



Stirling & District Women's Aid

Annual Report

2019—2020



Stirling and District Women's Aid Registered Charity Number SC010937

Stirling and District Women's Aid, 2019-2020

This has been a very busy year for our service. We have experienced an increase in demand for support for women and children and an increased demand for refuge space. All while battling the ever challenging constraints of competitive funding.

While funding is an ongoing challenge for all third sector organisations, we must also acknowledge the impact of overall reduction on public spending and the impact this has on many of our service users whose difficulties are further impacted by financial hardship. We are grateful for the input and support of partner agencies such as CAB, Foodbanks, HomeStart and many others, without whom many survivors of Domestic Abuse would be in an even more difficult and dangerous situation.

This year saw the introduction of the new Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018. This provides additional protection for victims of Domestic abuse by acknowledging the role of Coercive Control within intimate partner relationship, including abuse from ex partners. Here at SDWA we certainly see this as a cultural shift in understanding of the true dynamic of abusive relationships. By acknowledging coercive control as a central element in domestic abuse we are better able to understand a victim's full experience and acknowledge the scale of harmful, criminal behaviour being perpetrated by their partner or ex-partner, no longer placing the emphasis solely on physical abuse which has been society's default position for too long.

We must remember that Domestic abuse is a global problem, affecting every section of society and deeply rooted in women's inequality and the continued imbalance of power between men and women. We all have a role to play in tackling Domestic Abuse and wider gender based violence. So keep the conversation going, raise awareness where you can, support all local organisation fighting this fight!

Finally, I would like to say a huge thanks to our staff, trustees and all those who have supported us this year, through volunteering, donations, fundraising, social media support and spreading the word about what we do. We would not be able to support our women and children without your continued support.

Lisa McGloin

Executive Manager

From the Board of SDWA

During the 2019-2020 financial year, the SDWA Board met eight times for routine governance matters. At these meetings we: monitored financial reports; discussed the Executive Manager's operational reports; and reviewed SDWA policies as part of the rolling review programme.

We underwent significant board changes during 2019-2020. Four board members left, including the previous Chair, Gillian, who had reached the end of her tenure. We are all very grateful for the hard work and dedication from our outgoing board members.

We also appointed two new board members who have been invaluable in improving the administration and organisation of the board. Furthermore, I was appointed to the position of SDWA Board Chair in November 2019. I have greatly appreciated the Board's support of me as the new Chair, as well as the experience and wisdom they bring to our governance duties.

The 2019-2020 period also saw several staff changes, including the Executive Manager, tendering her resignation in early 2020 after nine years in post. She was an extremely capable manager of the service, and the Board was sad to see her go. We all wish her the very best in her new role in the academic sector, where she will undeniably be an invaluable asset.

In March 2020, the Board was delighted to appoint the previous Family Outreach and Children's Manager, to the Executive Manager post. She is a skilled manager who brings seven years of experience with SDWA to the role, and she has done an admirable job in stepping into the post during an exceptionally difficult period.

This brings me to the COVID-19 lockdown, which began during the final weeks of the 2019-2020 period. As it came at the end of the financial year, it did not significantly affect the financial and statistical information detailed in this report. However, it would be remiss not to mention it here, given the pandemic's widely recognised impact on women and children experiencing abuse, as well as the specific challenges it has created for service delivery. SDWA staff are classed as essential workers, and thus were able to respond to these challenges in a variety of ways, e.g. changing work rotas to provide support at refuge, helping the women we support to secure essential supplies, and by moving to virtual platforms where practical.

The way that the SDWA staff members have stepped up to meet these unprecedented challenges has been truly remarkable and a testament to their dedication and professionalism.

Prior to the pandemic, the service had been working to a 2019-2024 strategic plan which detailed the priorities to:

- ◇ Secure and maintain existing level of provision in the: refuge; drop-in service; IDAA support for high-risk victims; rural family outreach; prison outreach; and training delivery.
- ◇ Seek funding where appropriate to increase the level of support in the above services.
- ◇ Develop additional services where there is an established gap.
- ◇ Grow capability around IT, administration, and communication.

