

Specialised in supporting women, children & young people in Caithness & Sutherland to stay safe from domestic abuse

CASWA

Caithness and Sutherland Women's Aid



CASWA: 0345 408 0151 - www.caswa.org.uk - info@caswa.org.uk
Scottish Domestic Abuse & Forced Marriage Helpline: 0800 027 1234



SPOTLIGHT ON CASWA

54

Referrals

October-December 2024

116

women receiving support

57

children & young people receiving support

Thank you for the support in 2024!

While we are a relatively 'behind the scenes' charity, we aren't one without support and are always blown away and full of gratitude for the support we receive. We're starting 2025 with gratitude by acknowledging all those who supported CASWA in 2024.

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

Funding:

In November, we released a joint media statement in partnership with the other Highland-based Women's Aid groups and Scottish Women's Aid to raise awareness and call for support around the concerning funding situation we are facing with the Highland Council. We'd like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the support we have received from elected representatives and our community. You can read the statement here: <https://bit.ly/HighlandFundingWAGroups>

2025 - CASWA's 20th Anniversary Year

As we head in to a new year, we also head in to an important year in CASWA's history - the organisation's 20th anniversary. Our theme for the year, A Light in the Dark, has been inspired by some of the feedback we have received over the years about the difference that has CASWA made to the lives of the women, children and young people we have supported. The legacy of CASWA is down to all the amazing women who have been part of CASWA's journey as staff members, volunteers and board members. We will be marking the year with awareness raising and fundraising events. Please keep an eye on CASWA's social media and the news section of our website: <https://www.caswa.org.uk/news>

ONE THING YOU CAN DO!

We're often asked by people what they can do to help and support CASWA. This small part of our newsletter shares our ideas and invites you to get involved, should you wish to!

2025 is a big year for CASWA as we mark the charity's 20th anniversary. We have a number of things planned throughout the year. One thing you can do is help us to mark this important year by helping us to reach wider audiences by sharing our social media posts as well as attending events we have planned!

Box of Gratitude

We'd like to say a **HUGE thank you** to everyone who donated to our recent donations campaigns for 16 days via our Amazon Wish Lists! Your generous donations of books to our book fairy and additional safety equipment for women were hugely appreciated!

Thank you to everyone who stopped by at the **Festive Safety Campaign** events in **Thurso and Wick Tesco's in December**. A fantastic **£245.16** was raised for CASWA!

For as long as we can remember, families supported by CASWA needing extra support at Christmas have benefitted from the **MFR Cash for Kids Mission Christmas Appeal**. We submitted **35 applications** on behalf of families. We would like to say a **HUGE THANK YOU** to **MFR Cash for Kids, their team and volunteers as well as everyone who supports this worthy campaign!** We would also like to **thank Gary from KWICK Deliveries** who supports us every year by transporting the sacks north for us **free of charge!** This campaign and the support makes a huge difference to families who need it at Christmas!



Thank you

Women's Service

Own My Life Group-Work: December saw the end of another inspiring Own My Life course. The aim of the course is to give women who have been subjected to abuse the tools to gain ownership of their lives. The course material is fantastic but as with any course, the real magic is created within the room among the group of women who attend. The women on this course inspired our workers in so many ways, with their knowledge, self-reflection, courage and the support, kindness and wisdom shown and shared with each other.

Here are examples of some of the feedback this session:

"I got something out of every single session."

"You inspired me, thank you."

"it was really quite validating for me, quite relatable for me."

"There's no judgement [at Own My Life]."

This course is a great resource and addition to the support package available at CASWA. We aim to and run the course in person bi-annually in addition to occasional online courses. It can be a helpful tool to support moving on from recent or historic abuse. If you need help moving on, please do get in touch.

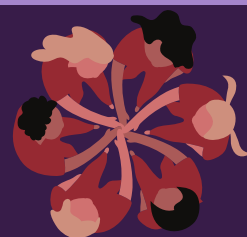
Additional Safety Equipment: In December we ran a donations campaign for additional safety equipment (in addition to the equipment we routinely source and provide to women to promote their safety). Here's what one of our Domestic Abuse Specialists had to say about the difference this makes:

"Additional safety equipment really helps women feel more reassured and have a greater sense of security and safety. Women always tell us the difference it makes. We cannot control what a perpetrator chooses to do, but we can promote women's safety and help them feel listened to, believed and safer."

