

Animated Activism: Women Empowered

Large Print Exhibition Guide

Who are Leeds Animation Workshop and Women's Aid?

1 Materials from the Leeds Animation Workshop Archive

In 1976 a group of friends in Leeds came together to make a film about the need for pre-school childcare. “Who Needs Nurseries? – We Do!” was completed in 1978, the same year the group was formally established as Leeds Animation Workshop. They bought a house in Harehills in 1982. The house became their studio and base of operations and is still in use today. Throughout its history the Workshop has been run by women as a collective organisation.

“Who Needs Nurseries” follows four-year-old Tracy and her toddler friends as they decide to take action on the lack of nursery provision. The eight-minute film references one of the seven demands

of the Women's Liberation Movement - free childcare - and is still in use today.

Later films would cover a broad range of subjects, many of which - such as equal opportunities, self-defined sexuality, and freedom from threat of violence - align with these seven demands.

Many of the Workshop's films have been broadcast on television and translated into different languages. Films are screened across the world in a variety of contexts, including film festivals, government agencies, hospitals, training centres and trade unions.

Leeds Animation Workshop is a rare survival of the independent film workshop sector. It remains true to its early objectives and continues to flourish, creating and distributing films that are accessible, engaging and provocative.

Leeds Animation Workshop Archive MS 2276

2 Materials from the Women's Aid Federation of England Archive

Women's Aid began as a national network of nearly 40 independent refuges. Over 50 years they have expanded services, campaigned for change and pioneered research into domestic abuse.

Women's Aid have used a powerful blend of wit, strength and conviction to raise awareness of what was once seen as a taboo subject. The launch of the National Domestic Abuse Helpline in 1987 marked a significant breakthrough in supporting women and children. Women's Aid continues to lead the field today.

Women's Aid Federation of England MS 2265

How did the personal become political? The foundations of law and WAFE

3 Bolton Women's Group scrapbook, 1971–1973

The Women's Liberation Movement grew and developed through activist groups. One of the earliest to form outside London was in Bolton. This scrapbook documents issues such as contraception, nurseries and women's activism. It is a rare record of women's liberation group activities from the period.

The material collated in this scrapbook was an important reference point for the activists in Bolton Women's Group in the age of pre-digital communication. It formed a means of retaining information about campaigns and resources, as well as the work of others.

Activism at a local level was connected to wider regional and national networks through newsletters, leaflets and other printed materials. During the 1970s and 1980s, Bolton had one of the most active Women's Liberation groups in the UK. Local women's groups proliferated across the country.

Activist Lynne Segal reflecting on local women's activism in the 1970s suggests: "...we always emphasised the importance of local activity and tended to under-emphasise, and were suspicious of, national organisation. In national structures we felt women, in particular, couldn't overcome the problems of male domination and leadership and feel able to contribute their own experiences...The national organisation which the women's movement has achieved is only around particular struggles, for example NAC [National Action Committee], Women's Aid or WARF (Women against Racism and Fascism).

Segal singles out Women's Aid as one organisation which was impactful nationally, as well as providing an insight into the reason local groups flourished.

Feminist Archive North FAN/BWLG/Box 01

4 Leeds Women's Centre newsletter, 1980s

Before the internet and mobile phones, newsletters were an important way to share information. This newsletter from Leeds Women's Centre spread the word on upcoming events, current topics, and job advertisements.

Established in 1981, Leeds Women's Centre provided a vital space for women to come together to talk, work, and learn. It formed part of a national network of women's centres that helped empower women to find practical, creative solutions to everyday challenges.

It was a hub of activity, hosting groups like Justice for Women, Leeds Young Lesbian Group, and Leeds Against Apartheid. It offered women

information on social issues such as health, housing, and benefits. It also provided childcare facilities, an extensive library, and a weekly Girls' Group featuring games and trips.

The centre encouraged women to develop and share skills through workshops on topics ranging from management skills to bike maintenance. Their vibrant programme of events was bolstered by the centre's own rentable disco equipment. Their monthly newsletter, as seen here, kept women informed with articles and reports as well as updates on events in Leeds and beyond.

Feminist Archive North FAN/CA/LWC/04

5 Spare Rib diary, 1982

Spare Rib was one of the longest running magazines to come out of the Women's Liberation Movement. It ran from 1973 to 1993 and was bought by women across the country. Their 1982 diary lists a range of useful resources, from contact details of local women's groups to a menstrual calendar.

Among the information included in the diary is the list of “Seven Demands” made by the British Women’s Liberation Movement:

1. Equal pay
2. Equal education and employment rights
3. Free contraception and abortion
4. Free nursery care
5. Legal and financial independence
6. The right to self-defined sexuality
7. Freedom from physical and sexual violence.

They were established at the series of “National Women's Liberation Conferences” that ran from 1970 to 1978 in cities across the UK. The initial meeting took place at Ruskin College in Oxford. The first four demands were agreed in 1971, the fifth and sixth in 1974 and the seventh in 1978.

Today it is hard to imagine the societal constructs that restricted the discussion of issues facing women. For example, domestic violence was considered a “domestic issue” to be resolved within the home. Married women were not protected against rape.

In agreeing the “Seven Demands” the Movement foregrounded issues for campaigning, where they wanted to see legislative change. Included here in the diary they acted as a reference point for Spare Rib subscribers and indicate their importance in the consciousness of women seeking change.

There is a strong correlation between the demands and the themes addressed in films made by Leeds Animation Workshop during this period and beyond.

