

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

57  
Referrals  
January-March 2024

66  
women receiving  
support

58  
children & young people  
receiving support

## ONE THING YOU CAN DO!

### "Why doesn't she 'just' leave?"

A question many ask, but few understand. The reality is there are many complex reasons why it isn't a case of 'just leaving' an abusive relationship. At CASWA we are passionate about raising awareness, particularly around the problematic ways society can often frame & discuss domestic abuse, in order to promote better understanding & less victim blaming. We do this via blogposts, social media & more recently through creative writing like the poem below, which we've also made into a promotional postcard.



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 help us improve and develop our website. We're starting to make some minor changes based on an audit we began in December. An important part of this audit is gaining external feedback and we're keen to hear your thoughts. Visit our website [www.caswa.org.uk](http://www.caswa.org.uk), have a look around and let us know what you think by completing this survey: <https://forms.office.com/e/iHZ2rBeIVr>

## Box of Gratitude

We'd like to say a **big thank you** to **students** Parneet Kaur, Abbie Talboys, Rhianna Mackay and Francesca Brimm from the **University of the Highlands and Islands** who raised £410 by arranging a **charity fundraising event** as part of their coursework. We'd like to thank them for all their hard work and congratulate them on arranging a successful charity fundraising event.

We'd like to say **thank you** to **Golspie High School, Farr High School, Wick High School and Dornoch Academy** for inviting us in to speak with pupils for their **Youth Philanthropy Initiative (YPI)** work. In particular we'd like to congratulate pupils from Golspie High School who made their school's final & created a fantastic video about the work that we do at CASWA. More information about YPI can be found here: <https://ypiscotland.org.uk/>

We would like to say a **huge thank you** to **St. Finnbarrs Charity Shop** in Dornoch for their **continued support year after year and recent donation of £1500**. We would also like to say thank you to the **Monday Afternoon Bridge Club at the Royal Dornoch Golf Club** for their **kind donation of £200** to CASWA. Donations play a huge role in our work locally, enabling CASWA to add to the package of support we have available and raise awareness of our work. **If you would like to donate to CASWA**, you can do so here: <https://www.caswa.org.uk/support-us>





Let's get creative! - Group work

As well as providing our day-to-day one-to-one support to women supported by our service, we are also passionate about providing group work opportunities! We started the year with a creative theme to our group work! Group work is often about re-discovering who you are and how to interact with others again. For some, it is a way to be more sociable again after a potential period of isolation. It's also a great way to learn new skills and regain self-confidence. We have other groups planned soon with a variety of activities and hope for more positive experiences then.

**Candle-Making:** After false starts due to stormy/snowy weather, our first group work session of 2024 was a real success. The day involved candle making at Messy Nussy in Thurso and was attended by six women and two CASWA workers. It was a really enjoyable experience and some wonderful aromatic candles are now gracing the participant's homes. Thanks to Messy Nussy for a great workshop! Some feedback about our group work:

*"I would highly recommend this group and CASWA because I wouldn't be here today without either."*  
*"I really enjoyed it. I'd be happy to join more. It was nice to share with others without the focus on being on the reason we were all together, but also knowing we all shared experiences in the background."*

Consultation and Research at CASWA

Did you know that CASWA get involved in consultation and research? We've been involved in a couple of interesting projects this quarter which have sought our expertise and experience to inform consultations and research which ultimately strive to promote better understanding, responses and services for women, children and young people who have experienced domestic abuse.

Women's Service

**Wreath-making:** After a glorious few days of sunshine, the time was perfect for a living wreaths workshop to celebrate the oncoming of spring. Creating wonderful living wreaths was easier than expected and it was certainly therapeutic to touch the moss and flowers and create something beautiful that will bloom again each year. A huge thanks to Blooms from Burnside who facilitated this workshop and Othin House for hosting it. Thanks to those that attended and made it such an enjoyable experience.



