



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 2023 - December 2023.

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



Referrals

May 2023 - December 2023

Women Support Service (WSS)

From May to December we have had 396 WSS referrals, with 151 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 and other Women's Aid Groups.

Children and Young People Service (CYP)

We have received 47 referrals to our Children and Young People Service, 15 of these were received from a parent or family friend with the remainder from other organisations e.g Education or Social Work



Partnership Working May 2023 - December 2023

MARAC

We welcomed a new Chair, Louise White from Police Scotland to Marac in Autumn 2023 and this has been a smooth transition. Thank you to the Marac Co-ordinators Team and the professionalism of all who take part, with Marac now well established in South Ayrshire. On 1st June, all agencies got together for the first Ayrshire MARAC Learning Event to share ideas and learning.

Partnership working and good communication between the agencies are key to ensuring that the safety, security and wellbeing of our families at the highest risk are at the heart of what we do.

Violence Against Women and Girls Partnership

In November, our manager was involved in working in partnership with colleagues from Pan Ayrshire VAWG partnerships, to help organise and support a one-day pan-Ayrshire conference in conjunction with The Women's Support Project who delivered sessions on Commercial Sexual Exploitation at the Park Hotel, Kilmarnock.

Also, during 16 Days of Action, colleagues and service users from SAWA attended the Reclaim The Night Walk alongside many individuals, businesses and agencies to raise awareness of violence against women and girls and promote equality and safety for all.

Our assistant manager also attended 2 other walk and talk events hosted by South Ayrshire Council and NHS.

Partnership Working May 2023 - December 2023

River Garden, Auchincruive

Colleagues attended an open day to visit the new women's facilities being built at Auchincruive, viewed the gardens and greenhouses and learned about their unique recovery model and plans for the future, while enjoying coffee and cake.

We have continued our connection with Good Things Foundation - Improving lives through digital through an introduction by Simon and Sam, digital participation officers from West of Scotland Housing Association. The Foundation has provided tablet devices which we are able to loan out to our residents to use while in refuge.

The tablets make it easier to access information and submit applications for benefits/job applications etc.

We continue to have the support of a local volunteer driving instructor, Laura, who has supported one former client to pass her driving test in 2023, a vital new life skill which will help her achieve her aims and dreams for the future.

Learning Network West

We have linked in with Learning Network West because of information from VASA to provide a placement for social work students. Our manager will be accessing Link Worker Training in January with a view to a student starting with SAWA mid-January 2024



Freedom Group



The Freedom Group examines the tactics, attitudes and beliefs of the perpetrator and the impact on victims. We hope that by the end of the group we have helped women make sense of and understand what has happened to them and how their lives improve when the abuse is removed.

Our last group ran for twelve weeks through September to December and was a great success. It was attended by eight women who gave amazing feedback. They felt they were able to get a lot of healing and support from being part of the group, and because of this we are due to start with another programme which will begin in February.

Specialist Support Worker

The specialist support worker role has now been filled which will allow us to support more women across South Ayrshire. We also have student counsellors joining us which again allows us to offer more counselling services to our women.

The specialist support worker will be starting a PTSD group which will be beginning in February. This group will offer women peer support as well as specific support surrounding the symptoms of PTSD. This group has had extremely positive outcomes for women who have attended in the past. With the women reporting that they feel more confident, less anxious and some are even no longer displaying symptoms of PTSD.





Children and Young People's Service (CYP)

For school term 4 we continued our lunchtime drop in sessions within secondary schools and engaged with 307 CYP. For these, we provided CYP with a questionnaire to gain a snapshot of their understanding of healthy/abusive relationships. CYP were asked to rate their understanding of healthy relationships out of 10 (10 being the highest) 40% of CYP scored themselves 7 and under. CYP were also asked to rate their ability to recognise the warning signs of abuse out of 10, 49% scored themselves 7 and under.

CYP workers were able to organise trips during the summer holidays for CYP and their families. This was with support from funding from Cash for Kids. Families were offered the opportunity to take part in a trip to Ayr Farm Park, bowling and weekly games sessions at the beach. Glasgow Science Centre also provided us with a fully funded trip to visit them which included transport and lunch. These activities allowed CYP and their mothers a chance to interact with others in a positive way and take part in activities they may not have been able to do otherwise. Below are some comments from the CYP and their mums from the activities organised:

"I have enjoyed this a lot. Seeing the kids having fun and not having to worry."

"We have never been to the farm park before, it was great fun and the kids loved it. Getting lunch too made it much easier."

"We have loved these activities. It has been great to see the kids outdoors and enjoying themselves".

One of our CYP workers was invited to be involved in a training event with Scottish Women's Aid. This involved her meeting with other workers from across Scotland to discuss the work that we are doing with YP, how best to support them and provided an opportunity to network with other services.

