

Oral History Interview Transcript

Interviewee: Jane Rubens

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Interviewer: Flora Pringle-Paterson

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Groups: Edinburgh Women's Aid, Falkirk Women's Aid, Scottish Women's Aid

Roles: volunteer refuge worker, refuge worker (paid position), training worker (paid position)

So this is Jane Rubens interview for Scottish Women's Aid being interviewed by Flora Pringle-Paterson. The first question is, can you describe what your connection to Women's Aid was, and why did you get involved in Women's Aid?

Yes, I can, I've had to go and seek it out. I joined Women's Aid in about 1979, I think, as a volunteer in Edinburgh Women's Aid. And, um, the reason I got in to it, I'll start off with that as well, is that, um, Marnie Roadburg who was a worker at Edinburgh Women's Aid, did a talk to the women's study group that I was in. And I was so impressed at what she was talking about and what they were doing, it seemed like such practical action, I really wanted to volunteer and that's what I did. So, I took an initial training programme then and worked as a volunteer for quite a few years. Um, I applied for every job that came up anywhere 'cause I wanted to get a job in it, but, uh, I continued to volunteer as a refuge worker and there were other women who joined at the same time as myself. And, it was when Edinburgh Women's Aid's resources were quite low, a number of posts had been cut from their work group, kind of thing. So, there was nobody there who had time to do any training for us or anything like that, so four of us had decided to develop our own training programme and worked on it from there so that it would be ready for other new people coming in. And because I did that it made, made me look perhaps more deeply at the organisation than I would've done had I just come in once or twice a week.

Um, we were very committed to it and, um, tried to, um, first of all explain and justify why a, a feminist view of domestic violence was so important in the whole thing. From all the women that we

had been working with who had, say, gone to the housing department or the social work department and had very different experiences, you know, we were pretty certain that we were going about things in the right way. So, that... I think the training programme really helped me to put those things into practice and, into words and then into practice. A job became available in Falkirk Women's Aid and that was in, let me see... I worked there in 1982 as a refuge worker and enjoyed that very much. And what was really interesting was to work in another authority, another area, and to look at the issues women faced because of that. For example, Falkirk had a lot of extra housing, council housing. So, um, getting a house after having left an abusive partner wasn't such a problem for women in Falkirk, that was such an issue. Whereas in Edinburgh where, um, there was a very conservative housing authority at the time and abused women weren't given much chance for housing, you'd have to wait, and wait, and wait in refuges, you know, up to a year, this kind of thing. So, that affected what was happening to you a lot.

So, moving to Falkirk gave me a good view there, and I learned a little bit more about working with travelling women because many women that were in the travelling community were in Central Scotland more, so that was very interesting. Um, and then a job came available in, um, 1983, in the end of the year. It became available at Edinburgh Women's Aid. And really just to go back to where I started from and also not to quite have the commuting issues, I got the job in Edinburgh. And, um, again we built that, were building that up quite a lot until I left in 1986 when I went to the National Office and became the second training worker for Scottish Women's Aid. So, I have National experience as well. And that was a good thing, to be someone from a local group, or even two local groups in mind, to understand what local groups needed in terms of support from the central organisation and also help the central organisation on the basis of what women are really experiencing in the various areas, so... And I held that on until in 1991, I think or 2. And, um, when I then moved out of working with abused women altogether and went to work in a mental health advocacy organisation, using a lot of the skills I'd developed at Women's Aid. So, that's that one.

00:05:04 *Um, next question is what were the different ideas connected to Women's Aid that were important to you at that time?*

When I was in it, um, well certainly that the feminist analysis of women in society made a lot of sense to me and the organisation reflected that in many, many ways. Specifically, over-using

violence and abuse as a way of controlling women – I felt very much that that needed to be understood by other people. And I think we were at the time where a lot of what Women's Aid were saying is, 'It's a subject behind closed doors and therefore you don't really know what's going on, and what we're trying to do is bring it out into the open'. And I think that's where a lot of the effort went to and also to try to get away from shaming the women that were in that position, and the children of course as well, being seen as lesser people. Especially if there was a woman who seemed to go back to her partner all the time, not understanding how hard it was to get away from a domestic violence situation.

