

Specialised in supporting women, children & young people in Caithness & Sutherland to stay safe from domestic abuse

CASWA

Caithness and Sutherland Women's Aid



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SPOTLIGHT ON CASWA

32 Referrals
April-June 2021



68 women currently receiving support



47 children & young people currently receiving support



"CASWA HAS SAVED ME...I THINK THAT IF I HADN'T GOT SUPPORT, I WOULD NOT BE THE PERSON I AM TODAY: STRONG, KNOWLEDGEABLE AND HAPPY."

~
Young Person, aged 16 years.

The pandemic - One year on...

Like so many other frontline services & organisations, we have kept going throughout the last year... We quickly adapted, navigating our way through a completely unfamiliar world to ensure that women, children & young people had access to support, albeit remotely, throughout. Thanks to generous grants & donations, we were also able to ensure that we could also provide practical support which we know has made a huge difference to many individuals we work with.



The year certainly hasn't been without its difficulties, but we are so proud of what we have achieved. We have learned so much which will influence our service going forward... The pandemic forced us re-think how we deliver support & provided us with many other options in addition to face to face support, such as phone calls, emails, messages, video calling & outdoor support. While these have always been available as options, we have become much more effective (and confident!) at using them over the last year. This last quarter, after restrictions lifted following the second lockdown, our team have been delighted to return (thorough risk assessments in hand!) to face-to-face support. However, we appreciate that everyone feels differently & will continue to provide alternative options to support to everyone accessing our service. Over the last quarter, we have also been planning a self-care program for our team which will be taking place over the Summer months! We have a passionate, dedicated and driven team who make CASWA the organisation that it is. We've never worked through a period like this before, but rest assured we are looking after our team too!

Box of Gratitude

We would like to say a huge **THANK YOU** to **Kris Hamilton / Through Performance (Caithness)** for raising **£450** for CASWA through profits from sales of gym t-shirts! On handing over the cheque, Kris said, "I appreciate everything this group does and hopefully this money will go a long way. This is what our Through Performance group is all about – creating a strong community for the community that we live in, and appreciating everything that we have on our doorstep." Read more in the press article in the [John O'Groat Journal](#).



THANKYOU

Other News...

FUNDING: We don't often share the behind the scenes work that goes on at CASWA that contributes significantly to the successful day to day running of CASWA. In May, we submitted our application to the Delivering Equally Safe Fund to fund our work from 2021-2023. Delivering Equally Safe is the name of the Scottish Government fund which supports third sector organisations and public bodies to contribute to the objectives, priorities and outcomes of the Equally Safe strategy! Our management team were delighted to hit the "submit" button after months of hard work putting together a comprehensive application for funding. ...And now we keep our fingers crossed!



Women's Service

It has been a busy quarter in our Women's Service: we waved goodbye to one of our Domestic Abuse Specialists from our Women's Team this quarter as she moved onto pastures new and we are currently recruiting to fill this vacancy. In other news, one of our Domestic Abuse Specialists was promoted to Team Leader of our Women's Service, a new position in this service!



WALK LEADER TRAINING: Some of our team recently attended walk leader training which has given them the skills and confidence to lead more mindful walks as part of support sessions for women. Throughout the pandemic we have been doing more outdoor support and found the women were able to open up and talk more freely while out on a walk. We are in the process of exploring this further. Watch this space.

GROUP WORK: Our Sutherland Women's support group met up recently (following all COVID19 guidance) and did stone painting and decoupage. The women who attend these group sessions have said on a number of occasions that they get a lot out of being around other women referring to the groups as a relaxing and safe space, and somewhere that gives them a sense of belonging.

CASWA's Tips

Consider "covering your tracks" online as part of keeping yourself safe. Our website has a "Leave Now" button, as do many sites similar to ours. Further advice can be sought from the following websites:

<https://www.womensaid.org.uk/cover-your-tracks-online/>
<https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/covering-your-tracks-online>

FEEDBACK: As a person-centred & person-led service, we always ask people accessing our service for feedback about the support that they have received - this helps us to ensure that the support we are providing is right for them and helps us to understand how we can improve our service. Here is some feedback we received over the past few months from children & young people!

"I like having someone to talk to...
...you understand things others don't"

"I FEEL LISTENED TO....
...I CAN TALK ABOUT MY PROBLEMS & DON'T FEEL JUDGED..."

