

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

CASWA

Caithness and Sutherland Women's Aid

0345 408 151 - www.caswa.org.uk - info@caswa.org.uk



50 Referrals
July-September 2022

72 women currently
receiving support

63 children & young
people currently
receiving support

Volunteering Opportunity!



The Gift Project

Our volunteer-run project, The Gift Project, was set up in 2019 to provide gift boxes of essential items to women, children and young people supported by CASWA. The founder of the project, Annie, is stepping back and we're looking for a new volunteer to help CASWA to continue Annie's fabulous work. More information about the project can be found on our website: <https://www.caswa.org.uk/blog/volunteer-week-gift-project-update>. If you are interested in hearing more about this opportunity, please e-mail us: info@caswa.org.uk

Kaleidoscope Schools Tour

In 2019 our Children & Young People's Service secured funding from the Highland Violence Against Women Partnership to bring Kaleidoscope, a dramatisation of one woman's story of domestic abuse by Breeze Productions, to high schools in Caithness and Sutherland. The tour has been on hold due to the pandemic, but at the end of September our team were finally able to start this tour and bring the performance to audiences of S4-S6 pupils from Farr High School and Golspie High School and S5 pupils from Wick High School. Over 3 days, over 200 pupils saw the production and had the opportunity to spend time with our team exploring the facts and myths about domestic abuse and violence against women. It was a great week for our Children & Young People's Team who are passionate advocates of prevention, education and awareness work, particularly with young people.



CASWA's Children & Young People's Team have great relationships with local schools and value working alongside them. We'd like to thank Farr, Wick & Golspie High Schools for welcoming us in with open arms. Our team look forward to continuing the tour later this year!

16 Days - A busy time for activism in CASWA's calendar

Those who know CASWA well won't be surprised to hear that we are already putting plans in place for this year's 16 days. Running from 25th November until 10th December, it is the international, annual period of activism against gender-based violence. Make sure you're following us on social media to keep up to date with this year's plans!

Box of Gratitude



If you follow us on social media, you might remember that last Summer North Lands Creative ran a t-shirt fundraiser for CASWA in collaboration with glass artist Silvia Levenson. The t-shirt featured Silvia's iconic piece 13lb of love. An amazing total of £1,102 was raised for CASWA from this fundraiser! We'd like to say a huge **THANK YOU** to all at North Lands Creative & Silvia Levenson!



We'd like to say a big **THANK YOU** to North Coast Competitions who donated £500 to CASWA after CASWA was selected by one of their competition winners to receive their charity donation! We would also like to say thank you to their competition winner for thinking of CASWA and putting us forward!



Women's Service



Mini Retreat: We were very fortunate to be able to hold a mini-retreat in the beautiful setting of Forse of Nature for a group of women supported by CASWA. The retreat was run by Donna Booth from Vitality, an award-winning wellbeing specialist. Our retreat day began with learning a little about the benefits of meditation and a short meditation session. We then did some chair yoga - everyone was amazed at how much better we felt afterwards. After a delicious lunch made by Forse of Nature and a wee look in the craft shop, we ventured out into the woodland garden for a mindful walk. Walking at a very slow pace allowed us the time and peace to really take in the sounds, colours and textures surrounding us. We gathered twigs, leaves, feathers and anything that caught our eye or that gave us joy. In the cosy classroom we then made mindful creative designs with the pieces that we had picked - we've shared a picture opposite! The women loved their day of peace and tranquility away from the hustle and bustle and the worries of everyday life giving themselves the space and time to reconnect with nature!

Woodwork Workshop: Our women's group in Sutherland attended a woodwork workshop at Lairg Learning Center at the end of September as an opportunity to try something new. We were set a task of making a box with a hinged lid after running through the health and safety essentials. We were shown how to choose the right piece of wood, how to measure properly with a set square and cut our wood with the chop saw (a large machine that makes a very scary noise!), how to glue, drill holes for the screws and have a lid that opens and stays open via attached hinges. Learning to use the tools properly made the process far less daunting. Everyone went home with their box ready to decorate at home.



