



**SURVIVING  
ECONOMIC  
A B U S E**

---

# A survivor-led approach to influencing policy on economic abuse

---

Final evaluation of the Women First policy support grant funded by Smallwood Trust - May 2022

---

“Thank you for sharing this amazing piece of news. I am crying with happiness.”

---

*Victim-survivor*

**SMALLWOODTRUST**

## Contents

Introduction	3
Evaluating policy outcomes	4
How we achieved change	9
Challenges and barriers	19
Survivor engagement	20
Conclusion	28

## Introduction

### Background and aims of the work

In 2019, Surviving Economic Abuse (SEA) requested £30,000 per year for three years to support the role of a Legal and Policy Advisor. The proposal to the Smallwood Trust stated that the project would develop SEA's capacity to ensure women's lived experience shapes our systems and policy advocacy.

The grant funded a critical policy role intended to enable SEA to realise the potential of the 'Experts by Experience' group (EEG). The role would enable a responsive, co-production model to help shape the content of the Domestic Abuse Bill for England and Wales as it passed through Parliament. The grant period was from July 2019 – April 2022.

### Evaluation methodology

SEA's in-house evidence team conducted the evaluation and used the following methodology:

- semi-structured interviews with eight Experts by Experience, three policy makers, four partners/allies and three SEA team members
- document review
- thematic analysis of interviews conducted using qualitative coding software Nvivo.

*"I woke up this morning and saw the news and I was practically jumping up and down with joy. Yes, joy. These milestones that SEA achieves or helps achieve ... are like magic healing for my soul, this one in particular."*

Victim-survivor



## Evaluating policy outcomes

This section evaluates what outcomes or policy goals were achieved and whether the evaluators found evidence to support a causal link between SEA's interventions and the outcomes achieved.

The evaluation will focus on the outcomes achieved in support of the following policy goals:

- 1) the definition of economic abuse included in primary legislation
- 2) post-separation abuse recognised in law and
- 3) non-means tested legal aid for victim-survivors.

### Outcome 1: Economic abuse recognised in primary legislation

The Westminster Government's four-year Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) strategy published in March 2016 made just one reference to financial abuse – within a case study example (HM Government, 2016). The issue itself was not addressed within the strategy, nor the action plan that underpinned it. Reference was made only to the fact that the needs of victims may be 'complex' and can include 'assistance with debt'.

In March 2018, the consultation document Transforming the Response to Domestic Abuse proposed including economic abuse within the new statutory definition of domestic abuse. When the draft Bill was published in late January 2019, economic abuse was both named and defined within it. In the paper published alongside the Bill, the Westminster Government explicitly recognised that economic abuse 'encompasses a wider range of behaviours than financial abuse' (Home Office, 2019). Furthermore, the term 'economic abuse' was used 35 times within the paper and seven commitments addressing economic abuse were outlined within its plan of action moving forward.

The Domestic Abuse Bill successfully passed through Parliament and was enacted on 29 April 2021 as the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. The Act includes economic abuse within the new statutory definition of domestic abuse. This means that statutory agencies have a legal obligation to understand and respond to economic abuse. The Act also includes a definition of economic abuse itself.

Our evaluation found that some felt this inclusion was already a 'done deal' before this grant began but was the direct result of SEA's earlier policy influencing from 2018 to 2019. However, a significant achievement was to keep the pressure on to ensure the definition remained in the Bill. The tactics used to achieve this are explored further below.

### Outcome 2: Post-separation abuse recognised in law

Our objective was to build on this success to influence the government on the issue of post-separation abuse. We proposed an amendment to the Serious Crime Act (2015) via the Domestic Abuse Act (2021) that would extend the offence of controlling or coercive behaviour (including economic abuse) to include post-separation abuse. On 1 March 2021, the government announced it would include the amendment to the Domestic Abuse Bill, making provision in law for post-separation abuse to be criminalised. This was what we had campaigned for and the wording of the amendment was shared with SEA in advance.

Our relationship with SafeLives, who supported our call for the amendment, was important, along with the support of other organisations in the sector including Women's Aid. SafeLives came at this from a slightly different angle than SEA – they wanted to cover abuse by family members (eg siblings) who were not living with the victim.

The theme of partnerships is explored further below. However, a number of external interview participants confirmed that they felt that the achievements could not have been made without SEA taking the lead. The reasons for this included other organisations' priorities not necessarily including economic abuse.

Our evaluation found good evidence that this achievement was a direct result of SEA's work. Over the course of the Bill, a number of MPs and Peers acknowledged SEA's role. For example, Alex Chalk MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Justice, stated *"I entirely agree with the Surviving Economic Abuse charity raising the issue, and it has done an important public service in doing so."*<sup>1</sup>



Recognising post-separation abuse, including often hidden economic abuse, in legislation is a significant step forward in supporting victim-survivors and holding perpetrators to account. When the amendment was taken up for debate, 18 Peers across parties and crossbench spoke in support. The issue of economic abuse was referred to 84 times, and post-separation abuse 29 times<sup>2,3</sup>. SEA was mentioned specifically 10 times, providing evidence of a link between SEA's interventions and the outcome.

One interviewee said, *"the level of recognition that SEA was given in those debates, given the size of the organisation, compared to some of the other wider, broader domestic abuse charities was enormous"* and expressed shock at how many times SEA was mentioned in the debate saying that *"in 20 years" they have "never known that to happen"* praising *"rare alignment and adoption of messaging"*.

<sup>1</sup> House of Commons debate, 17 June 2020. Transcript available at: [https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2020-06-17/debates/56d8cf25-5197-4301-b4f3-e872ae712acb/DomesticAbuseBill\(EleventhSitting\)](https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2020-06-17/debates/56d8cf25-5197-4301-b4f3-e872ae712acb/DomesticAbuseBill(EleventhSitting)) (Last accessed 7 December)

<sup>2</sup> The transcript for this debate is available here: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/2021-02-08/debates/0AD1E051-A663-45F6-ADE9-5683C1F79BC0/DomesticAbuseBill> (Last accessed 31/5/2022)

<sup>3</sup> A recording of this debate is available here: <https://parliamentlive.tv/event/index/10f0d1fe-e1fe-49d0-949c-dd8820d7608d?in=20:24:21> (Last accessed 31/5/2022)

During the report stage of the Bill (when Lords have an opportunity to examine and make amendments to a bill), the government announced its intention to accept the amendment. Baroness Lister said:

*“The Government’s decision to accept an amendment on post-separation abuse has been widely welcomed by organisations on the ground, and by survivors themselves. I pay special tribute to Surviving Economic Abuse, which has campaigned on the issue of post-separation economic abuse with such determination and skill, in response to concerns raised by victims and survivors. It has shared with me, anonymised, some of the responses that it has received from these women. They are truly heartwarming. I will quote just two: ‘Thank you for sharing this amazing piece of news. I am crying with happiness.’ ‘I woke up this morning and saw the news and I was practically jumping up and down with joy. Yes, joy. These milestones that SEA achieves or helps achieve ... are like magic healing for my soul, this one in particular.’”<sup>4</sup>*