Children & Young People's Service

FACE-TO-FACE SUPPORT IN SCHOOLS: This has been a busy quarter for our CYP Team as we have returned to face-to-face support with children & young people. Thanks to great support from our partners in Education & their recognition of the key role we play in the lives of children & young people who have experienced domestic abuse, during the Spring/Summer term we were able to return to our work in schools. We took time at the end of term to pass on our thanks and appreciation to all the schools we worked in this year. We would also like to dedicate some space in our newsletter to acknowledge all the work done by school communities during an incredibly difficult year: **THANK YOU** 🌟

SUPPORT PLANS: Our CYP team have been busy re-developing our support plans to make them more user friendly & easier for all children & young people to use & understand. We asked them their feedback and ideas and we're now spending the Summer redesigning our support plans and renaming them support "journeys" in acknowledgement of the fact that support is a journey for children and young people and we are passengers on their journey to help them along their way.

~ Self Care Boxes ~

We've been busy working with some children and young people to put together self care boxes. The idea behind these is that young people have something to go to & use when they are struggling, feeling low, stressed or anxious. This helps to promote self care and healthy strategies for dealing with difficult feelings. Each box is different & personalised to each young person. We spent time during support sessions exploring what should go in their box and what would help and support them. In the photo is some examples of some of the bits and pieces CASWA purchased for young people for their boxes - a great example of the kind of thing that donations to CASWA might go towards!



Awareness Raising, Prevention & Education



IF YOU'RE ANYTHING LIKE OUR TEAM, YOU'RE ALWAYS LOOKING FOR NEW RECOMMENDATIONS... HERE'S WHAT OUR TEAM HAVE BEEN WATCHING, READING & LISTENING TO RECENTLY...

THE HANDMAID'S TALE - SEASON 4 (CHANNEL 4)

WARRIOR NUN (NETFLIX)

SWEET TOOTH (NETFLIX)

LIE WITH ME (CHANNEL 5)

THE BRIDGE (BBC IPLAYER)

THIS IS US (AMAZON PRIME)

THE MIDNIGHT LIBRARY BY MATT HAIG

CONCRETE ROSE BY ANGIE THOMAS

ELEANOR OLIPHANT IS COMPLETELY FINE BY GAIL HONEYMAN

CASTLES OF STEEL & THUNDER BY GAIL BROWN (LOCAL AUTHOR!)

MUSIC BY: FIRST AID KIT & HOLLOW COVES

WORKSHOPS & INFORMATION SESSIONS: This quarter we delivered a workshop session to Dounreay employees as part of our community-based efforts to raise awareness of domestic abuse and our service within our community. We also delivered an information session to the Caithness Children & Family Team - a team we work very closely with as part of our multi-agency work.

NEW PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL: You may remember, in our last newsletter, we shared some great news about a group of pupils from Golspie High School who picked CASWA as their charity of focus for their Youth Philanthropy Initiative (YPI) project. Their work led to CASWA winning £3,000! ...Not only this, the group created an animation about CASWA as part of their work and have granted us permission to use this for promotional purposes! Keep your eyes peeled for a blog post on this in August.

PREVENTION WORK: One of our Domestic Abuse Specialists from our CYP Team spent time during lockdown developing a resource for use in future group-based prevention work. The program is a six week program aimed at teenagers covering topics from healthy relationships to abusive relationships to consent to gender and we will be rolling this out locally as part of our prevention work in future. Please get in touch with us if you'd like to hear more.

WEBSITE: Our new website went "live" a couple of years ago and it is time to take a closer look to make sure it is as good as it can be! As a service we always strive to improve and develop, so this quarter we asked partner agencies, service users and our community to provide us with some feedback about our website via a questionnaire. We were delighted to learn that by and large, peoples experiences with and views of our website were positive. Feedback was extremely helpful in helping us to put together an action plan which we will be working on over the next couple of months. If you've not visited our website before, have a look around: www.caswa.org.uk

BLOG: Our team have been extremely busy over the last few months, so our blog has been sadly been a wee bit neglected! This quarter we spent time [connecting with nature](#) and considering all the ways that being in/with nature supports our mental wellbeing during mental health week in May. We also wrote a blog about how [finances can be impacted by domestic abuse](#). To have a read of these, click the highlighted links or visit www.caswa.org.uk/blog



FEMINIST CORNER

AT CASWA, WE'RE A TEAM OF FEMINISTS WHO BELIEVE IN CREATING AN EQUAL WORLD! WE'RE HERE TO HAVE IMPORTANT CONVERSATIONS ABOUT GENDER EQUALITY AND PROMOTE THE ROLE AND VALUE OF FEMINISM AT A LOCAL LEVEL.

