

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

56  
Referrals  
July-September 2024

118  
women receiving  
support

60  
children & young people  
receiving support

## ONE THING YOU CAN DO!

### 16 Days:

We're well underway with our plans to mark 16 days later this year, 25th November-10th December is the annual, international period of activism against gender-based violence and abuse. It is always a busy time in CASWA's annual calendar and a period we use to raise awareness of domestic abuse and its impact. This year...

- Our book fairies will be returning! Our book fairy project, now in its 4th year, sees our book fairies share 16 books recommended by our team and our social media community via 'book drops' across Caithness and Sutherland.
- We will be seeking donations of safety equipment we can provide to women who access our service. Keep an eye on our social media for our Amazon Wishlist.
- We will be working with our artist in residence, Micah Mackay, and Lyth Arts Centre to showcase work created earlier this year in our workshops with Micah. Save the date: Monday, 9th December for a public evening event.

### CASWA Marks 20th Anniversary in 2025:

Alongside our plans for 16 days, we've also been working away in the background to look ahead to next year: our 20th anniversary year. We've got lots of exciting plans on the horizon to mark this important year in CASWA's history.

More details will be shared in the next edition of our newsletter, on our 'news' page of our website and social media.

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 is...take part in 16 days – the annual period of activism against gender-based violence and abuse. Use your social media to share our social media coverage during this period of activism. It can be really difficult to achieve the reach we need on social media and you can help us do this. We're keen to engage more of the community and during 16 days is an important period for us to be visible. We ramp up our social media channels from 25th November to 10th December and one thing you can do to help us during this period is to share our posts!

## Box of Gratitude

We'd like to say a huge **THANK YOU** to the team from **Milk & Honey in Dornoch** and to all who sponsored and donated to their fundraiser for CASWA! They raised a fantastic **£1,875.51**. Read more about their fundraiser on page 3.



THANK YOU

Another massive thank you to **Dornoch Highland Games** for their donation of £100

**The Gift Project:** We're always very grateful to our volunteer who runs our Gift Project, putting together beautiful gift parcels of essential items for individuals supported by CASWA and their families. We've added a new 'Project Update' section to our newsletter to acknowledge and share all the fantastic work that goes into the project year round! Thank you Annie! Find the gift project on [www.facebook.com/thegiftprojectsutherland](https://www.facebook.com/thegiftprojectsutherland)

# Women's Service

**Reflections from a new team member:** As a new worker with CASWA I've been amazed at the amount of training that's been made available from CASWA and Scottish Women's Aid. As well as the mandatory training we're required to do for our role, I've been provided with a comprehensive induction programme which is designed to enable new staff to build knowledge, understanding and confidence during the first few months of working for Women's Aid.

There is the opportunity to learn important core skills and to develop links with other workers from local groups across the network. Peer sharing and support is an important element and workers also have the opportunity to connect and share practice both inside and outside of courses throughout the programme.

The programme covers a range of themes and topics, including the foundational feminist values and history which underpin the Women's Aid movement; the dynamics of domestic abuse, support skills, trauma-informed support, child protection...and much more, right through to case note recording.

All our staff are highly trained to ensure we offer appropriate assistance to the women, children and young people who reach out to us for support.

**Online 'Own My Life' Group:** We delivered a condensed Own My Life course over a six week period, ending mid-July. It was a fantastic way to meet the needs of those living very rurally or where social anxiety made accessing group work very difficult. It also bridged a gap for those with young children to attend, with the flexibility to take part in their home environment. Below are some quotes from some of the women who took part:

"I thought it was relatively normal what was going on in my relationship. Knowing everyone [at the group] 'got it', I found that really liberating."

"I think it's coming to terms with, I'm me, I'm flawed but it doesn't mean what I went through was my fault."

**"I USED TO LET PEOPLE PUT ME DOWN, PUT LABELS ON ME. NOW I'M PEELING THE LABELS OFF."**

If you would like to know more about the Own My Life course at CASWA, we co-wrote a blog post with women who have previously attended:

<https://www.caswa.org.uk/blog/a-message-to-other-women>

Alternatively, please get in touch (contact details can be found at the top of newsletter).



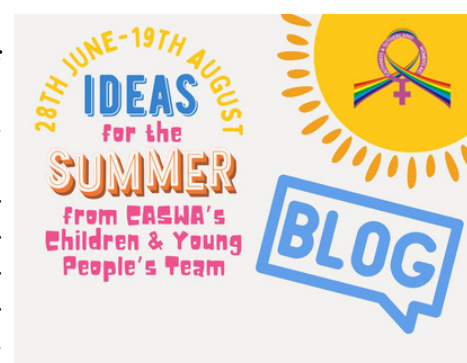
**Project Update:** The Gift Project is a volunteer-run sister project of CASWA which provides gift parcels of essential items to individuals supported by CASWA and their families. This quarter, our volunteer has put an incredible 77.5 hours in to the project in volunteering hours and has created 35 beautiful gift boxes. We always receive great feedback: *"The clothes made me feel so grateful. They felt like they'd been picked just for me and were so comfortable. It's just wonderful."*



## Children & Young People's Service

**Using Funding for Outings and Calm Kits:** In the last edition of our newsletter, we shared that we had secured some funding from the Children & Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund. Our CYP Team have had a busy Summer putting this funding to good use: they've taken children and young people supported by CASWA to the cinema, swimming, out for lunch, on outings to local areas/attractions, etc! Not only this, the team have spent time researching and purchasing items for 'calm kits'. These will be kits full of sensory, fidget and distraction items to support CYP in and out with sessions.