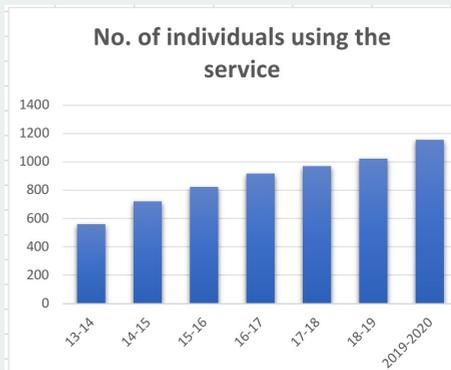
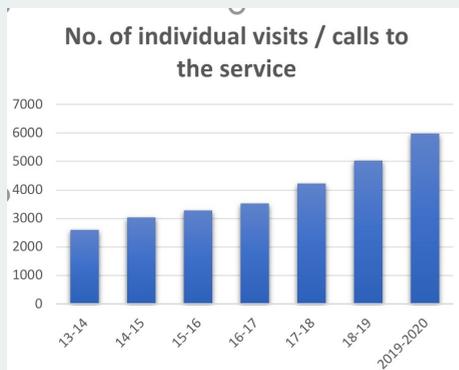
While these remain priorities for the service, the board plans to review – and revise if necessary – the strategic plan to address the radically changing social and economic circumstances created by COVID-19.

Finally, I would like to mention the further board changes that have occurred since the end of the financial year. Two of our board members, Cynthia, and Katja reached the end of their tenures. Their departures represent a combined loss of 12 years' board experience and we wish them well on their future endeavours.

Six further members have been recruited since financial year end. As of this writing in December 2020, our current board membership stands at a healthy ten members who bring a wide range of skills and experience in: academic research, management, finance, fundraising, human resources, and administration. These skills will be very important as the board moves forward in supporting SDWA to continue to provide high-quality support to women, children, and young people affected by domestic abuse.

Clare, Chair of the Board of Trustees.

Our Service in Numbers 2019—2020



Number of Visits & support calls to the service	5976
Number of individuals service users supported	1157
Number of new referrals not previously known to the service	239
Amount of time spent in one to one support with women	3296 hours
Number of families supported through Family Outreach	80 families
Number of Children supported through Children's service	100
Number of support sessions with children	1284
Number of women accommodated in Refuge	16
Number of children accommodated in Refuge	29

Working with Children and Young People

We work with the children and young people and advocate on their behalf at meetings, core groups and children's panels. This is very important as it provides a voice for the child in a situation where the child often feel powerless. We have very good feedback from the children and we know that the work we do enables children to make sense of their experiences, work through fear and trauma and be able to express their feelings better.

Most of these sessions are carried out either in schools, refuge or at any other location that is suitable and preferred by the children. Sessions take place in a private and safe space, to ensure that the children's confidentiality is respected. The workers use specialised resources and therapeutic play to support each child's specific needs using tools such as:

- ◇ The Bears' feeling activity cards. These help to support young people reflect, name and talk about their feelings
- ◇ Children's Empowerment Star
- ◇ The 'worry monster' This enables young people to draw or write their worry and place it into the monster's mouth
- ◇ 'Things that make me feel' worksheets
- ◇ 'All about me' workbook. This supports a young person to talk about their feelings in relation to their home, environment, friendships, relationships, family life, education and overall emotional wellbeing.
- ◇ 'Mad isn't Bad' workbook. This resource supports young people to discuss safe ways to express and manage feelings of anger
- ◇ Kind hands and Kind feet scenario flash cards
- ◇ Calm down flash cards. These are given to young people in an envelope to take home. When feeling overwhelm them they can use the flash cards which provide them with various techniques to help them calm down and self-regulate.

- ◇ Milkshake breathing, an effective technique for teaching young people how to calm their breathing rate when they're feeling distressed, angry or anxious.
- ◇ 'The huge bag of worries' storybook. This book supports young people to learn about worries and the benefits of talking about their worries with a trusted adult.
- ◇ Focused work on friendships, identifying how to build and sustain healthy friendships

It's Important to have a chance to just have FUN!
Some of our CYP days out & activities 2019-2020...

Plean Country Park & Picnic

Visit to Fire Station

Kings Park Games Day

Edinburgh Fringe

Bandeath— Walk the Dogs (Pet Therapy)

Mum's & Kids Pamper Day

River Walks

Doune Ponds – Wildlife Trail

" You are the only person I can talk to about all this, and I know you won't judge me. You help me see that it's not my fault " -Age 15

" Yeah , I'm writing your name, because you're my safe person that I can talk about my feelings to" -Age 9

Refuge Accommodation

Stirling & District Women's Aid has 7 self-contained flats in the Stirling area as well as 5 scattered properties in rural areas which provide women and children fleeing domestic abuse with a safe refuge.