00:06:23 *Were there any, um, contemporary books or films that stuck with you, or were they more kind of ideas?*

Um, the main one that really, um, impressed me was we had training from the National Office from a woman called Ginny NiCarthy Crow who was from Seattle in the States and did a lot on why men abuse, or why do people abuse. And she cleverly, at some point, had recognised that the kind of things she was isolating was, what behaviour by men who are abusing women paralleled what people use in brainwashing when it's a military type of situation. And, um, she got some kind of guidance or booklet from Korea, I think it was, from the Korean War. The specific ways that they would be trying to get people under their power and that type of thing, and it paralleled extremely well all the phases of, you know, isolating the women and lowering their confidence but also things like giving occasional indulgences, um, that kind of thing, that made the woman stay in there, that he wasn't so bad and maybe he was really gonna change and all that kind of thing. So, that was very powerful. So during the time was there anything else? Well, it was the Erin Pizzey story that got the whole movement started, that, that was important I think. And the fact that women helping women through that situation went such a long way. And, let me think if there's anything else I can think of that stands out. I haven't got anything else in my mind at the moment.

00:08:15 *No that's fine, that's fascinating about the Koreans. Um, can you describe a day in the life of your Women's Aid group, perhaps comparing the two?*

Well, I'll start with Edinburgh Women's Aid, and um... Normally we'd be meeting once a week as a collective to divvy up the work for the week and check how things had developed from the week before. So that was a very intensive meeting time one morning a week. And then, we'd agree to be

in on certain days, um, as a volunteer this was, then as a paid person this wasn't much different. You went in, if you were office based, to see the individuals that were coming for advice and support, or if you were a refuge person you'd be going out to support people in the refuges. And then there were some other tasks, like, um, you might have helped a woman go back to her house to collect her things with the police, that kind of thing. Or, um, accompanying people to the DHSS [Department of Housing and Social Security] as it was at that time, so people's benefits got sorted out. It might involve other agencies: health, or social workers sometimes for other things. So, a lot of it was about that. As a member of the group I often, if I were going to refuge, I would try and do a few things for the children, you know, play with kids in the refuges and stuff. Um, and those visits, I think, were very important in trying to keep some kind of consistency going for the women who were kind of waiting for the next step and moving on.

Sometimes refuges worked extremely well and other times they didn't and needed a lot of help, and maybe weren't a very good place at certain times when things got pretty bad. But we were under a lot of pressure all the time, there were always women waiting to get a refuge place. It used to be a desperate position in regard to single women, particularly older women, we had to prioritise what spaces we had toward women with children. Older women had a very hard time finding a place to go and the Housing Department, the Homelessness Department, would put them in homeless accommodation but then that was a pretty grim place, could be any type of person there. You're very alone, I think. So, a day in the life of... What else would be there, writing up information on each woman that came. We tried to keep written information to a minimum and the records were the woman's and all that, quite conscious things of not trying to influence future people who'd be reading anything about them in a negative way, but just to be the bare facts that were needed. And if there were some complicated thing we'd probably be writing down what the next step might have to be, that kind of thing, so that's a bit of note writing, taking. In the refuge, occasionally you'd run a refuge meeting. That, you know, worked sometimes well, and others not so well, but um... The tasks, taking in donations and sorting all that out, and, um, perhaps entertaining children in the office while their mothers were, or women they were with, were dealing with quite heavy things, and trying to keep the kids happy, um...