Children & Young People's Service

**New Resources!** Our Children & Young People's Team are always delighted to be told they have a budget for new resources! We've recently purchased some new ones to use in our support sessions. These include: some new books and flash cards to promote discussion and understanding, sensory materials to create a safe and comfortable space in support sessions and craft materials to do for fun and/or address a support need. For example, we've purchased a selection of dream-catcher craft kits for children who are experiencing difficulties with sleep.

**Red Flags in Young People's Relationships:** The top viewed page on our website for a long period of time has been our blog post on red flags in young people's relationships. We wrote this blog to raise awareness of some of the behaviours that may be indicators, signs and causes for concern. We followed this up by speaking with students at UHI at a Fresher's Fayre seeking their views of red flags in relationships and wrote a further blog post based on our conversations with them. You can read and access the blog posts below.

<https://www.caswa.org.uk/blog/10-red-flags-in-teen-relationships> :  
<https://www.caswa.org.uk/blog/red-flags-according-to-students>  
We're keen to continue this important conversation & raise awareness. Our Children & Young People's Service provides support to young people who have experienced domestic abuse in their own relationship as well as children and young people who have experienced it within their family unit/at home. For more information, visit our website: <https://www.caswa.org.uk/services>





# AWARENESS RAISING, EDUCATION & PREVENTION



**New look blogs:** At the start of the year we updated the blog section of our website with a new look. Our new style is colourful and more modern in design, but still written in house by our team. Alongside a blog containing self-care tips from our team We've uploaded two informative blogs on specific topics: love bombing: <https://www.caswa.org.uk/blog/love-bombing> and respectful dating: <https://www.caswa.org.uk/blog/respectful-dating> and we've got a great series of blog posts planned for the rest of the year!



**New blog series:** As well as a new look blog, we have a new blog series we've introduced for 2024 entitled Inspirational Women of Caithness and Sutherland. We've shifted our lens locally and are getting out and about in our community to interview women who inspire us...and there are many! We will be publishing the interviews on the blog section of our website once a quarter. The first woman to feature in this new series is Ellie Lamont. Ellie has been a CASWA board member since 2012 and is currently the chair of our board: <https://www.caswa.org.uk/blog/inspirational-women-of-caithness-and-sutherland>



**Charity fundraising event:** Last Autumn we were contacted by a group of students (Parneet Kaur, Abbie Talboys, Rhianna Mackay and Francesca Brimm (pictured)) studying Golf Management and Professional Golf at the University of the Highlands and Islands who were arranging a charity fundraising event as part of their coursework. We arranged meetings with them to support their planning of the event, a Texas Scramble golf competition. The event was held at the Royal Dornoch Golf Course on the 6th March, two days ahead of International Women's Day. Thirty golfers and golfing students took part on the day and a fantastic amount of £410 was raised for CASWA. We were delighted to be invited along on the day and delivered a short awareness raising talk on the work that we as well as hand out packs to all participants containing CASWA promotional materials. A great event all round!



**Love Isn't Always Sweet - Valentine's Day Campaign:** We marked the annual day of love by raising awareness of examples of behaviours in abusive relationships. Using "love heart" sweets as our inspiration, we sought to explore the ways love is not always sweet. by hanging "love hearts" in our community.

**Flowers from CASWA:** To mark International Women's Day, on the 8th March, we shared ten bunches of purple flowers, representing each member of our team with our community. We included some CASWA promotional materials We included some CASWA promotional materials and asked that they were kept by the lucky finder or given to a woman in their life. We loved hearing from those who got in touch to say they'd found them!



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

**Lessons in Chemistry** - One of our team read this fantastic book, written by Bonnie Garmus, last year and was delighted to catch up on it's TV adaption on Apple TV recently. Lessons in Chemistry follows the story of Elizabeth Zott - a tenacious, resilient, intelligent scientist in a male-dominated world. The story sees her determined to create change for women and for them to be recognised and respected for what they do and what they are capable of! A true fictional feminist icon!