Feminist Archive North FAN/CA/WLG/01

6 Selection of postcards and badges, 1970s–1980s

Badges and postcards were useful ways to spread the word. They were cheap to produce and easily shared. This collection highlights the Women's Liberation Movement's broad activism, from reproductive rights and peace campaigns to fighting misogynistic advertising and demanding equal rights. Many of these issues remain relevant and familiar to us today.

The use of pin badges to pledge allegiance to a cause and promote support for it can be traced back to the late nineteenth century. The “pin-back button” was invented by Whitehead & Hoag Co. in New Jersey, USA. Badges were soon available in the UK too and adopted by the women’s suffrage movement, as well as by anti-suffrage campaigners.

The cheap and customisable nature of the badge, and the availability of home badge making machines during the second half of the twentieth century, ensured they have remained an essential campaign tool. Badges were used by the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) movement from the 1950s onwards and went on to become a tool of Second-Wave Feminism.

In the exhibition the range of professional and home-made badges reveal the slogans campaigners adopted, as well as the colours and motifs they used. The work of regional groups and the evolution of protest on specific themes can also be traced through these objects.

Postcards were used before badges, their widespread use dating back to the nineteenth

century. Like badges their immediacy and inexpensive nature has seen them used for campaigning ever since.

Feminist Archive North Collections

7 Leeds Celebrates International Women's Day, 1986

International Women's Day began over 100 years ago and is observed across the world. It has been a key focal point for feminist activism. Leeds Women's Centre arranged this event at the Corn Exchange. It provided a forum for local women's activities and businesses, and attendees included Leeds Women's Aid and Leeds Animation Workshop.

Leeds Corn Exchange hosted International Women's Day events in 1986. Initially a bustling meeting place for farmers, traders, and merchants, it evolved into a space for community events, markets and exhibitions. In the late twentieth century it was a hub for alternative culture and a meeting point for creative groups.

The marking of International Women's Day and related campaigns have been supported by the United Nations (UN) since its founding in 1945. Coinciding with the growth of the Women's Liberation Movement in the 1970s, the UN designated 1972 the International Year of the Women. This support has seen the 8 of March marked all over the world and used as a catalyst for events and discussion concerning greater equality for women.

The theme for the 2025 International Women's Day is "Accelerate Action", to emphasise "the importance of taking swift and decisive steps to achieve gender equality" and ask "for increased momentum and urgency in addressing the systemic barriers and biases that women face, both in personal and professional spheres."

Feminist Archive North FAN/CA/LWC/03

8 Reclaim the Night leaflets, 1977–2017

Reclaim the Night marches were first held in the UK in 1977, when women marched in Leeds to protest police advice to stay indoors during the

“Yorkshire Ripper” murders. The movement soon spread nationwide, becoming a symbol of women’s resistance to violence and oppression.

Those who marched in Leeds were joined by others in Manchester, Newcastle and London, who demanded the right of women to be able to move safely through public spaces at night.

The response from some is illustrated by the tone of Jane Gaskell’s report of the first Leeds march for the *Daily Mail*: “The women who have joined the feminist groups do not belong to any Rent a Women Libber hit squad. Many are typical North of England or Scottish lasses now letting go with anti-male resentment.”

Reclaim the Night was adopted by feminist counterparts in North America and Australia from 1978, and since this time women from different parts of the world have campaigned for safety in this way. Regular marches took place in the UK until the early 1990s and have been revived in the new millennium in different cities, for example in 2017 in response to the #MeToo movement.

Feminist Archive North Collections

How can animation make a difference?

9 Cel from “Alice in Wasteland”, 1991

Leeds Animation Workshop have made several films about human impacts on the natural world. In “Alice in Wasteland” the main character wonders where things go when they are thrown away. Her adventures explore issues such as pollution, deforestation, and ozone destruction. This artwork shows a “cut out” animation style.

“Alice in Wasteland” was the tenth film the Workshop made, which revisited themes explored in “Crops and Robbers” (1986): the environmental impact of pollution, waste and deforestation.

The Workshop developed the idea of “a variation of the theme of A[lice] in W[onderland]” in May 1990. Using children’s stories and fairytale tropes to explore serious issues was a device they would use again with the Ella animations.

Funding was never a simple process. To make “Alice in Wasteland”, the Workshop produced storyboards which were used to elicit letters of support from Friends of the Earth and the World Wildlife Fund. These in turn helped the Workshop attract funding from a range of institutions: the British Film Institute, Channel 4, Leeds City Council and West Yorkshire Grants.

The film launch was held at Leeds City Art Gallery in July 1991 and received mostly favourable press, although an article in the Wetherby News two months later showed some controversy.

Conservative party councillors complained the film was biased, extremely left-wing and should not be shown to children.

Leeds Animation Workshop Archive MS 2267/2/3/10/2

10 Cel from "Pretend You'll Survive" 1981

“Pretend You’ll Survive” was released in 1981 and tells the story of one woman and her nuclear nightmares. It argues that government advice on how to best prepare for a nuclear attack was a

pretence, and that the only way to survive was to protest nuclear warfare.

“Pretend You’ll Survive” was a direct response to the “Protect and Survive” public information programme. “Protect and Survive” was a civil defence public information campaign between 1974 and 1980. It aimed to advise the public on surviving a nuclear attack and included pamphlets, radio broadcasts and public information films. They were originally intended for release only in a national emergency, but due to public interest the pamphlet was published in a revised form and sent to every household in the UK in May 1980.

The campaign’s controversial subject matter and publication timing had a significant cultural impact, far outlasting typical public information efforts.

