



## **SOUTH AYRSHIRE WOMEN'S AID**

### **N E W S L E T T E R**

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### **Welcome to Our Newsletter**

In this issue we will cover our referral intake, information, recent events, thank you's and feedback on our service covering the period January to April 2024

We are open to the public and can be contacted Monday to Friday  
between  
9.00 a.m. and 4.30 p.m.

Telephone: 01292 266482

Email: [support@sawamail.org.uk](mailto:support@sawamail.org.uk)



# Referrals

## January 2024 - April 2024

### Women Support Service (WSS)

From January to April we have received 209 women's support referrals, with 85 of these being self-referrals. We have also taken many referrals from the Police, Social Work and the remainder from other organisations e.g. Assist, Health Services and other Women's Aid Groups.

### Children and Young People Service (CYP)

We have received 21 referrals to our Children and Young People Service, 12 of these were received from a parent or family friend with the remainder from other organisations such as Education and Social Work



WHEN WOMEN  
SUPPORT EACH OTHER  
INCREDIBLE THINGS  
HAPPEN

## **Partnership Working January 2024 - April 2024**

### **MARAC**

Michelle started as our new Idaa in February after many years as a CYP worker and she has quickly settled into the routine, assessing and mitigating the risks and presenting the individual cases and it is regularly demonstrated that good partnership working between the Marac representatives is the key to keeping women and children safe in South Ayrshire.

In one case, prompted by findings from a previous Marac, we worked very closely with a mental health worker over a period of time to help support a woman to seek refuge and safety in another area. We have also participated in joint visits with social work and the police to offer additional support to women.

### **Violence Against Women and Girls Partnership**

We continue to attend the VAWG partnership meetings and the Joint Action Group where we work together in partnership with those agencies who are in attendance. The work of the JAG is to develop activities to hold during the 16 Days of Action.

As part of the last 16 Days where we worked in partnership across the 3 Ayrshires to hold a conference with the theme Commercial Sexual Exploitation. This work will be continued this year during the 16 Days so that the momentum is not lost.

We have also attended Commercial Sexual Exploitation training in partnership with the Women's Support Project to take the training forward both within our own organisations and within others. Work is being undertaken to see how we can implement this in a Pan Ayrshire way.

## **Partnership Working January 2024 - April 2024**

### **Police**

We were approached by the MARAC chairperson to deliver training to the frontline police officers, again delivering the same materials across the 3 Ayrshires. We have met with 2 officers from the Domestic Abuse Unit who will be working alongside our trainer, and those in the other two Ayrshire's to develop and deliver this training. It is hoped that this will be underway in the next few months.

### **Student Placements**

In January 24 we welcomed a third-year social work student to SAWA to complete her 80-day placement. This was because of information received from VASA requesting host agencies to allow the students who attend UWS University to complete their placements. We were successful in securing a student and were delighted when this was a great match, and the student achieved all her outcomes. This was a first for SAWA and the team enjoyed it very much, we are hoping to be able to host another student at the start of the academic year.

We also have 3 student counsellors who are working with some of our women to achieve the necessary hours that they must do in order to complete their course. One student is currently studying Person Centred Therapy with Glasgow Clyde College, another is with the Centre of Therapy studying Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and the other one is studying Cognitive Behavioural Therapy at Caledonian University. These placements have been very well received by the women who access our service and beneficial to SAWA to ensure that those most vulnerable receive the much-needed support when it is required.

# **Partnership Working January 2024 - April 2024**

## **Ayrshire Wellbeing Alliance**

The Ayrshire Wellbeing Alliance was originally founded by charity Megan's Space to bring together like minded individuals, businesses, and third sector organisations to address the issue of mental health and suicide in Children & Young People. The aim is to invite different agencies from across Ayrshire to meet quarterly, to network and learn about what each service offers, to share ideas and encourage referrals.

SAWA have been involved in the Alliance from its inception, which has introduced us to partner charities such as Christians Against Poverty, who came to a staff meeting to deliver an information session on their debt management and befriending service.

The next meeting of the Ayrshire Wellbeing Alliance is to take place at River Garden, Auchincruive where the delegates will be given a tour of the facilities.

## **Staff Training**

We have also had inputs at our staff meetings from Victim Support & NHS Smoking Cessation and continue to invite partners to share their knowledge with the team.

We continue to work in partnership with the Good things Foundation to provide digital devices to women through their lending library scheme.

Our volunteer driving instructor has helped another client pass their driving test, opening up for her a whole new world of opportunities, empowerment and independence.



## Freedom Group



Our freedom group started in February and ran for twelve weeks. This programme is focused around different aspects of abuse and allows women to open up and talk about their experiences with other women who have also been in a similar situation. We had very positive feedback from this group of women with every one of them saying that the friendships they have made will be the best part of the group work experience. We plan to run another group in the upcoming months to help and support another group of women.

## Specialist Support Worker

The specialist support service is up and running well. This service offers woman the opportunity to engage in 12 weeks of cognitive behavioural therapy in the hopes of being the bridge between domestic abuse and mental health.

We ran a PTSD group at the beginning of the year with some great successes and we wish all the women who attended the best of luck for the future. This group contained women with high clinical symptoms and as a group the women asked for an extension after identifying some extra issues they wished to work on. We listened to the feedback and extended the group to accommodate this. As our PTSD groups are a continued success we will look to facilitate another one after the summer holidays.