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES:

Are you an interested member of the community? A professional wanting to undertake some professional development? There are some great e-learning opportunities available at the moment.

Scottish Women's Aid is the lead Scottish organisation developing exciting, innovative domestic abuse training informed both by leading research and practice. Women's Aid groups and the women, children and young people supported by them throughout the country inform these training courses. Scottish Women's Aid trainings are open to anyone - survivors, people wanting to learn more, interested professional. Find out more here:

<https://womensaid.scot/learning-development/>

Another learning opportunity is webinars and courses led by Dr. Jessica Taylor of Victim Focus. Find out more here: <https://www.victimfocus.org.uk/> or here:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/dr-jessica-taylor-12172989597>

CAMPAIGN: YOU CAN BE

a campaign by Zero Tolerance to tackle gender stereotyping in the early years. The campaign aims to raise awareness of how harmful gender stereotyping can be and aims to start important conversations! This is a campaign that aligns very closely with our work at CASWA. Let's move towards a world where children (and adults) aren't restricted or limited by the pressures of gender stereotypes and ALL children express and explore who they are and reach their FULL potential without the pressures of gender stereotypes! Find out more here: <https://www.zerotolerance.org.uk/you-can-be/>

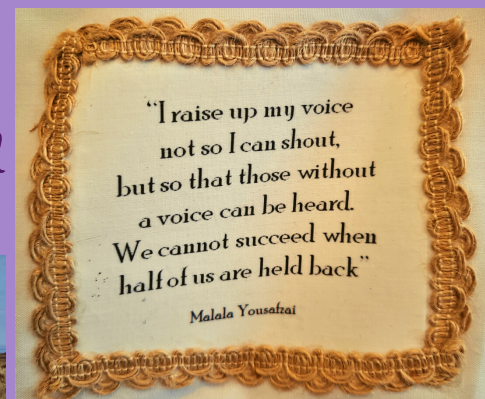


CHECK OUT THIS TED TALK

- LESLIE MORGAN STIENER: WHY DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS DON'T LEAVE - THIS TED TALK ADDRESSES THE QUESTION "WHY DOESN'T SHE JUST LEAVE?". THIS IS A COMPLEX QUESTION OFTEN ASKED, BUT POORLY UNDERSTOOD. IT IS A QUESTION WHICH DESERVES TO BE ANSWERED AND UNDERSTOOD WITH COMPASSION, SENSITIVITY AND AWARENESS.

Empowered Women Empower Women

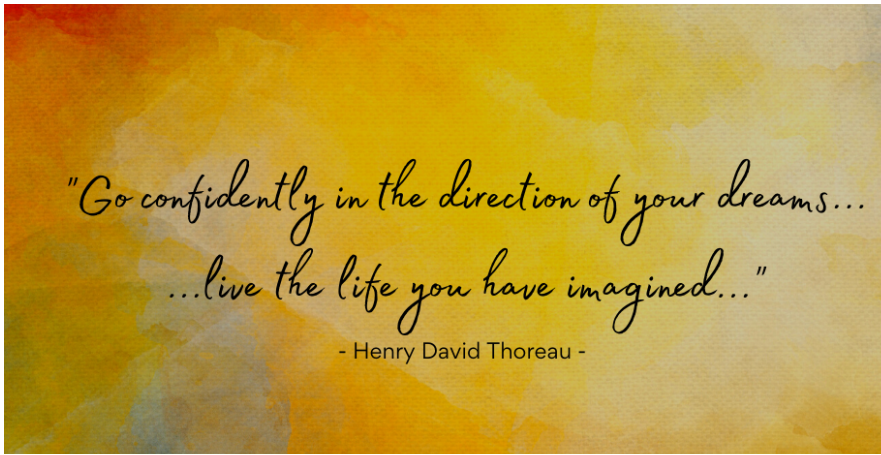
ONE OF OUR TEAM, STANDING TALL, PROUDLY SPORTING THE 13LBS OF LOVE FUNDRAISER T-SHIRT BY NORTH LANDS GLASS X SILVIA LEVENSON. GOT YOUR T-SHIRT YET? IF NOT, THERE IS STILL TIME TO GET YOURSELF A PIECE OF WEARABLE ART AND RAISE FUNDS FOR CASWA. READ MORE ABOUT THE FUNDRAISER AND SILVIA'S WORK ON THE NORTH LANDS GLASS WEBSITE.