“Protect and Survive” provoked scepticism as well as fear. Anti-Nuclear groups reported a surge in membership.

The central message of “Pretend You’ll Survive” highlights the absurdity of civil defence proposals, arguing that the only way to survive a nuclear attack is to prevent it altogether through protest. The film exemplifies the Workshop’s role as an

alternative source of public information,
challenging establishment narratives.

“Pretend You’ll Survive” stands with “Threads” and
“Where the Wind Blows” as cultural and artistic
responses to the “Protect and Survive” campaign,
which continue to resonate today.

The film was made with financial support from a
range of funders, including Yorkshire Arts
Association, the Joseph Rowntree Charitable
Trust, Concord Film Council and the Campaign for
Nuclear Disarmament.

**Leeds Animation Workshop Archive MS
2267/2/3/3/**

11 “Out to the Family” resource booklet,
2008 and “Out to Lunch” comic book,
1989

Additional resources were often provided after
completing a film. “Out to Lunch”, which addresses
sexism in daily life, was readapted into a comic,
making its complex topics even more accessible.
“Out to the Family”, a film exploring the experience

of being an LGBTQ+ teenager, came with this helpful resource booklet.

The Workshop began to include informational booklets, which might include discussion notes, posters and resource lists in their packs in the late 1990s, which coincided with the distribution medium shift from VHS to DVD. Distribution of titles would, in some cases, be free as part of an initial funding agreement.

The “Out to the Family” booklet was marketed as suitable for young people, parents and teachers, and was intended to support discussions in the family, in a group, or at school.

As with other films of the period, “Out to the Family” was produced with financial assistance from the National Lottery through the Big Lottery Fund, and Leeds City Council.

Twenty years earlier this book of the “Out to Lunch” film was published by Penguin. It was a separate item, but furthered the Workshop’s aims of reaching the widest audience possible.

**Leeds Animation Workshop Archive MS
2267/2/7/3 and MS 2267/2/7/1**

12 Articulated animation cut outs from “Through the Glass Ceiling”, 1994

These articulated cut-out figures are from “Through the Glass Ceiling”, which concerns equal opportunities in the workplace. This is one of three films featuring Princess Ella. In “No Offence” (1996) she deals with sexual harassment in her castle. In “Working With Care” (1999) she struggles with the realities of caring for an ageing fairy godmother and two young children.

The series of three Ella films feature some of the most recognisable characters and styles produced by the Workshop.

The films use timeless fairytale tropes to explore issues that women face: sexual discrimination and harassment at work and the realities of caring. The fairytale setting is immediately understandable by a wide audience and is a very useful device to help the viewer engage with what could otherwise be dismissed as everyday problems.

These films achieved significant crossover appeal. “Through the Glass Ceiling” was featured in the

BBC documentary series “Breaking Glass” on sexual discrimination in the workplace.

The Workshop made a further fairytale film, “Did I say Hairdressing? I meant Astrophysics”, in 1998, about equal opportunities in science, technology, engineering, and maths. The fairytale films have continued relevance and are screened regularly around the world. “Did I say Hairdressing?...” won the audience favourite award at London Feminist Film Festival in 2018.

These films were primarily funded by the European Commission, and later by the European Commission Medium-Term Community Action Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men.

Leeds Animation Workshop Archive MS 2267/2/3/13/95

13 Postcards from the Leeds Animation Workshop Archive, 1980–2007

Here is a series of promotional postcards for Leeds Animation Workshop films, including “Dads

Inside and Out” (fathers in prison), “Risky Business” (workplace safety), “Out at Work” (LGBTQ+ rights), “Tell it Like It Is” (gender stereotyping in schools), “Teenage Grief” (bereavement), and “Joined Up Families” (challenges in stepfamilies).

Most of the films depicted here were made during the 2000s and are part of a group which cover various aspects of the lives of families and young people.

Postcards have been a key promotional tool for the Workshop throughout their history. They are an accessible marketing tool and focus on the visual. These eye-catching images are from the Workshop’s films and encapsulate their themes.

Postcards are a low cost yet effective way to maintain visibility and connect with a range of audiences.

**Leeds Animation Workshop Archive MS
2267/2/7**

14 Promotional materials from the Leeds Animation Workshop Archive, 1982–1987

Leeds Animation Workshop became part of the Leeds radical arts scene. They organised “Women on the Big Screen” at Hyde Park Picture House and engaged with East Leeds creativity through the Leeds Black Film Festival. They promote both their own films and showcase international, independent, feminist cinema.

While Leeds Animation Workshop operates on both global and national levels, its impact on Leeds and networks within the city should be explored.

The Workshop's origins are closely tied to Red Ladder Theatre Company. The founding members met through Red Ladder, which also supported the Workshop's first film, “Who Needs Nurseries...” and continued to collaborate.

Workshop members were politically and culturally active, so it made sense that they would also engage with other groups in the city. Although not always branded as collaboration, organisations such as Leeds Other Paper and Pavilion would

often share membership and work closely in other ways.

These items show some of the Workshop's activities supporting film and cinema in Leeds. A consistent thread has been promoting work by women and marginalised groups.

Venues used for screenings also provide an interesting picture of the radical and cultural life of the city. Hyde Park Picture House hosted screenings and seasons by the Workshop. The flyer is for a screening of "Pretend You'll Survive" at Leeds Trades Club, now Leeds Media Centre in Chapeltown. The Trades Club was the hub of the trade union movement in Leeds and included meeting rooms, concert hall and lounge. Alongside screenings, it also hosted a weekly lesbian night.

