



SOUTH AYRSHIRE
WOMEN'S AID

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N E W S L E T T E R

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 May 2022 - August 2022.

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

Telephone: 01292 266482

Email: support@sawamail.org.uk



Referrals

May 2022 - August 2022

Women Support Service (WSS)

Through May to August we have had 185 WSS referrals, with 75 of these being self-referrals. We have also took many referrals from Police, Social Work and with the remainder from other organisations e.g. Assist, Education, Health, Housing to name a few.

Children and Young People Service (CYP)

We have received 12 referrals to Children, Young People Service, 6 of these were received from parent/family friend, with the remainder from other organisations e.g school



Partnership Working May 2022 - August 2022

Through May to August 2022 Claire Forsyth worked in collaboration with Tam Penman and Meg Williams of the Council's Health & Social Care Partnership to deliver a one day training on Child Sexual Exploitation, a training that has been developed by Barnardos.

In attendance were delegates from Social Work, Housing Departments, Moving On and other agencies. Also able to attend and observe the training was our new Training Worker, Niamh, on her first day with SAWA.

Claire also attended a meeting of the Ayrshire Wellbeing Alliance, held in Dundonald Business Park in June. The Alliance meets quarterly and brings together a variety of services and agencies with a shared aim to improve the mental health and wellbeing of young people in Ayrshire.

Some staff members attended ASIST - Applied Suicide Training Intervention Skills and staff found this was very informative and gave them a flexible pathway in supporting women with considering suicide.

Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) is now live with our first MARAC taking place on 23rd August. This was well attended by all agencies involved and seemed to run smoothly. Congratulations to everyone as this is a new venture for South Ayrshire.

MARAC - MULTI-AGENCY RISK ASSESSMENT CONFERENCE

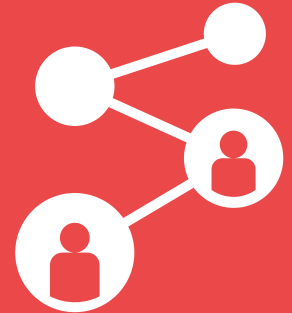


WHAT IS MARAC

Local meeting in which representatives from statutory and non-statutory agencies meet to discuss individuals at high risk of serious harm or death as a result of domestic abuse. The meeting provides a safe environment for agencies to share proportionate and relevant information about current risk, after which the risks are discussed and agencies agree actions to reduce the risk and increase safety.

REFERRAL PATHWAY

Referrals are made using a hyperlink which is available on intranet sites and can be saved on desktops for ease of use. A referrer clicks on the hyperlink to start a referral to MARAC, submits it and then this will be reviewed by a MARAC coordinator and if accepted will be added to the to the agenda for the next available MARAC



PRESENTING A CASE

Most cases will be presented by the referring agency representative by collecting information about the adult, current risk, current management of risk and any other relevant information. Information on children, vulnerable adults and the perpetrator associated with a case will also be shared. There may be times when the referrer is asked to attend to present the case, most often when there is added complexities. When this happens the referrer is given a slot to attend and present - this will be for no longer than 15 minutes

MARAC REPRESENTATIVES

MARAC representatives are from a number of agencies and service areas. Representatives will be responsible for bringing and sharing information from areas which may include a cluster of teams and services. E.g. Mental Health Rep will bring information from community and in-patient mental health services, they may also bring Learning Disability and Alcohol and Drug services information.



MARAC MEETINGS

The meetings will be held every month for each locality and depending on the number of referrals may last from an hour to taking up the full day. Meetings will be held virtually for at least the first 6 months. Each locality has a MARAC lead who can be contacted for more information. Each Health & Social Care Partnership, NHS, A&A also have intranet pages with more information - just search MARAC

RECORDING MARAC INFORMATION

Each agency will use their own system to record MARAC. It is recommended to download a copy of the referral and save this to the adults' record, also most frontline staff will use a DASH Ric to support decision making and this should be recorded on systems too. An action for representatives will often be to place a marker on a persons' record so that the time period from referral can be monitored. This aids risk assessment. For queries call the MARAC coordination team on 01292 513120 or email aa.clinical_MARAC@apct.scot.nhs.uk



The Willows Garden Update

We are delighted to report our new refuge garden is complete and this has made a huge difference to families in our refuge.

We would like to give a special thank you to Lochlie for all their help exploring various design options and creating a design which is right for all ages of those we support with safety and mental wellbeing being our main key priority.

This garden would not have happened without the support from local donations and funders so we would like to give special thanks to all who contributed.





Freedom Group

Our Freedom Group delivered by Shirley Middleditch was a success and as promised from our last newsletter please see feedback from women who attended this twelve week course.

"Taking part in the Freedom Group helped me learn more about what I had been through and how to cope. I was nervous about attending the first session but really glad I came. Being part of the Group I have met new friends and we all keep in touch. Friendship bonds happened and I got so much out of it. I am so pleased to have had this opportunity to take part. It was really interesting and I got a lot out of coming. For me it has put closure on some of the things that happened. I have now stopped blaming myself and learned different traits of an abuser. Thank you"

"I think it is good to face your fears and come along to meet new people who have been in a similar position as you and you know you are not alone. I would say I was in denial but attending the group highlighted everything for me. Shirley was very supportive and the way she runs the group and I felt reassured I could leave the group at any time if I felt this got too much".