**Holiday Ideas Blog & Socials Campaign:** As well as writing a blog post packed full of ideas to keep boredom at bay during the school holiday periods, every Monday throughout the summer holidays our team shared a #MONDAYIDEA. We had everything from taking part in a library reading challenge, to sharing our favourite walking locations, playparks and games to sharing ideas for coastal inspired crafts. Our favourite #mondayidea? The lazy/duvet day - we all need one of those occasionally!



**#MONDAYIDEA**

# AWARENESS RAISING, EDUCATION & PREVENTION



**News:** In August we created a new 'news' section of our website: [www.caswa.org.uk/news](http://www.caswa.org.uk/news) This is the area of the website where we will be sharing our newsletters as well as any news in-between newsletters. We've had a busy quarter since the publication of our last newsletter. See more below.

**Campaign:** During August and September, CASWA took part in a Scotland-wide campaign by Women's Aid entitled: #HerFreedomScotland. This campaign aimed to raise awareness of the impact of domestic abuse on the day to day lives of those who experience it. The campaign included photographs of shoes taken in various settings and locations to represent what freedom from domestic abuse looks like. Our whole team got involved, highlighting the significant impact domestic abuse has on people's freedom and ability to go about their everyday, day-to-day lives. Read more about the campaign and see our contributions here:

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

**Freshers at UHI:** With the start of a new academic year, we returned to the North Highland Campus of UHI for two days to attend their Freshers Fayre. We've been attending these events for years and love the opportunity it gives us to chat with students. We always take conversation starters, this year no different. Our focus this year was on problematic statements and asking and discussing 'What's the harm?'. Read more here: <https://www.caswa.org.uk/news/caswa-attend-freshers>

We've been inspired to create a new blog series asking the question 'What's the harm?' and where we will unpick some of the statements discussed in more detail - watch this space!

**Blogs:** Our team have written two blog posts for our website recently. Our 'Love Shouldn't Hurt' blog helps to promote more discussion and awareness of the signs of an unhealthy or abusive relationship, while our blog on Claire's Law aims to impart information about this important disclosure scheme in Scotland. You can read them both here: <https://www.caswa.org.uk/blog>

**JustGiving Fundraising:** This quarter we became LIVE on JustGiving with the team from Milk & Honey Café in Dornoch being our first official fundraisers! In between serving up delicious food and drinks, the team put on their running shoes to run the Baxters River Ness 10K at the end of September. They raised a whopping £1,875.51 for CASWA through sponsors/donations!



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

**Prima Facie** - National Theatre. Written by Suzie Miller and directed by Justin Martin, this one-woman play featuring Jodie Comer as the sole and lead actor, is outstanding. The play tells the story of Tessa, exploring her experience of the legal system first as a successful, determined defence barrister and then as a survivor of sexual violence seeking justice. It is a harrowing, raw and incredibly powerful piece of theatre which shines a light the reality of gender-based abuse and violence and is critical in its assessment of the flaws in the legal system. It highlights the very real impact that legal proceedings, in the pursuit of justice, has on survivors. As a pre-recorded 'live' National Theatre piece, it was playing in theatres up and down the country for a very limited showing in September, but is one not to miss for any future showings.

## FEMINIST CORNER

**Women & Girls in Sport:** Did you know that the 2024 Olympics and Paralympics in Paris were the first ever to achieve gender parity with equal numbers of men and women competing? While we see encouraging reports of improved representation of women in sport, bodies of research sadly report that significant numbers of girls disengage with sports as they reach adolescence - UNESCO quoting this figure to be 49%. Shifting the tide is important and it is crucial that girls and women have opportunities, encouragement and safe spaces to engage and take part in sport throughout their lives. We need to continue to tackle gender stereotypes around what girls can do and where they belong, particularly in relation to sport and we're thrilled to see so many great examples locally of local women's, girl's and mixed sporting groups/clubs.

As well as the positive benefits of movement and sport on physical health, engagement in sport can play a big role in building resilience, self-esteem and confidence, fostering emotional wellbeing and mental health as well as developing important life skills!

# CUT OUT & KEEP

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



## GIVE IT A GO...

**Yellow sticker rummage:** Do you ever check out the yellow sticker/reduced section at your local supermarket? We love a 'yellow sticker rummage'. It is a great opportunity to experiment and make, for example, a HUGE pan of soup for very little cost. A member of our team loves making 'Green Soup' from their yellow sticker hauls. Grab any reduced green vegetables, chop them up and add to a pan alongside fried onions and stock. Add some frozen peas and then blend once cooked. Add a bit of cream if you fancy. Quick, easy, affordable! Why not give a 'yellow sticker rummage' a go?

## Leaf Printing

Collect the fallen leaves you come across on your autumn walks and turn them into art!

Make sure you collect freshly fallen leaves, if they are too dry they will crumble when pressed into paper!

All you need is some paper and paint, ink or chunky felt tip pens!



**RECIPE SHARE:** We're fully into cosy, Autumn territory now and looking forward to making and eating lots of tasty hot puddings again. One of our team loves a crumble and has shared a favourite recipe. Why not give it a go?

### Ingredients:

Fruit base -

- 500g Fruit (take your pick: cooking apples, rhubarb, blackberries, pears, plums...)
- 100g-175g Granulated Sugar (adjust according to sweetness/sharpness of fruit you're using)

Crumble topping -

- 150g Plain Flour
- 75g Butter
- 50-75g Caster Sugar

### Method

Chop fruit into thumbnail size pieces. Add to heatproof dish alongside the sugar.

Add flour to a bowl and rub in butter finely using your hands. Add sugar. The mixture should be a fine crumb.

Sprinkle the crumble layer on top of the fruit.

Place in oven at 180degrees for 45mins-1hr or until top is lightly brown/golden.

**Enjoy** - just don't burn your tongue (it is very hot straight out the oven!). Serve with cream, ice cream, custard or a splash of milk. A great recipe to use up some fruit (or 'yellow sticker' finds!).