Our first office was on Buccleuch Street in a very small, small space where sometimes we had one little closet toilet. Sometimes women were interviewed in that because the front office or the back office were already busy and the person felt they could come back, that kind of thing. So, we were used to working under very, very cramped conditions. And then we moved to Morrison Street after that and had a bigger place where we could have an area for children, we had a downstairs place where we could store goods that had been handed in, and that kind of thing. So, all the work went to building it up as we were going, quite difficult as well. Also, there'd been some connection from the local group to the National Office through meetings, or conferences or whatever. Falkirk was slightly different because of the area. It covered Falkirk and Grangemouth, so there were lots of little enclaves, of little towns, so I found myself on the bus a lot more and travelling about to try and meet women. Also, a smaller area showed quickly that you can become quite well known as a person, and its keeping things anonymous, keeping things under some security was really much more difficult. On the other hand, um, 'cause housing wasn't as difficult, women didn't stay in the refuges as long, I don't think, and, um, the local group was very strong. They only had one worker, I think, at that time and the rest were volunteers and it was a great group of volunteers working together to provide the service. And there we were also, some of the same personnel, were involved with central Rape Crisis as well. So, women's groups were a bit more close to each other than in the larger Edinburgh. So...

00:14:06 *That's great. Um, next question is, you might have covered this, during your time with Women's Aid did you and your group have links to Scottish Women's Aid. If so, can you describe what the link was like. I know you said you worked with the National Group?*

Yes, eventually yes. But when I was first, I was a volunteer with Edinburgh, then I was a paid worker by Falkirk, then I went back to be a worker in Edinburgh, and then I went on to the National Office. As a local group, you'd be getting questionnaires in quite a lot of times, so that meeting once a week we'd try and deal with the questionnaires, so that the Central Scottish Women's Aid could pool in information from all the groups around Scotland. So, there was always some sense of supplying information, about what it's like in the office itself and at the refuges, so that they weren't leading things in the wrong direction. Plus, there was also trying to draw a national picture because Women's Aid groups were very different, depending on what areas they came from. Um, and there were women that were interested within each group to take part in projects that Scottish Women's Aid were doing. So, I was very involved when the Matrimonial Homes Act came out, with producing a guide to that so that we would have the information out for workers to use right away. So, there

was myself, and Alison who was a national worker and the lawyer Marion, and the three of us kind of got on that. But there were lots of projects like that, and there were lots of training events where you could go to think about different issues. Um, they were really developing counselling, or what was Women's Aid counselling all about at that time and, um, also, it was a lot about Asian women and black women, different needs people had dependent on what their origins were, and maybe where they came from as well. This constant process of trying to update workers and keep them informed so that when they were dealing with individual women, they'd be ready for that. Um, yeah, I think that's probably the best I can say from a local group to Scottish Women's Aid.

00:16:34 *Okay, that's great. Can you describe any interactions with external organisations or groups? The examples they give are social workers, the police etc.*

Police training, being involved with police training, had already begun before I started in the end of the seventies but I think we consolidated it a lot in that time, and also the police were changing a bit and requiring police officers to have more training than perhaps they'd had in the past. And there was some sympathy, empathy, within the training section to help people understand, well, why do women... why is it the same people we're coming back to all the time when, you know, surely she's letting him in again, and why is that. Um, to understand a more... the hold that somebody had over the women, um, became more clear. And, um, because we spoke from a feminist perspective they were always challenging what that meant, that kind of thing. I think many could see, in the situations that they'd been called to, that in fact women were at a great disadvantage, women were harmed. And there were women abusing men in some kind of way and the police always would throw that out again, but the kind of numbers that you would be talking about there would be very few and far between. And, um, to help them to understand how power works in a personal relationship, that was a lot of what the training was trying to do. And I remember them saying after a few years, 'Oh, we're getting a much better class of recruit now so they'll probably be more open to hear what you've got to say' 'cause I think they required more educational background to the people that were becoming police officers at that time [laughs].

00:18:31 *[Laughs] That's always good. Um, can you talk a bit about your views on Women's Aid's work with children?*

Sure. Um, when I started there was, children were very much an afterthought in the whole process because it was so hands-on, and worrying about getting things organised for women. That being said it wasn't that individual workers were unkind to children, or not thinking of children, it was just that the focus of the service was much more to women. But quickly it was easy to see how the two were so tied up with each other. And, uh, you know, you had a lot of situations where in fact that child hadn't, hadn't decided for themselves to come to a refuge, it was 'cause their mother needed to go there and she was taking them away from their father, or whoever. And, um, they might've had a lot of connection wherever they lived and they, you know, would rather be at home. So, I used to feel very sorry for those kids who were kind of in that position, especially young teenagers, teenagers, it was pretty tough, although some children were very supportive of their mothers doing that.

