three, em, and he was extremely violent, em, and she found out that she was pregnant when she arrived into the ref-, just after she'd arrived into the refuge, and she decided that she wanted a termination. So, we had to support her to do that, em. We, obviously ... She went in and she ... We took her for her appointment, for that to happen, but for me, the fact that that could happen was, just like that, you know, em, was incredible, actually, but the solidarity of the women ... So, all of the women, so one of them took her two children, made sure she was looked after for the few days, when she came home they all rallied around her, em, because I think it could have been, it could have been anybody, you know, there, that was in the same boat, so there was an extraordinary level of, kind of, yeah, of just women rallying together that was, that was quite a thing actually, em.

And then the, the other one was, em, there was a woman who was in refuge whose husband was high up in the police. Em, and, we had to, in terms of safety, em ... He had abused his position, eh, and, we had to tell them not to let the police into refuge, which would be unusual at that time, so, em, we had a refuge meeting, with the woman's permission, to try and talk about safety, which we would do as well if there were high risk offenders, you know, sort of where they were particularly violent, we would, kind of, have a house meeting and then talk about potential risks and stuff like that and, em, you know, just being careful with the door and not leaving it open and that kind of stuff. But this was a policeman, and, em ... But to get away she had pretended to be going away with her kids and, eh, took his car, and was terrified 'cause she knew he would report it as stolen. So, em, she had been there for a few days and that and had told the other women the, sort of, the story and, eh, and, obviously, I had, I had been working closely with her. What I had arranged I wouldnae do today, I'd be, I'd be sacked, or reported to the Care Inspectorate, but we had arranged to do an early morning stint to try and swap cars, em, so, eh, to, to go through in the early hours, it was something like two in the morning, and then drive through, and, eh, park her car outside his door, eh, pop the keys through the letter box or ... I canna mind whether we even did that but then take her car. But in the end, em, she'd had my work mobile and, em, she phoned to say, 'Look, no it's fine'. There's two of us coming through, me ... and the rest of the refuge is sitting up with the kids, em. So, [laughs] they were all sitting up all night. The next morning when I went in they'd stayed up the whole night long, em, but they did manage to get the car but then, em, there was a problem with her lights. The headlights wouldn't come off, so the whole way, driving back, they were absolutely terrified that

they would get pulled over by the police because her headlights, em, were broken, em, but they managed to get the car and that was her then. So, they couldnae, em ... He had no reason to, kind of, track her down, em. So, that was ... I mean, again, just the sort of the, the solidarity and, you know, the lengths that some women have to go to as well in terms of getting away.

00:11:30 *That's, obviously, quite an unusual situation. What about your relations, that are the, refuge relations with the other external groups, such as the police and, normally, and the social work, that kind of thing?*

At that time? Em? They were actually ok, I think. I mean, they ... I don't actually recall there being a lot of dealings with the police, ironically, at that time, em, and I don't, I don't really know why, actually, em, just ... Yeah, I actually don't recall masses of dealings with them, em, I mean, in general. I mean, if they did call, it was, you know ... There was never ... any specific problems, but I think with the refuge and at that time it was sort of, you know, the worst kept secret in **[location anonymised]**, was, you know ... Everybody knew it was the refuge, but there was, kind of, a thing of trying to not have them in the vicinity, you know, of, of there and, kind of, keeping it as, I suppose, normal looking as, as possible, and even for working with other, em, sort of, Women's Aid there would have been some dealings but not massive amounts. Not, not ... I don't think like there is today, and I don't know whether that was because of the, kind of, em ... the relationships not, not being ... or maybe it was reflection of the relationships not being great, or that the refuge was treated as a place of safety, you know. So, it wasn't ... Once they were away they were away, so, you know, em ... But I don't recall a lot of, of dealings with, em, the police. Social work were our ... We were funded by, in the main by, social work at that time, em, East Ayrshire Council, so we'd quite good relationships. And then not long after I started, the development of the multi-agency partnerships as well, so we would have sat round the table, em, you know, with them, but I think, and again with it being such a small ... area, perhaps if we'd been in the likes of ... Kilmarnock, they might well have had more, kind of, dealings there with the police but there didn't seem to be much that I can recall at that time, you know. No, I don't.

Mm, interesting. So, this was a collective at this point when you were working there?

Yeah.

