

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

35 Referrals
July-September 2023

99
women receiving
support

55
children & young people
receiving support

"Never doubt that a group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

Margaret Mead

The CASWA Team! As you might have noticed, we've had a busy recruitment spell this quarter and have been looking forward to welcoming new members to our team. At the end of September we held a facilitated **team development day**. This was a great opportunity for our new and existing team members to work together and look towards the future of CASWA. It is an exciting time and we all look forward to working together to deliver, grow and develop as a specialist organisation for women, children and young people who have experienced domestic abuse in Caithness and Sutherland.

Looking Forward - As we head swiftly towards the end of the year, we enter an important time in CASWA's annual calendar: **16 Days**. The 25th November to 10th December is the annual international period of activism against gender-based violence and abuse, otherwise known as 16 days. It is a time to raise awareness, start conversations, create ripples, promote change and take a stand against gender-based violence and abuse. Last year, our book fairies returned for a second year, we held two successful events with the Highland Violence Against Women Partnership and we also spent time engaging local men in conversations and introducing them to the White Ribbon campaign and pledge - a hugely successful and well received campaign where we reached over 50 local men. Read more about this here: <https://www.caswa.org.uk/blog/white-ribbon-campaign-2022> We're still planning for 16 Days 2023, but the CASWA book fairies are definitely returning to share some great literature with the Caithness and Sutherland community while raising awareness of CASWA. They're looking for suggestions at the moment and love to share literature which is women-centred and/or has feminism or gender equality at its core - if you'd like to send them a suggestion, please do get in touch and we'll pass it on! If you'd like to hear more, read about last year's book fairy project here: <https://www.caswa.org.uk/blog/caswas-book-fairy-project-2022>

Box of Gratitude

'The gift boxes were fantastic, thank you. They were all lovely items and the kids were happy, its very much appreciated.'

Our team would like to say a big thank you to our volunteer-run sister project, The Gift Project. Via kind donations made to the project, it provides gift boxes of essential items to women, children and young people working with our service and their families. Above is a message of thanks from a recent recipient of gift boxes and below is a message from one of our team :



"I would like to say a big thank you to The Gift Project for the amazing gift boxes that were given to families recently. The families were delighted when I dropped them off, it takes so much pressure off families and I can really see the difference it makes."



thank you

MY BILL OF RIGHTS

- I HAVE THE RIGHT TO SAY 'NO'
- I HAVE THE RIGHT NOT TO BE ABUSED
- I HAVE THE RIGHT TO EXPRESS ANGER
- I HAVE THE RIGHT TO CHANGE MY LIFE
- I HAVE THE RIGHT TO FREEDOM FROM FEAR OF ABUSE
- I HAVE THE RIGHT TO REQUEST AND EXPECT ASSISTANCE FROM POLICE AND SOCIAL CARE AGENCIES
- I HAVE THE RIGHT TO WANT A BETTER ROLE MODEL OF COMMUNICATION FOR MY CHILDREN
- I HAVE THE RIGHT TO RAISE MY CHILDREN IN SAFETY
- I HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE TREATED LIKE AN ADULT, AND WITH RESPECT
- I HAVE THE RIGHT TO LEAVE THE ABUSIVE ENVIRONMENT
- I HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE SAFE
- I HAVE THE RIGHT TO PRIVACY
- I HAVE THE RIGHT TO DEVELOP MY INDIVIDUAL TALENTS AND ABILITIES
- I HAVE THE RIGHT TO PROSECUTE AND GET PROTECTION THROUGH THE LAW FROM MY ABUSING PARTNER
- I HAVE THE RIGHT TO EARN AND CONTROL MY OWN FINANCES
- I HAVE THE RIGHT TO MAKE MY OWN DECISIONS ABOUT MY OWN LIFE
- I HAVE THE RIGHT TO CHANGE MY MIND
- I HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE BELIEVED AND VALUED
- I HAVE THE RIGHT TO MAKE MISTAKES
- I HAVE THE RIGHT NOT TO BE PERFECT
- I HAVE THE RIGHT TO LOVE AND BE LOVED IN RETURN
- I HAVE THE RIGHT TO PUT MYSELF FIRST
- I HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE ME



WWW.CASWA.ORG.UK

Women's Service

My Bill Of Rights - opposite. Issued to every women supported by CASWA - an important and powerful reminder of our rights!



