



LOVE AND POWER'S

NO ROOM AT THE INN

MOVEMENT TO END DOMESTIC ABUSE



Welcome

Thank you for looking at this No Room at the Inn campaign pack!

Our aim as an organisation is to build the capacity of ordinary people to be able to take action on the feminist issues that matter to them. Together, we want to build a sea change for survivors of domestic abuse. Instead of focusing just on crisis and intervention, we're interested in building the power needed to shift things fundamentally.

No Room at the Inn is a Christmas action for 2020 - but also, a step on the journey for building this power.

Anyone can participate in these actions, as long as they subscribe to the values of the organisation. We're so grateful for your energy and support.

In love & power

Charlotte & Martha
Co-Founders

Who We're Not

Love and Power is a new feminist organisation that exists to support ordinary people to take effective action on the issues that matter to them. We're building a grassroots movement with a mass membership, that trains, supports, connects, and organises feminists.

We're still building our structure, but here are some things we are not (we're very grateful other people are these things, but it's just helpful to know what we are by comparison with other organisations you may have come across)

We're not a **front line service organisation** that provides emergency response to people who have suffered violence or abuse. We LOVE these organisations and link to them on our website - and whilst they do the crucial work responding to the urgent results of inequality, our aim is to build the policy solutions that tackle the root causes.

We're not an organisation where **professional staff pick the issues and write the strategy** and ordinary people can participate only by signing a petition or writing to their MP. We train our members to understand how to build power and change public policy - we want every member to be more able to make change as a result of their membership.

We're not a **single issue based** organisation - unlike great organisations that are built around one campaign, we build power across a range of issues because we agree with Audre Lorde that "there is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives". We know that plenty of people care about period poverty AND domestic abuse AND affordable childcare, and we think that power is the fundamental issue underneath them all - if we have enough of it we can change things, and if we don't, it doesn't matter what issue we pick because we can't make a difference. As a result we often work with expert single issue organisations - but we ourselves do not define ourselves by any specific issue.

We're not a **pure direct action** group - even though we love a good protest! Rather than building ourselves around one kind of action, such as the Women's March, we are interested in building strategy - of which direct action is one part, but not the whole sum.

We're not **party political**. This doesn't mean our members can't be part of political parties - they can! - it means that we come together to advance women's rights and dismantle sexism regardless of who is in government, and we are not aligned to any particular party.

Who We Are

This is some of what we ARE aiming to do:

We **build the power of our members** and the women's movement. Our membership helps people build their skills and power to take on a feminist revolution - we train up our members on HOW to build a campaign and connect them to other members who are keen to act on the same issues.

We are **strategic**. We are in this for the long haul. We respond rather than react. We think at the heart of feminism is a conversation around power, and we want looking to build organised women's movement as an ability to build power - and that takes time.

We are explicitly **intersectional**. That's a long word, but it just means that we recognise that people's experience of womanhood is different and affected by things like class, race, disability, sexual orientation, and where they live. We welcome all women - that includes our trans sisters - and we appreciate support from men too!

We **take people on a journey** - we appreciate the courage it requires to change your mind, and we don't expect our members to be a mythical 'perfect feminist'. Instead, we see our job as teaching people to be able to work together to create a more just world.

We **create space for our members and their opinions to learn and change and grow**, knowing that we've ALL learned and changed and grown. We also, as part of that, create spaces that actively teach about and create accountability around mean, unkind or oppressive behaviour - including limits, such as hate speech, where we may ask members to leave.

We **build community** - we are building this movement together, and building relationships of trust is the only way to do that.

Love and Power is the brain child of Charlotte Fischer and Martha Jephcott who are best known for their work leading the campaign to make misogyny a hate crime in the UK. The duo marries Charlotte's background as an effective campaigner and organiser, and Martha's time in the violence against women and girl's sector.

Our Analysis of the Problem

The immediate: In Britain, like in much of the world, domestic violence rates have skyrocketed since the onset of Covid-19 and the need to stay at home. Refuge has seen a 700% increase in calls to its helpline. Counting Dead Women has recorded that there have been points of lock down where double the 'normal' rate of women have been murdered.

This is particularly important because even before Covid-19, three out of every five women who tried to access shelters in order to leave domestic violence were turned away because of lack of space. In the words of Sisters Uncut, "how can she leave if there's nowhere to go?" We can perhaps add another question now, which is "why is there nowhere to go at a time of thousands of empty venues?"

Our campaign, backed by over 80,000 of you, has gone a long way. We've seen in our first win in London, with the Mayor announcing City Hall funded homes for survivors.

However, women in Britain are still in an impossible position. The government have announced £10 million to support domestic abuse - and the money was explicitly framed as being available to help plug gaps in the current capacity, and without a focus on emergency accommodation. It's wonderful that more women will have access to helplines or women's charity staff time, but it doesn't help those most at risk of injury or death and need to leave - a situation made all the more common by lockdown.

We put in Freedom of Information requests to 126 local authorities and found that that 2/3 of local authorities had bought no additional bedding under lockdown. That is despite a 700% increase in calls to the Domestic Abuse Helpline and the fact that 15% of all calls were women specifically asking for emergency housing during July alone.

