

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

52 Referrals
October-December 2023



108
women receiving
support



61
children & young people
receiving support



16 Days - International period of activism

This year, a pared-back, but nevertheless important, period in our annual calendar was 16 days. 16 days, for those less familiar, is **the international, annual period of activism against gender-based violence and abuse which takes place from 25th November to 10th December**. We had to streamline things this year, but were delighted to join partners from across the Highland Violence Against Women network to share important messages highlighting 2023's core theme across Scotland: **imagine a Scotland free from gender-based violence and abuse**. Central to this theme in Highland was a poem written by Myra Ross, entitled Imagine. If you haven't heard it, make sure you check out this YouTube video recital: [Imagine - by Myra Ross](#)

We were also delighted to have our **book fairies return for a third year!** Throughout 16 days they share women-centred and/or feminist literature via "book drops" across Caithness and Sutherland. Book suggestions are proposed by our team and social media followers and the fairies then select titles to share with our community! Our book fairies carefully wrapped each book, placing CASWA promotional materials inside to raise awareness of the work that we do.

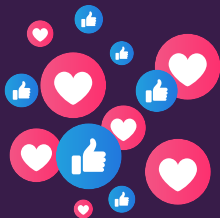


The project is our innovative and creative way of bringing a bit of magic to our community via book fairy book drops while also raising awareness of CASWA and the work that we do while sharing influential books which convey important messages. If you were one of the lucky ones who found one of our books - we'd love to hear from you!

Read more about our book fairy project on our blog:

<https://www.caswa.org.uk/blog/caswa-book-fairy-project-2023>

ONE THING YOU CAN DO!



We're often asked by people what they can do to help and support CASWA and the work that we do. We've created this new section of our newsletter, sharing our ideas of "one thing you can do", inviting you to get involved should you wish to! This quarter we're asking you to follow us on social media and importantly: react, comment and share our posts! Social media algorithms are extremely challenging and can mean that posts can become invisible, disappearing into the social media ether! We put a lot of work in to creating and sharing engaging, current content related to our work and our social media is a very important tool in our awareness raising, education and prevention work locally. By following and interacting with our social media presence you can help us to reach you and helps us to reach others!

Box of Gratitude

"The sacks from MFR Cash for Kids are amazing, honestly to families like myself I don't know what I'd do without the support I get! These sacks are truly a gift! I rely on them and shop from secondhand places to make sure Christmas is still happy"

MFR Cash for Kids Mission Christmas Appeal - Once again we would like to say a **huge thank you** to MFR Cash for Kids Mission Christmas and to everyone who supports this appeal. This year we made applications for **31 children and young people in families supported by CASWA**. This appeal goes a long way in supporting families and ensures every child and young person wakens up to presents under their tree. We'd also like to **thank Gary and his team from KWICK Deliveries** who, for as long as we can remember, has kindly delivered our sacks from Inverness direct to our office in Wick free of charge! **A huge show of support and generosity from a local business!**

Thanks to **generous donations directly to us** throughout the year, this year we were also able to provide **wrapping paper** for all families supported by the appeal.

Women's Service

Own My Life - Our new team member's perspective! For 12 weeks running up to the end of December CASWA ran our forth 'Own my Life' course. This course was a wonderful safe place where those affected by domestic abuse could explore the patterns and behaviours used by perpetrators to manipulate and control. During the course the women acquired knowledge and understanding, from the course structure itself but also from each other. They were supported to regain their sense of self and have the confidence to set their own boundaries and expectations in a relationship and feel empowered to enforce them. The support workers involved follow a structured program but put a lot of work into facilitating the topics each week. The themes each week are familiar but there are new perspectives on old topics and reassurance regarding the diverse types tactics used by abusers.

I look forward to this course running again soon as I know the power of good it can create.

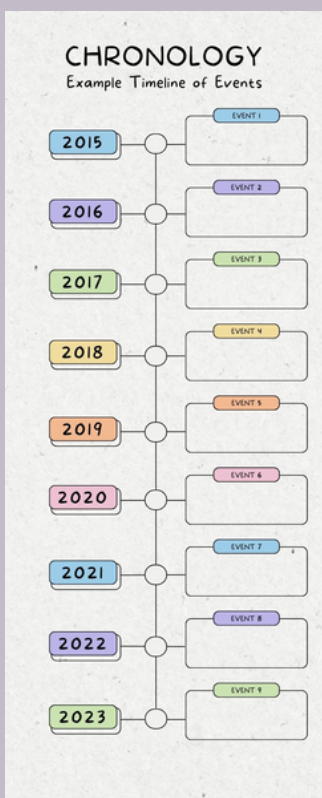
For more information about Own My Life, you can visit the course website here: <https://www.ownmylifecourse.org/> or read a blog post we co-wrote with women who took part in the course in Spring 2023: <https://www.caswa.org.uk/blog/a-message-to-other-women>

Long term support to understand and move on from experiences of domestic abuse - Dealing with an experience of domestic abuse can be a very long road. Whilst it is important to manage the practicalities of safety, housing, finances, etc in the initial stages of support, the longer term support we offer provides an array of methods to help women understand and move on from their experience.