Anxiety is an inbuilt safety system but sometimes it doesn't recognise there is no real danger. Stress and anxiety touches everyone at some point in their lives, so to help you get through these periods try grounding with the senses.



## **Children and Young People's Service (CYP)**

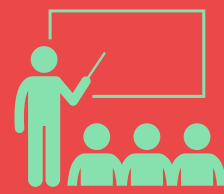
Our children and young people's workers have had a busy start to the year, they have attended several meetings and information days within the community to raise awareness of our services. These took place in schools which allows us to speak with the young people and let them know we are there if they ever needed some support.

Some of the young people we support took part in a survey for Champions for Change - South Ayrshire Champions Board. The vision for this was that everyone within the South Ayrshire community are always supported to "grow well, live well and age well." It was lovely to hear that the young people felt our service was very beneficial to them and they like that they are able to have someone to talk to who is out with their family and friends.

In the February school holidays, our team helped to organise a free family fun day at the Cutty Sark which was a great success and was enjoyed by so many families across South Ayrshire.

We are also very grateful to Cash for Kids who granted us money to allow us to take some of the families we support out for a fun day of bowling at LA Bowl.

## Training Worker



We started the New Year with a return to delivering inputs within the schools to support young people's awareness of safe and healthy relationships. As well as give them resources and information available to them, including the confidential young people's service at South Ayrshire Women's Aid and the report remove tool developed by Childline for young people have had sexual images posted online (non-consensual intimate image sharing). 2024 arrived on the heels of the 2023 online safety bill which is all about a new obligation on tech platforms to protect their users (especially children and young people) from online risks. The aim of the bill is to hold the platforms more accountable for what happens on their platforms. Online safety is a shared responsibility – not just parents, carers, teachers and children and the act itself is being regulated by Ofcom. Young people are at the highest risk of being targeted with illegal and harmful content including self-harm content. This, including a range of other harms are now reportable and in our continued work though training and delivering inputs we aim to increase young people's awareness of their right to online safety as well as support conversations about the barriers that young people face with accessing their right to report.

A highlight of March was receiving an email from a South Ayrshire resident, Mica Hill who reached out to Women's Aid to invite us to be a part of their journey in making a documentary about coercive control. We connected and following some filming at the Sandgate office it will be shown at an event in the summer.

Other highlights include the continued partnership working within the community. We delivered a routine enquiry training in March and are working with the JAG committee to develop a school lesson plans for Hysteria following the creation of a short video developed by Ayr North time and The Iris that tells the story of the 17th century witch trials in Ayr.

As we moved further into the year ahead, we are looking forward to the continue partnerships and collaboration with the community.



## Refuge Accommodation The Willows

The women and children in The Willow's have been busy over the first few months of the year.

Firstly, one family moved into their forever home and another one is waiting to get keys to their new home to start their new chapter.

They took some time to celebrate Burns Day with a traditional Burn's supper, of haggis, neeps and tatties along with some irn bru substitute for whiskey, which was enjoyed by all in the refuge.

They also decided to celebrate Galentines day instead of Valentines Day where they took some time to celebrate the friendships that they have made in the Willows and also to celebrate women supporting women.

They also enjoyed a lovely lunch for International Women's Day, the women decorated the communal space with photos and descriptions of women in the public eye who inspire them as well as chatted about the inspirational women that they all know in their own lives.

As the weather is starting to improve the children have been outside enjoying time in the garden and everyone is looking forward to the summer months. The garden furniture is all ready to set up once we see the sun so that everyone can get outside to relax.

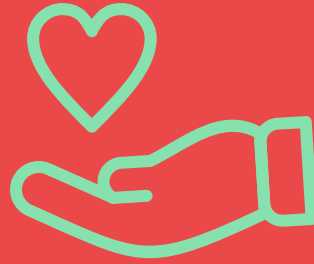
Every week The Willow's receive a donation of butcher meat from Christ in action which is always greatly appreciated by the women in the refuge.



## Volunteers

Thank you to our kind-hearted and dedicated volunteers we currently have who are making a difference to women and children's lives. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer with our service please send your CV to [office@sawamail.org.uk](mailto:office@sawamail.org.uk).

*Thank  
You*



## Donations

We have received significant donations of clothing, household items and toiletries from:

Inner Wheel, Prestwick

FFU Scotland

Barony Universal, Irvine

Landlords/Selling agents for the old Debenhams store

And many more businesses and individuals who we are grateful to for their ongoing support and generosity.

## Evaluation Feedback

Evaluations from our families, that we support, are extremely important to us. They help us to shape our service and make adjustments we feel will enhance the support we provide. Thank you to everyone who have provided this valuable feedback.



*"I have really benefitted from the support of Women's aid. I have managed to explore my feelings and put my thoughts into words. It has been nice to get the perspective of a stranger who doesn't know me or know the relationship."*

*"I am really glad the service is available and everyone is always really helpful and empathetic."*

*"I really appreciated and valued the contact its been really important to me. I have alot of respect for the organisation."*

*"The office felt like a safe space when I came in for my appointment lovely atmosphere."*

*"Huge thank you to my support worker for always being there for me, i feel safe to talk about everything without it being discussed elsewhere."*

*"There is no improvement needed my support worker is fantastic I am able to tell her anything that is on my mind and have never felt judged. She helps with everything she is amazing."*