But there's a bigger aim: the problem goes deeper.

The crisis we've seen this year is only possible because we've been taught to see domestic abuse as rare aberration, and for many years, the infrastructure has been gutted. Put that together with a framing of abuse that many people living with abuse don't recognise, we're in a situation where we know that less than 1 in 10 women escaping domestic abuse engage in ANY formal services or shelters or support, and those who try to often can't access them. Over 10,000 women are forced to travel and cross local authority borders in England alone in order to be able to access services they need - and that's for the women who aren't in the 3 in 5 who are turned away, or the 9 in 10 that don't even try. Women have never had as much money and political power as we've had now - but women's services, and services that cater predominantly to women, are being cut.



So we're building a new strategy

We want to move from a short-term, crisis intervention, plaster-over-a wound approach towards a focus on long-term recovery and safety for survivors, their families, and their communities.

We work with survivors, supporting them to use their experiences to take action and make change

We are trauma informed, but not trauma led

Many of our wonderful supporters who work in domestic abuse frontline services tell us that they feel caught - they can't criticise the government, local or national, because their money depends on it - so we don't take government money so that we can be free to represent survivors and their families and communities.

We are grateful to our colleagues working in frontline services providing urgent support to people who have immediate needs because that work is crucial and necessary- and the fact we don't do that work frees us up to build a mass movement and changes at a policy level, rooted and grown by those most directly affected by the issue, when they are in the right place and space to do that.

Over the next year - we want to build teams across the country who will map exactly how domestic abuse support is working in their area, and build new systems with us - and to kick that off, we're launching our No Room at the Inn campaign.....

No Room at the Inn

Want to be part of making this change?

As our nation approaches Christmas, this year we want to draw attention to the heart of the story - a woman, literally in the desperate midst of labouring, calling out, but no one will give her what she most needs - a room. A room would ensure her safety, her dignity, her security - but the story of Christmas is of a baby who ends up being born in a manger because no one would listen and respond to the woman's desperate call in need. As our nation's public policy seems to be focused around this event at the moment - it feels like the perfect time to raise the feminist frame at the heart of the story and pull out the lessons of how we should treat survivors today.

What are we trying to achieve?

We want to use this moment to build the power of being able to map a nationwide picture of what's being provided to survivors fleeing abuse in lockdown, find people who want to improve it, and connect those people and that information to decision makers - the beginnings of building power across the country to change how our nation deals with domestic abuse

We want you to gather some friends and potential team mates and TOGETHER ask your local Council and MP to meet with you in the new year about what support is and isn't available for those in and escaping domestic abuse in your area. - and what is needed!

What can I do to help build that?



How do I do that?

In our experience, to get a meeting where MPs and Local Authorities come ready to work with us we often need to take public action! So here are some possibilities:

SIMPLEST: Take photos in your home near your tree, or walk together if lockdown restrictions in your neighbourhood allow to an area with a Christmas theme, and take a photo with signs that there is No Room At the Inn and the number of additional beds bought locally - then send the picture to your MP and Council and ask for a meeting (we have template letters in the back of this pack)

THINKING MORE CREATIVELY:

- A walk of 3 wise women (or people!) to the MP/ Local Authority's office to deliver some mince pies and a letter asking for a meeting with a photo (and a donkey or star sign depending on how well you think your Local Authority did this year?)
- Enacting a nativity scene with a sign about the number of rooms bought by your Local Authority
- Could you engage with a local church to support the message - could they have a "There is Room at the Inn" sign?

Yes of course! Turn over to see our simple guide to action



Can you break that down for me?

Step by Step Guide

STEP ONE: Have a think about your town or city, the number of beds they have bought, and decide which option might suit you best. Would it be more fun to dress up as Santa and drop off a letter and to your MP, or do you need to do your action with photos from home and an email? (Santa outfits still welcome!) . We've had responses from most primary tier local authorities, but if we don't have data on your area, would you FOI it for us? It's free and involves sending one email. You can see the template below and cc in hello@loveandpower.co.uk

STEP TWO Find your team mates - a few others (depending on which tier you're in allows!) to take action with you. They can be your friends - or you can reach out beyond people you know. Remember, we are a deliberately intersectional group - so feel free to reach out to other organisations in your neighbourhood that represent or include people who might care about this to invite them to be involved. They all need to be willing to be involved in an action. We love that people have walked for women, but if your local lock down rules apply you can cycle, drive or bus it, and some people take photos from within their homes instead! If you let us know your postcode and that you want to take action, we can also email other L&P supporters in your area and ask them if they want to join.

STEP THREE Make a plan of what you'll do together.