When I did start, one of the things at Edinburgh that got going – it was Edinburgh and Lothian by the way, at the time, so we were linked to East [Lothian], Mid[lothian], um, East and Mid actually, we weren't linked to West [Lothian], that was always a separate group. But, from a pretty early time there were men who were concerned at doing something to help, um, women and children who were in this situation, so they eventually, with some women, set up Kid's Aid. I don't know if anybody [from the project] talked to them, but there was actually a whole organisation around that, and they used to go, particularly on a Saturday, and take the kids out and they got vans. Um, there weren't quite the restrictions on taking kids out at that time [laughs]. There were two men in that group and about three women and different students that would come along with refuges. And that was quite good because kids just got to be kids in these situations. So, that was always seen as important. Um, but it was a separate organisation from Women's Aid, working in alliance with us.

Um, the other thing about children, um, the one thing that I used to find very, very difficult is when does a boy become a man and the issues of over sixteen-year-old boys. They decided to put the cutoff at sixteen 'cause you could have women in the refuges who are eighteen years old with little toddlers and things like that. And it was very awkward having teenage boys who were almost a man, you know, living around them, especially when there was such fear really. Um, but, of course, a lot of sixteen-year-olds are very much part of their family and, you know, there wasn't a refuge space. And I felt sympathetic to those people and there were times I know that as soon as the workers were away the sixteen-year-old was let in the door [laughs].

But, um, also we'd get enquiries from women who had disabled boys and some would be like, some with Down's [syndrome] who was twenty-three, I remember that very specifically. We couldn't find a space for that person to go and it was dreadful really. But those issues did affect us a lot. Um, what else for children... As the National Conferences go, and as we became more thoughtful about children, anytime we supplied anything for the women, like a meeting or anything, we made sure a crèche was available so that somebody could see to the kids so that the woman was free to participate but also so that the kids were well supported during the time their mother was busy. So, I think that was a big help. And then children's workers came in a bit more, right after, toward the end of when I was in the Edinburgh office and then I worked with the national children's workers a bit more, Fiona and with Jay. Um, and pretty supportive to all the resources and things that had to go out for children. But there was always a bit of a tension about where should resources go, because the children's needs were so high, and I suppose in that whole business of trying to stop the cycle of violence as well, wondering about that. And, um yeah, a lot of things for children. We went to children's panels with women, and that was about the time, in the mid-eighties, when they stopped paying Legal Aid for any parent who had to go to the children's panel, for whatever reason. Before that, you could get Legal Aid. So, we kind of stepped in and tried to at least support people. We couldn't be the legal voice, obviously, for the person, but get the information together that might be needed, try and help the women explain your position, that kind of thing, very much an advocacy role. That's kind of what comes to mind at the moment.

00:24:04 Do you remember any media stories about domestic violence that were in the news during your time as Women's Aid?

Yes, I remember quite a few of them. I don't remember the person's name but there was a terrible situation for a young woman who'd been in and out of our refuges and her partner, um, put acid in her face. I also, uh, supported a woman called Mary Khelifati who was coming and needed refuge. We didn't have a space for her and her daughter. She had an interdict out against her husband. He shouldn't come near her but he actually approached her on her stair in her building and killed her. So that was covered as well. Um, those kind of events. Before that June Greig and when she'd, um, killed her husband, or her husband died and she got sent to prison and all that sort of stuff. It was a lot to do with Women's Aid's involvement with that one. I do remember other, other instances

where, um, battered wives were kind of in the headlines, but often it was something to do with an actual incident.