She also said

*“Many of these women have shown such courage in speaking out and have undergone such an ordeal just at the point at which they believed that they had broken free of their abusers. I dedicate this new clause to them.”<sup>5</sup>*

A number of other Peers in the House of Lords also acknowledged SEA. Lord Harries stated, “Everyone, including the Government, recognises that post-separation economic abuse exists and is serious. Its full seriousness has been well documented by Surviving Economic Abuse, to whose work I also pay warm tribute.” Similarly, Baroness Newlove particularly noted the effectiveness of our briefing in her comments, stating, “I am very grateful, as many noble Lords have said, for lots of briefing but especially to Surviving Economic Abuse. Its briefing was outstanding.”<sup>6</sup> Baroness Altmann also praised our work stating, “My Lords, I support Amendment 149, as so excellently moved by the noble Baroness, Lady Lister, who I warmly congratulate on all her work in this area. Amendment 149 relates to the abuse perpetrated after people have separated. I too thank Surviving Economic Abuse for its excellent work and briefing.”<sup>7</sup>

SEA works alongside a group of survivors of economic abuse, the Experts by Experience Group (EEG). Members of the group generously give their time and insights to support our work. They speak openly and honestly about what they have gone through so that they can be a force for change. Their insight helps us identify what tools and resources victims-survivors need, as well as where change is required in policy and practice.

One EEG member talked about the early impacts of the amendment on her personally, even prior to the update to the Serious Crime Act. She recalled how the police had started communicating to a perpetrator about the amendment, stating, *“I think [the post-separation amendment] would have really helped a lot of people. Because [after] that one email to him from the police after that, stating that, I’ve not heard another word from him [...] He absolutely knew that he was in trouble if he carried on.”*

Interviewees were explicit that legislation change would not have happened without SEA. Sophie Francis Cansfield, former Campaigns and Policy Manager at Women’s Aid, said, *“We surveyed our members and survivors about what their priorities were, and economic abuse wasn’t a top priority for Women’s Aid, so it was good that SEA were focusing on it. SEA made it a priority within all the debates and discussions.”*

Conservative member of the House of Lords Baroness Bertin, said, *“There’s no doubt that the work that the groundwork that SEA put in, in advance of the bill coming to Parliament, contributed to this legislative change”.*

Jess Phillips, Labour MP, said, *“Without question, as a relative newcomer into the space, Surviving Economic Abuse, has been punching way above its weight. SEA has changed the law quicker than most organisations in this space in a quick amount of time and deserves real credit for that”.*

The Home Office Bill Manager, Charles Goldie, said, *“When changing primary legislation you need to present practical manifestations of the change you’re seeking to deliver and illustrate how particular legal change sought will make a difference. That’s not always done. I think it was done, and done well by SEA, in this case.”*

## Outcome 3: Legal aid

Non-means tested legal aid for victim-survivors was a key policy priority for SEA. Many victim-survivors of domestic abuse fail the legal aid means test if they are deemed to have assets, such as property. However, they often cannot access these due to economic abuse. We consistently called for victim-survivors of domestic abuse to be exempt from the means test, which fails to account for assets that survivors cannot access.

SEA did not focus on calling for changes to the legal aid system in primary legislation (and would not have had the capacity to lead on calling for an amendment in legislation on legal aid). However, we did support an amendment to the Domestic Abuse Bill proposed by the Bar Council. This amendment did not succeed.

SEA pursued policy changes through different routes, particularly working with others.

In June 2020, Public Law Project brought a judicial review on behalf of a victim-survivor. She had been declined legal aid as she jointly owned a property with the abuser, who was her ex-partner. The woman was in receipt of Universal Credit and was unable to use the property to raise funds to pay for legal proceedings. SEA supported this litigation through collating evidence and testimonies from the EEG. The High Court recognised the circumstances and ruled that the Legal Aid Agency has discretion to ignore trapped capital.

In November 2020, SEA submitted a response to an inquiry by the Justice Select Committee into the future of legal aid and also published the report ‘Denied Justice: How the legal aid means test prevents victims of domestic abuse from accessing justice and rebuilding their lives’ in October 2021.

One of the key recommendations in this report was: ‘Consistent recognition of trapped capital and ‘capital passporting’.



The report said, ‘Assessment of capital must be underpinned by an understanding of economic abuse, and the wider dynamics and implications of coercive control. Trapped capital must always be disregarded, rather than based on discretion, and capital that is the subject matter of dispute must be disregarded in its entirety.’

The Ministry of Justice recently shared their proposals from the Legal Aid Means Test Review. This includes the proposal that:

- Where an asset is disputed and the person is applying for legal aid in relation to that dispute, we propose to remove the £100,000 cap on the existing disregard, so that disputed assets of any value will be disregarded.
- We propose to create a mandatory disregard for inaccessible capital, while putting a charge on the asset in question with the aim of recovering the legal aid costs.

The proposal is extremely well aligned with the recommendations we made in our ‘Denied Justice’ report, barring the addition of a charge on the asset. While other organisations have called for similar changes, the evaluation considers these proposals good evidence that SEA directly contributed to these recommendations. We hope that the government will make the disregard of inaccessible capital mandatory instead of discretionary, but along with others in the sector strongly oppose the application of a charge.

<sup>4,5</sup> House of Lords debate, 10 March 2021. Transcript available at: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2021-03-10/debates/5A6B3EBE-EE46-453F-AAC8-5391793E3923/DomesticAbuseBill> (Accessed 7 December 2022)

<sup>6,7</sup> House of Lords debate, 8 February 2021. Transcript available at <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/2021-02-08/debates/0AD1E051-A663-45F6-ADE9-5683C1F79BC0/DomesticAbuseBill> (Accessed 7 December 2022)

## How we achieved change – effective strategies, tactics and success factors

This section shares the evaluation team's findings about the strategies and tactics which were most effective in leading to the outcomes described previously.

### Survivor engagement

Interview participants regularly mentioned how important the role of survivors was in the work. Victim-survivors – members of the Experts by Experience (EEG) – spoke at multiple events attended by senior civil servants and government officials. Their input at roundtable events in particular was described by interviewees as highly influential. Case studies in briefings were described by interviewees as powerful and emotive, and essential to SEA's influencing work.

"They [case studies] touched upon all the points that [were] needed - what happened, the impact, and how that impact then not only affects the woman, but then also affects her at work, [and how] it affects her when it comes to paying her bills... those case studies highlighted both the personal impact [and] also the impact on society. And during the Domestic Abuse Bill passage, the government published some research about the cost of domestic abuse to society. So being able to connect it to that societal impact was incredibly effective."

Sophie Francis-Cansfield, former Domestic Abuse Bill Lead at Women's Aid (Evaluation interviews 2022)

When discussing key moments, several participants in our evaluation referred to the roundtable event with Home Office civil servants in 2018. They described the event as *"the first time the voice of [economic abuse] survivors were actually heard by officials"*.

All evaluation participants recognised the role of the EEG. They stated clearly that it was the EEG who highlighted the need to name economic abuse, to define it, and to recognise it post-separation, emphasising how the work was grounded in victims' and survivors' experiences and feedback.