Own My Life: After delivering our first Own My Life course in Caithness at the start of this year, we're half way through delivery of our second course with a group of 7 women in Sutherland. We've had some great feedback so far, which speaks for itself:

"Feel like a weight is off my shoulders" "I feel encouraged" "I don't feel alone"
 "I feel more confident that I am going to get better and things will be okay"

"Coming has been validating that I am in the right place and it [the abuse] wasn't normal". We'll continue to deliver this course into October and November and look forward to providing another update in our next newsletter!

Feedback from one woman supported by CASWA
 "Thank you so much for coming to see me, thank you for your time and help and support. Gratitude from the bottom of my heart, you are doing an amazing job. Without your help and support we could not have managed. Our lives will be different. You are certainly making fascinating differences and transformation in people's lives! Thank you so much for that!"

A BIG welcome to our new Manager, Karen Wilks, who joined CASWA at the start of August!

Karen brings with her over 10 years of experience working within the support sector in roles with Women's Aid, Citizens Advice Bureau and Victim Support Scotland and has predominately specialised in domestic abuse within the Scottish Criminal Justice System. Karen is a Mum of two sons who are now young men and tell us she has two (very spoilt!) dogs! Karen wishes to add:

"I have moved to the area to take up the role of Manager at CASWA and I am very much enjoying learning all that Caithness and Sutherland has to offer. I have been fortunate to inherit a very dedicated, passionate and supportive team who I am getting to know. I very much look forward to working with them in the continued growth of CASWA".



Feedback we received from a Mum of children supported by our service:

"You have been our lighthouse in the storm of our lives. Thanks for being the hope for the children that they can trust and be respected."

Children & Young People's Service

Training: Over Summer our Children & Young People's Team took some time out for professional development. We had a practical, messy day with our two local Primary Mental Health Workers exploring therapeutic creative approaches to our work with children and young people. Later in the Summer, two members of our team attended bereavement training which was delivered locally by Crocus (of Highland Hospice) - a bereavement support service for children and young people living in Highland. We really value our multi-agency partners and both these training days were excellent examples of professionals working together, sharing practice to deliver the best possible support to children and young people.



Messy Play for Teens: During summer we held a messy craft session for some of our teens. We got together, made lots of mess and made our own D.I.Y stress balls. Our teens (and our team!) had a great time and we have more group activities like this planned in future! The importance of messy "play" can be overlooked for teenagers, but at CASWA we really see the value in providing opportunities like this for young people - they too need the opportunity and permission to play and be creative!

Mindful Beach Combing: One of our young people recently went beach combing during their support session. We mindfully scoured the beach to try to find an item for every colour of the rainbow. The young person found this to be a valuable session and enjoyed having time to "escape from home and not have to think". Our team often bring mindful activities into our support sessions, be that through mindful breathing or mindful activities (like beach combing, creative activities, meditation, etc).

Mindfulness...

AWARENESS RAISING, EDUCATION & PREVENTION



Guest Speaker at LGOWIT Forum - Our deputy manager, Emma, was invited to be one of the guest speakers at LGOWIT's (Let's Get On With It Together) Forum on resilience in September. She was asked to talk about empowerment and her session explored what empowerment looks like in a trauma-informed domestic abuse and highlighted why it was such an important part of CASWA's working practice. She also briefly explored how we can all become more empowered in our own lives. Her session was based on a blog post she wrote recently which can be read here: <https://www.caswa.org.uk/blog/empowerment>



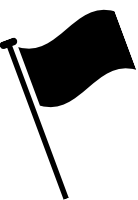
Own My Life - To celebrate and mark the completion of our first delivery of the Own My Life course, Kate (Domestic Abuse Specialist and course facilitator from our team) wrote a blog post to share on our website. The blog aims to raise awareness of Own My Life, an exciting and new addition to our support package. The blog tells the story of CASWA's first delivery of this course and the impact it had on the women who attended in their own words. To read more, please click here: <https://www.caswa.org.uk/blog/own-my-life>



UHI Fresher's Fayre - How we've missed the fresher's fayres at UHI over the past couple of years! We were delighted to see them return this year. Over two days in September, Emma, Lynsay, Laura, Lucy and Jean from our team attended the Fresher's Fayres at the Dornoch and North Highland College UHI campuses. As per tradition, we asked students and staff to get involved in our stall! This year they were asked to complete a red flag and add it to our board with their ideas of what they would consider a red flag in a relationship. As usual, we had great conversations and we'd like to thank everyone who stopped by to speak with us. Engagement with our stall was so good we were able to collect all the ideas from the day and create a blog post which can be read over on our website:



<https://www.caswa.org.uk/blog/red-flags-according-to-students>



What we've been watching, reading and listening to...