POWERFUL WORDS FROM MALALA YOUSAFZAI PRINTED ONTO FABRIC BY ONE OF OUR TEAM AS PART OF A CASWA BANNER INCLUDED IN THE 2018 EXHIBITION, "FROM WIFEY TO WIFE" AT LYTH ARTS CENTRE. THE EXHIBITION EXPLORED THE CHANGING ROLES OF WOMEN IN CAITHNESS.

CUT OUT & KEEP

Some bits and pieces for a scrapbook, your journal, a vision board, your wall, etc



- Henry David Thoreau -

CROCHET

Why not give it a go! Check out this [YouTube](#) tutorial or search for Bella Coco on YouTube



During the last lockdown I decided to teach myself to crochet, this was after one of our CYP team came down to one of our Women's groups to give instruction on the subject a couple of years ago. I initially found it very difficult to get the hang of the hook and wool and reading a pattern...forget it! I eventually went onto YouTube and with determination (and following the instructions on the video, which is easier seeing it step by step!) I managed to get the hang of it. We were also expecting an addition to the family (my great niece) and spotted this blanket and thought I would give it a try. The first one ended up lopsided and had to be taken back but I stuck with it and produced the blanket in the picture which I love, the colours are bright and vibrant, my niece loved it and hopefully baby will delight in the colours as she gets older.

Give it a Go Recipes, self-care, crafts, etc

Oatmeal Raisin (Soft & Chewy) Cookies - Makes 16-18

Ingredients

240 g raisins - Optional: Soak raisins in boiled water for 10 minutes. Drain then pat dry. (This makes them plumper).

225 g flour (plain)

1/2 tsp salt

1/2 tsp baking powder

1 tsp cinnamon powder

250g / 8 oz (2 sticks) unsalted butter at room temperature

220 g brown sugar

220 g white sugar

2 large eggs at room temperature

3 cups rolled oats

Instructions

Preheat oven to 180°C/350°F (160°C fan). Line 2 trays with parchment/baking paper.

Sift dry ingredients: Sift flour, salt, baking powder and cinnamon into a bowl.

Cream/beat butter and sugar until creamy/fluffy.

Add eggs: Beat in eggs one at a time until incorporated.

Add the flour using a wooden spoon to stir the flour mixture in.

Stir in oats and raisins - this requires a bit of effort as the dough gets firm!

Roll and flatten into 16-18 balls and place onto baking trays 4"/10cm apart. I use an ice cream scoop. Then press down to slightly flatten into a thick disc shape.

Bake for 11 minutes. Then swap the trays between the shelves AND turn the trays around. Bake for a further 11 - 14 minutes, or until cookies are golden on the edges and LIGHT golden on the surface.

Cool on the trays for 5 minutes before transferring to cooling rack. Cool for 30 minutes before serving.



We love exchanging dinner ideas or recipes! One of our team keeps talking about these cookies & making us all very hungry! We'll definitely be making these...! Why don't you "give it a go" too...?



Yoga Nidra : Sleep is so essential and yet sometimes so elusive! Some of our team find yoga nidra practice a great tool to induce sleep naturally, connecting within & to the body. They use it as a way to transition into sleep, or as a way to bring meditation into napping. When you can't sleep, it can be due to physical factors, mental and emotional factors, or a combination of both. One of our team says, "Yoga nidra helps me with this and is my absolute 'go to'."

You can find out more online or via various apps.

Favourites of our team are:

<https://www.vitality-inner-sanctum.com/>

App - Insight timer

App - Yoga Nidra Deep Relaxation Practice



Ever heard of "vision boards"...? ...Ever made one? ...Fancy giving it a go? We're a team of vision-boarders here at CASWA & we've put together a blog post all about them (including a "how to") over on our website!

Why not "give it a go"? Have a read of our blogpost to find out more:

www.caswa.org.uk/blog