"I attended the group as I wanted to learn more about domestic abuse relationships. I am so glad I took part in it. Staff were lovely. The group has helped me a lot. I feel more confident and stronger. I am well informed now on domestic abuse and the impact it had on me and my child. Coming to the group has helped me move forward. Thank you".

"Shirley was very helpful the way she presented this. I was anxious at the start and by the next session it had left me. I always felt Shirley valued my point and always listened. I feel my confidence has grown and I know nothing was my fault and it was my abusive partner who did wrong".



Children Support Service

We have delivered a further 6 awareness raising sessions within local secondary schools, with 134 young people participating in these. During these sessions we talked about healthy and unhealthy relationships in order to help young people understand and identify these. All young people engaged well during these sessions and the feedback highlighted how important it is that young people are taught how to identify unhealthy relationships.

Some comments from the participants include:

"I can now spot the signs but think that sometimes you could be blindsided into thinking its right."

"We were given lots of examples and it has become a lot more obvious now."

"Very informative and able to identify clearly a healthy relationship and non-healthy relationship."

"It was pointed out to me some aspects as an abusive relationship that I didn't know before so I am able to help my friends."

"Before I wasn't really aware of what a healthy relationship was but now I feel like I could tell the early signs of an unhealthy relationship."

"I feel like we don't talk about healthy relationships enough anymore and it's good that Woman's Aid are bringing it up again"

CYP workers were also invited along to Queen Margaret Academy as a guest at the YPI final. This allowed workers to see the young people who had chosen SAWA as their charity, present their information and ideas as finalists. Workers were able to offer support and guidance and were impressed with the hard work and dedication shown by all pupils.

We would like to thank all young people from across schools in South Ayrshire, who took the time to find out more about our charity and use their skills to raise awareness through their hard work.

CYP workers attended the Young Carers Family Fun day event to represent South Ayrshire Women's Aid. This allowed workers to engage with individuals in the local community, raise awareness of the service, offer advice and signpost where needed.

Children Support Service



We have completed a peer group session with a group of teenage girls. This ran for 6 sessions and we worked once again in partnership with Genna from The Gifted Kind. These sessions focussed on improving emotional wellbeing and resilience. The group helped the girls to identify, express and manage their emotions, find their inner voice and improve their confidence.

Some feedback from this group includes:

"I really liked the petal, bud, thorn activity. It helped me to see the good, not so good and rough thoughts."

"This has helped me with my confidence and how to deal with stress."

"Since starting the group, I have been able to make better choices and better friends."

"I have gained the tools to help me protect myself"

We did more work with Gifted Kind during the school holidays to run a Family Wellbeing Group. During the sessions we worked on similar activities as we do in the Peer Groups. These sessions allowed families the opportunity to come together and bond as a family as well as providing them with skills and activities they can take forward in their day to day lives.

Some feedback from these sessions includes:

"It's helped to open up our family to learn new things."

"It was surprising how alike we are."

"My favourite activity was the mediation because it helped get rid of my anxiety and stress of that day."

"This can really help if you are having a bad day."

Children Support Service

We have been lucky to receive funding and items from organisations who we work in partnership with:



CASH FOR KIDS

Provided funding to allow us to offer activities during the school holidays and provide 32 families with £35 Asda voucher per child.



KIDS OUT

Provided us with cinema tickets which we distributed to the families within our service to be used during the school holidays. Also boxes of toys for children who began their stay in refuge.



SOUTH AYRSHIRE SCHOOL CLOTHING BANK

Provided us with school uniforms for families who were struggling financially to purchase these.



BABY TO TEEN

Provided us with a buggy for a toddler in refuge.

**THANK YOU
SO MUCH**

Children Support Service

During the school holidays, we have organised activity afternoons for children and their families. The funding we received from Cash for Kids allowed us to purchase some equipment for this and also to provide the families with food and snacks while there. The funding also allowed us to offer the families the chance to attend a trip to the farm park.

These were enjoyed by the families who came along. These activities during the holidays are a great opportunity for the families we support who can often feel isolated. It has allowed the children and mothers to speak with other people and make new friends.

Some evaluation feedback from activities:

"We have had a few days out. Heads of Ayr and one of the beach activity days. Kids absolutely loved Heads of Ayr. I also received Odeon vouchers this week and we used them already, kids were excited to go. Going to cinema can be so expensive so this was lovely to be able to spend time together and not have to worry about the financial side".

"I enjoyed Farm Park day, we had lots of fun"

"I got 2 cinema tickets for Odeon and went with my friend to see the new Top Gun movie. I enjoyed doing this".





Specialist Support Worker

This quarter marked the completion of South Ayrshire Women's Aid 3rd CBT workshop for PTSD. In this workshop we learned more about PTSD and explored different tools and strategies for dealing with symptoms, such as nightmares and flashbacks, emotional dysregulation, problems with sleep and dissociation. Each member of the group put themselves wholeheartedly into the process and the post-workshop measures for PTSD symptoms and anxiety speak volumes to this.