Survivor voices added an important emotional connection to the campaign, with one evaluation participant citing *"powerful case studies that SEA used in some of the debates that really cut through and had that impact"* (Sophie Francis-Cansfield, former Domestic Abuse Bill Lead at Women's Aid).

"I think in terms of making the argument, the fact that both Jess Phillips and Baroness Lister referenced victim-survivors words...in their speeches... it was that bit that brought it to life. [...] women's words are really powerful, because [...] they were convincing in a way that a dry argument wouldn't have been."

Dr Nicola Sharp-Jeffs, CEO - Surviving Economic Abuse (Evaluation interviews 2022)

Interviewees highlighted how the Experts by Experience provided an evidence base which added credibility to the campaign, describing how SEA *"really drew on the Experts by Experience when we did that roundtable. [Nicola] put an evidence base together from SEA's Experts by Experience, and I think that really helped; it added credibility, definitely."* (Cassandra Wiener, Senior Lecturer in Law at City, University of London)

"Amplifying of survivors voices to get that human face to the statistics we're so used to reading about in the news but when it's [...] that detailed experience and someone's personal experience, it just has a different impact."

Sophie Francis-Cansfield, former Domestic Abuse Bill Lead at Women's Aid (Evaluation interviews 2022)



## Collaborative relationships

Throughout the work on the Domestic Abuse Bill, SEA worked with, supported and was supported by many domestic abuse and women’s sector partners, in particular SafeLives and Women’s Aid. SafeLives supported the post-separation abuse amendment. We also drafted a section on the amendment for a joint VAWG sector briefing coordinated by Women’s Aid, consolidating wider sector support. External interview participants stated that relationships were strong and effective. There was a sense that partners were treated as equals with a common purpose. Examples of effective, supportive relationships include combining our case study resources, undertaking joint briefings, alignment of consistent messaging and backing each other’s calls at roundtable events.

“We were very much the kind of the junior partners, but it was still a really great relationship. And what I liked about working with SEA is that they treated us like equals – they valued what we brought to the table. We got swift agreement on our actions, we knew what we were there to do. And it felt like we were campaigning shoulder to shoulder, and that’s always really nice when when you feel you’ve got this common mission and you’re working together.”

Jessica Asato, former Head of Policy and Public Affairs, SafeLives (Evaluation interviews 2022)

SEA’s CEO and Legal and Policy Advisor met with the Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales, Nicole Jacobs, who expressed support for the amendment during her oral evidence at the Committee Stage of the Domestic Abuse Bill.

The evaluation identified several advantages of partner working, including the amplification of our message. One interviewee acknowledged that building up alliances with the ‘big players’ such as SafeLives, Women’s Aid and Southall Black Sisters, who have years of experience working with the Home Office, was an effective approach to ensuring our message was heard. As SEA is a young organisation, interviewees felt that alliances with well-established and known charities increased our credibility and enhanced our reputation as the go-to specialists on economic abuse.

“Without question, Surviving Economic Abuse was the key actor in in that legislation being included in the Domestic Abuse Bill. ... not just direct lobbying and policy work with civil servants and ministers... It was also in allyship building... the big players in the domestic violence sector who have years and years of experience on working with the Home Office... And so building up an alliance around this particular issue undoubtedly makes any organisation’s voice and the thing that they’re pushing for stronger.”

Jess Phillips, Labour MP – Domestic abuse lead (Evaluation interviews 2022)

Other advantages to partnership working included increased networking opportunities, introductions and invitations to meet Government figures and senior civil servants. This included being invited to speak alongside partners at a Conservative Party conference and being connected to the office of Jess Phillips MP (via Women’s Aid).

Sharing knowledge, experience and expertise was another advantage. This was particularly important for SEA as a small charity. For example, we worked with Cassandra Wiener, a lawyer and senior lecturer with expertise on domestic abuse within criminal law. We did not employ anyone in a public affairs role, however, Cassandra’s former colleagues within the policy team at the University of Sussex provided excellent support and advice. They gave strong support with the roundtable event, suggesting meetings and people to approach.

Cassandra discussed how different strengths complemented each other, saying, “I think mine and SEA’s collaboration worked really, really well, because Nicola had policy expertise, and I had the legal expertise. And together that was more than the sum of its parts.”

Collaborative approaches were also key to our legal aid work. For example, SEA received feedback and advice from Jenny Beck QC (Hons) on the first draft of the legal aid recommendations within the Denied Justice report. This feedback was valuable and helped to refine recommendations.

There were no formal partnerships in the legal aid work. However, we provided some support to Public Law Project and Rights of Women, and also liaised with the Bar Council. Interviewees rarely cited these partnerships, though.

## Evidence-based

SEA drew on the EEG Home Office roundtable report, collated evidence about post-separation abuse during the pandemic and worked with an expert on coercive control from the University of Sussex. We submitted this evidence to the government’s review of the coercive or controlling behaviour (CCB) legislation.

SEA used evidence of post-separation abuse strategically in campaigning. This evidence was drawn from the lived experience of victim-survivors, including from data gathered by the specialist casework service run by Money Advice Plus in partnership with SEA. Data from the service highlights how abusers continue to control victim-survivors via financial services and products after the relationship has ended.

The Cost of Covid-19 research we conducted in 2020 also generated valuable evidence about post-separation abuse in the context of the pandemic.

When discussing key strategies, interviewees described the quality and abundance of evidence, “all the evidence, all the research, all the lived experience that they [SEA] bring to their policy and campaigning work” was based on SEA being experts on economic abuse.

“[SEA] really went in to make the case with the very best evidence and to positively persuade people that this was the right thing to do for survivors. And so I always felt that she [Nicola] made her case positively. And that’s often what actually does have a good impact is where you’ve got great relationships where people really, really want to hear from you as the expert.”

Jessica Asato, former Head of Policy and Public Affairs, SafeLives (Evaluation interviews 2022)

Interviewees described how powerful case studies and survivor voice played an important role. In some cases civil servants ‘totally got it’ and ‘immediately took the learning on board’, understanding that the definition had to be wider than just financial abuse.

The case studies were time-consuming to develop and SEA’s Legal and Policy Advisor described them as a key learning opportunity. She had neither worked with survivors nor developed any case studies before, but received support received from other team members.

The Government didn’t tell SEA whether the case studies had made a difference, but one SEA team member described them as ‘pivotal’. However, shortly after the case studies were shared the Ministry of Justice put out a general statement<sup>3</sup> about introducing changes to the CCB offence. This included a quote from Safeguarding Minister, Victoria Atkins MP, describing controlling or coercive behaviour as “an insidious form of domestic abuse that can destroy lives”.

Sophie Francis Cansfield, former Campaigns and Policy Manager at Women’s Aid, noted that SEA play a unique role. “SEA are the key experts on economic abuse. All the evidence, research, or lived experience that SEA brings to their policy and campaigning work, is based on that expertise.”

<sup>3</sup> New laws to protect victims added to Domestic Abuse Bill – GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

One interviewee discussed the ways that the case studies complemented the work of a key stakeholder influencing relevant policy targets.

“...all we know is, we sent them [the final set of case studies] and something happened, something changed.”