00:14:00 *So, can you tell me a bit about the change from collective to more hierarchical?*

Well, we didn't ... When I was in Cumnock, it was still ... When I left, it was still a collective and most of the Women's Aid groups were collectives at that time, so we ... It was only when I moved to, it was only when we, when I moved to Fife, actually, em ... So, I ... 'Cause I'd worked in first Cumnock and Doune Valley and then I worked in Glasgow Women's Aid for a couple of years, and then moved to Fife Women's Aid, and finished up working in Women's Aid in Dundee. Em, so it was in Fife that the move from a collective ... And each collective was very different ... Em, I think it worked quite well in Cumnock because there was only a small number of staff, so there was only five of us, so it seemed to actually work relatively well, em, although I think, em ... I think, em It didn't feel like there was an awful lot of accountability, actually, in terms of the work that we were doing. We didn't have the same level of scrutiny as what we do now, so in some ways, you know, if you didn't do very much in a day, nobody was going to know, do you know what I mean? It was that ... There wasn't ... But having said that I think the likes of, em, you know, doing things that you would get with away with, with doing now ... Like I was saying in terms of, you know ... I mean, I, I went to pick up, you know, a pregnant woman one time, you know, eh, knowing that it might have been a risky situation, but, you know, we'd kind of risk assessed it and, and all of that but I don't know that you would get away with that now, in terms of, eh, you know, it was high risk, but, sort of, you don't go into the job, then, without knowing what it was that you were, you were doing. So, you were doing, you were doing it because of empathy for the woman's situation, and, kind of, right, come on, let's do everything we can to get you out and if transport is a barrier, that's about then, feck it, come on, I'll take my car and we'll go and pick you up, you know. It was very much that, and even ... I could take ... My son used to come with me to the Christmas parties and stuff like that. Because of the rules now, in terms of the Care Inspectorate, all of that kind of stuff, it wouldn't be deemed to be appropriate to be mixing your family with your work life and things like that. So, I think that that kind of broke down, em, in, in, em, and became, we became more professionalised, em.

But in terms of the move from collective to ... It was very difficult and actually, eh, em, in Fife it came about where, em, the culture was awful. A lot of bullying, em, at that time, and, em, we were actually, just before Christmas, and I canna mind the year, em, the Board resigned en masse, em ... 'Cause we were a collective but we also had a Board, and they resigned en masse, and, em, so the council came in and pulled the plug. They said, you've got thirty days' notice, and you're shutting, so

we would have been closed on the 31st of December. So, we managed to get, sort of, over the Christmas, came in, managed to get a couple of new Board members, do a lot of political lobbying and we got a stay of execution, and basically to put in place a ... We'd a timescale of three months to get a management structure in place and then we had to, eh, we had a milestones agreement with the council that we had to achieve, so that kind of forced it. I think it was the direction of travel anyway but it forced the issue and, em, it was difficult. Um, I was the trade union rep at the time so, em, I, we brought in a change manager who went through the terms and conditions, changes and stuff like that, em, and that wa-, you know. I think they did a lot of consultation. In my view they made far too many concessions, in particular around our maternity rights, and stuff like that, where it was, em ... We went back to basic, basic statutory provision where it was twenty weeks full pay, twenty weeks half pay, stuff like that. We got less holidays and, you know, all of that kind of stuff, and all of ... It became, you know, that this was to save money and so that we could have better provision of service and become a bit more like the council in terms of our rights and that, that kind of thing. So, you know, I don't think that was particularly, em, good, em, at all actually but we didn't win that argument, and we had pay cuts as well, em, because our pay was, eh, reflective of the fact that we had management responsibilities attached to our job descriptions, in theory. Em, so, eh, because that was no longer the case then there was a restructuring of pay, em, to help pay for the cost of the management team so we went down a pay grade, em, to pay for that. So, and then we moved, and I think ... I mean, it, it was difficult, it took a few years to really bed in, em, the changes, em. I think there were some ... pros, there were a lot of pros. I think I would favour it, I think it's a more accountable structure, to have a management structure in place, because, for a collective, not everybody pulls their weight, there are some who do and then there are, there were some who were happy just doing their job, which is fair enough, but it, em, it's difficult when, how, you know, dealing with staffing issues are difficult, do you know, because...

00:19:55 [Interruption].