**Leeds Animation Workshop Archive MS
2267/1/6 and MS 2267/2/2/3**

How do you animate an issue?

15 Materials related to “Give Us A Smile”, 1983

Securing funding is crucial to getting a film made. This application to the British Film Institute, for funding to make “Give Us A Smile”, shows a breakdown of material and equipment costs. Once funding is secured, work begins in earnest. This early draft of the script shows careful language considerations.

These documents provide an idea of some of the labour involved in making a film, and more specifically, getting it funded. The abundance or scarcity of funding fluctuated over the years. Although the Workshop successfully funded each of its forty films, the archive shows evidence of even more unmade films, including those rejected for funding.

The Workshop Declaration was key to funding their filmmaking during the mid-1980s. The Declaration was a pact established in 1984 between independent film workshops, the film and TV trade union ACTT, Channel 4, the British Film Institute and regional arts organisations.

Leeds Animation Workshop was a member of the National Organisation of Film Workshops (NOW). NOW negotiated contracts to allow independent filmmaking groups equal pay, guaranteed copyright, supported long-term funding over two to four years, and TV and cinema distribution. As a result of this Leeds Animation Workshop was supported a revenue grant from the BFI for several years.

“Give Us A Smile” was the first film the Workshop made under Workshop Declaration arrangements.

**Leeds Animation Workshop Archive MS
2267/1/5/8 and MS 2267/2/4/34**

16 Storyboards for "Dads Inside and Out", 2004

Storyboards are an early, experimental phase of a project where animators explore arrangement and narrative structure. Leeds Animation Workshop researches each project extensively, in this instance to accurately portray the experience of having a dad in prison.

"Dads Inside and Out" is one of several films the Workshop made about different aspects of parenting. Others include "Bridging the Gap", "Joined-up Families" and "Minding the Baby".

"Dads Inside and Out" was created as a resource for prisoners and their families. It was also marketed towards professionals and volunteers working inside and outside prison.

The film was principally funded through the Home Office Family Support Grant Programme, set up in the early 2000s to develop effective and accessible support for parents. This was not an arts funding scheme, which illustrates how effectively the Workshop succeeded in securing

support beyond more traditional media and arts funding.

Storyboards are a key step in the animation process. They are sometimes used to attract further funding. These notes and sketches show a storyboard in process, while the narrative and structure are still flexible. The scenes and notes as separate pieces of paper which can be easily rearranged to try out different arrangements.

**Leeds Animation Workshop Archive MS
2267/2/4/13**

17 Articulated concept cut out and animation cut out characters from “Out to Lunch”, 1989

These oil pastel cut-out figures of the waitresses from “Out to Lunch” allow for flexible stop-motion animation. Tape and string joints enable movement, while interchangeable eyes and eyebrows offer quick expression changes. The Waitress character in the film observes

conversations dominated by men in the café where she works.

“Out To Lunch”, the Workshop’s eighth film, revisited the themes of sexism, male harassment, and media bias previously explored in “Give Us A Smile”.

The film was commissioned by Channel 4, which was renowned at the time for championing bold and experimental animation. Channel 4 was also one of the parties in the Workshop Declaration, which aimed to foster innovative and socially conscious filmmaking.

“Out To Lunch” came to fruition following a meeting with Commissioning Editor Paul Madden. As well as commissioning the film, Channel 4 provided an equipment grant that enabled the Workshop to acquire a rostrum camera and an editing desk. These tools would prove invaluable for their future work.

**Leeds Animation Workshop Archive MS
2267/2/3/8/3 and MS 2267/2/3/8/4**

18 “Risky Business” cel artwork, 1980

This painted cel from “Risky Business” features multiple layers. This layered approach to cels enables the movement of elements without having to repaint the entire scene. This makes it easier to portray health and safety hazards in the workplace.

“Risky Business” was the second film made by the Workshop. It came about through Terry Wragg’s trade union activity, and work as a trade union tutor at Leeds College. Through this work she became aware of upcoming health and safety regulation, and the demand for every workplace to have a health and safety representative.

The Workshop obtained funding from the Manpower Services Commission to employ people for the film, alongside further funding from the Yorkshire Arts Association (YAA), the Gulbenkian Society and a small grant directly from the UK Safety Council. The film was also supported by individual donors, including £75 from Keighley MP and YAA Board member, Bob Cryer.

Red Ladder produced the “Risky Business” theme song which runs through the film.

Leeds Animation Workshop distributed “Risky Business” via the Union network (the Transport and General Workers Union bought a 16mm copy) and a hire-scheme for factories and Union representatives around the country.

“Risky Business” premiered at the Leeds Trades Club, in October 1980. It was screened on BBC Arts Programme, “Grapevine”, in December of that year.

Leeds Animation Workshop Archive MS 2267/2/3/2/8

19 Photographs of Leeds Animation Workshop equipment, 2003 and dubbing chart, 1996

These are photographs of the Bayswater Studio workspace, including the rostrum camera and editing desk. Dubbing charts formed a part of the editing process as animators articulated the timing of audio throughout the film. This dubbing chart

was used to design the soundscape for “Waste Watchers”, a film about climate change.

The Rostrum camera and Steenbeck editing table were bought by the Workshop with an equipment grant from Channel 4 finance in the late 1980s and are still in use today.

The acquisition of this equipment was a gamechanger for the workshop. It meant they had their own means of production, and did not have to outsource, or travel for key parts of the animation process.