Reflections from one of our Domestic Abuse Specialists:

"When I talk to friends or am asked what I do for a job, people often tilt their heads and say something along the lines of 'that must be difficult/upsetting' or something similar. I would agree that some parts of the job can be hard and there are days where I find my natural empathy for others can really make the work challenging to cope with. The general word I would use though when I talk of my job would be 'inspiring'. The women who use our service inspire me daily with their insight, resilience and determination. Both in one to one support and in group situations, I spend most of my time in awe. We all need a push to get on sometimes and when you work with wonderful women every day, it makes it so much easier. This of course, is also paired with a work environment unlike any I have known. An ethos of humour, support and passion in the workplace is wonderfully unique and keeps a horrific subject matter from becoming overpowering. When work feels like a safe space, you are empowered to deal with anything."

Funding Success: In December we heard that our application to the Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund for adults was successful. This funding will support the group work opportunities available at CASWA. We're in the process of putting together a program of group work in 2025 - this will include the Own My Life program, opportunities to engage in art, craft, leisure and social activities as well as opportunities to be involved in marking our 20th anniversary.



Children & Young People's Service

Calm Kit Feedback

Our team have been busy creating "calm kits" thanks to funding from the Children & Young People's Mental Health & Wellbeing Fund. These are resources that children & young people can use in their own time when they feel overwhelmed with their feelings or need a source of comfort or distraction to take their mind off things. We've had some great feedback so far:

"It has been very helpful, it feels like a positive little thing, and it helps keep me calm with my anger and anxiety."

"When I can't sleep I use my calm kit. It helps me get to sleep."



Getting creative with children and young people: Our Children & Young People's Team love providing opportunities for creativity in sessions. They were able to replenish their art and craft supplies ahead of Christmas and provided opportunities in sessions for Christmas crafts. Creative approaches are always popular and an important part of the support package available at CASWA. They can provide down time in sessions, a chance for children and young people to express themselves as well as opportunities for achievement and feelings of pride. Creative approaches is also an important part of our work as they provide accessible, approachable and age and stage appropriate/relevant ways of exploring difficult topics and experiences.

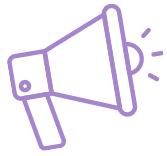


Involving children & young people in development: we love getting children and young people involved in the development of our service. As the people who access our service, their voices are important and they are really well placed to help us evaluate and develop our service. Recently, some young people have been helping us to design new posters to help bring more awareness to the community and other children and young people about the work we do locally.

AWARENESS RAISING, EDUCATION & PREVENTION



News: We've launched a **news** section on our website. We've had a busy quarter since our last newsletter! We've condensed all of our news below, but please visit <https://www.caswa.org.uk/news> to read more!



YPI at Local High Schools: Over the past few months, we've spent time with pupils from local High Schools supporting their Youth Philanthropy Initiative work. Pupils are required to research, liaise with and learn about local charities and create presentations with a view to securing their chosen charity a financial grant.

16 Days: Those familiar with our area of work and/or CASWA, will know that the period from 25th November to 10th December is an important time in our annual calendar. It is a period for activism against gender-based violence and abuse, otherwise known as '16 Days'. This year we marked the period through three strands of activity:

- The return of the CASWA book fairies, now in its 4th year.
- A donations campaign for additional safety equipment for women via Amazon Wish List.
- A 'one night only' exhibition event in collaboration with our artist in residence, Micah Mackay, and Lyth Arts Centre.



Safety Campaign Event: In December, we joined forces with Police Scotland and the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service on a safety campaign event at Tesco stores in Wick and Thurso.



Christmas Library Displays: It is a tradition at Christmas for CASWA to create displays for some of our local libraries. In the past we have worked with libraries across our area to create seasonal displays which aim to raise awareness within our community about domestic abuse and the work that we do at CASWA.