00:25:41 *Can you describe any significant turning points or times of change? How were these managed by the Women's Aid group?*

In a way I've sort of referred to some of them, the kind of shift around getting more resources for children, that was a kind of change in thinking or, an evolving thinking as well. But I guess I'd have to talk about the business of working with men and there became a lot of criticism about who was helping these men who were the abusers and maybe they had been abused themselves, and that kind of thing, maybe they needed help. Um, and the National Office was given a lot of, um, pressure to be involved in things like that so... And there was something called the Change Programme that came out, based in Stirling. And it was following a model of working with men who abused that had been in Marin County in California, in the States. And, um, the men could choose to, or men could be put on to a stream of, kind of educational, psychological kind of thing called 'Change' and it was a separate organisation that was given central government money, I think, at first, to work with individual men and there was always a sense, uh, not always, but often, that organisations wanted Women's Aid to help them to say things but, you know, we wanted to keep definitely away from that kind of work. First of all not want any women to think that we're allies with men who abuse, but also we had to use all the resources we had towards the women. The kinds of numbers, the people that we were turning away that were in difficulty, were that great. Um, that was a time of change I would say. And I came to the National Office I continued to look, work with that a bit. Um, let's see if there's anything else I can think of.

Um, again, providing specific refuges for black and minority ethnic women, that started with Shakti when I was at the end of working at Edinburgh Women's Aid. We had helped a steering group that was trying to get a black woman's refuge off the ground, and I was involved a bit in that, and that was a change in thinking as well. Um, we had experiences of racism happening within the refuge. Not every time but part of the problems were due to people, lack of education, people not understanding the differences of what people needed because of their religious basis, or because of their health issues, or whatever. So, there was a big push on to try and get that, um, to broaden the spectrum of who Women's Aid, who Women's Aid could help. That's another one.

00:29:05 *Were you present for the transition from collective to individual groups?*

Kind of, yeah, yeah, kind of. I'm one of the people who are still very committed to collective working and I think it had a lot of good strengths about it but unfortunately we couldn't explain that to the rest of the world. And we couldn't always justify it every time in terms of sort of meeting targets, and all that sort of stuff. So yeah, I was leaving a group at that time, and Edinburgh tried to work collectively and tried to make sure that volunteers and staff were kind of on the same basis and all that kind of thing, but at times, um, it was seen as not working. Sometimes it was because the women, certain women who had been given opportunities didn't have the educational background, or hadn't really held work positions before where they sometimes were floundering really about what it was. And I felt it was fair enough that the organisation tried to help women come up from a more disadvantaged position with a new organisation, also that the group itself reflect more the women that we're meeting day to day to show that you can use Women's Aid as a way of moving on in a very positive sense. But, um, I then went on to the National Office which was a source of discussion all the time and our national conferences would bring it in to, um... And eventually I think with pressures from funders that was not seen as an acceptable way of doing things, and eventually collective working was pushed out. I believe Clydebank might still attempt collective working but it's pretty difficult in today's climate to do that. But I think in the [Speaking Out] exhibition Lindsay from Dundee said something about, you know, we're looking at power relations between men and women within domestic violence situations and trying to change that and trying to subvert why one person should hold all the power and that sort of thing. So, it seemed very consistent to make sure that our relationships involved that kind of, or kind of looked at that, where power made a big difference and all that kind of thing, and give opportunities for people to grow and change and to use the organisation to do that. So, yeah.

00:31:36 *That's very interesting. What about the changes in Scottish politics in recent years? Have these had any impact on the work of Women's Aid or how domestic abuse is talked about?*

Again I only know this as a move away from it, but since the inception of the Scottish Parliament things have been so much better [from] when it was Labour controlled and there weren't very many women MSPs who understood domestic violence was a huge issue for women throughout Scotland. So, I felt there was always a sympathetic ear there for example, that hadn't been the same down

when we were in Westminster and the Scottish Grand Committeee, I think it was called at that time, um, and then what also started happening was multi-agency working. Instead of just Women's Aid working on its own, it was trying to change the, uh, landscape of who would be helping, uh, victims of domestic violence, or, um... And I think that brought some good and some not so good things in doing that. I think, from what I can tell, Scottish Women's Aid was able to keep the importance of feminist analysis of why that type of violence exists. Um, but it was a pretty hard battle fought I think. And, it appeared to me that more recently, in the last say 5 to 10 years when we're talking about abused women at times, or women who've been abused by their partners, often Women's Aid wasn't mentioned in the press. It was the police, it was the local authorities, you know, COSLA [Convention of Scottish Local Authorities], or something, the big guys doing it. And, Women's Aid wasn't mentioned quite a lot of the time and I didn't think that was right. Because if there hadn't been Women's Aid pushing and pushing and pushing and trying to, uh, keep the, um, whole problem on the agenda, get some resources aimed at it, it just wouldn't have happened. And it did take women doing that, I think, to get it all the way around.