We provide one-to-one support along with a variety of group support sessions. The groups offer a great space for relaxation, confidence building and community. The next three groups we have planned involve workshops in candle making, floral printing and spring wreath making. These sessions provide a real boost to mental health and can reduce feelings of isolation. They also allow a safe space to meet up with other women who have similar experiences. The items created are taken away by the women and act as a wonderful reminder in the following days and weeks of the positive experience and also their success in creating something beautiful.



Website Audit - Our website team recently completed an audit of our website. We're always looking to ensure the information we share is relevant, accessible and up-to-date. Our website contains lots of information about domestic abuse and the services that we provide as an specialist organisation. We also our blog section as an important tool to discuss domestic abuse through the lens of gender-based violence and abuse as well as discuss wider feminist issues and current affairs relevant to our area of work. Following our audit, we are starting to make some minor changes to our website to areas we identified as in need of development but to help us develop and improve our website further, we'd love to hear from you. Visit our website www.caswa.org.uk have a look around and let us know what you think via e-mail, social media message or by completing this survey: <https://forms.office.com/e/iHZ2rBe1Vr>

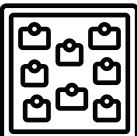


Children & Young People's Service

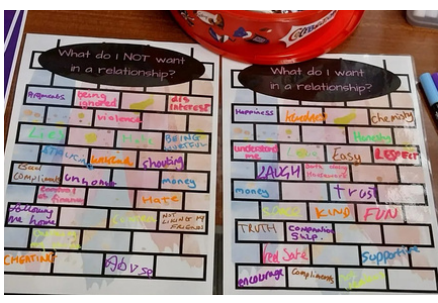
A WEE GLIMPSE INTO OUR WORK: The CYP Team work in lots of different ways to support children & young people to meet their support goals. Whether that be through using mindfulness techniques, arts & crafts, workbooks, games and other resources (both those bought in and made in house) to help CYP learn about and navigate their emotions, talk about worries, fears and future dreams or re-build their self-confidence, for example. Of course the primary focus of all our work is the fact that the child/young person has experienced domestic abuse & promoting their safety as well as supporting them to understand & move on from their experience. We take a child/young person-led and -centred approach to our support - this means work with them on what they want to work on or talk about, when they want to do this. For example, we might use a timeline to support a young person who wants to understand their experience. This can be helpful to start to break down and unravel what can be overwhelming, confusing and scary experiences and memories, supporting children/young people to make sense of them, talk about them, see the pattern of power & control, identify their experience as domestic abuse. This type of activity where we help a child or young person to make sense of their experience is one we do often. We're a creative, innovative team though so the approaches we take don't always look the same or they may not always be in the form of a timeline. We ensure any approach we take meets the needs of the child/young person as an individual.



AWARENESS RAISING, EDUCATION & PREVENTION



SAFETY EVENT AT UHI NORTH HIGHLAND CAMPUS - CASWA received an invitation to attend UHI's North Campus to discuss safety issues with students. We had a great day examining relationships and compiling ideas about what we would ideally like and not like in a relationship and what made us feel safe. These conversations aimed to lead the students and staff to consider their needs within a relationship and spot red flags in the early stages. We hope discussions on these points will help them keep themselves safer moving forward.



THE RETURN OF OUR CHRISTMAS LIBRARY DISPLAYS - Awareness raising and education is an important part of what we do here at CASWA. This year we have re-connected with some of our local libraries in Thurso, Golspie and Wick creating Christmas displays based on the theme of domestic abuse at Christmas. We hope, through these displays, to have made more people aware of the services we offer and the support we can provide whilst also encouraging people to support each other and understand the factors that may make leaving an abusive relationship difficult. We would like to thank the wonderful library staff for accommodating this and being so supportive.



YPI (Youth Philanthropy Initiative) - We've been delighted to be contacted by a number of groups from local schools recently for their YPI work. Two members of the CASWA team attended a YPI information gathering session at Golspie High School. During the session we spoke to two different groups that have chosen CASWA as the charity they wish to support for their YPI school work. Both groups had prepared relevant questions to find out further details of the work CASWA does supporting women, children and young people in the local area. The questions were well researched and relevant. The young people were inquisitive, positive and keen to find out about the work we do. One of the groups had prepared a slide show presentation which they presented to us to receive our views and feedback. We have also been invited along to the YPI presentation day which we look forward to attending to see the groups make their pitch for their chosen charity. For more information on YPI, visit their website: <https://ypiscotland.org.uk/>



16 Days - The annual period of activism against gender-based violence and abuse, also known as 16 days, is an important period in our annual calendar! See the front page of our newsletter for what we were up to this year!