These havens provide women and children fleeing domestic abuse with a safe and secure shelter as well as ongoing support and advocacy from the women's and children's workers. Often, women cannot start to process the trauma they have experienced till they are safe in refuge. This can also be when the hard work for them starts – recovery from trauma involves a lot of painful memories and refuge staff are trained and experienced in assisting the family's recovery. It takes an average of 7 attempts for a victim of domestic abuse to make a successful and final effort to leave the abuser and we aim to make the refuge as comfortable and safe for them as possible, to allow the recovery to begin.

On admission to refuge, the family meet the women's and children's workers who go through the essential paperwork with them, then provide them with a welcome pack and explain their roles and what support and safety planning they can expect from the workers.



Our families have their own flats but in addition have access to a large communal garden which is very well stocked with play equipment, outdoor seating and a drying area. As well as outdoors, the families also have use of an indoor play room, living room and kitchen all open when staff are on duty, which offers women the opportunity to socialise with other women and the children can play together.



Once in refuge, the children are seen regularly by the children's worker and the women have regular 1-1 support sessions with the women's worker. There is also a weekly meeting for all residents and staff in the communal living area which gives all the opportunity to discuss any other matters, such as repairs, in the comfort of a nice big room with refreshments provided. This also provides an opportunity for the families to socialise and meet newcomers. All women are also made aware that they can approach staff at any time, if practical, about any issues and don't have to wait for individual sessions

There are a few special people that volunteer their time to help the women and children in refuge, coming in to help staff and spend time with the families. One of our volunteers has started a veggie patch and grown sunflowers for the children and does a weekly 'food-share' at weekends with various activities for all. She has also created a 'fairy garden' which helps develop the children's imagination.

Our women also have the opportunity to access group therapy work and activity groups. One of our new group sessions is called Seasons for Growth, which is a programme covering aspects of change, loss and grief – all very real emotions when recovering from domestic abuse. The group provides valuable coping techniques and builds awareness and resilience.

We also try and put on fun activities for the families in the holidays – eg. day trips and picnics in the summer, and a Christmas party and pantomime tickets in the winter! We have also had cinema afternoons and bingo sessions in the refuge living room!

The long-term aim, however, of being supported by Women’s Aid is to empower survivors of domestic abuse to move on and to live without fear. Once they leave refuge accommodation, they can receive ongoing support to ensure this continues.

“For such a long time, we had been stuck in a cycle of misery. We were literally prisoners ...for months and months. I felt so guilty for not being able to provide a proper home for my babies and very confused about conflicting feelings I was experiencing.

Coming to refuge and meeting you has helped me to get to a place of clarity where I was able to put a big push to get both my housing and my head sorted.

I’ll never forget the first night we arrived and being so touched by the nice food, toiletries and comfortable flat. Don’t ever lose sight of what a powerful and life-changing difference you make in the lives of women and children”

Family Outreach Support

Our family Outreach Service supports women in the rural area who find it hard to get into our office. We currently have two outreach workers who, in 2019-2020, worked with approximately 80 families.

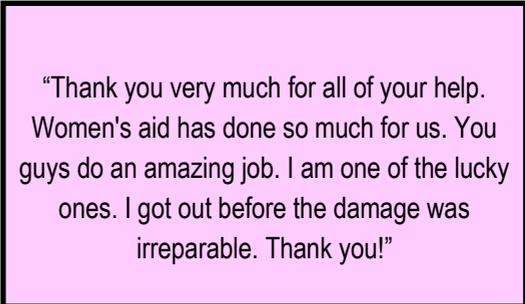
Women who access the Family Support Service typically require support with legal issues, housing, financial issues, court support, as well as emotional support from their traumatic experiences, which could have lasted many years. Women may experience continual harassment, stalking, disputes over child contact, problems with safeguarding and feeling of low self-esteem and self-confidence.

Our Family Outreach Workers have a variety of focused work they use to support women and we have resources to suit everyone irrespective of background and situation. We use resources such as the power and control wheel, equality worksheets, health relationship resources as well as resources on trauma, good boundaries, how to deal with stress, anxiety and low self-esteem issues.

As part of our Outreach Service we offer a focused group on domestic abuse. This gives women in similar situations an opportunity to share their experiences with others. Women in this group will often become friends with other group members and form valuable relationships and sources of support out with the group.



“Thank you so much for all you do. Just knowing I have all this support is so empowering”



“Thank you very much for all of your help. Women's aid has done so much for us. You guys do an amazing job. I am one of the lucky ones. I got out before the damage was irreparable. Thank you!”