Own My Life Group Work: In September we started our forth group work program, Own My Life. This program runs for 12 weeks and the group will be running up to Christmas. Read more about Own My Life in our blogpost here: <https://www.caswa.org.uk/blog/own-my-life> Better still, read what other women supported by our service have said about the course in our co-written blog here: <https://www.caswa.org.uk/blog/a-message-to-other-women>

10 year celebration - A decade of the IDAA in Scotland

IDAA stands for Independent Domestic Abuse Advocate. IDAA was started in Scotland in 2013. It is an SQA-accredited qualification delivered in partnership between ASSIST, SafeLives and Scottish Women's Aid. The training is designed to equip managers and practitioners in domestic abuse services with the knowledge and skills to offer a consistent, safe and effective response to high risk victims of domestic abuse. In 2018, CASWA's Domestic Abuse Specialists from our Women's Team attended training and then completed the recognised qualification to become trained Independent Domestic Abuse Advocates (IDAAs). We were recently invited to attend an anniversary event to celebrate 10 years of IDAA in Scotland - a great opportunity to acknowledge the value of this role!

Children & Young People's Service

Hello and Welcome to a new member of the Children & Young People's Team! In September we welcomed a new member to the CYP team! This team member will be based in Sutherland and in time will provide support alongside the rest of our CYP Team to children and young people throughout Caithness and Sutherland who have experienced domestic abuse. Here's what she had to say: "I'd like to say how happy I am to be working with such a lovely supportive group of women. Their passion for CASWA shines through and I look forward to working together and continuing in the positive and supportive role everyone within CASWA plays".

Feedback: We've recently been completing mid-service questionnaires with children and young people supported by our service. As a person-led and centred service we provide lots of opportunities for feedback informally and formally about the support that they receive. This helps us to monitor, evaluate and develop our service on an ongoing basis. Here's what some children & young people had to say recently about their support...

"YOU LISTEN TO ME,
UNDERSTAND ME
& BELIEVE ME"

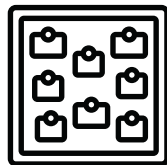
"YOU ARE SOMEONE
I TRUST"

"SUPPORT
MAKES ME FEEL
CONFIDENT TO
SPEAK UP!"

"YOU HELP ME TO
UNDERSTAND
MYSELF BETTER"



AWARENESS RAISING, EDUCATION & PREVENTION



FRESHER'S FAYRE: In September, CASWA had a stall at the annual Fresher's Fayre at the North Highland Campus of UHI. We always value the opportunity to raise awareness among student and staff of the work that we do and domestic abuse.



FACE TO FACE "GET TO KNOW US" SESSIONS: We've welcomed a couple of representatives and trainees from other organisations into our office bases to say hello and get to know CASWA and the work that we do! We're always happy to meet with multi-agency partners to raise awareness of CASWA among those working locally!



WHAT WE'VE BEEN WATCHING, READING, LISTENING TO...

Strong Female Character by Fern Brady - A raw, honest account of her life and experiences as an autistic girl and woman - so much that society can learn from Fern's lived experience. Unapologetic, frank, insightful and brave. Listened to as an audiobook by one of the CASWA team, they said it was an eye-opening rollercoaster and a fantastic read.

Wintering - The Power of Rest and Retreat in Difficult Times by Katherine May - Read by one of our team in the thick of winter earlier this year and highly recommended by them as we enter the autumn and winter months. This book explores rest and retreat - its importance, its power and how natural it is as a part of life. Drawing on nature and practices found in different parts of the world, the author navigates her own period of enforced rest and retreat. Something we can all learn here. It is okay to pause. It is okay to rest... Not just okay: essential!

Shadow Man - This is a Scottish crime fiction novel by Margaret Kirk which is the first in her series and is set in Inverness and the Highlands. One of our team came across this book in the local charity shop and found it fantastic to read (£1 well spent). Being local to the Highlands, she said the book resonated with her and that Margaret Kirk really brought the Highlands to life. She said, "there is something special about reading a book and being so familiar with all the places that it refers to. Needless to say I have since gone on and read all of the books in the series".