SEA team member (Evaluation interviews 2022)

## Focused recommendations and clear messaging

Another strength was SEA’s clear recommendations. One interviewee described SEA’s focus and ability to prioritise the ask and recommendations as key qualities in the way that SEA operates.

We provided an effective, consistent message, which was amplified across sectors. Although SEA’s aim was to influence the Domestic Abuse Act, the message about economic abuse was threaded through proposals in other sectors, including the housing and homelessness sector. As a result, conversations related to economic abuse were raised in parliament, Home Office, Ministry of Justice, and at Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (now Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities). This wide-angle approach was described as normalising the term ‘economic abuse’ over ‘financial abuse’, which was also supported through work with the financial services sector to support the industry to recognise and respond to economic abuse.

## Constructive approach

In addition, it was acknowledged that SEA had a constructive and non-adversarial approach to working with the government from the beginning. We attempted to influence from the inside and obtain support from within rather than take a combative approach. In particular, the evaluation found the relationship with the joint committee that was scrutinising the draft Bill, in which SEA facilitated a victim-survivor to attend, to be positive.

One Home Office civil servant interviewed said, *“Regular engagement with policy teams will get a better result for NGOs seeking legislative changes, rather than mounting campaigns and working with MPs and peers without reference to the government. That gets a poor response from government compared to organisations like your own, who are prepared to engage and provide a strong evidence base for the change you’re seeking to make. Without that, we’re not going to be able to persuade ministers.”*

## Facilitating cross-party agreement

The evaluation highlighted the benefits of cross-party support, *“if you can get that cross-party agreement, it takes the politics out of it”*. We intentionally worked cross-party in order to gain wider support for our calls. We made a statement at the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Perpetrators of Domestic Abuse chaired by Thangam Debbonaire MP, prompting her to give a publicly supportive response. By working with Cassandra Wiener, a legal expert in coercive control from City, University of London, SEA was also able to engage the support of Baroness Bertin and Baroness Sanderson.

SEA was able to engage the support of Baroness Lister (Labour) via the Women’s Budget Group. She tabled the amendment, signed by Lord Rosser (Labour frontbench), Baroness Bertin (Conservative) and Lord Harries (crossbench).

SEA held a roundtable hosted by the Domestic Abuse Commissioner, with attendees from the Home Office and Ministry of Justice, as well as seven Peers.

With a Conservative government in power, it was important to influence Conservative MPs. In May 2021, SEA’s CEO was invited to speak at a Conservative Women’s Organisation Conference on ‘the making of the Domestic Abuse Bill’. The panel of speakers at the event included Victoria Atkins MP, Maria Miller MP, Baroness Sanderson, and representatives from Refuge and Women’s Aid. It was convened to share the different contributions of those involved in getting the Bill onto the statute books.

Evaluation participants also cited the importance of the determination of the Conservative Party in getting the Bill through. Then Prime Minister Theresa May and Victoria Atkins MP were cited in relation to the broader political context. One Peer said, *“I think the Conservative Party really needs to be recognised for their determination to get the Bill through, with the appointment of a Domestic Abuse Commissioner who really does have such a loud voice. I mean... the power, the influence that she has on social media and within the department, the people that she can call up and want to meet with... that’s a huge step forward that had never been there before... there are things that have to change, but you can’t fault the political will for making that happen.”*

## Effective engagement with MPs and Peers

Several interviewees referenced the strong relationships SEA had with MPs and Peers. One Peer who was interviewed described a strong relationship between their fellow Peers and other political figures who worked well together in a *“very constructive way”*. Shadow Minister for Domestic Violence and Safeguarding, Jess Phillips MP, agreed to table the amendment in the House of Commons. Baroness Lister agreed to table the amendment in the House of Lords. She and Baroness Newlove also spoke about the issue in the media.

Another interviewee commented on the importance of personalities, particularly personalities that work together, saying, *“personalities that work well with other personalities is much more important in this work than people give it credit for.”*

## Relationships with civil servants

Relationships with civil servants were often described in very positive terms. Several interview participants referred to the benefits of working with civil servants in the Home Office and the Ministry of Justice. Interview participants described on several occasions how working with one parliamentarian or civil servant led to new opportunities to work with more people and departments.

The difference between economic abuse and financial abuse was comprehensively explained and showcased and, through the help of the legal expertise of Cassandra Wiener, the inadequacy of current law was proven. One interview participant stated that SEA’s CEO *“went to real depths”* to explain why the definition had to be economic and not just financial. Another described how successful efforts to change the mind and reduce the opposition of a junior minister in the Ministry of Justice were critical. The minister was described as being quite resistant to amendment in the House of Commons originally but, by the time it had returned to the House of Lords, he didn’t put up any opposition.

Working with the Home Office and talking to civil servants was described as key in securing a roundtable event with various officials. This, in turn, was cited several times as being highly influential for attendees. Furthermore, the later roundtable hosted by the office of the Domestic Abuse Commissioner was described as *“lending it a kind of oomph”*. Although the roundtable event was widely recognised as successful in many ways, two interviewees questioned whether the event was less influential than originally anticipated. They felt that several key individuals had already been persuaded and were well informed through SEA’s previous efforts leading up to the roundtable. However, this does not negate the wider impact of the roundtable, such as comprehensively raising awareness and knowledge of economic abuse. This last point aligns with a general view that SEA’s early work on the Bill helped to set up the successes seen in the later stages.

Baroness Bertin said, *“Often the civil servants need to be persuaded in addition to the politicians. SEA had academics behind the scene, helping the civil servants as well as the front-line politicians understand the arguments”*. This was a sentiment also shared by Charles Goldie, Home Office Bill Manager, who said, *“I had a good relationship with SEA and I thought that the relationship with SEA was always very productive. SEA provided helpful challenge and helped build a case to be able to change the (CCB) offence by giving a lot of helpful examples.”*

The Government and officials demonstrated a high degree of trust with SEA's senior team members. For example, SEA was informed in advance, in confidence, that the Government was willing to accept the post-separation abuse amendment.

The Government then drafted the amendment, which they shared with Baroness Lister. With the Government's permission, she shared it in confidence with SEA to check that it achieved what was required. SEA's Legal and Policy Advisor reviewed the draft and confirmed that it did. The amendment drew on wording from our Legal and Policy Advisor.

## Utilising political appetite

Some interviewees felt that the Home Office was already interested in economic abuse as part of its ongoing VAWG focus in the UK. They suggested that the changes SEA was calling for were politically palatable to the government. However, other contributors referred to the fact that the Westminster Government's four-year Ending Violence Against Women and Girls strategy, published in March 2016, made just one reference to financial abuse (HM Government, 2016). This example was within a case study example, with the issue itself not addressed within the strategy or the action plan that underpinned it. Reference was made only to the fact that the needs of victims may be *"complex"* and can include *"assistance with debt"*.

Several interview participants discussed how the definition of economic abuse was politically palatable and was an easy win for the government. One interviewee felt that it was a new concept that they could adopt non-controversially to show that they were doing something.