...Em, so they became ... They were the most difficult things to deal with, was staffing when there was, kind of, issues arising because you're dealing with your peers, and that's difficult, em. So, having that was ... It felt a little bit safer, em, we had a better way of, em, forward planning, em, rather than, kind of, doing the day to day. We began doing a strategic plan, a business plan, outcomes, you know, stuff like that that we'd never had before, so I think we became better, em, at

that. Having said that, em ... And I was a team leader then. I went for the post in Fife and, and got it, em, but I think that positives of collective working were, em, you got the opportunity to develop skill sets that you would never do in a management structure, because they were shared management responsibilities, do you know. So, em, I did get the opportunity ... Like when I worked in Glasgow, I was part of ... We got a massive piece of funding for, em, a barrier free refuge in Glasgow, and I was part of the working group working with the local housing association around that development, you know. So, there was, sort of, there was a lot of stuff like that I got to do, em, be part of a multi-agency partnership, you know. There was strategic work that I got the opportunity to do and things like that so, I think if, if ... And if you were, em, more ... you know, you, kind of, put yourself forward, you did have the opportunity to do that. I think the tensions became when there were a lot, there was a lot of places to just, och, I'll just go in and do my job, and then it leaves the, you know, the, sort, of pressure on the rest of the collective, you know, to be, to be taking that forward. So, it was very painful, the move, em, but I actually, I think that, em, it worked well, and I think that the ethos of, em, of a partnership approach to work has, in my ... I think that that's been maintained where you're trying to use skill sets within the, you know ... Like there's good information sharing, you know, em, eh, involvement in staff, you know, in, sort of, eh, where the, em, the, the, the organisation is going, you know, and things like that so, em, I ... And the feminist analysis side of it is still, you know, em, there, em, but ... So, I think that that makes it, em, not a traditional hierarchy in that sense, do you know what I mean?

So, eh, although I do think that the Care Inspectorate brought, it did bring a professionalism but also, eh, the more we've been brought into mainstream, or ... I don't know if that's ... The more professionalised we've had to become, I think that has been where we've lost a political edge as Women's Aid organisations than perhaps we would have had ... Em, I definitely, I definitely do think that. But yeah, so that was kind of ... Ironically, I am the change manager, I'm managing here, so we've just gone from collective to management structure three years ago so that's been an interesting process here. But, em ... And trying to do it but with keeping the, sort of, the ethos of involvement and, you know, and keeping our ethos of feminism, you know, and so on, to the core. Em, I don't think that that's a challenge. I think you have to be very, you know, focused that that's what it is that you're wanting to do. So, who you get to lead becomes important in the sense that, are they in the Women's Aid, eh, organisations, are they coming with that background, and stuff like that, and I'm not sure that everybody was, you know, in terms of, in terms of that. But, yeah.

00:24:30 *And what about, em, Women's Aid's work with children? What are your views about that?*

In what sense?

[Laughs] It's one of the questions. Just, em, the way in which children were looked after, dealt with, within the refuges, I suppose, or if there's anything particular that stands out.

So, I mean, eh, I think it's, I think, em, it's essential that we ... I think it was a very important move and development to recognise the, eh, the impact of domestic abuse on children, em, and having children's workers, children and young people's workers there, em, because I think for women as well, you know, they would worry as well about the impact of, of the witnessing of, em, of violence and their experiences directly or indirectly of abusive behaviour within the home has a massive impact on children. So, it would have been remiss had we not have made that shift, I think, to, em, providing good quality, em, work with young people. So, I think it was an extremely important development, em, and, and something we should be really proud of, actually, of it becoming much more of an equal partner, I suppose, in terms of the work that we're doing with women and trying to equate that with the work that we're doing with, em, young people, and also because it, em, we work with young, young, young men and women, boys and girls, and that can be about changing attitudes for the future as well and sort of, em, recover, helping people to recover in the future. Hopefully, [it] will mean that they, they, em ... As we know, the sort of, the devastating impact of, of those experiences will be minimised to, you know, through the support that they are getting from Women's Aid, and I think, yeah. I think that that...

I think it greatly differs now. I mean, when we had one young peoples, children and young people's worker in, in, eh, Cumnock, em, and, eh, and I mean, I think, given the numbers that was fair enough, we had a tiny room for young people to ... and for that work to be done, em, and then, by the time ... And in Glasgow, every refuge had a young people's ... had a ... like a, um, a flat, where I ... was it ... was like a flat that was used as a young people's room, and, um ... So, they did the youth work and the children's work in every refuge, em, to ... Everything seems much bigger now and more organised, and, you know, and responsive, and also, em, going out the way more so it's not just about supporting children of mums who have been affected but of actually working with ... where even if mums don't want to be supported that they're getting support and I think that that's really

important because it recognises the impact of children and young people in their own right, regardless of whether the mum is ready or not to actually engage in support. So, I think that that's, you know, also a really positive, em, development, and I think we seem to, we seem to be, certainly in my experience and certainly in Dundee and Fife, was, em, engaging with the wider, sort of, child protection agenda of trying to make them more aware of, you know, em, of the, the, the importance of not placing the blame on mum, for, you know that, well, it's her fault if dad's abusing, all of that kind of stuff, that, that wouldn't have happened if we hadn't have been so proactive around, em, working with young people and taking that message out into the wider child protection, you know, arena, and I think that that's a really important step forward as well, you know, and beginning to bear fruit, actually.