The Rostrum camera was initially set up at the Yorkshire Arts Studio in Leeds, but was later moved to Bayswater Row. This required a structural engineer to strengthen the floor and make a hole in the ceiling.

The Dubbing Cue sheet seen here was an essential part of the pre-digital animation process. The sheet colourfully illustrates another technical part of animation, and the sheer amount of work required.

**Leeds Animation Workshop Archive MS
2267/2/6/3 and MS 2267/2/8/6**

20 “Out to Lunch” film premiere poster, 1989

This is a promotional poster for the premiere of “Out to Lunch” at Leeds Playhouse, alongside Indian Hindi-language film “Salaam Bombay”. Launches were an essential part of post-production, usually taking place at local venues.

**Leeds Animation Workshop Archive MS
2267/2/2/8**

Violence against women

21 Cel artwork from “Give Us A Smile”,
1983 and newspaper cuttings, 1978–1996

Leeds Animation Workshop’s “Give Us A Smile” film addresses street harassment and violence against women, in response to the “Yorkshire Ripper” murders. Misinterpreted by press at the time as a “fun film,” it challenges the view of animation as frivolous and uses the medium to deconstruct complex issues.

During the 1970s, serial killer Peter Sutcliffe brutally murdered 13 women across the North of England, 6 of which occurred in Leeds. The killings created a culture of fear and provoked a number of responses from women's activist groups in the city.

The *Yorkshire Evening Post* described the work as a “Fun Film”, which reveals the ways in which cartoons and animations were seen as silly or frivolous. Leeds Animation Workshop were empowered to turn that idea on its head. The Workshop understood that animations could slow

down, speed up, construct and deconstruct complicated issues into accessible and thought-provoking narratives.

“Give Us A Smile” uses text in a considered way. The speech, words and methods of verbal harassment used against the main character almost become a separate character. Towards the end of the film, the main character viscerally squashes the words “Give Us A Smile”, replacing them with the words “Give Us A Break”.

**Leeds Animation Workshop Archive MS
2267/2/3/4/3 and MS 2267/3/1/1**

22 The Domestic Violence and Matrimonial Proceedings Act, 1976

The 1976 Domestic Violence and Matrimonial Proceedings Act was the first piece of legislation to address domestic abuse. It allowed women to obtain court orders against violent husbands without needing divorce or separation proceedings. Women’s Aid played a key part in lobbying for this change by gathering evidence from survivors in Women’s Aid refuges.

Jo Richardson presented her Domestic Violence and Matrimonial Proceedings Bill to Parliament in 1976. It was the culmination of many years of campaigning by the Women's Liberation Movement. Women's Aid worked closely with Richardson to gather evidence of failed injunctions and police indifference directly from women in their refuges. They led a letter writing campaign to MPs and encouraged members to stand outside the House of Commons with banners during the reading of the Bill. The handwritten annotation "We made it!" is weighted with a huge sense of accomplishment and pride.

The 1976 Act was the beginning of a long history of campaigning for legislative reform by Women's Aid. Most recently, the 2021 Domestic Abuse Act formed a landmark piece of legislation. It both expanded the legal definition of domestic abuse and increased the protection orders available.

**Women's Aid Federation of England Archive
MS 2265/6/2**

23 Bisto TV advert, 1988

From 1987 to 1988, a Bisto Gravy advertisement featured a storyline where a husband killed his wife over her choice of gravy. While intended humorously, this is a striking example of how popular culture in the 1980s often trivialised domestic abuse. It highlights the period's broader context of misogyny and normalisation of violence against women.

A similar example from the Women's Aid Archive can be found in a letter written to Rover cars. In a 1988 campaign, Rover advertised their new walnut interiors with the old proverb "a woman, a dog, and a walnut tree, the more you beat them the better they be". For this response Women's Aid teamed up with animal charity the RSPCA.

Our collections contain numerous examples of misogynistic advertising and articles, reflecting attitudes that were once openly accepted. While such biases may be less obvious today, misogyny and sexism remain pervasive in our culture.

Women's Aid Federation of England Archive
MS 2265/5/2

24 Zero Tolerance poster, 1992

The Zero Tolerance campaign, launched in Edinburgh in 1992, aimed to change societal attitudes excusing violence against women. Through a series of shocking posters, it raised awareness of domestic abuse, sexual assault, and other forms of gender-based violence. Its powerful messages provoked conversations around issues typically ignored or minimised.

By displaying bold, provocative posters and hard-hitting messaging in public spaces, the campaign focused on making violence against women a visible, public issue rather than a private, hidden problem. The black and white designs covered a range of topics and would appear on billboards, buses and shops.

Zero Tolerance was not a campaign that aimed to share information with victims and survivors of domestic abuse. It wanted to address society as a whole and hold everyone accountable. It asked each person who viewed a poster to confront their own prejudices about violence against women.

The campaign had a lasting impact, influencing similar initiatives in the rest of the UK and globally, paving the way for continued conversations around violence against women.

**Women's Aid Federation of England Archive
MS 2265/6/1/22**

**25 Women's Aid postcards and Feminist
Archive North badges**

Postcards and badges are affordable, impactful tools for spreading vital messages. These badges show the range of topics and campaigns surrounding violence against women. The "Battered Wives Valentine" uses wit and humour to address domestic abuse, while "All Women Are Battered by Society" delivers a bold, confrontational statement.

**Women's Aid Federation of England Archive
MS 2265/4/7/10, MS 2265/4/7/13 and Feminist
Archive North FAN/EPH/01**

26 Materials related to “Home Truths”, 1999

The Leeds Animation Workshop film, “Home Truths”, explores domestic abuse from a child's perspective. It highlights both the harm and the support available. It was created for schools and youth groups to help “break the silence” around domestic abuse.

