

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 0151 - www.caswa.org.uk - info@caswa.org.uk

Monday-Friday, 10am-12noon & 2pm-4pm

Please note CASWA is closed evenings and weekends.



SPOTLIGHT ON CASWA

39
Referrals
January-March 2025

105
women receiving
support

55
children & young people
receiving support

ONE THING YOU CAN DO!

We're often asked by people what they can do to help and support CASWA. This section of our newsletter shares our ideas and invites you to get involved, should you wish to! **One thing you can do, particularly if you are a community group, is to share our newsletter on your social media with your community.** This can really help us to increase our reach and awareness of the service. We share our newsletter on CASWA's social media pages - sharing this and any of our posts makes a huge difference to us!



We'd like to say **thank you** to our local **Tesco store in Wick** and **their community champion** for the very generous donation of flowers to our Flowers from CASWA campaign for International Women's Day - read more about this on page 3.

Box of Gratitude

We'd like to say a **huge thank you** to **all involved** in two fundraising events at **Royal Dornoch Golf Club** in February which raised a fantastic amount for CASWA and our sister project, The Gift Project! Read more about these events on page 3.

CASWA secures £22,500 grant from Rosa

Following a competitive application process with applications spanning the length of the UK, we were thrilled to hear news at the start of the year that our application to Rosa's Stand With Us fund was successful! We secured a fantastic grant of £22,500 towards some of CASWA's strategic goals and to mark our 20th anniversary. Read more here:

<https://www.caswa.org.uk/news/caswarosagrants>

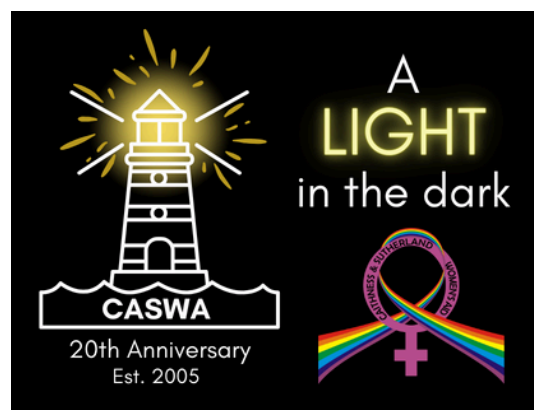
20th Anniversary Launch!

We had a busy end to 2024 and beginning to 2025 as we put plans in place to launch and mark our 20th anniversary! We picked 'A Light in the Dark' as our theme for the year, inspired by the feedback we have often received from the women, children and young people who have and do access CASWA for support. We've used this as the basis of

our logo for the year and have lots of plans in the pipeline. We aim to use the year to engage with our local community and we hope that the community will join and support us in marking this important landmark year in CASWA's history.

For more information, please see page 3 and read more here:

<https://www.caswa.org.uk/news/celebrating-20-years-of-caswa>



Women's Service

CASWA Coffees: Our Women's Team have recently launched a new initiative 'CASWA Coffees', which will be a series of informal engagement sessions across the Caithness and Sutherland communities to reduce isolation and provide a safe space for relaxed conversation and support. Our team are focusing on geographically 'hard to reach' and rural locations to ensure support is available for people within their own community.



Informal Group Work Feedback: Providing group support as part of our support package is important to us. Time and time again, women tell us how much it makes a difference to them. Here's some feedback we have recently received:

"It was good to get together, and I didn't feel so alone in my situation."

"It's hard to get out there, it's hard to make those steps into a new environment, but it's so worth it."

You will be understood, you will be welcomed."

"It's a relaxed small group of women who have similar issues & past experiences, but there is no focus on the trauma! It's a safe space to create, with laughs and chat. It's certainly a good space to begin your new journey to the future."

Drawing & Doodling Workshop: In March we arranged a drawing & doodling workshop as part of our program of informal workshops for women supported by CASWA. Here's what one of our team who attended said: "Some of us had never done anything like this before so weren't sure what would happen but our tutor soon reassured everyone that we were in for an enjoyable creative morning. We produced beautiful bookmarks and cards using a variety of arty equipment (paints, pens, brushes) and were well rewarded with coffee and cake!"



First Aid Training: In March the CASWA team had a day away from their usual working days to complete Emergency First Aid at Work training with Mini First Aid. This was a comprehensive course and one of CASWA's mandatory trainings for the staff team. The team reviewed their first aid skills and knowledge, which included: how to provide CPR, how to manage bleeding and choking and how to use a defibrillator. We practised CPR on adult, teen and infant manikins, some of our team may have got their mics out to sing 'Pink Pony Club' to help with their rhythm and pace and we also had a go at patching each other up with bandages! That's us qualified now for the next 3 years.

