



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 January 2023 - April 2023.

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

January 2023 - April 2023

Women Support Service (WSS)

Through January to April we have had 201 WSS referrals, with 61 of these being self-referrals. We have also taken many referrals from the Domestic Abuse Unit Police, Social Work and with the remainder from other organisations e.g. Assist, Education, Health, Housing.

Children and Young People Service (CYP)

We have received 33 referrals to Children, Young People Service, 11 of these were received from parent/family friend, with the remainder from other organisations e.g. School, Social Worker.



Partnership Working January 2023 - April 2023

MARAC

This is now very much established in South Ayrshire, with positive relationships building between the different agencies and excellent collaboration shown to help keep women and families safe. The WSS Team worked closely with partners involved in the MARAC including the police, housing, social work, education, and health professionals. We also work with and signpost clients to a wide range of services and organisations to help them with additional needs. For example, the Council's Information and Advice Hub and Scottish Welfare Fund for money matters, Ayr Housing Aid for housing issues, helping to make applications to local housing associations, national & local charities like The Trussell Trust for foodbank, Baby to Teen for clothing.

DIGBY BROWN

We are thrilled to share the good news that Digby Brown, Sandgate, Ayr have chosen us as their charity partner for 2023. The wonderful employees of the law firm participated in this year's Kiltwalk with donations being made directly to our service through Justgiving. This was a massive fundraising success raising over £1,500. Thank you to Sharon Reid, Lee Murray, Natalie Smith and Iona Brown who completed the Mighty Stride covering 22.7 miles.

Sincere thank you to Digby Brown for choosing us as their charity partner.

CO-OP LOCAL COMMUNITY FUND

Thank you to the Co-op Pioneers, staff members and customers who have chosen us as the charity they would like to support. When Co-op members buy selected Co-op branded products and services two pence for every pound spent goes to our service to support women and children with experience of domestic abuse.

We are thrilled to report £775 has been raised so far. If you are a Co-op member, please log in and choose us as your local cause. If you are not, it is easy to sign up by visiting www.coop.co.uk.

Partnership Working January 2023 - April 2023

THE GIFTED KIND

We collaborated again with local enterprise The Gifted Kind, who delivered weekly group sessions over 6 weeks for 3 women, with the aim to introduce wellbeing and mindfulness practices to their lives. Session Leader, Genna, described the course as 'A program designed for women to become the leaders of their own happiness. An opportunity to re-discover their identity and gain the self-awareness needed to take their life to the next level. A creative experience that will encourage individuals to re-imagine and re-connect with their life from the inside-out. Letting go of who they were before and making movement towards the person they are becoming.'

Some feedback:

"Genna has such a relaxing, calming voice, she certainly put me at ease. I enjoyed the "singing pot" in mediation. With the group in your office, I felt safe and with the private setting I felt I was able to open up freely. The office is very peaceful, I enjoy coming in".

"I felt the group was very supportive, you were not put under any pressure to talk although it was good to hear other stories and know I was not alone. I came out of the group looking forward to coming back the following week".

NATWEST CIRCLE FUND

We have had the benefit of Circles funding from NatWest Bank over the last 3 years which is now ending in June 2023. This fund has been used for many vital and diverse purposes such as emergency hotel accommodation; removal expenses; new white goods; emergency cash for essentials – all very gratefully received by our clients in times of crisis.

We would like to thank NatWest Bank for their generosity and Safelives.org for introducing SAWA to the Funding Circle and helping administer the scheme.

GOOD THINGS FOUNDATION

We have just recently connected 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.

YPI

YPI - YOUTH PHILANTHROPY INITIATIVE

This is a powerful active citizenship programme empowering young people to make a difference in their communities while developing a range of skills. It was introduced to Scotland in 2008 by the Wood Foundation.

We would like to thank all teachers and staff at Kyle Academy but most of all the amazing pupils who championed our charity by helping to raise awareness of domestic abuse and promoting our service. We are very fortunate to be awarded £3,000 which will benefit women, children and young people we support with experience of domestic abuse. THANK YOU !



FREEDOM GROUP

Our Freedom Group is an opportunity for women to attend a group based in our office and delivered to women who may be coming towards the end of their journey. The Freedom Group examines the tactics, attitudes and beliefs of the perpetrator and the impact on victims. At the end of this group our aim is to help women make sense and understand what has happened to them and also their children who have been exposed to the abuse and how the families life improves when the abuse is removed.

This group runs for a total of twelve weeks looking at different tactics, beliefs and actions of the perpetrator.