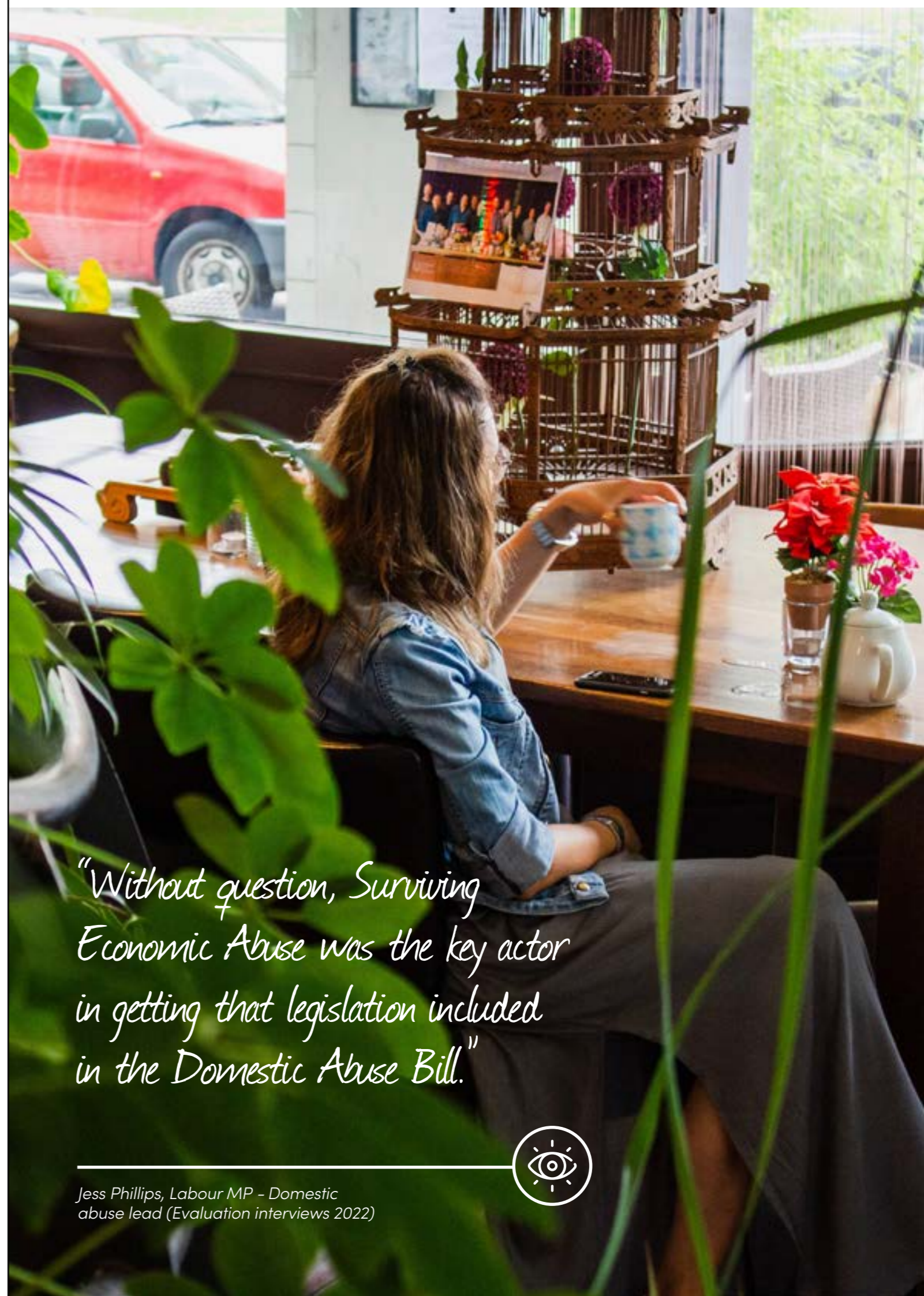
One SEA team member interviewed said, *"We were helped by the fact that ours was less controversial than things like maybe migrant women or non-fatal strangulation or the rough sex defence, which got people's back up a bit more, or people were more polarised in their views."*



In contrast, the post-separation abuse amendment was a significantly tougher ask, requiring the additional and persistent involvement of Peers and MPs.

SEA team members and partners noted how challenging the sector had found it to secure safety for migrant women, noting that the Domestic Abuse Act (2021) discriminates against migrant women who have no access to public funds. One MP noted that the calls related to migrant women in the Bill (which were not successful) still required a significant push as well as public support to be heard. Given SEA's size, with limited resources and capacity, efforts were focused on the post-separation abuse amendment. But SEA team members acknowledged regret over the lack of capacity and resources to push further on issues related to migrant women.

Jess Phillips MP recognised that *"the inclusion of financial abuse within the definition of domestic abuse became one of the bigger ticket items for the government."*



*"Without question, Surviving Economic Abuse was the key actor in getting that legislation included in the Domestic Abuse Bill."*



Jess Phillips, Labour MP – Domestic abuse lead (Evaluation interviews 2022)

Skilled and effective leadership

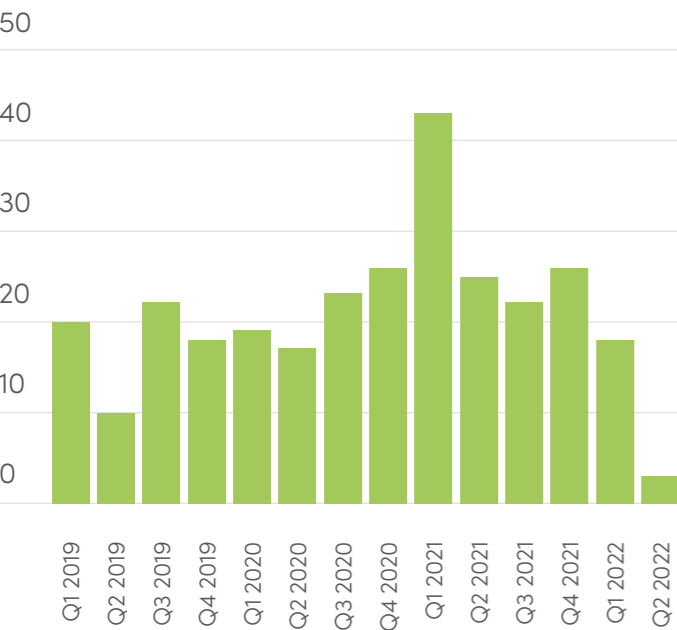
Throughout the interviews, participants regularly discussed the passion, expertise and professionalism of SEA’s CEO, Dr Nicola Sharp-Jeffs. SEA was described as well led, managed and organised.

“I would say leadership. Leadership is such an important quality and Nicola has this in absolute droves. She really leads within the sector and outside of the sector. People trust her because she trusts people and she also celebrates people as well. She does it in a really sisterly way. She’s the very best, I think, of the women’s sector for sure.”

Jessica Asato, former Head of Policy and Public Affairs, SafeLives (Evaluation interviews 2022)

There was praise for Nicola’s ability to ensure the organisation remained focussed on the topic of economic abuse and avoiding overlap with the requests of other organisations such as Women’s Aid and Crisis.

Media Coverage



When participants were asked whether they would work with SEA again, responses were highly positive with specific references to SEA’s CEO.