Um, what else, media-wise... Um, just 'What about the men' used to come out quite a lot in any kind of discussions which were broader than Women's Aid's organisation. You know, um, also that men who abuse have problems too and then there's that Families Need Fathers was a big, um, news grabbing kind of organisation. It was interesting for me that became bigger after I left Women's Aid but, um, knowing, helping women access appointments and knowing the number of times children were let down because a man didn't come, or whatever. They did things that, you know, made it worse for the women involved. All kind of stuff. I didn't have much sympathy for Families Need Fathers although, um, I would probably agree that the statistics come out more that, um, women are given, more often given, care of the children and that kind of thing. But I think that just reflects the pattern that was existing all the time. Things are changing though. I think there are more men who are more directly involved with their families now and it is better, yeah.

00:35:31 Okay. Um, what do you think the impact of Women's Aid was, both on society and on you on a personal level?

On society... Well, refer back to the fact that it is seen as a crime now and it has been recognised how difficult coming away from that kind of pattern is, and, um, women's financial and legal

independence is crucial in the whole story as well. Women are able to see themselves as individuals and not dependent on a male partner. If women are choosing to do that and it works out fine I'm not against that. It's just that it is tied up to the fact that women's employment patterns, that sort of thing, aren't as good as men's. So, the pay still isn't as good as men's and we haven't broken the glass ceiling, and all that stuff does reflect the imbalance that's already there in society. So, organisations like Women's Aid are very important for continuing to voice things from a female perspective. And then I think in linking, um, with male violence issues in general with Rape Crisis, then there was SASI [Sexual Assault Services and Information] for sexual abuse and there was Women Against Pornography for a while. For a while women were making headlines, uh, not making headlines but bringing together strength by coming from different perspectives on male violence.

Society-wise, other changes... I think, eventually, when the Matrimonial Homes Act came out things were clearer, that things for married people were better. It pointed out that people who were cohabiting were in much worse positions and in a way I think that helped people to understand the lack of rights you'd have through cohabiting and why marriage as a legal institution gave you certain things. So, I think Women's Aid had something to do with making that more well-known and perhaps onwards then to look at, uh, other relationships like gay and lesbian relationships, and then moving on to get civil marriage type of things, there. It's all part of the pattern, by bringing out what's happened from women's history I think that helps women, younger women as well, to understand that what we see now isn't how it always was and to try and understand where the differences are, and perhaps where some of the same things are, yeah.

And then for myself personally, it gave me an awful lot. I'd start first by saying that I felt I was doing really important work. I felt it was something very practical that could make changes that made a difference to people, and that made me feel that I, you know, my own self-esteem felt better because I recognised that I was playing a part in the whole story, um, and it also helped to clarify issues in my own personal life about, um, difference between men and women and how that should work out in practice, you know. I feel I worked very hard within my married relationship with my husband to keep things as an equal partnership and keep bringing these things out, and I think I had the strength to do it partly because I'd given it so much thought when I was younger as well. Um, and as I said, I was very keen on collective working and I still want to see opportunities for that to

happen, to co-ops and housing associations or whatever, so people can come into an organisation and play their part and find a good part to play within it, but also try and move up and achieve through that, taking on more responsibility if that's what you want to do, and that kind of thing. So, um, I think that is, um, that's a really ideal way of working if you can do it and go with the people who have the first-hand experience, who really know what it's like and therefore can, you know, can tune into it very quickly, what the issues are for the next person you might work with. Anything else... Going back to society, I think there's been more awareness of children's rights in general in this time, and the Children's Commissioner came in, and this time [in the past] there was nothing there in the government to protect children. And I think Scottish Women's Aid and Women's Aid groups were one area where children were given a lot of respect and, uh, given resources and thought of as crucial to the understanding of the overall situation. So, I think it did play a part in that as well.