66	Families accessed the Family outreach service
36%	of families report taking on work, studies, counselling, etc
70%	of families report being able to look forward and plan for the future
52%	of families report feeling more confident and able to do daily activities
82%	of families report having a better awareness of domestic abuse and their options for support
51%	of families report feeling safer in their own homes
50%	of parents report an improvement in their relationships with their children
82%	of parents report having the confidence to seek information and support they need
67%	of families report having a safety plan

The Women's Aid team are angels. It's very daunting to go to Women's Aid but they make you feel so welcome. All their groups have been excellent and if wasn't for the team I don't know where I'd be now. My confidence has been greatly improved as before I could not look anyone in the eye. The activity group has been a godsend. So much to look forward to with the activities, I've made new friends and been able to vent and let off steam, then we have fun and a laugh. Mainly we like the walks, getting into nature chills us all. The main importance of the group is we can meet up with people who are like minded and if anyone new joins we can offer advice and a few shoulders, can't wait for the groups to restart.

SDWA Activity Group

Stirling and District Women's Aid run an activity group in order to support recovery from the experience of domestic abuse, in which women are often cut off from family and friends and not allowed to pursue their own interests. The group aims to reduce isolation, promote peer support and increase the confidence of our service users, as well as being fun.

The group is held twice a month during the school term and is service user led. At the start of each session the group members meet to draw up a programme of activities. In 2019 -20 we enjoyed a mixture of indoor and outdoor activities, including crafts (jewellery making and glass painting), walks in the local area, bowling, breakfasts and looking round charity shops. Particular highlights were a visit to the restored Japanese gardens in Dollar and a trip to the Moving Image Archive in Glasgow, which was part of a community project run by the Macrobert Arts Centre.

The spring programme was sadly cut short by the lockdown and group members are greatly looking forward to the group starting again once Covid restrictions are lifted



Drop In Support & Independent Domestic Abuse Advocacy (IDAA)

Number of women who have accessed our drop In service	965
Number of High-risk survivors supported through IDAA service	58
Number of MARAC referrals	35
% of survivors who report feeling safer as a result of MARAC actions	87%

From our central Stirling office, we offer a Drop In & IDAA (high risk victim service). Service users can drop in any time between 9am-4.30pm Monday to Friday. They can also call and make an appointment if they prefer. Our premises are accessible for any woman or child experiencing Domestic Abuse in any form. This support is ongoing for those women and children who need it.

Our IDAA service offers specialised support for high risk victims of domestic abuse and we have found that this service adds a focus to those most at risk that is very valuable. The service provides short term interventions to increase safety for those women who have been identified as being at significant risk of harm. The IDAA workers work in close partnership with police, housing, community safety and social services to keep those at risk safer. They are in post to advocate for the high-risk victims and act as the go-between different services aiming to coordinate support that helps to keep survivors safe.

Case Study

Juliette was referred to the SDWA following an incident reported to the police. Juliette said she wanted help and was deeply distressed and wanted out of the relationship but was finding it very difficult to leave on her own.

Juliette worried about being able to afford to live without the additional income of her partner.

On completing a risk assessment and IDAA assessment with Juliette, it was clear that she and her child were at high risk. Juliette had been experiencing mental, emotional, sexual and financial abuse with her partner engaging in a lot of coercive controlling behaviours.

After discussing what she thought would be best for her and her child, looking at all the options, we supported Juliette to complete a Homeless assessment as she did not feel safe at her current address and there were a lot of traumatic memories for her and her child.

We worked with her in dramatically reducing the risk for her and her child, we referred her case to Marac to use a multi-agency response to reduce any risk and ensure that her family unit is getting maximum support all round. We explained this would be a chance to let her “voice” be heard.

We asked Juliette what she wanted, and she said she wanted a safe space to be open and to be able to move on and be independent in her life.

We worked with Juliette to help her identify the abuse she was experiencing and accept that it was not her fault. The offender was trying to play the victim by contacting people close to Juliette and trying to manipulate them against her. We advised her that she did not have to justify herself to anyone and highlighted anyone who knew her would know she is not to blame. Juliette came to understand that she was not responsible, and this behaviour was a continuation of the abuse now they were no longer together.

We did an Individualised Safety and Support Plan to put in extra safety measures unique to her, to help make her and her family unit feel as safe as possible. We offered Juliette’s young child the option of a Children’s and Young person’s referral and gave her step by step advocacy support to the Homeless Service to help Juliette feel like she was fully supported every single step of her support journey.