“Absolutely. 100%. They were great. They were so good. And literally, Nicola is amazing. Her belief in the project was such that she never gave up. I mean, she just knew that we were going to be successful. And that, above anything else, is what carried the whole project. Because, you know, there were plenty of setbacks. But Nicola was just absolutely determined.”

Cassandra Wiener, Senior Lecturer in Law at City, University of London (Evaluation interviews 2022)

“I would say Nicola could definitely have done it without me. But I could not have done it without her. Definitely not, she was the driving force.”

Cassandra Wiener, Senior Lecturer in Law at City, University of London

SEA’s CEO was also described as approaching parliamentarians with a lovely manner and great skills in persuasion.

“It was SEA’s persistence, perseverance, Nicola is like a dog with a bone, just won’t let go, and she got the victory in the end, which was amazing.”

Jessica Asato, former Head of Policy and Public Affairs, SafeLives (Evaluation interviews 2022)

Engaging with financial services

Interviewees made several references to SEA’s engagement with and understanding of the finance sector. SEA was described as having put a lot of energy into engaging with banks to ensure that parliamentary policy was mirrored within financial services. One MP stated that SEA had managed this work well, particularly by “getting banks and big players within finance on board and talking about their interests.”

In addition to partnerships with fellow charities, one interview participant acknowledged the support received from financial services and the relation of economic abuse to the vulnerable customer agenda in the sector. Interviewees discussed how each agenda reinforced the other – the alignment in the Domestic Abuse Bill and customer vulnerability agenda, which led to the Financial Abuse Code being refreshed to reflect the Domestic Abuse Act.

Communications

SEA’s policy work was underpinned by a media and communications strategy. SEA has maintained a constant presence in the media since 2018, including appearances in print, digital, radio and television. SEA was mentioned or involved in at least 16 articles or broadcasts by the BBC, 11 articles by The Independent, 10 through iNews, and total of 23 articles published by The Times, The Telegraph and The Guardian.



SEA undertook significant work to raise awareness of economic abuse. The use of media was particularly important. Interview participants discussed high rates of media attention. SEA was invited to appear in high circulation outlets including BBC Breakfast and radio talk shows, as well as being referenced and quoted in multiple articles in the Independent and the Guardian. One interviewee described it as a question of getting as much air-time as possible. Through the use of connections and partnerships, several mainstream journalists were committed to sharing SEA’s calls.

Opinion pieces by our CEO were published in the Evening Standard and iNews. The Guardian and the Times included features by David Challen (son of Sally Challen, whose murder conviction against her abusive husband was quashed), who spoke in support of SEA’s work.

In January 2021, on the day the Bill returned to committee stage in the House of Lords, the Times featured a piece by the Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales highlighting the issue of post-separation abuse. In February, the Express published a piece highlighting SEA’s campaign.

When asked about political context, one participant mentioned the involvement of popular and public figures discussing economic abuse in the media as important in raising awareness.

## Challenges and barriers

### Steep learning curve

Some members of the team and a partner discussed how they had little experience in the influencing work that was being undertaken and that it was a learning process. The support and experience of colleagues and partners was identified as invaluable.

Some interviewees felt that, during the earlier years, SEA would have benefitted from a public affairs specialist. One interviewee described said, *“So you need a more comprehensive and multi-topic, government affairs and policy strategy, so that you can interlink and build on things that are happening within government and wider policy work.”*

### Political delays and disruptions

The disruption of Parliament through proroguing at a critical time, and the regular re-shuffling of senior members of government, were identified as factors that delayed and set back the mission. Several interview participants discussed how events with government led to delays and the Bill falling at multiple stages, which meant that the process had to be started again each time. One legal expert described their concern around whether there would even be a Bill at one point. However, several interview participants noted that there was a positive side to these delays. They said it gave proponents more time to put together more effective arguments by allowing them to better learn and understand the topic of economic abuse.

Furthermore, there was political hesitancy around the post-separation abuse amendment. One interviewee said that this was due to the contradiction of the amendment with existing policies that facilitate economic abuse. This includes Universal Credit joint payments and the no recourse to public funds rule.

This hesitancy was also apparent in the government’s failure to make a decision until a review of the Controlling or Coercive Behaviour offence had been completed. However, as remarked in two interviews, reviewing policy may be a commonly used delay tactic, *“interestingly, when that [review] finally came, there was no conclusion made around post-separation abuse. So even though the government constantly said that they needed to wait for this evidence, actually, it had no real bearing on their decision. In the end, I think it was a political decision based on people who were interested and supportive.”*

### Being heard

Another common barrier discussed by interview participants was the fact that political campaigning on the issue of domestic abuse is a busy and competitive space. It was recognised that a proposition or amendment won’t necessarily be successful just because it is sensible and the right thing to do. This is especially true in a space in which there are many different policies being supported by various groups.



# Survivor engagement

## Working with the Experts by Experience

SEA’s work with victim-survivors could be grouped into three key areas: advisory groups; research and surveys; representation and media.

- 1) **Advisory groups** – Long-term advisory groups are a key model of the way that SEA engages with survivors. These groups help us to understand survivor experiences and recommendations, research issues and plan our work. The Domestic Abuse Bill Advisory Group was initially made up of 12 women, increasing to 28 by the end of the project, with varying levels of engagement. The group helped to shape the direction of SEA’s policy work. It was set up following the Home Office roundtable to inform the Bill, attended by 18 EEG members.
- 2) **Research and surveys** – SEA regularly surveys EEG members and involves them in our research to inform policy responses. For example, 40 women were surveyed as part of our legal aid work (out of 110 EEG members, ie 36% response rate).
- 3) **Representation and media** – EEG members also have a representative role and are involved in speaking to government. For example, victim-survivors spoke at SEA’s parliamentary launch and regularly speak at events. We also work with them to share their stories in the media. EEG members’ stories featured in every piece of media we placed related to the Bill, including in the Guardian and on Radio 4’s Women’s Hour.



## Positive feedback on survivor engagement

Interview participants were positive about the level of engagement with survivors. Contributors praised the way that SEA has been able to involve EEG members in *“lots and lots of different ways and at different levels”*. One contributor noted how important this is in a policy context where *“policy moves on day by day, you know, whatever we want today is not what we want for tomorrow kind of thing. And so, being able to do that, in a fleet of foot way, enables actually you to always lead with survivor voice.”* This has allowed SEA to be agile: *“we just need that lived experience to show to civil servants or ministers or MPs, that this is the thing, it’s real, it’s not us making it up. And when you’ve got SEA’s panel, you can do that really quickly.”*

Interviewees also referenced the benefits of a long-term advisory group. *“One of the brilliant examples [...] was that Women’s Aid were funded to bring together a group of survivors to implement directly the Domestic Abuse Bill and it was called law in the making. I thought what they did there was also amazing, but the difference there was it was a funded, short-term piece of work, just for the Bill. Whereas SEA’s panel is standing and ongoing, and they’re all the time. And you can therefore ask those survivors lots and lots of different questions, if that makes sense.”*

One interview from a professional in the women’s sector highlighted the challenges for second tier organisations in working with survivors.