00:41:13 *Great, you've covered this slightly with the collectives. What do you think the future holds and what would you like to see happen next?*

Future holds, oof... Well, I'll start off by saying that these feel like scary times, shaky times where ideas that were becoming quite firm and, um, forward-thinking are now being challenged. If I hear one more day of somebody saying how terrible political correctness is it'll make me spit because, you know, these things were pointed out for a good reason because, you know, there was discrimination and people weren't treated fairly, and our line reflected that a lot. So, it feels a bit shaky. I think it's really important that Women's Aid hangs on as a women's only organisation. I believe there's one or two groups that have talked about having men involved and I wouldn't want to see that as a step, I'd like to see female only organisation with Women's Aid. Um, all the cuts in Legal Aid, I'm not really aware of how it directly affects women who are abused but just, our general ability to use the law to help us get out of certain problems and that kind of thing, seems much more tricky and worrying. So, you need lawyers and other professionals who'll be there to help the people that are really in need. And, that's a legal kind of thing. I don't have many other specific ideas. I know that there is still lots of need for more refuge and spaces, and, uh, greater resources. I would like to see toward helping women who have left to support what they need to build themselves up again, in jobs and training and all that kind of thing as well. Um, I can't think of too many other things there.

00:43:42 So we've covered all the questions. I don't know, is there anything else that you feel like you'd like to talk about? Or do you think you've covered everything?

I think one thing that I haven't mentioned which I thought of while, um, before I talked about is, if you don't have a National Office to look at, say, the legal changes that are coming, or social work patterns or research that's coming up, if you leave that on the local group to, all local groups, to pick up that information, there's not resources within the local group to do that, so that's why the central Scottish Women's Aid is really, really important, I think, to keeping up the network. The trouble with how we got set up, piece-by-piece, is that often women in local groups can't... there isn't sufficient resources to send somebody to work nationally. So, it would be good if they could institute some kind of change where central government gave all the local groups money to, um, work centrally sometimes to form Scottish Women's Aid. There are lots of organisations that are national, be it Citizens Advice Bureaus, or Children First, and that kind of thing. You know, it's very important that there be a two-way movement between the two and I'd like to see that. And one good example is around the legislation and... So, I was in Edinburgh Women's Aid at the time the Matrimonial Homes Act came out, and we did a lot to, um, try to get the legislation brought into force and influence what was going on. And at that point there was still the Grand Committee, so we went and spoke to Lord Mackay, who was the Lord Advocate at the time, and I think because we were there – and they were all Tory, not very interested in women's issues at all, usually – but I think because we did well and presented a full case, they understood why interdicts themselves were just a piece of paper and they didn't really help the women very much but if you got the powers of arrest attached to it and that the police without a question took the man away, and, you know, the man was charged with breaching his interdict, you're creating a legal structure that was much more effective to what women needed. It took, like, on-the-ground knowledge plus the national perspective. So, I think that was a really good thing. I don't know how much come-and-go there is between local organisations and national now, but I think there is an advisory group, or a Women's Aid group that still speak to people at the National Office and try and direct Scottish Women's Aid policies. I think keeping it all a dynamic situation would be what I'd really want to see.

Um, anything else that I've thought of... Unfortunately, I think we still have a way to go, a long way to go, and issues around, um, what do you call it, refugees who come and that kind of thing. There are so many links to the way male violence can be used against women, that it's important to keep a

hold on all of that. And, I guess the other thing is that people doing this kind of work need to take care of themselves in the process as well and the organisation has to help them do that. Good training has to be around but also good policies and the ways that women take care of themselves whilst they're involved in quite heavy Women's Aid work.

Okay, well, if you feel like you've said everything you need to say I will conclude the interview there.

End interview