

Stirling Women's Aid Annual Report 2018-2019



Stirling and District Women's Aid Annual Report 2017-2018

In this last year we have seen the buildup and preparation for the Domestic Abuse act which became law on the 1st of April. Stirling and District Women's Aid welcomes the added protection for survivors as well as the recognition of coercive control as an integral part of domestic abusive that the act provides. The recognition of coercive control marks a cultural change in our understanding of domestic abuse. We hope this will lead to a better appreciation of the impact domestic abuse have on survivors and better responses from services. For too long there has been a disproportional focus on domestic violence and for survivors and professionals working in this field the focus on violence does not tell the story of the real impacts of the daily and ongoing control survivors experience from their partners.

This year has been another busy year for the service, and we have been supporting over 1000 women this year and supported those individuals with a wide range of issues. Ongoing constraints on services and finances society wide continues to have an impact and many of the survivors have complex issues linked to financial constraints, mental health, poverty. With austerity and financial hardship, survivors rarely must not only contend with the domestic abuse but also poverty, lack of support, difficulties with benefits and low paid work as well as an increasingly difficult to navigate benefit system. As a result, we have to work more effectively with partners to get relief to those we support. We are immensely grateful to our partner agencies such as Foodbanks, CAB, Homestart, Buttle trust etc without whom our survivors lives would be even more desperate.

Domestic abuse is a societal problem and one that is relevant to us all. It is present in every community, every workplace, school and nursery. We all have a role to play to increase our own awareness, discuss the issues in public, raise the awareness and call it out when we see it. We need to lift the lid on what too long has been "a private issue". Domestic abuse is not a "personal problem" it is a political and societal problem deeply rooted in women's inequality and the imbalance of power between men and women. Maybe we need to resurrect the feminist slogan of 60s and 70s arguing that the "private is political" and once and for all ensure that someone's "private business" stops being private once crimes are committed.

I would like to also extend a huge thank you to all of those who support us. Thanks to our staff for all their hard work doing a very difficult job, to our trustees for supporting the organisation and ensuring good governance, our volunteers for providing their time and commitment, to all those who fundraise for us, donate to us and support us in social media and finally to our funders. We would not be here if it was not for you all and your continued commitment to supporting women and children.

Jessica Lindohf
Exec Manager

From the Board of SDWA

During 2018-2019 the SDWA Board met nine times to undertake the routine work of governance. At each meeting we reviewed and monitored monthly accounts and discussed reports received from the Executive Manager outlining the hands-on work of the organisation. Over the year we have also approved the annual budget and previous years accounts, reviewed and updated SDWA policies as part of a rolling review programme, and approved adoption of a new lone worker app system to provide increased staff safety.

Early in the year five Board members attended a Trustee / Director Development Day organised by Scottish Women's Aid. We enjoyed discussion around being a trustee of a feminist organisation, learnt from presentations on diversity / inclusion and fundraising, and benefitted from meeting and sharing experiences with other Women's Aid groups. The Board also benefitted from holding a meeting at the main refuge, with new members gaining from a being shown around the refuge and associated accommodation.

In 2018, as a recipient of funding from the Scottish Government's Equally Safe Violence Against Women and Girls Fund, SDWA underwent an Organisational Health Check. The Board provided responses to a questionnaire covering a range of matters including governance, human resources, funding and management, and subsequently had a follow up meeting with the funder. We were pleased to receive positive feedback, and to hear the work of the Executive Manager being especially complemented.

The year also saw us developing our Strategic Plan for 2019 – 2024. Reflecting on the work completed in the previous Strategic Plan highlighted how much the organisation has expanded and developed. As in recent years, 2018 saw SDWA providing support to increased numbers of women and children. With several staff changes occurring through the year the Board are especially aware of, and tremendously grateful for, the continued hard work of all SDWA staff in providing support to more individuals in the Stirling area. Being re-funded by the Lottery for another three years, starting in 2018, is further testament to the recognised success of SDWA's work. The Board also recognise the importance of the extensive partnership work SDWA staff undertake.

The Board experienced their own changes during the year, with three members standing down at the annual AGM, having completed their full tenure – a combined loss of 18 years' experience. As the new Chair I have appreciated both the Board's support of me and our combined input to undertaking our governance role. Further change will ensue as this is my final year of tenure.

Looking forward, Board priorities include:

- maintaining and enhancing supportive relationship with the staff who are at the heart of the organisation

- continuing awareness of Board responsibilities in respect of SDWA beyond the tenure of the present Executive Manager whose efforts, in relation to raising money and expanding the service continue to be outstanding
- pursuing recruitment of new Board members, with associated consideration of wider diversity and continued training

SDWA has continued to function well over the year, to provide services for steadily increasing numbers whilst maintaining financial stability. We thank the staff for all their hard work and the Executive Manager for her effective leadership and efficient management of the organisation. We look forward to working together over the coming year.