00:28:01 For me now, here, em, 'cause I was a women's ... I worked with women in the main, em, but I'd been ... My new role has brought, in Rape Crisis, has brought me into the children's arena, but there's a hell of a long way to go in terms of, there's not really, em, a broad recognition of the impact of gender, for example, on young people's experiences. It's like gender only matters when you become an adult. So, I do think that there's still a hell of a lot of work that needs to be done, perhaps jointly between ... I know we've worked, we're working more closely with, as a Rape Crisis centre, with, em, Women's Aid, to kind of collaboratively work together to try and, em, create a better understanding of gender and so on in terms of, em, impacts on domestic abuse amongst young men and women, where, you know, there's a lot of, it's not just about your experiences from parents but actually they're experiencing it more and more in their own right, em, in terms of relationships and, em, particularly in the education settings and social work settings, there's still a hell of a long way to go. So, there's a need, in my view, for much more joined up working to ensure that the issues are understood and responded to, 'cause what tends to have happened, well, what we're finding, it's ... There are certain organisations who don't come from the feminist analysis who downplay the issue of gender and it's just about, em, safety planning, and so on, which when you turn it on its head, what we've found is that there's a lot of victim blaming, you know. So, it's just about healthy relationships or what you do to keep yourself safe, and, you know, that kind of message as opposed to, well, wait a minute here, how to we get young men to understand what their behaviour is, and that they take responsibility for abusive behaviour as opposed to, it's women's jobs to keep themselves safe from, you know ... So, eh, even in terms of sexual assault or, you know, within relationships, or, you know, sexting, and all of these, what, pressures that are

there for young people then it really comes down to, then, there's still a huge, eh, a long way to go, I think, in terms of, em, mitigating that, and starting from a young age. So, the prevention agenda, I think, definitely needs to be more focused and perhaps more joined up working between the, the sort of feminist organisations to make sure that we're reaching as broad a sector as possible and that there's coherent kind of joined up working. I would like to see, certainly, more of that, 'cause it's not coming nationally, it's actually, well, it's not as visible nationally, em, whereas locally, I know Women's Aid have just got prevention workers so we've met to see how we can complement the work of each other and that kind of thing. So, it would be good to see more of that actually, sort of, develop, but yeah.

00:31:00 *And how do you see the recent changes in Scottish politics as affecting organisations such as Women's Aid?*

Em, well, in the sense of who's in power or of the parliament?

Both.

Eh, I mean, I think the Scottish parliament has been a huge step forward. I mean, you know, you just look at, you know, there's been a massive increase in the level of funding, you know, even from when I started, which was the beginning of, em, you know, eh, the, em, the sort of investment in refuges and all of that began. There was, like, incredible investment, em, in refuge provision, so I think that that's been really important. Em, and, eh, I think the, the policy development has been a very positive step forwards as well, em, in terms of, you know, some of the changes to the, you know, the laws, even the fact that we're discussing things like, em, eh, what d'you call it, eh ... corroboration, you know, there's a, there, there seems to be more openness to gender-based violence and, actually, you know, taking it as a key political issue, and gender inequality and driving that forward. So, I do think that there's been a lot of improvements, you know, around there. I think there are dangers in it, though, as well, is that you can become, em, eh ... There's a danger of, em, if you align yourself, that you lose your political edge, your political independence, em, and I would certainly have concerns around that, em, and making sure that that doesn't happen, em, because there's still a hell of a long way to go in terms of, em ... And even around, sort of, some of the local ... 'Cause you've got your national politics and local politics, but if you look at the impact of the wider sort of even, em, cuts in public services, the impact that that's having on women, you know, em,

access to, eh, homeless accommodation, access to housing, eh, they give you choices, you know, em. I fled an abusive, em, relationship from, eh, when I lived in Kilmarnock, just after I'd started working but managed to get rehoused quite quickly, and I had to move again, em, to Glasgow, em, and was lucky that I, I got rehoused, but, it would ... It's harder now, em, so there's, kind of, two sides to it where it can be politically sexy to put money into us, em, and organisations like us, but, actually, there's an agenda of cuts right now that disproportionately affects women, you know, in terms of if, if you're needing to get out of an abusive relationship, you need a home to go to, you need access to benefits, you need a job, you know, or childcare, or, you know. So, there's all of these kind of things that are also important to be working on, not just the money that we, actually, happen to get in terms of, em, our own funding and I think for that, we could be doing better in terms of highlighting the broader impact of, you know, sort of austerity and cuts and what not on women, em, because got, eh, eh ...