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

Women Talking - FILM. A film adaption of the book of the same name written by Miriam Toews. The film follows the conversations and decision making of women in an isolated, rural, religious community as they discuss and decide what action to take following sexual violence perpetrated towards them by men in the community. "Our freedom and safety are the ultimate goals". For me it was a powerful film demonstrating the importance of women talking: "We didn't talk about our bodies. So when something like this happened there was no language for it. And without language for it, there was a gaping silence. And in that gaping silence was the real horror."

The Bold Type - TV SERIES. A glimpse into the outrageous lives and loves of those responsible for a global women's magazine. The three main characters are three very different young women, doing what they love and smashing it. There are dramas and hurdles and some comedy on the way with strong feminist themes throughout. I found it made me want to crack on and do what I love doing, so for me it was inspiring.

Charity Golf Event - 6th March 2024

In November, we were delighted to hear from and meet up with a group of golfing students from UHI's Dornoch Campus who had got in touch about an event they are planning as part of their course work. The group are currently working to plan & coordinate a charity golf event in aid of CASWA on 6th March 2024, inviting members of the Royal Dornoch Golf Club to take part in the event alongside UHI golfing students. We're looking forward to continuing to work with the group as they continue to plan for the event!

EVENT REMINDER

Save the Date!

March 6th 2024

CHARITY GOLF EVENT
HELP TO SUPPORT
CASWA

See you there!

ROYAL DORNOCH GOLF CLUB
1V25 3LW
CHAMPIONSHIP COURSE

FEMINIST CORNER



"Women speaking up for themselves and those around them is the strongest force we have to change the world!"
Melinda Gates

CUT OUT & KEEP

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

New year
DOESN'T HAVE TO MEAN A
New you ♥

believe in yourself



Enjoy
THE LITTLE
Things

KNOW YOUR
WORTH

Good
things
are
coming

i honor my
boundaries

Time
to
Rest



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!

GET CREATIVE WITH ZENTANGLES

A creative idea from one of our team: over the dark nights I was looking for something to do that was a little different to the usual things like knitting, sewing or other craft things I like to do, something different that wouldn't require much in the way of equipment or expense. I came across **Zentangles** which is basically creating repetitive patterns and shapes. This looked like something I could get into. After learning the basics of lines, shapes, patterns, etc, I started putting the idea into creating pictures.

Zentangles comes from the words 'zen' (the Buddhist meditative philosophy for balancing the mind) and 'tangle'. The goal of this art practice is to achieve calm. It was developed as a concept in 2004 in the United States, from the minds of Maria Thomas, an artist and Rick Roberts, a monk. Zentangles promotes relaxation and is a mindful, inspiring activity where you can create a lovely piece of art!

Creating repetitive shapes and letting go of expectations and allowing my art to evolve based on your vision and play is fun and inspiring. It really is just mindfulness! It requires no expensive art supplies, a plain paper notebook, a pencil, fine black marker pen, coloured pens/pencils if you want to add colour, and your imagination!

Why not give it a go and try Zentangles? More information and a how to video here: <https://zentangle.com/pages/get-started>

Make sure you're following CASWA's social media. The new year can be a difficult time and with talk of resolutions, change and negativity! Often we can be left feeling we're not enough! At CASWA, we strive to change this by starting our year with **self-care** sharing self-care and self-compassion focused content!

START THE
YEAR WITH



USING UP THE LEFTOVERS!

You may (or may not!) have some chocolates left over from Christmas! Looking to use them up? Here's a **tasty recipe shared by one of our team - give it a go!**

What you'll need:

75g Milk chocolate, broken into chunks
75g Dark chocolate, broken into chunks
125g Unsalted butter
150g Soft light brown sugar
2 Eggs
100g Self raising flour
300g (or whatever you have!) of leftover chocolate pieces (Heroes, Celebrations). Add less (200g) if using a wetter chocolate, e.g. Roses.

How to make it:

Preheat your oven to 180C.

Melt the chocolate (not the leftover chocolates), butter and sugar either in a pan or in the microwave (take care!).

Let it cool down a bit before adding in the eggs and flour.

Beat the mixture until very smooth and totally combined.

Line a small roasting/cake tin (about 9" square) with baking paper.

Add the leftover chocolates (whole) to the mixture.

Place your mixture into the tin and smooth it out a bit.

Bake in the oven for 20 minutes or until the top looks dry.

Remove from the oven and allow to cool fully before cutting into pieces.

Enjoy!! We love it warmed up and enjoyed with ice-cream!