Find out more about Mini First Aid here: <https://inverness.minifirstaid.co.uk/>

Children & Young People's Service

The joy of Lego: We've recently added some new Lego to our support bags to use in sessions with children and young people. We've had some great feedback:

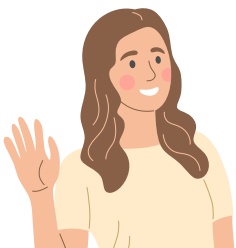
"This was the best day playing Lego with you. I can't wait for next time!"

Calm Kits: You may have read in previous editions of our newsletter that we have been providing 'calm kits' to some of the children and young people we support. These include sensory, fidget and distraction items they can use to support themselves out-with their sessions. They're going down a storm! ...Here's what some of our children & young people had to say about them:

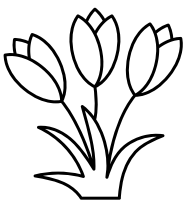
"I'd give my calm kit a 10/10! I use it when I am mad and sad, it helps me."

"I don't like my calm kit...I LOVE it! It is pretty cool, there is loads of fidgets in it and I like fidgets. It will help me calm down. There's loads of fun stuff in it. It also has my favourite colour on the front."

Waving goodbye, saying hello & welcome: We've had a busy recruitment spell in our CYP Service as we waved goodbye to one of our longest serving members of staff as she moves on to exciting pastures new. We're excited to be welcoming two new members of staff to our Children & Young People's Team in the next couple of months!



AWARENESS RAISING, EDUCATION & PREVENTION



2025 - CASWA's 20th Anniversary: As well as launching the year with our theme and logo (see page 1), we also launched the year with a poem written in house by one of our domestic abuse specialists. The poem explains the complexity of domestic abuse in the hope that it will allow those with no experiences to better understand it and the impact it can have. Read the poem on the final page of this newsletter. Watch this space for more poems written by our talented team throughout the year!

Fundraising Events at Royal Dornoch Golf Club: Two events in February in the space of one week raised £1,334 for CASWA and our sister project, The Gift Project. Golfing students, Amy Mangan & Louise Milligan, at UHI organised a golfing competition in aid of CASWA, while Lady Captain Rosemary Muschamp and her committee arranged an Art & Prosecco Afternoon in aid of CASWA!

Flowers from CASWA to mark International Women's Day: Our team turned into 'flower fairies' from 7th - 9th March to mark International Women's Day by leaving flowers across our community for people to find to take home or gift to a woman in their life. We were thrilled to have received a very generous donation of purple flowers from our local Tesco store in Wick. Our flower fairies wrapped the bunches of flowers up beautifully and included some CASWA promotional materials alongside the flowers to raise awareness of the work that we do at CASWA.



News Section of CASWA website: Did you know you can read more about each of the news items above over on our website?
www.caswa.org.uk/news

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

Adolescence (Netflix): Our team, like many, have been watching and talking about the four part Netflix series, Adolescence. Here's what one of our team had to say: "Adolescence tells the story of how a family's world is turned upside down when 13 year old Jamie (Owen Cooper) is arrested for the murder of a teenage girl who goes to his school. I found it a fascinating insight into the world that young people are living in that as adults we can be blind to. The show focuses on Jamie and his family, but we never hear from the victim, Katie, or her family which was a real shame. I found the social media conversations since the show aired particularly interesting, both in what is said and what is not said. What I am happy about is that more people are talking about men's violence against women and girls."

Ren (Musician): A musician whose work is insightful and explores the human condition. One of our team members has been listening a lot to his work and had this to say: "Topics such as mental health, body image, sexual abuse, domestic abuse and many more topics are included in his repertoire - I've only heard the tip of the iceberg. His changes in tempo and voice are shocking and transfixing and really hits hard and drags you on an emotional journey. 'Violet's Tale' is a sad story of a woman who is killed by her partner. The emotion he injects into the song is truly moving and devastating. I recommend a listen, but bear in mind the subject matter is challenging to say the least."