“Home Truths” explores the private sphere of domestic abuse, contrasting with the public sexism of “Give Us A Smile”.

The film features five separate clips which show young people responding positively to different domestic abuse situations, including physical, emotional and financial abuse. Each young person takes action, telling friends or a trusted adult, contacting an agency, asserting their right to live in a violence-free environment. The film also addresses some of the myths around domestic violence.

“Home Truths” was distributed as a DVD with an accompanying booklet giving background

information, teaching strategies and ideas for follow-up work.

This was one of two Workshop films funded by the European Commission's DAPHNE Initiative, which funded projects to combat violence against women and children.

**Leeds Animation Workshop Archive MS
2267/3/1/2 and MS 2267/2/3/20/7**

How do you make safe spaces?

27 “How to Set Up a Refuge” information pack, 1979

This information pack contains everything a Women's Aid group would need to know to set up their own refuge. It includes information on the history and aims of Women's Aid, an introduction to the Women's Liberation Movement, as well as help approaching issues such as publicity and funding.

When Women's Aid began in 1974, they brought together more than 40 local refuge groups. Within a year that figure had doubled. By the end of the decade, they had 99 groups affiliated in England, 42 in Scotland, Wales and Ireland, and around 200 refuges across the country. Today, Women's Aid makes up a united federation of over 180 domestic abuse services across England.

The training and resources produced by Women's Aid are still incredibly important to domestic abuse services today. Most notably, their National Quality Standards (NQS) provides a benchmark for services to aim towards. The NQS is the only accreditation recognising the life-saving work of specialist domestic abuse services in England.

**Women's Aid Federation of England Archive
MS 2265/7/4**

28 Women's Aid postcards and badge

Women's Aid have produced a range of postcards and badges over the years to help raise awareness and funds. This selection focuses on refuge provision and creating safe spaces for those in need.

**Women's Aid Federation of England Archive
MS 2265/4/7/14, MS 2265/4/7/15 and MS
2265/4/10/2**

29 “Leaving Violent Men” refuge photographs, c.1980

These are photographs showing the inside of a London refuge at the start of the 1980s. These images were used in the publication “Leaving Violent Men: A Study of Refuges and Housing for Battered Women”. They give a rare and humanising insight into refuge life.

“Leaving Violent Men” was one of the first studies conducted by Women's Aid, beginning in 1978. It sought to research refuge provision in the wake of the 1975 Select Committee on Violence in Marriage, which recommended one refuge place per 10,000 of the population. The study found that refuge provision was only one sixth of the recommended level.

The 1981 publication, “Leaving Violent Men: A Study of Refuges and Housing for Battered Women”, used these black and white images. Some of the photographs were taken by Margaret Murrey, an influential photographer who played a pivotal role in founding the Format Photographers Agency in the early 1980s. Format was a women's

collective that provided a platform for female photographers in the context of a male dominated industry. They often represented subjects not covered in mainstream media, such as Greenham Common Peace Camp, the Miner's Strike, and these insights into the domestic abuse refuge experience.

Women's Aid Federation of England Archive MS 2265/12/1

30 Women's Aid newsletter, October 1979

Refuges provide safe spaces for both women and children escaping abuse. The image on the front of this newsletter includes a design for children to colour in and hidden words to find in the illustration. Advocating for child protection is central to the Women's Aid mission.

Conversations with Women's Aid staff consistently highlighted the critical importance of child protection. This focus is particularly vital, as children often account for over half of the residents in domestic abuse refuges. Women's Aid has undertaken original research, advocated for

legislative reforms, and launched national campaigns to highlight the often-overlooked impact of domestic abuse on children as its hidden victims.

Their work around safe contact in Family Courts highlights the risks of unsupervised contact with abusive parents and helps ensure children's safety in child contact arrangements. Women's Aid also offers training on identifying and supporting children who may be experiencing abuse at home, as well as working with agencies like UNICEG, NSPCC and Ofsted. Their national reports bring attention to the emotional, psychological, and developmental harm experienced by children in abusive environments.

Women's Aid also provides resources to help educate children and young people about domestic abuse. The Love Respect campaign aims to empower young people to talk about domestic abuse and what a healthy relationship should look like.

**Women's Aid Federation of England Archive
MS 2265/4/3/28**

31 Open Doors? Training Pack by Lesbians in Women's Aid, 1992 and Black Women leaflet, 1970s

Women's Aid has been made up of a number of sub-groups over the years, including Lesbian Group and Black Women's Group. These groups advocated for voices that were often marginalised in feminist activism. These items show the importance of highlighting domestic abuse in all areas of society.

These sub-groups conducted independent meetings, undertook dedicated research, and shared their findings with Women's Aid staff to inform broader strategies. For instance, the Black Women's Group organised a conference on the service needs of Black women and produced a Black Refuges Resource Pack to address gaps in support services.

The Open Doors Training pack was produced by the Yorkshire Region's "Lesbians in Women's Aid" group. It came in response to a feeling of anti-Lesbianism in Women's Aid and aimed to move the organisation forward in a positive, constructive

way. The pack covers a two-day training course with exercises that explore conversations around pervasive heterosexuality, pressures from society, and raising awareness of the invisibility of Lesbian experience.

As well as operating their own sub-groups, Women's Aid works with member services and external organisations to prioritise marginalised voices. For example, the iconic Women's Liberation group, Southall Black Sisters, with whom Women's Aid have worked alongside on a number of lobbying campaigns.