Over the summer months, the Specialist Support Worker has been taking advantage of the wonderful weather we have been having, to carry out behavioural experiments; helping service users with social anxiety or panic disorder to go outside and challenge some of the predictions that they have been making around what will happen if they walk outside. For many sufferers of domestic abuse, making eye contact with others or even leaving the house may have been something that they have not been allowed to do, and challenging the idea of safety, where a risk assessment has shown that there is no risk of harm now from the perpetrator, can be very important in helping a woman to take back her independence and decrease feelings of isolation.

Our Specialist Support Worker, Natalie Frew will be moving on from our organisation and we would like to thank Natalie for her hard work and dedication to our service over the years. We wish her the best of luck in her new job.

We are in the process of recruiting a new Specialist Support Worker and we will hopefully be in a position to introduce the new team member in our next newsletter.

Recent Feedback

"I knew your service existed because I work in the school so I have made referrals to you in the past (child protection issues) but never actually knew the background of the service and what you provide. I will certainly be recommending your service now that I have experienced it first hand and see the work you do for people. I would never have got through the past couple of months without it. Thank you !!!"

"I don't feel as anxious now which was a big part of my goal. Overall I am managing so much better. So grateful to Natalie. I got loads of new tools and practical things which helped me a lot, still using these. The more you use them the more it becomes second nature. Really helpful service"

"My mental health has improved significantly since meeting with Natalie".

Refuge Accommodation, The Willows

Many thanks to Christ In Action who continually assist agencies in our local area with food and hygiene products.

We are very fortunate to receive these food parcels weekly and women are extremely grateful.



Many thanks to Enlightened Training who kindly donated a 2 day mental health first aid course which our refuge support worker attended. This training was interesting and very beneficial in her daily role.

Many thanks to all donations of clothes recently recieved. These are now displayed in our communal area for women to choose their suitable size and preferred style.



Feedback

"Kids are enjoying refuge. All the workers take really good care for us. I feel so much better since coming here. I was a shell of myself before getting support from Women's Aid. Having somewhere safe, not needing to worry made such a difference to me. I feel very welcome here. I call it my home now but I know it is just temp. We love it".

"I have found throughout my time in refuge and Women's Aid support I have been experiencing domestic abuse. I now have the confidence and skills to make a safe environment for myself. All SAWA staff have been so supportive throughout my journey. Thank you all so much"

"All staff are understanding, respectful, patient and kind. I am really going to miss being here and having the staff around. Thank you for everything"

"Refuge is lovely. I have a beautiful flat".

"Thanks for letting me stay, I learned alot about myself and it is not my fault I have been subjected to physical and emotional abuse. Each and every staff member has helped me get better and stronger".



Training Worker

We would like to give a warm welcome to our new Training Worker Niamh Connolly.

Niamh, originally from Ireland has spent over ten years providing support and services to survivors of gender-based violence in Toronto, Canada. Niamh has worked in various roles including working as a Violence Against Women Worker with Child Welfare services and providing training to staff and volunteers who provide counselling, safety assessment and risk management support to survivors in the community through a digital helpline.

Niamh recently moved to Ayr with her family and dog and is excited to continue her work as a Training Worker with South Ayrshire Women's Aid.

If you would like any training please contact Niamh at
Niamh.Connolly@sawamail.org.uk

Evaluation Feedback

Evaluations from our families we support are extremely important to us as it helps shape our service and make any adjustments that we feel would enhance the support we provide. Thank you to those who have provided this valuable feedback.



"You have changed my life completely. I am graduating from university next week and I have my own house. I am doing really well. All this is down to the help and support I received from my worker"

"My worker installed an alarm for me which made me feel much safer in my home as my ex was hanging around. My worker was extremely helpful, checking my benefit entitlement for me and we did a lot of work on coping strategies. She was lovely and always there for me".

"At the age of 62 I had to reach out and ask for Women's Aid help and I am so glad I did it. My worker gave me the strength to leave and start a fresh".

"I ended up getting support as a self referral after taking an anxiety attack. It was my CPN who gave me your number. I would not have got help with my mental health if it wasn't for Women's Aid. I feel doctors needed me to hit crisis point again before they would see me. Using your service I am able to speak to my worker about domestic abuse and she also put a referral into your Counsellor placement for Women's Aid to help with my mental health. This is really helping me. My worker has also been keeping me informed with different grants which I was eligible for and different opportunities and interests which she thinks would benefit me. I am really grateful to Women's Aid. Thank you.

"It is a wonderful service and I appreciate you so much. Summer holidays for kids with planning activities is amazing. Heads of Ayr Farm Park was such a good day. Great support you provide for kids.."

"You never judge, you are amazing, I would not say there is a better service anywhere else. You have helped myself and family members in the past and I always praise the service when I speak with anyone".

"Your service honestly go above and beyond for women and children. It is tough financially for me so I was overwhelmed with the kindness".