It reduces choice, you know, even around Legal Aid. The attacks on provision for Legal Aid means that if you're working, you know ... And refuge provision, you know, you wouldn't think, but most working women probably couldn't go into refuge because of the cost of being in refuge just now. I certainly couldn't, em, you know, em, if I needed to, couldn't afford it, you know. So, there's issues like that that, em, that are not being addressed, em, at the moment and, em. So, there's ... Yeah, so I think there's a lot of positives but there's also, em, a lot that still needs to be done and I just think we need to be careful that, em, you know, when we become, eh ... When you're being funded to a large extent by your councils or by the Scottish Government, sometimes the sacrifice is you have to toe a line, em, whether consciously or unconsciously, you know, so that you're not running the risk of not being, you know, em, a favourite. So, I think that that, you know, for me would be one of the, the, em, the things we need to be guarded against, you know. 'Cause everything, it's not just Women's Aid, it's, em, or Rape Crisis, or whatever, there's a whole other, you know, em, eh, protective factors that are there for, for women, em, both in terms of gender equality, but also in terms of abusive, you know, of, of, em, being able to get out of abusive relationships or being able to access justice, whether it's in terms of, you phone the police, are they responding, no – why? Where, you know, and all of that, so, em, I think we need to ... I think we could be doing more, in that regard.

00:36:02 *So, what do you want see happen next? You probably answered some of that within that,*

but what, what would your hope ... What do you think the future holds? Do you think there's, there's a chance of, em, progressions with things being more unclear at the moment?

Oh, and at the minute I think things are very unclear, because, em, you know, even, em, you know, with the economic climate we, we don't know, there's no long term planning in terms of ... I mean, you look at, if, if things were really great, I wouldn't have to be, and, and other Women's Aid or violence against women sector organisations, we'd be able to plan for the longer term. We can't do that, we're not getting need met, we've got massive waiting lists, you know, for support. It's becoming more and more difficult, there's growing demand, em, you know, on our services as well, and, and, actually, some of the stuff that's happening is we're getting more referrals from public sector organisations because they can't deal with it, so there's, em ... I think that, em, we don't know what we're going into, there's a lot of fear. I have a lot of fear as to ... We've been told, em, that we could expect between and ten and forty percent cut in our funding, you know. You've got cuts too from local authorities too, in, particular Women's Aid. They got quite sub-significant levels of cuts for the size of their organisations. Glasgow ... you know, the levels of cuts that's been delivered there, Edinburgh, you know, and so on, em. So, there's a huge level of uncertainty so it's not just about ... And I think that the national government have a role to play in whether it's statutorily forcing, making sure that there is provision, em, and the money to actually deliver on that, em, because without it ... And, and that it's longer term, em ... And sometimes it feels like we're a bit of a political football, they're afraid to make decisions but they won't invest in the longer term. We can't plan on that basis, you know, and, actually, it's a very poor provision to survivors and, you know, and for retention of really good staff, as well, that actually, you know, every year, you don't know where you're gonna be, you know, em, it's not a good way for service provision. So, there's an uncertainty there, and it makes it very, very difficult to be able to, em, place for sustainability and that kind of thing, so, em.

That being said, I mean, I think ... And it's also about ... You know, they've introduced a new Equally Safe strategy which I think is a really positive document, but it needs to be backed up by resources, em, and a cro-, and, and a political willingness across the sector, so, you know, every local authority should be, you know, this is what we're doing to meet this, you know, em, every public body, NHS; this is what we're doing, police; this is what we're doing, you know, lo-, and the government; this is what we're doing to make this happen, as well as the violence against women sector. So, em, in all of its facets that that's being ... that that, it's being actioned, but, em, is it going to happen? Don't

know is the honest answer. I really don't know.

Ok, well, I think we can stop at that.

Ok.

Thank you very much.

End interview