**Women's Aid Federation of England Archive
MS 2265/1/9/6 and MS 2265/4/8/1/9**

How was sisterhood in action?

32 Save WAFE campaign, 1983

Securing enough funding has always been a challenge for Women's Aid. In the early 1980s, the "Save WAFE" campaign was launched to address a major funding crisis. Questionnaires gathered evidence from refuges and letters were sent to MPs. The campaign raised awareness and lobbied for much-needed support.

After a series of funding crises, Women's Aid evolved in 1987 to form a more structured, administrative organisation. This was a big move away from their origins as a collective organisation but meant that they could more easily secure funding for the fight against domestic abuse.

Early correspondence with the DHSS (Department of Health and Social Security) shows Women's Aid were not afraid to demand the resources they needed right from the start. They made their case

successfully, and secured Government funding from as early as 1975.

This first funding grant in November 1975 offered the National Women's Aid Federation £11,000 a year until 1977. However, Women's Aid communicated that this would not be enough to cover their work.

Insufficient funding continues to be a major barrier to Women's Aid services to this day. In 2024, a Women's Aid review found that the government spent £195 million on local domestic abuse services in England, £232 million less than the £427 million needed.

Women's Aid Federation of England Archive MS 2265/1/12/7/2

33 Photograph of the Women's Aid offices, c.1970s

This photograph captures a busy Women's Aid office, the hub of national refuge support. Before the national helpline was established in 1987,

alongside their administrative duties, staff responded to countless calls from women in need.

Women's Aid operated as a collective well into the 1980s. A women's collective is a group that works towards shared goals, guided by principles of collaboration, shared leadership and mutual support. Historically, women's collectives such as Women's Aid and Leeds Animation Workshop have played vital roles in social movements. They provide a platform for women to amplify their voices, build resilience, and enact meaningful change

As part of the collective ethos, key roles in Women's Aid were decided through elections at the national conference. This ensured that the women taking up these roles were accountable to the whole organisation, including both staff, volunteers and the women using the domestic abuse services.

**Women's Aid Federation of England Archive
MS 2265/12/**

34 Women's Aid conference topics, 1977–1981 and Cardiff conference booklet, 1978

The national conference has always been central to Women's Aid, bringing together staff and service users to discuss, debate, and make key decisions. In its formative years, it was a vital space for shaping the organisation's direction as a women's collective. Here are just some of the many topics discussed over time.

“Feminist Finances” highlights money as a political tool and explores the challenges of being a funded organisation able to address some, but not all, necessary work.

The role of men in refuges sparked debate in the late 1970s. Some refuges hired male childcare workers to provide positive male role models for children, while others prioritised maintaining women-only spaces.

“Women and Mental Health” proposes discussions on topics such as mental cruelty, suicide, drugs, and the wellbeing of children.

“Refuges in Rural Areas” urges the conference to consider the specific hardships experienced by rural services in comparison to their urban counterparts.

Classism was a key issue in Women’s Aid and the broader Women’s Liberation Movement. Middle-class women often managed services, while working-class women tended to be the primary service users. This paper advocates for greater involvement of domestic abuse survivors and working-class women in decision-making, as well as fostering the sharing of skills and knowledge.

The “Violence Against Women” paper examines gendered violence and its roots in patriarchal society. It covers a spectrum of issues, from jokes and street harassment to sexual assault and murder, emphasising how all use force or threats to harm women.

**Women’s Aid Federation of England Archive
MS 2265/2/1**

35 Materials related to Women's Aid protest marches, c.1977–1979

Marches are a pivotal part of women's activism. This photograph of banners, signs, and posters captures the essence of the Women's Liberation Movement. This song sheet, shared at a Leeds march in the late 1970s, offers a glimpse into what these powerful protests might have sounded like too.

The 1979 Leeds march was a part of a National Week of Action on Violence Against Women that ran from the 4 to 10 March. This week of activism aimed to bring women together for consciousness raising and to show their strength and anger. On the back of this song sheet is a map of Leeds with the itinerary of the day. Beginning in Woodhouse Moor, the march finished on Dolly Lane in Harehills, a 10-minute walk from Leeds Animation Workshop. It was then off to the Adelphi pub on Hunslet Road for a disco and more music.

The photograph and badge are from a march in Birmingham on 24 September 1977. Birmingham was the last big city without a council funded

refuge, and Women's Aid organised coachloads of women and children from around the country to come together and protest. Unfortunately, the council did not listen. In 1979, following months of negotiations, a group of women took matters into their own hands and formed a squat protest. Ten days after the squat began, on 14 June, the squatters won a promise of a house, with funds to run it, and the right to stay in their current squat for three months.

Women's Aid Federation of England Archive MS 2265

36 Women's Aid newsletter, summer 1979

Newsletters were the way to share information on upcoming marches and campaigns, and featured articles on important topical issues. Contributions also included poems and cartoons from women in refuges, as well as drawings from children, offering personal insights into their experiences of domestic abuse.

This newsletter from summer 1979 gives an insight into the content shared around the Women's Aid

network. It is clear from the start that women were encouraged to discuss and debate, and articles were not afraid to comment on how the Federation should be run.

Yorkshire is referenced on more than a few occasions, from “sisterly summer greetings from Yorkshire” on the first page, to an advertisement for WIRES (Women's Information, Referral and Enquiry Service) on page 28. WIRES worked as the national information coordination service for the Women's Liberation Movement and was based in different locations between 1975 and 1986: Leeds (1975-1978), York (1978-1979), Nottingham (1980-1981) and Sheffield (1981-1986).