*“...a second tier organisation, because you’re not a [service] provider, you can’t go ‘I know they’ve got a caseworker supporting on them and I know that specialist domestic abuse worker, so if we ask them to give their testimony, which may be traumatising, we know that we’ve got that support in place’. But SEA seemed to manage it brilliantly. And I think lots of other organisations, both within the domestic sector and without, so many of the same issues, apply working with children, young people, and trying to ensure that their voices are the centre of our work...And I think SEA’s model is a best practice case study of centered survivor voice, which would I think, have lots of lessons even outside of the domestic abuse sector. I think it’s really, really interesting and should be celebrated.”*

*Jessica Asato, former Head of Policy and Public Affairs, SafeLives (Evaluation interviews 2022)*

SEA has a full-time Survivor Engagement Specialist who is responsible for supporting organisation-wide engagement with the EEG.

## Working more systematically

Team members noted that SEA does not have a survivor engagement strategy outlining the level of engagement or co-production it is seeking. While engagement levels are good, as demonstrated in this evaluation, there are areas where SEA could learn from others. A number of guides and frameworks (eg Women’s Aid Research Integrity Framework) exist to guide organisations working with survivors on engagement, including in research.

Using one framework for survivor engagement outlined here, we saw examples of consultation, plaction and partnership within this policy work. It would be useful to explore in future work whether we could better integrate delegated power or survivor leadership models into our work. For example, it is important to avoid harvesting knowledge and expertise in a way that feels exploitative (for example a one-way extractive process or one that fails to credit survivors ideas).



Across most of SEA's research – including the research which contributed to this policy work (such as The Cost of Covid-19 project, and *Into Plain Sight*, the analysis of coercive or controlling behaviour prosecutions) – survivors are not yet engaging in the design, research methods or analysis of findings. This is an area which SEA could choose to invest in more significantly in the future.

One person interviewed felt that we needed more consistent involvement in our day-to-day work:

"I'm not terribly sure we necessarily centred working alongside them in a consistent way [...] I don't think they were participating in the day-to-day bit, potentially, as much as they could have been. But I think that was the capacity, that was kind of getting the job done."

SEA team member (Evaluation interviews 2022)

One person said that sometimes team members needed prompting to check whether we have spoken to the EEG.

Cautious approach

One former team member raised concerns that, at times, we can be too cautious about how we use the EEG, stating that they were *"almost treated like Faberge eggs, the whole network was treated very sensitively"*. She expressed concerns that SEA should not be *"so afraid of contacting them. They'll tell you if you're contacting them too much. Or if you're not contacting them enough"*.



Expectation management

Some contributors mentioned that SEA could have done more to manage the expectations of EEG members, particularly in relation to the post-separation abuse amendment. One said, *"there had been some belief, I think, that the crimes that had happened prior to the legislation could retrospectively be covered by it. So, we did spend quite a lot of time also explaining that, no, actually you can't prosecute someone for something that wasn't criminal when it happened"*.

We saw an increasing number of survivors coming to us with questions about the Bill and post-separation abuse, such as when the amendment would come into force. In response, the Legal and Policy Advisor worked with the Survivor Engagement Specialist, in a role that was then titled EEG Facilitator, to produce an FAQ which was posted on SEA's website.

"it was really clear when the Act received Royal Assent that there were a lot of questions. We created a Q&A sheet which is on the website. The fact that just because it's now an Act, doesn't mean overnight, it's become law. So there's managing expectations around that most definitely is a real frustration, which I still hear from victims and survivors, that they still can't use it even a year on."

SEA team member (Evaluation interviews 2022)

Diversity of survivor voice

Interview participants reflected on the diversity of the EEG with mixed conclusions. One felt that it was positive how EEG members were *"drawn from all walks of life that one would not normally associate with this kind of abuse"*. Others expressed concerns about the EEG not being *"as representative as we would like"* with black women particularly under-represented.

SEA has surveyed EEG members in both 2019 and 2021. In 2019, we received 49 responses from 85 members (58%), most respondents were White (88%), followed by Asian/Asian British (8%) or Mixed (4%). There were no respondents who identified as Black/African/Caribbean/Black British. A follow up survey was issued in 2021 which resulted in a similar but smaller number of responses (43 responses from 110 people – 39%. White (84%), followed by Mixed ethnicity (9.3%), followed by Asian/Asian British (2.3%), with the remainder choosing not to say).

Team members interviewed reflected significantly on the ways in which survivors are *"experiencing multiple oppressions"* and the impact that will have in terms of how many people will use the post-separation legislation in particular. Team members also cited the ways in which the Domestic Abuse Act fails to protect all women, particularly migrant women with no recourse to public funds.

What did the Experts by Experience value about their engagement with SEA?

Building confidence

Survivors spoke about how the experience of being part of this policy work helped to build their confidence. One survivor said, *"It has made me personally feel that I can contribute again. Whereas I thought I never would be able to do anything again, because I was so useless. It's built my confidence up no end."*

This was a theme we found repeated across the interviews. Another EEG member said, *"It's confidence building, self-esteem. And, actually, this year, because I can't see anyone, you have time to think. My granddaughter just read the newsletter to me. I was thinking, I don't even think I'm scared to use my own name anymore. Whether I would be when it came to it, I don't know. But I thought, gosh, how much have I moved on. And that's only through SEA."*

Creating change for others

Survivors valued being part of a process that was making change. One survivor mentioned that the messages from SEA were uplifting, particularly when she was dealing with her own challenging financial situation.

"The fact that [SEA's] emails would come through regularly and you'd be part of a process that was actually trying to tackle these things when there was nothing else available, not a thing, that made me really happy".

EEG member (Evaluation interviews 2022)

Throughout the interviews, survivors spoke of feeling *"part of something"* and *"making a difference"*. Even if it might be too late to change things for themselves, they felt it was important to be part of change *"for others in the future"*.

One woman said, *"You're part of a change, and that's important."* The theme of wanting to make a difference for other women came up repeatedly.

### A positive space

Survivors felt that SEA created a positive space which celebrates survivors and their achievements. Their stories and bravery were acknowledged in speeches and on social media. SEA team members also took steps to personally celebrate EEG members. One woman said, *"sometimes, when you feel really down, I think of Georgia before she left. She sent me a list of everything that I've done to contribute, and I was like, 'Oh, my goodness, you know, I am worthy of something. I'm not a total failure.'"*

### Feeling heard

EEG members interviewed stated that SEA *"really listened to survivors"*. They spoke about feeling heard because they were *"not only listened to"* but also *"reflected on and taken into consideration, as well"*. Another survivor recalled a *"longer phone interview"* she had done, and said she was *"amazed that was taken on board"* and *"very impressed at the transferring of information I'd given into something actionable"*.

Survivors talked about feeling *"vindicated"* and *"proud"* that their stories were used in Parliament to help others be aware of economic abuse.

"Having gone through real trauma, right at the beginning, I mean, continuing up till very recently. I think it was the first time that I'd been heard in a proper way. Because I was silenced. So it was really important and powerful."