When this group comes to end we meet with the women to complete an evaluation and obtain feedback. Some quotes below:

"Shirley was very welcoming which I think encouraged chat amongst us all. She laid down the ground rules straightaway which made me feel much better because she spoke about confidentiality within the group. I felt better knowing this was all going to be kept private. I was really nervous about coming because I was unsure how I would open up (turns out really well) however that feeling of anxiousness was there at the beginning. I think having the ice breaker as well when we were all to say a silly name made us laugh and come together".

"I think learning about all the elements of someone having a dominating personality. Realising that things, I had accepted as normal was not, in fact way off. I think through most of the chapters I managed to reflect back on the things I knew which was not right. Having this kind of relationship does really rob you of who you really are".

"Attending the group has given me a boost to my self-esteem, confidence and aware more to keep a fresh eye on any patterns which I feel is not right".



Donations January 2023 - April 2023



We would like to say a massive thank you to ML Williams Funeral Directors and staff for your generous donation of Easter eggs to the children we support. All the kids will be thrilled to have a tasty treat at Easter time. Your kindness and continued support over the years means so much.

We are delighted to have received a donation of £500 from Ayrshire Housing which will contribute towards energy costs for our service-users.

Having these extra funds will ease some financial pressure on heating and electricity bills through the cost of living crisis. We would like to sincerely thank Ayrshire Housing for their kind donation to our service.



The Provincial Grand Lodge of Ayrshire kindly donated to our charity once again. We received £1,000 for our new upcoming project and we are very touched with this kind deed.



Children and Young People's Service (CYP)

CYP workers have continued to attend secondary schools weekly at lunchtime to offer a drop-in service to speak with CYP about the service and support. This has proved to be a beneficial experience as we have been able to engage with 61 CYP, highlighting our service.

CYP workers have also successfully completed Drawing and Talking Therapy training. This program allows individuals to discover and communicate emotions through a non-directed technique. Following completion of Drawing and Talking therapy, CYP are more able to control their behaviour and have higher self-esteem. This has been a valuable tool for the workers to engage with CYP in a non-direct way, offering a safe space for child led work to be carried out. The focus of the 12 weeks is establishing positive and secure relationships, which helps CYP work on their emotional regulation and overall promotes positive wellbeing.

They also successfully completed the CBT Toolkit. This is an introduction to the theory and practice of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy. It has provided CYP workers with the opportunity of learning and applying basic CBT tools, techniques and interventions which can be integrated into existing therapeutic approaches.

CYP workers carried out family work which was offered to CYP in outreach and those in refuge. During the Easter holidays, we worked in partnership again with the Gifted Kind, to run a Family Wellbeing Group. 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. It offered the families a safe space to explore their emotional wellbeing, whilst being encouraged to implement skills learned to aid their mental health and promote safe and open environments for each family in their own homes.

Thanks to the continued support from KidzOut, we were able to provide families both in refuge and outreach with Cinema Vouchers over the Easter Holidays.



Specialist Support Worker

The Specialist Support Worker position is going extremely well. As a humanistic counsellor Eilidh can facilitate a space here in the office where women who have experienced domestic abuse can attend and speak freely and safely. This service will build a trusting relationship with clients by being genuine, offering respect, unconditional positive regard and empathy. Our Specialist Support Worker uses a person-centred approach to understand a women's experience from their perspective. Eilidh values, believes and listens to the woman as a person accepting her views and opinions which is vital in helping the woman feel accepted, and better able to understand their own feelings. This approach can help the women to reconnect with their sense of self-worth which can encourage and enable them to find their own way to move forward and progress with this support.

Alongside this our Specialist Support Worker has been busy introducing herself and our service to doctors surgeries and mental health teams across South Ayrshire to highlight the support this role can provide to women.

Eilidh is really enjoying her job and feels it is a privilege to work with so many incredible women.



Training Worker

Our Training Worker has delivered a variety of awareness raising sessions, healthy relationships and gender-based violence workshops in this period. In secondary schools over 500 students from years S1 to S5 have participated in healthy relationship inputs. As part of these inputs to help people participate a bingo game was created which helped to generate discussions about behaviours and actions.

Each number is linked with a behaviour/action that pupils discussed if the behaviour or action was healthy, unhealthy or both then asked to explain why. Other inputs looked at the word banter and it was amazing how many meanings of banter the pupils came up with. For example it can go too far, hurt someone, makes someone feel bad or can be toxic. Other school and community engagements attended to promote the awareness of the support that SAWA can provide has included participation at Troon Primary's Whole Family Approach event, pupil networking events at Carrick and Girvan academies and a Love to Learn event for staff at Prestwick Academy.

We welcomed new volunteers to the team in January and they attended their first training with our Training Worker. This provided an opportunity to connect, learn, share and reflect on experiences and the value a volunteer can bring to the team and survivors of domestic abuse.