Some other gems from this newsletter include the cartoon on page 8, the “wen-do” women’s self-defence classes advertised on page 27, and the children’s colouring and crossword pages at the back.

**Women’s Aid Federation of England Archive
MS 2265/4/3/27**

What's next?

37 Women's Aid campaigns and partners, 2014–2024

Women's Aid continues to campaign in innovative and inclusive ways. "Football United Against Domestic Abuse" works with football clubs to change attitudes around domestic abuse. "SOS: Save Refuges, Save Lives" advocates for refuge funding. In partnership with Loving Me, they also ensure support services are inclusive for transgender and non-binary survivors.

Loving Me, a trans domestic abuse charity, also gave guidance on LGBTQ+ domestic abuse for Women's Aid's recent "LoveRespect" campaign. Creating safe spaces for all survivors who identify as women or belong to marginalised genders, while also offering single-sex spaces, is a vital part of Women's Aid's mission.

Women's Aid celebrated its 50th birthday in 2024, culminating with an event in Westminster attended by Women's Aid staff, members and supporters.

This included Queen Camilla, who recently raised awareness of domestic abuse through her documentary “Behind Closed Doors”. The event offered the chance to reflect on 50 years of campaigning - and what there is still left to do.

Women’s Aid Federation of England Archive MS 2265

38 Women’s Aid myths leaflets, 1974– 1998

For over 50 years, Women’s Aid have been actively working to dispel common myths surrounding domestic abuse. While significant progress has been made, these leaflets highlight how stereotypes and dismissive attitudes about domestic abuse remain deeply ingrained. The journey is far from over - there is still crucial work to be done.

There are 17 myths listed on the Women’s Aid website today, each followed with academic references and statistics that prove them wrong. From “domestic abuse is a private family matter, and not a social issue”, to “women are just as

abusive as men” to “women often lie about abuse”, these damaging myths contribute to the feeling of isolation and guilt felt by women in these situations. Most worryingly, they can deter women from reporting abuse they have experienced.

Women's Aid calls on the public to actively challenge these widely believed and deep-rooted misconceptions.

**Women's Aid Federation of England Archive
MS 2265/4/8/2/6, MS 2265/4/8/2/7 and MS
2265/4/8/2/8**

39 “Where She Was to Where She is Now” animation artwork, 2022

“Where She Was to Where She Is Now” is a 2022 film by Leeds Animation Workshop that celebrates the Women and Girls Initiative (WGI). The featured artwork was created by women and girls involved in WGI-funded programs, including domestic abuse services like Birmingham and Solihull Women's Aid.

Beginning with “Locked Down in West Leeds” in 2020, the Workshop have engaged with participatory animation in new ways in the years following the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Where she was to where she is now: Celebrating the Women and Girls Initiative” was produced as part of the Women and Girls Initiative (WGI) Learning and Impact Services and funded by The National Lottery Community Fund. The film was commissioned by the Tavistock Institute.

The film shares words and drawings from women and girls supported by, and working for, WGI projects. The film shows the difference that specialist services for women and girls can make.

The film was created with 17 different WGI projects: The Angelou Centre, Aspire, A Way Out, Birmingham and Solihull Womens Aid, Chayah Development Project, Leeway, The Nelson Trust, North Devon against Domestic Abuse, RISE, Saheli, SERICC, Sheffield Women & Girls Recovery & Empowerment Partnership, Southall Black Sisters, Women at the Well, Womens Community Matters, Wild Young Parents Project and Young Womens Outreach Project.

Leeds Animation Workshop Archive MS 2267/2/3/41

40 Harehills Culture Show flyer, 2023

Engaging with local communities and providing training opportunities are key parts of the Workshop's current activities. The 2023 Harehills Culture Show was a celebration of local creativity, featuring a diverse array of art, music and film.

Leeds Animation Workshop Archive MS 2267/2/7/144

41 Save Little Owls Nurseries rally poster, 2024

Leeds Animation Workshop's first film "Who Needs Nurseries? - We Do!" is still relevant 46 years after its release. The Workshop was recently contacted by campaigners protesting the closure of council run nurseries in Leeds.

"Save Little Owls Nurseries" is a campaign created to protest Leeds City Council's decision to close

three council run nurseries and privatise 12 more across the city. The campaign is part of a larger coalition of local campaigns and union branches fighting cuts to public, workplace and community nurseries across England.

In a 2019 interview with *Big Issue North*, Terry Wragg highlighted the significance of this resurgence in interest in the Workshop's early films: "There was a time when young people thought our more hard-hitting political stuff was old fashioned, but now they are into it again," said Wragg. "It's nice in a way, but sad as well, a sign that the same problems persist."

Courtesy of Save Little Owls Nurseries

The large graphic on the left wall contains images from the following films by Leeds Animation Workshop:

Top Row Left to Right:

"Out at Work", 2006, equal rights at work, explaining employment equality legislation

"Minding the Baby", 2005, first time parenthood

"Crops and Robbers", 1986, international trade, food aid and famine

"They Call Us Maids: The Domestic Workers Story", 2015, migrant women workers

"All Stressed Up", 1993, stress at work

Bottom Row Left to Right:

"A World of Difference", 1997, racial harassment in schools

"Council Matters", 1984, local government

"Did I say Hairdressing? I meant Astrophysics", 1998, equality for women in STEM

"Waste Watchers", 1996, energy saving and global warming

"Who Runs the World?", 1994, the World Bank