Newspaper article - "I'm a Psychologist - and I believe we've been told devastating lies about mental health", written by Sanah Ahsan and published in The Guardian newspaper at the start of September. The article opens up some important conversations about mental health, adopting a trauma-informed perspective by shifting the question from "what is wrong with you?" to one which considers the environment and circumstances surrounding individuals and the consequent impact on their mental health. To read the article, click the link here: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/sep/06/psychologist-devastating-lies-mental-health-problems-politics>



You Tube Video: Tea & Consent - This is a video we often return to. A simple, quick guide to consent using tea as a metaphor - very effective! Watch it here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pZwvrxVavnQ&t=46s>



The Police Scotland "Don't be that guy" campaign which was launched in 2021 has started making the rounds again. This campaign was launched to help target sexual violence towards women. To read more about it and watch the video, Click the link: <https://www.scotland.police.uk/what-s-happening/news/2021/october/police-scotland-launches-new-campaign-urging-men-to-call-time-on-sexual-crime/>

There are services available which provide help and support around experiences of sexual violence. Visit: <https://www.rasash.org.uk/> or contact the Scottish Domestic Abuse and Forced marriage helpline on 0800 027 1234



FEMINIST CORNER

There has been so much concerning, heart-breaking and scary news coverage recently which has really brought home the fact that we do not live in an equal world. We continue to live in a world that affords some people less rights than others, evidenced in backwards steps in reproductive rights in America, the policing of how women dress in Iran and the removal of the right to education for girls in Afghanistan, to name only three current examples of inequality worldwide. It is so important that we remain informed and educated, that we advocate and take action. ...However, it is also true that sometimes it can all be over-whelming, it can feel like we'll never get there and perhaps sometimes we just don't have the headspace or it all feels too close to home. Sometimes we need to take a step back from the news, from our activism and look after ourselves and this is okay...

Equality...? We're not there yet!

CUT OUT & KEEP

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



Autumn is the season that teaches us that change can be beautiful...

GIVE IT A GO...



A couple of Autumnal activities...why not give them a go...

PUMPKIN APPLE STAMPS



EASY CROCK-POT BUTTERNUT SQUASH SOUP

INGREDIENTS

- 1 large butternut squash, peeled and cut into large cubes
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1 carrot, peeled and chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 4 sprigs thyme
- 1 sprig sage
- 720ml chicken or vegetable broth (or dissolve a stock cube in enough water to cover the veg)
- Salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- Pinch of cayenne pepper
- Heavy cream, for serving
- Freshly chopped parsley, for garnish

DIRECTIONS

In a large slow cooker, combine butternut squash, onion, carrot, garlic, thyme, and sage. Pour in broth and season with salt, pepper, and a pinch of cayenne.

Cover and cook until squash is very tender, on low for 8 hours or on high for 4 hours. Remove herb sprigs and use an immersion blender to blend soup until smooth.

Stir in cream and garnish with parsley before serving.

If you don't have a slow cooker, simply fry off the vegetables in a soup pan, add the broth/stock cube & water and seasoning and boil until veg cooked.

Omit the fresh herbs if you don't have them! Enjoy!



AUTUMN FIRES

In the other gardens
And all up the vale,
From the autumn bonfires
See the smoke trail!

Pleasant summer over
And all the summer flowers,
The red fire blazes,
The grey smoke towers.

Sing a song of seasons!
Something bright in all!
Flowers in the summer,
Fires in the fall!

~ Robert Louis Stevenson.