Students across secondary schools have been busy creating YPI presentations in March. Our training worker has been happy to talk to those students who have reached out to SAWA, expressing a passion for highlighting the impact of violence against women and girls, including sexual harassment in person and online. Workshops were delivered to UWS students in collaboration with the UWS student wellbeing team. To date, two sessions have been offered to students in residence and all UWS students which saw representation from each of the campuses.

Feedback included:

"I thought this was an amazing experience and I had no idea the university offered such services".

Students also learned about the range of supports and services that are available on campus and online to support all UWS students. Other sessions have been scheduled for later months. Other highlights over the last few months included attending a staff meeting at Ayrshire housing where the team participated in International Women's Day 2023 trivia, supporting this year's theme #embracing equity.

Refuge Accommodation, The Willows

Refuge has been busy over the past few months, at the start of the year we were busy in our craft group, where we made keyrings for the families forever homes. We also celebrated Galentines day by decorating our notice board. We decided to celebrate Galentines instead of valentines as Galentines is about women supporting women and in refuge all the women are fantastic at supporting each other.



We also enjoyed a few celebrations over this time, we came together as a group to celebrate Burns Day where we savoured a traditional Burns supper. It was a very enjoyable afternoon.

We also had an afternoon tea for International Women's Day where we discussed women who inspired us in our lives. This was a very empowering discussion, and it allowed the women in refuge to see their strengths.



The first few months of the year saw a few of our families/women move to their forever homes which was extremely exciting for all concerned. South Ayrshire Council, West of Scotland Housing and Ayrshire housing were the organisations that provided these homes.

Christ in Action kindly donate meat parcels to the refuge each week which is welcomed by all families living there.

Linear Landscaping maintains our garden fortnightly, and it is looking fantastic. The late HRH Queens Tree is flourishing. All the children are enjoying playing on the new equipment that was donated last year from Lochlie Construction.

We would like to welcome Leanne our new Refuge and Outreach Support Worker who will be based at 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 with great training opportunities. Please note closing date is Monday 19th June 2023 at 12 noon. If you are interested in applying please visit:

www.goodmoves.com

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

The purpose is to provide a range of information, advocacy and face to face support services to women that access the service independently or by referral and to deliver this service in an outreach capacity within South Ayrshire. Participation in an On Call rota for families living in our refuge accommodation. All staff are expected to promote equality and anti-discriminatory practice and to work with women who may have multiple and complex needs.

Qualification requirements – a relevant SVQ qualification at level 6 or above to meet registration requirements of the SSSC or willing to work towards.

A full driving licence is required as is the ability to travel throughout South Ayrshire.

This post is subject to membership of PVG scheme. Women only need apply. This post is covered by a Genuine Occupational Requirement (Schedule 9; Equality Act 2010).

Children and Young People's Support Worker Funded by the Scottish Government

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

The post holder will provide services to children and young people with experience of domestic abuse within refuge accommodation and throughout South Ayrshire area. These services are delivered:

- While children and young people are resident in our communal refuge or in the dispersed accommodation available to us.
- On a follow-on basis when they move to permanent accommodation from refuge.
- When children and young people access the service independently on an outreach basis.
- When children and young people are referred by agencies and others.

Qualification requirements – a relevant childcare qualification at level 6 or above to meet registration requirements of the SSSC.

A full driving licence is required as is the ability to travel throughout South Ayrshire.

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.



"The support I have been given I can't put into words. To be honest it really has overwhelmed me. You have done so much, more than I ever expected from a service. I have enjoyed participated in group work on a Tuesday".

"I think you provide a fantastic service and it is essential to have. There are so many women who are experiencing domestic abuse and I think you should employ more workers to help more women. You do so much, I come into office for support and I know I can call my worker anytime I need to speak to her in between. I started Freedom Group last week which I think will be good for me going forward, meeting new people. I think I will start to open up more in these. I also see your volunteer Counsellor and she has been excellent for me as well. Thank you to all staff".

"I would like to say thank you to your service. I am continuing to get so much out of this on my road to recovery. The support has been great and I really appreciate it all. I have an alarm as well which makes me feel safer. I also have court case coming up soon and my support worker is going to help me with this and look at CBT down the line. I think you are a wonderful service. Thank you".

"My friends and family have noticed how much I have come on from using your service. It is good that my close family can see a difference in me. I wouldn't be able to have done this without the support. Slowly getting back to myself after years of unhappiness and moving on with my life".

"I always felt safe and happy in the refuge. All the staff made me feel I could take to them. I am going to miss everyone and staying here a lot. Thank you for your help and making me the person I am today, it means everything to me. I will never forgot you all. Thank you from the bottom of my heart".