Over time Juliette started to remember the things she used to love and that she and her child were the most important people.

“If it wasn’t for the support, I’d received I would have got back with him. I could not really see a future without him and didn’t think I could financially support myself. It’s nice to hear from my friends and family that I’m back to my happy self. It wasn’t easy in the first few weeks, but I soon realised it was the best decision I ever made”.

SDWA Prevention Service

The Prevention service within SDWA began in Autumn 2016 and has continued to develop since then. It has two parts providing training and awareness raising, as well as providing direct one-to-one support in HMP Cornton Vale.

Stirling Women's Aid offer one-to-one, confidential support to women in Cornton Vale who have experienced domestic abuse and this year we worked with 26 women in a one to one capacity. Time is spent discussing and educating about the dynamics of domestic abuse to help women have a deeper understanding of the impacts and provide tools to progress without feeling that the easiest option is to blame themselves and possibly return to the abuser. We offer emotional support, as well as practical support and safety planning and work with other partner agencies as and when required. This includes helping to access Women's Aid in their local area upon liberation from HMP Cornton Vale.

"I really appreciate everything Stirling Women's Aid has done for me, my support workers took the time to listen to my story without judging my situation and explored the trauma I have experienced from my ex-partner. I now feel I am able to look at my future more positively and move on in another direction."

SDWA provides a programme of training and awareness sessions for professionals, other organisations, community groups, schools, colleges and universities. Sessions cover topics including:

- ◇ Domestic Abuse awareness
- ◇ Coercive Control
- ◇ Domestic Abuse and Children
- ◇ Understanding and taking part in MARAC (Multi-Agenct Risk Assessment Conference)
- ◇ Responding to Trauma
- ◇ As well as bespoke sessions for individual organisations.

In 2019-2020 we began work on a new schools programme focussing on Relationships, Equality and Domestic Abuse. Due to Covid-19, work on this was halted. However we aim to move this forward in the near future.

Number of Training & Awareness sessions 2019-	37
Number of Individual Attendees	554

**“Excellent Training!
Challenging and thought
provoking. Thanks!”**

**“Really enjoyed the
session! Will definitely
be helpful in my role.
Thanks.”**

Income	Unrestricted Fund	Restricted	Total Funds 31.3.20	Total Funds 31.3.19
Income and Endowments				
Donations and legacies	10,123	-	10,123	2,739
Charitable Activities				
Children and Young People funding		74,064	74,064	74,064
Women's Support funding	138,028		138,028	151,831
Refuge Income	107,586		107,586	90,954
Lottery Outreach funding		82,837	82,837	60,799
Comic Relief		10,060	10,060	32,261
Prevention		42,246	42,246	50,146
Other Trading Activities	1,950		1,950	
Investment income	6,754		6,754	6,759
Total	264,441	209,207	473,648	455,786
Expenditure On				
Raising Funds	278		278	228
Charitable Activities				
Children and Young People		78,539	78,539	74,812
Women's Support	82,210	(7050)	75,160	114,114
Refuge	25,905	71,205	97,110	22,813
Lottery Outreach		11,876	11,876	62,787
Comic Relief		53,297	53,297	36,723
Prevention		43,227	43,227	57,272
Other	94,677		94,677	87,416
Total	203,070	251,094	454,164	456,165
Net income (Expenditure)				
	61,371	(41,887)	(19,484)	379
Transfer between funds	(41,887)	41,887		
Net Movements in funds	19,484	-	19,484	379
Total funds brought forward	101,088	-	101,088	101,467
Total funds carried forward	120,572	-	120,572	101,088

Reserves policy: The restricted funds received during the period were used for the specific purposes laid down by the donors. The remaining general fund which is the free reserves of the charity, represents the unrestricted funds arising from the organisations past operating results. We have now reached a sufficient level of reserves to support three months operating costs and any necessary refurbishment of the refuges.

Thank You!

We would like to thank everyone who has supported us over the last year:

Our Funders:

Big Lottery

Robertsons

Stirling Council

Scottish Government - Impact Funding (Inspiring Scotland)

Members of the public, schools, local faith groups, community groups and businesses.

Our Volunteers and Trustees.

We could not do the work we do without the support you provide!





Stirling & District Women's Aid

*"We have to free half of the human race, the women,
so that they can help to free the other half."*

- Emmeline Pankhurst