FEMINIST CORNER

**ANGRY WOMEN THEY SAY?
TOO RIGHT WE'RE ANGRY!**

"SCREAM

So that one day a hundred years from now
Another sister will not have to dry her tears
Wondering where in history she lost her voice."
~ Rupi Kaur



"Anger is an assertion of rights and worth. It is communication, equality, and knowledge...
...Anger is freedom, independence, expansiveness, and entitlement. It is justice, passion, clarity, and motivation. Anger is instrumental, thoughtful, complicated, and resolved. In anger, whether you like it or not, there is truth."
~ Soraya Chemaly



CUT OUT & KEEP

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

Keep GOING
= keep =
GROWING



Self-care
IS EMPOWERMENT

GIVE IT A GO...

GROW:

Spring is well and truly underway and we've had a flurry of lovely sunny, warm weather. Some of our team have been out in their gardens, cutting the grass, planting seeds and picking rhubarb (see below). Regardless of the space you have and even if you don't have a garden, it is still possible to sow some seeds and enjoy watching them sprout and grow!

One of our Domestic Abuse Specialists loves growing cosmos (picture opposite). She sows the seeds in compost empty cardboard toilet roll tubes believe it or not! Once sprouted and shoots begin to show, she transfers them to pots or plants them straight into the ground. There's lots of gardening videos with hints and tips online. Why not give growing a go?



BE WILD:

Fancy something a bit wilder? Why not make your own seed 'bombs'? Here's a 'how to' from The Wildlife Trust: <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/actions/how-make-seed-bomb>

USING RHUBARB:

Now that rhubarb season is in full swing you might be wondering how to use it! Of course there's rhubarb crumble or rhubarb cake and lots of delicious recipes available online. One of our domestic abuse specialists has been collecting home grown rhubarb from her garden and using it to make a lovely rhubarb cordial... Here's a recipe!

Ingredients

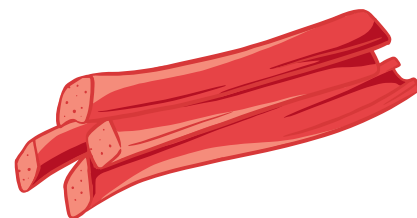
300g caster sugar
Zest & juice of 1 orange
Zest & juice of 1 lemon
450g rhubarb (chopped)
1 slice fresh root ginger (optional)

Method

Put the sugar in a large saucepan with 300ml water. Bring to a simmer then add the zest and juice of both the orange and lemon along with the rhubarb and ginger. Cook the mixture over a medium heat until the rhubarb has fallen apart. Pour the mixture through a sieve lined with muslin into a clean, heatproof jug. Transfer into clean/sterilised bottles.

Enjoy with water, sparkling water, your favourite tonic or lemonade or sparkling water. Why not 'give it a go'? Recipe credit: BBC Good Food

<https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/rhubarb-cordial>



THE DARKEST STORM



A LIGHT IN THE DARK

It started in sunshine, dappled through trees
He cared so much he wanted to know everything about me
He'd had a tough time and I felt I needed and wanted to help him
The skies were bright and clear

His landlord was kicking him out, I had plenty of space
He'd never had anyone be kind to him like I was
He really needed someone to help him, it felt good to help
The clouds began to float through the sky

The stress was getting to him, he needed my support
He only wanted to spend time with me, just with me
He really needed me just then, what I needed could wait
The showers came and went, but the sun shone bright in between

I began to drown in his need for me, his reign of me
He was stressed, but then I was losing myself too, I didn't know how to feel
He was all I had left, so I needed him, despite it all. I needed him
The rain was heavy and persistent, but sometimes the sun's rays broke through.
Sometimes

I lost myself, all sense of me, I could only see his needs, his wants
Focusing on him, that kept me safer, but I had to silence myself
Even in a box, sealed tight, sometimes my voice accidentally broke free
And then there was thunder and a storm that would last for days

I began to feel like I was lost at sea, the threat of a shipwreck ever present
Some days I longed for wreckage, to break the anticipation
No coast in sight, just rain and pain and him
But through the deluge, a sparkling light appeared

I saw the light but looked away, afraid to reach out
Waterlogged and bogged down, I fell, it was all I could do to get away, float not swim
It took me close to drowning, but then the light got closer, and a rope was thrown
I couldn't swim, but I clung to that rope and quietly began to hope for the rain to stop

Hauled ashore the rain still fell, but now a rainbow lit the stormy skies
Just enough to show the way, a path, an escape, a way forward
The light helped me by showing me the strength I held
I saved myself in the end, but not without that light in the darkness

J D Currums