Training Worker

Educating young people about healthy relationships and harmful behaviours is urgent work with 11 to 17 year olds being at the forefront of harms being perpetrated through apps and devices. Technology Facilitated Abuse impacts students daily with the sharing and re-sharing of sexual images without consent. The number one reason for a young person to not report the harm is 'they don't want to be the one to 'snitch' on friends and peers.' One of the impacts of delivering inputs to students in schools is that they learn about the age of consent for sharing sexual images as well as support and options available if that harm has been directed towards them, often from peers and friends.

Partnership building and collaboration were at the heart of the training role over the May to December period. This has involved establishing connections, building on existing partnerships and continued collaboration with schoolteachers, university staff and faculty and service providers across teams in South Ayrshire. This includes the Violent Against Women and Girls Joint Action Group, MVP Steering group, Trauma Informed Network, Equally Safe Scotland, NHS Ayrshire and Arran Health and Social Care partnership and South Ayrshire Council.

Some highlights included collaboration with Thriving Community officers to develop and deliver the "Who Are You" input which aims to educate young people on the bystander approach while inviting participants to reflect on their own values and behaviours that might inform future choices. We partnered with the student wellbeing team at University West Scotland, Ayr to deliver 4 workshops for UWS students, UWS staff and faculty. The workshops provided education about the patterns of coercive control and unpacked consent, reviewing sexual coercion from a rights lens.

Other training we have delivered includes four sessions to South Ayrshire Council teams with a focus on Technology Facilitated Abuse. This training offered information about the increased risk and rate of harm being perpetrated to children and young people through the misuse of technology, apps, and devices.

In Autumn 2023 our training worker completed the Safe and Together Model Train the Trainer training. This training promotes a domestic abuse informed practice across all sectors. As we marked the annual 16 Days of Activism in 2023, we delivered Sexual Coercion versus Consent inputs to sixth year female students in South Ayrshire Secondary schools. One of the plans moving forward in 2024 will be to deliver the same input to senior male students across the South Ayrshire education community. If you are interested in providing education, awareness or training to your team or staff, please contact our office.

Refuge Accommodation, The Willows

All CYP residing within refuge were asked on activities they would like to participate in and will be given the opportunity to take part in their chosen activities. This takes place fortnightly with 2 sessions having taken place so far. These sessions have allowed the children to play together and build on their friendships while they are living together.

Mothers in refuge were given the opportunity to take part in a parenting group ran in partnership with Barnardos. This allowed them to reinforce their parenting skills and give the reassurance that they are already supporting their children in a calm and nurturing way. All women who took part said they found this extremely helpful.

A huge thank you to both Muirhead Tenants and Residents Association and Ayrshire Quilters for their very generous donations to The Willows.

Live Job Vacancies

Would you like to become part of our fabulous team who support women, children and young people with experience of domestic abuse. To work with our service is very rewarding and offers great training opportunities. Please note closing date is . If you are interested in applying please visit:
www.southayrshirewomensaid.org.uk

Women's Support Worker (Outreach) Funded by the Scottish Government
Hours of work: 35 per week exclusive of lunch breaks. Salary: £28,246 PA

Children and Young Peoples Support Worker Funded by the Scottish Government

Hours of work: 35 per week exclusive of lunch breaks. Salary: £28,246 PA

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.



Donations

We would like to say a huge thank you for all the donations received over the past few months from cash, cheques, toiletries and clothes. With all of this kindness and generosity we have been able to help so many families in need of support.



Christmas Thank Yous



All Warriors Gym

We were overwhelmed with the Christmas donations received from All Warriors gym staff and members for families in our service. We are very grateful for their continued support over the years. All the gifts were collected and delivered by our SAWA Team in plenty of time for Christmas.

South Side Church

We are so thankful to have been able to deliver beautifully wrapped food hampers from Southside Church to our women. These were gratefully received by everyone and eased so much financial pressure for women to prepare a Christmas Dinner.

Holy Trinity Church

We were overjoyed to receive a Festival Tree invitation from Holy Trinity Church again this year. SAWA Christmas Tree was displayed in their beautiful church throughout the festive period. We are very grateful to all the congregation who also donated Christmas gifts and cash donations.

Stair Parish Church

Once again this year we received a tremendous amount of Christmas gifts from Stair Parish Church. This has been a continued support over the years and we are feel very blessed to have been chosen again this year.

Lily Simpson Brown

The most kind, caring and selfless young girl went above and beyond again this year, raising money and going out and buying Christmas gifts making sure all ages in our service were covered.

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.



"The service has made a world of difference to me, thank you."

"I am very happy with the service I had from you, really happy with everything you have done for me, with support, financial assistance, clothes, toiletries, housing. Every meeting I walk out with a smile. My worker is flexible, she picks times that are suitable for me"

"I get more support from you that any organisation I have had before. I enjoyed the group work and one to one support"

"It really has made such a difference. With the one to one support from my worker and group work I have took part in. You are a great service and helped me get back on the correct path. Your service , all of it is invaluable."

"I talk to people more and play with my best friend, you are my favourite, When I feel down, I have you to talk to."

"I would like to thank Women's Aid for making such a difference to my life. Between the support from the workers I am getting there. I have managed to overcome things I did not think would be possible. I really appreciate it."

"I would be lost without the service you provide"