- When you first connect as a group, we recommend sharing why it matters so much to you - and what numbers of beds your Local Authority has bought
- If you're taking action outside your home, check consent with folks BEFORE you take action - make sure everyone is happy to be photographed? Check if folks can't have their name released in public (that's fine if so), and if they're comfortable to give a quote about why they're doing it? For the action to be effective, we do need a photograph, but we DON'T need anyone's name to be attached to it.
- If you're going to meet to deliver some mince pies and a letter to your MPs office or go on a walk, confirm how you'll keep your local restriction L measures. Some folks have used hard tape measures to measure 2m out between each other - but you can take joint photos from home
- Agree a time to meet - we've found early mornings tend to be less busy, make sure you catch the daylight!
- Find a photographer - it's very hard to take part in the action AND take the photograph. Photographers can be anyone you know who has a phone or camera and is able to take the picture whilst following lockdown rules

Step by Step Guide

STEP FOUR : Make your props - does one of you want to dress up as santa and deliver the letter with some mince pies as a christmas gift - or some coal? We've had all kinds of creative ways of making a sign - cardboard, fabric, or even putting masking tape on umbrellas to spell out the statement. Print a letter, or your signs, and if you have a nativity appropriate outfit going spare....

STEP FIVE Amplify that action! Send us and your local press a photo when you're done (we can provide a sample press release)

And that's it....it's that simple!

Why should I meet with MPs and the Council?

Great question! They have different roles. Your council represents local people on local issues and is responsible for providing services for survivors in and escaping domestic abuse. Your MP represents local people at national government - they don't directly have control over local services, but they organise some of the funding that does! To work most effectively it's helpful to meet both so they can advocate for national solutions by seeing the issue up close in their own constituency

WELL DONE! Brilliant. Email us at hello@loveandpower.co.uk and we'll both run training for you AND if you'd like come with you to the meeting

I got a meeting! Now what do I do?



Our Values

We are proud to bring diverse groups of ordinary people together to make change. To be a supporter of Love & Power you don't need to have read any specific books or use any specific labels - but we do ask everyone participating in our actions to make sure they're comfortable with and abide by these principles of the campaign:

We are intersectional - we look at many different survivors' different experience and deliberately build relationships across lines of difference including race, religion and class

We are not party political - that doesn't mean you can't be, but it means any actions as part of this campaign can't be branded as linked to or in opposition to political parties. We're proud to be in a long tradition of activists who are part of civil society - from the suffragettes, to the local people who founded the models that the NHS was built off, to the Civil Rights Movement

We stand against hate in all its forms - that includes anti Black racism, Islamophobia, antisemitism, homophobia and transphobia

Draft FOI form

Dear [enter name of council]

My name is [enter name] and I am writing to make a Freedom of Information request to your council I would like to receive information on the following for research purposes:

- Since March 23rd 2020, how many extra beds have been made available to victims of domestic abuse specifically (not homeless people or any other groups needing accommodation)?

Within this data on beds for domestic abuse survivors I would like the following break down:

- What is the gender breakdown of the beds provided? IE how many were made available for women, men etc.
- How many of these beds were move on beds?
- How many of these beds were refuge beds?
- How many dependents also found refuge with the escaping parent?

Thank you in advance for replying to this FOI within the legally required 20 working days. We appreciate you finding this data as we are trying to trace government money and see where capacity has increased.

Yours sincerely

[your name]

Please send this email to your Freedom Of Information officer at your local council. You can find out their email address by going to <http://www.foi.directory/foi-directory/> and please copy in hello@loveandpower.co.uk when you send it! If you aren't sure which local council you live in - you can go here and enter your postcode and it will tell you <https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council>

Draft press release

Template press release to send to local newspaper journalists in your area

On X date at Y location, Z local people took action to highlight those for whom there is No Room At the Inn to fight for accommodation for those trapped in lockdown with their domestic abuser, when [name of Local Authority] has bought only [enter number] of additional beds.

In Britain, like in much of the world, domestic violence rates have skyrocketed since the government enacted a quarantine policy. Refuge has seen a 700% increase in calls to its helpline. Counting Dead Women has recorded 16 women and children killed by male abusers as part of domestic abuse in the three weeks between 23rd March and 12th April –double the 'normal' rate.

As part of a response, new charity Love & Power have supported groups of people to take public action by [enter what you did here] and ask their MPs and Local Authorities to meet them to map out plans for those for whom the government have not organised sufficient accommodation at the time of this national emergency. Over 80,000 people have signed up to join the campaign, with hundreds of MPs being contacted by supporters, a featured article on the campaign in the Huffington Post, and groundbreaking research that reveals that 2/3rds of local authorities in England have not bought any additional beds - despite the increased need.

The campaign was founded by Martha Jephcott and Charlotte Fischer. Those who want to join up and support can take action by going to loveandpower.co.uk

Co-founder Martha Jephcott said, "The government have announced funding for domestic violence, but explicitly saying it is going to charities to fill the gaps from years of under funding. That's fantastic for those organisations, and the women who can be supported by phone lines or help lines, but we're focusing on those women at one extreme end of the spectrum, who are in danger of being injured and killed unless they have somewhere to go to. For those women, it's crucial they can access emergency accommodation, and we're building teams to make sure they get it"

Local resident [enter your name] said, "this really mattered to me because [enter your reason]"

For interviews or more information, please contact: [put your phone number/email address in], person who organised the action in [your location]. For more information about the national campaign, please email hello@loveandpower.co.uk