EEG member (Evaluation interviews 2022)

This was contrasted with speaking of their experience of other organisations working with survivors. One EEG member said she's spoken to as if she is a *"second-class citizen. And very offhand, very dismissive. People who are not emotionally invested in any way in the victims. They're just doing their job and it's a tick box exercise."*

### Interaction with other victim-survivors

Survivors appreciated learning from other people and being about to share stories. One said, *"You know, again, you keep thinking, oh, thank goodness, you know, it wasn't just me, and you stop thinking it was your own fault. And again, it's just learning"*. This was something which survivors valued about their engagement, but also mentioned that this was largely done virtually and participants missed physical spaces (see more on this later in this report).

### Respectful and positive communication

Participants interviewed appreciated the "inclusive" style of communication which they found "friendly" and said, *"you communicate with us well."* One survivor explained why respectful communication is so important to her as a survivor:

*"I felt they're very supportive in their emails. One of the things that was very, very important to me was they treated all of the Experts by Experience with great respect. You know, when you've been treated like rubbish for years on end, and by almost everybody, you know, the actual perpetrator, the courts the police, the lot, you don't have a lot of self-esteem left. No matter where you came from, you can be brought quite low and then to actually be treated properly with respect, understood and listened to, is huge."*

EEG member (Evaluation interviews 2022)

*"I wrote to all the MPs and I'm just doing it all on my own before I discovered Nicola, so I know how hard it is and how it was impossible on my own to get anywhere. I've been trying, I've been fighting this for 10 years or longer. So it was a real relief to get the support. I feel like they've supported me as much as maybe they feel that I've supported them, which hopefully I have, so it's a symbiotic relationship, I think."*

EEG member (Evaluation interviews 2022)





**What did they value less and what were the challenges, if any? Is there anything we would do differently?**

**Team turnover and growth**

The survivors we spoke to talked about the impact of staff turnover on building relationships and having to retell their stories. One mentioned that the Survivor Engagement Specialist role in particular had changed a number of times. They appreciated being able to build relationships with certain team members and found it hard when they moved on. They reflect the impact of the SEA team growing *“larger, hugely much larger than what it was”* and the impact of having to retell their experience:

*“And then perhaps you get to the stage of you know, ‘I’m going to tell you this now because this is really important for this piece of policy that you need to know’, but then it’s somebody else, so you go back to the start again and sometimes you do have to repeat what you’ve already told somebody and even though you’re at a certain stage of recovery, you have to start again. And I found that quite hard. It’s like ‘oh, don’t you know this?’ And then you feel ‘or am I repeating myself?’ I don’t know if anybody else felt that.”*

EEG member (Evaluation interviews 2022)

Another survivor talked about the challenges of trying to remember who you had told what. *“And also, ‘you know, what I already told you and what I haven’t, because my memory is not so good at the minute’. But it’s also you think you don’t want to be stupid and feel stupid. And you can do in this sort of situation when you’re recounting your story, which is quite traumatic sometimes.”* (Evaluation interviews 2022)

One survivor talked about how important this is because *“some of the things you tell somebody but you don’t tell the deepest things, some things you can’t tell anybody.”*

**The impact of Covid-19**

Several EEG members interviewed missed in-person contact and requested more networking and face-to-face gatherings. One said, *“then we changed to doing it from home and I found those really difficult. And also I missed meeting the different people and also the same people, that was hard.”* Participants felt that, because of Covid, *“it’s been harder for us to feel so involved as we used to and it’s nobody’s fault”*. They enjoyed workshops and missed those.

Survivors expressed how *“helpful”* face-to-face meetings were and the positive *“psychological effect”* of a *“physical kind of presence”*. They felt a strong desire to return to them:

*“Now, post the major pandemic, you can actually come to a physical [meeting] rather than everything being virtual. I think that’s really important because women need to see each other and physically talk to each other. And there’s so much we can share that you can’t always text and type. You need to be able to talk about things that are happening at the time.”*

EEG member (Evaluation interviews 2022)

**Use a wider range of ways to tell peoples stories and reach survivors**

One contributor recalled a conversation with a fellow survivor, reflecting on the need to share the reality of how long the impacts of economic abuse can continue. *“She’s fed up of hearing survivor stories with happy endings. She’d rather have ones where it’s apparent that the people are still struggling, and there’s some sort of direction as to what those people can take because the abuse might have been ages ago in their history like me seven years. But here we are seven years later, and the ramifications are so huge that it’s still reverberating through the rest of our life”*.

Contributors also suggested not only using words, but voice clips. *“Hearing the voice of someone [...] what we’re doing now is so powerful, because they go, ‘Oh my God, that could be my mum, me, my auntie, whoever’. It makes it more real than just images. I think they’re more much more powerful.”*

Survivors also required alternative tools for getting quick inputs from EEG members. One suggested using quick questionnaire on Instagram or something that’s easily accessible. Simply asking, *“You know, what do you think of this?”* more regularly.

## Conclusion

SEA was extremely successful in the goals outlined through this funding, particularly in influencing the content of the Domestic Abuse Bill and around the post-separation abuse amendment. This level of success is unusual for such a small organisation with limited capacity to campaign in this way.

**The strategies that were most effective for SEA related to people, and how we engaged with others over the course of the funding period. In particular, the following strategies were critical to our success:**

- **utilising the support of victim-survivors effectively and centring their experiences**
- **making political allies and influencing government from within**
- **cross-sector working to amplify our voice and add credibility to our calls**
- **strong leadership and clear messaging.**

In addition to achieving our policy goals, this work also did a huge amount to raise awareness of the issue of economic abuse – not only in the political world, but in the domestic abuse and financial services sectors, as well as among the general public.

A clearer and more systematic way of working with the EEG would help survivor voice play an even more critical role in political campaigning in the future, as well as ensuring that survivors know what to expect and what the outcomes could mean for them.

The legal aid work similarly made good use of important relationships, including with legal experts supportive of SEA's calls and organisations aligned with our stance. We utilised these relationships well to have influence on the issue of scrapping the legal aid means test for victim-survivors. While this is not yet concluded, SEA has played an important role in, again, making very clear calls that have been heard by decision-makers and taken forward into recommendations.



Surviving Economic Abuse (SEA) is the only UK charity dedicated to raising awareness of economic abuse and transforming responses to it. We work day in, day out to ensure that women are supported not only to survive, but also to thrive.

#### **Get involved**

If you would like to get involved in our work:

Contact us:

**[info@survivingeconomicabuse.org](mailto:info@survivingeconomicabuse.org)**

Follow us on Twitter:

**[@SEAresource](https://twitter.com/SEAresource)**

Learn more about economic abuse at

**[www.survivingeconomicabuse.org](http://www.survivingeconomicabuse.org)**

Access useful resources at

**[www.survivingeconomicabuse.org/i-need-help/](http://www.survivingeconomicabuse.org/i-need-help/)**

Join our international network:

**[www.survivingeconomicabuse.org/get-involved/international-network/](http://www.survivingeconomicabuse.org/get-involved/international-network/)**

Raise funds or donate to us:

**[www.survivingeconomicabuse.org/donate-to-us](http://www.survivingeconomicabuse.org/donate-to-us)**