**Disclosure: Surviving Domestic Abuse** - Available on BBC iPlayer. Through home footage and candid testimony, seven women in Scotland tell their stories of surviving domestic abuse. Disclosure follows the women over the course of a year as they try to escape domestic abuse and seek justice against the men who abused them. An incredibly hard-hitting piece of journalism, which is a harrowing, difficult watch, but paints a very true picture of the experiences of women in Scotland who have experienced abuse.

**Inspire Inclusion** - To mark this year's International Women's Day on the 8th March, this year's theme was #inspireinclusion. As a team and an organisation we thought about ways we and the world around us could inspire inclusion of women as a means of further forging the path to gender equality. Our ideas included celebrating difference and diversity, promoting & supporting women in sports, challenging tokenistic approaches to inclusion and promoting inclusion through advocacy!

**"Courage is the root of change - and change is what we're chemically designed to do. So when you wake up tomorrow, make this pledge. No more holding yourself back. No more subscribing to others' opinions of what you can and cannot achieve. And no more allowing anyone to pigeonhole you into useless categories of sex, race, economic status, and religion. Do not allow your talents to lie dormant, ladies. Design your own future. When you go home today, ask yourself what YOU will change. And then get started."**

Elizabeth Zott, in 'Lessons in Chemistry', written by Bonnie Garmus.

## FEMINIST CORNER

*"Make" Change*

*don't CALL IT A Dream. CALL IT A Plan.*

# CUT OUT & KEEP

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



## GIVE IT A GO...

### LOAF CAKE RECIPE - MADE WITH TEA AND CEREAL, YES CEREAL!

Yes, you read that right - a cake made **Method:**

with tea and cereal! Think of your Make a cup of black tea (no milk!), remove the teabag after 20 minutes.

average tea or malt loaf, but made with Preheat your oven to 180c.

cereal! An easy, quick recipe (the throw Add the bran flakes & dried fruit to a large bowl, pour the tea into the it all in a bowl kind!) discovered on bowl & give it all a good mix.

Instagram by one of our team and When the bran flakes & fruit have soaked up all the tea, add the made more than once! Recipe credit: remaining ingredients to the bowl & give it all a really good stir until you @amysheppardfood - Instagram. have a thick cake batter.

#### Ingredients:

- 100g bran flakes (cereal)
- Mug of black tea
- 200g self-raising flour
- 200g light brown sugar
- 200g mixed dry fruit (sultanas, etc)
- 2 tablespoons golden syrup
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 egg (beaten)

Put the cake batter into a loaf tin and bake for 1hr/until cooked through Leave to cool in the tin for 15 minutes and then remove.

Enjoy! Delicious sliced, lathered with butter and enjoyed with a cuppa. Alternatively, cake for breakfast? - There's cereal in it after all!

Why not give it a go? Better still - double up the recipe and make two loaf cakes at once like one of our team members did!

Time  
TO  
BAKE



### PLANT POT PAINTING

Grab yourself some cheap ceramic terracotta plant pots and get painting! Here's some beautiful ones made by our Children & Young People's Team recently at their team day. Why not give it a go? - You can find lots of design ideas online.



We used acrylic paints and marker pens for our designs. We will also seal (inside and outside) or line our pots with a protective coat/seal to protect our designs! As we've painted them, to be on the safe side as terracotta is porous, we'll only be using our pots to plant flowers rather than plants we'll be eating!

### IDEAS FOR SELF-CARE FROM OUR TEAM

After spending January on CASWA's social media channels sharing self-care tips & information, our social media team invited the full CASWA team to share their favourite self-care practices for a blog post. Everything from creative writing, painting & gaming, to being outdoors & active - walking, running, swimming, gardening - to more practical tips around how they prioritise rest & sleep, deal with feelings of stress & overwhelm to how they are mindful of self-talk, particularly negative, critical self-talk and their use of boundaries in self-care. Our team know how to look after themselves and hope this blog will give you a few ideas to practice self-care & look after you:

<https://www.caswa.org.uk/blog/self-care-top-tips-from-the-team>