Don't forget you can read more about any of the above news items on our website!
<https://www.caswa.org.uk/news>



Blogs: We had a busy quarter and despite best intentions we were only able to publish one blog post this quarter. On 31st October, we published an informative blog post about the Scottish Witch Trials, written by a member of our team. The blog can be read here: <https://www.caswa.org.uk/blog/scottish-witch-trials>

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

Hidden Figures (Film) - Based on the true story of three African-American women who worked at Nasa and played a crucial role in providing the mathematical calculations for the launch of astronaut John Glenn into orbit. The film highlights discrimination in relation to both sex and race, but also shows the power and importance of those women, and the strength they must have shown to succeed in such environments. A member of our team who recommends it noted that it left her feeling inspired by the women's strength, determination and their dignity in the face of dehumanizing behaviour.

Until I Kill You (ITV/STV series based on the book, Living with a Serial Killer, by Delia Balmer) - A four part drama based on the true story of Delia Balmer. It highlights the long-standing trauma that abuse can cause both mentally and physically, and also the lack of understanding in the criminal justice system in terms of responding to people with experiences of trauma. Our team member who recommends the series noted that the story was shocking and although based in the 1990s-2000s and acknowledging that some things have improved, it also highlighted how far we have to go in terms of allowing justice to be carried out without re-traumatising survivors. A must see, but with a content and trigger warning.

Various Books (The CASWA Book Fairy) - Our book fairies returned for 16 days - the international period of activism against gender-based violence and abuse - sharing 16 books across Caithness and Sutherland recommended by the CASWA team, board and social media community. The list of books featured and recommended this year can be found here: <https://www.caswa.org.uk/news/caswa-book-fairy-2024>

FEMINIST CORNER

In 2024:

- The National Policing Statement for England and Wales acknowledged that violence and abuse against women and girls is an epidemic.
- Gisele Pelicot waived her right to anonymity to shift shame firmly to the side of perpetrators. She brought over 50 perpetrators of abuse and sexual violence towards her to justice.
- The British Transport Police recorded a 20% increase in violent crimes against women and girls on the transport network.

These three examples, alongside countless more, illustrate the true, concerning reality of an unsafe world for women and girls in present times. We all have a role to play.



CUT OUT & KEEP

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



GIVE IT A GO...

TED Talks: Have you heard of them? A range of talks on “ideas worth spreading”! There is a catalogue of a huge variety of topics and speakers from around the world ranging from short ‘snippets’ videos to more detailed, lengthy discussions of ideas. Why not grab yourself a cuppa and ‘give it a go’. You can look up topics of interest on the TED Talk website here:

<https://www.ted.com/talks>

Perhaps you won't be surprised to know that we recommend a few: <https://www.caswa.org.uk/blog/caswas-ted-talks-week>

TED
IDEAS WORTH SPREADING



BULLET Journaling

Bullet Journaling: Have a go at making a bullet journal this year. They are a great and inexpensive way to keep track of your mood, activities, habits and more throughout the year.

Journaling is a great way to be reflective of your day and also helps you to be mindful of what activities or habits impact your mood.

All you need is a notebook some pens and your imagination. If you're stuck for ideas Pinterest has some great inspiration.

Read more about Bullet Journaling here:

www.calminggrace.com/start-a-bullet-journal-guide/?utm_content=cmp-true



Pick up a new hobby

New year doesn't have to mean a new you, but it is a good opportunity to consider picking up a new hobby...and there are lots of online videos to help you get started!



Move your body

It can be harder to find opportunities to move our bodies during the Winter months - the weather in Caithness and Sutherland doesn't always help! Moving your body can really help you feel good and is great for your health and wellbeing. Our team have found some great online videos for some indoor, at home movement:

<https://www.youtube.com/@yogawithadriene>

<https://www.youtube.com/@growwithjo>

Be Creative

What about grabbing some knitting needles or crochet hooks and wool and giving knitting or crochet a go? Our team have found a great tutorial:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zjq0MoUZqVY>

A NEW YEAR DOESN'T HAVE TO MEAN A NEW YOU!