The Locket and a Five Taka Note - A book written by Abdul MKith and Catherine M. Byrne, it is "a true story of what is happening in the UK today". Recently read and recommended by one of our team, the book is described as follows: "Apart from his clothes, the only possessions Abdul Mkith brought to London, was a locket and a 5 taka note. When he was 10 years old, he fled persecution in his own country, he was taken to stay with so-called family and friends, already UK citizens, to where he believed he would be safe. But he was sold into slavery by the people he trusted. Abdul was rescued during a drugs raid in a small Scottish village. He now claims intervention saved his life, and his wonderful foster parents made him whole again".

Grass by Keum Suk Gendry-kim - Grass is a beautifully done graphic novel recommended by one of our team. It tells us the real life story of a Korean "Comfort Woman" during the Japanese occupation of Korea from 1910 to 1945 and during World War 2. This graphic novel tells a very real and true tale of Granny Lee Ok-Sun and her lived experiences as what was known then as "Comfort Women". For those who are unfamiliar with this phrase it was a term used to describe women who were taken to be used in sexual slavery for the Japanese soldiers. The author of Grass visited Granny Lee Ok-Sun, our main protagonist, and has very sensitively pieced together her story. This is a raw and thought-provoking piece of work.



How Are You (Routine Enquiry)

I wish someone would ask me How are you today And gift me enough silence To find the words to say	And he tells me I enrage him That these things I make him do I wish someone would please ask me But really how are you
I'm frightened I'm exhausted I don't think I want to stay But he says he'll tell the social That they'll take my kids away	I wish they would not judge me That they would not tell a soul That they'd take the time it takes For my story to unfold
He tells me how he loves me It won't happen anymore And I tell the neighbours Oh I walked into a door	I wish someone would save me Crack my glass and break right in So silly little spider Might run free be safe again

Myra Ross 2021

NATIONAL DOMESTIC ABUSE AND FORCED MARRIAGE HELPLINE - 0800 027 1234

FEMINIST CORNER



"For most of history,
anonymous was a woman"

Virginia Woolf

Today I asked my body what she needed,
Which is a big deal
Considering my journey of
Not Really Asking That Much.

I thought she might need more water.
Or protein.
Or greens.
Or yoga.
Or supplements.
Or movement.

But as I stood in the shower
Reflecting on her stretch marks,
Her roundness where I would like flatness,
Her softness where I would like firmness.
All those conditioned wishes
That form a bundle of
Never-Quite-Right-Ness,
She whispered, very gently:
Could you just love me like this?

- Hollie Holden



CUT OUT & KEEP

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



GIVE IT A GO...

To start the year, in January CASWA's social media platforms focused on self-care...but self-care is important throughout the year, not just as a 'new year, new me' resolution. Below we've included some ideas we shared on social media!



CONKER GARLAND!

Autumn is upon us and if you're lucky you will know where to find conkers! This year we'll be searching for the best spots for conkers so we can make some conker garlands as decorations! You can also thread some dried orange slices and dried leaves to add some colour OR paint your conkers! Perfect for Autumn celebrations and a rainy afternoon creative activity.

Using your haul of conkers, and dried slices and leaves, make holes through them with a fine screwdriver (or similar), thread onto a piece of twine or string. How many you use is up to you but the conkers are quite heavy so err on the side of fewer conkers. You have yourself a really seasonal garland. This is a brilliant activity for children to help with, but let an adult make the holes in the conkers!!!

To make the dried orange slices Heat oven to 140C/120C fan/gas 1 and line 2 baking sheets with baking parchment. Slice the oranges and apples very thinly. Arrange the slices on the trays, then bake for 45 mins-1 hr, turning halfway through cooking, until completely dried out.



Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 cups cubed peeled butternut squash
- 2 medium carrots, chopped
- 1 medium sweet red or yellow pepper, chopped
- 1 medium Gala apple, peeled and chopped
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 2 cups water
- 2 teaspoons vegetable base
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 1-1/2 cups unsweetened almond milk

Directions

- In a large saucepan, heat oil over medium heat. Add squash, carrots, red pepper, apple and onion; cook and stir until crisp-tender, 8-10 minutes. Stir in water, vegetable base and seasonings. Bring to a boil; reduce heat. Simmer, uncovered, until vegetables are tender, 8-10 minutes. Stir in almond milk.
- Puree soup by cooling it slightly and pureeing in batches with/in a blender; return to pan and heat through.