Gillian Flint, Chair of the Board of Trustees



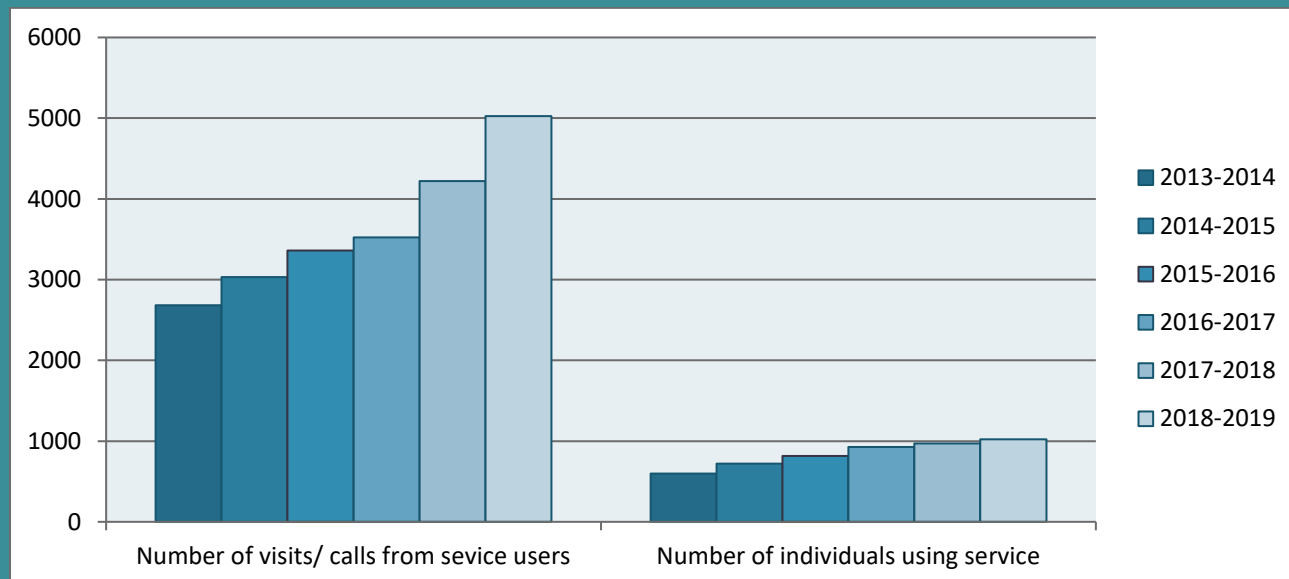
Picnic and
play in the
park



Refuge Garden



Our Services in numbers 2013-2019



2018-2019

Number of visits and support calls to the service	5026
Number of individual service users supported	1023
Numbers of new referrals not previously known to service	150
Amount of time spent in one to one support with women	3001 hours
Number of families supported through Family Outreach	67 families
Number of Children supported through Children's service	80
Number of support sessions with children	980
Number of women accommodated in refuge	31
Number of children accommodated in refuge	42

Working with Children

This year our Children and Young Person workers (CYP) have supported 80 children through refuge, one to one support and through our Pirate Group. The children we support are provided with weekly support through focused one to one using tools such as;

- ‘The Bears’ feelings activity cards, which support children and young people to reflect, name and talk about their feelings.
- The ‘worry monster’, children and young people draw / write their worries and then place them into the worry monster.
- ‘Things that make me feel’ worksheets.
- ‘All About Me’ workbook, supports a child 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 support children and 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, given to children in an envelope to take home. When feelings overwhelm them they can use the flash cards which provides them with various calm down techniques to help them self-regulate.
- Milkshake breathing, an effective technique for teaching children and young people how to calm their breathing rate when feeling distressed, angry or anxious.
- ‘The Huge Bag of Worries’ story book, this supports children and young people to learn about worries and the importance of talking about their worries with a trusted adult.
- Focused work on friendships, identifying how to build and sustain healthy friendships.

We also do group work through our Pirate Group

This year some children participated in the six weeks ‘Pirate Group’ within a local primary school. The Pirate Group is held on a weekly basis and each week a different topic is discussed.

1: Getting to Know You Pirate. Relationship building work through discussions on the children and young people’s likes, dislikes, interests and hobbies.

2: Special Pirate. Focused work on self-esteem and self-worth through group discussions on the importance of recognising everyone is different and special in their own way.

3: Lonely Pirate. Supporting the children and young people to identify people who care for them and support them. This increases a child's sense of identity and belongings.

4: Angry Pirate. Focused work on emotional regulation, supporting the children to develop their understanding of how to recognise anger and how to express it safely.

5: Helping Pirate. Safety planning and identifying support networks for the child

6: Goodbye Pirate. Reflection of work completed within the group, celebration.

The workers who ran the group both observed that during the first session once the children had learned that the group was ran SDWA, each child had the confidence to discuss their experiences of domestic abuse as they recognised that there were other children who had similar experiences to them. This enabled the children to feel that they were not alone. Some of the children within the group developed new friendships and began to play with one another outside of the group.

Summer activities

This year had summer activities giving children and their families a chance to have fun and make memories. Some of the children we support have not had the chance to have trips or activities, we try to think of different trips to enable children to have different experiences. These are some examples of the trips and activities this summer: trip to the fire station; Kings Park Games day; Soap carving; Diversity day; Pet Therapy; Arts and Crafts; Walks and a Picnics; Falkirk Wheel experience; Wellbeing and Pamper day

Sensory Group at refuge

Sensory play was introduced to refuge as this stimulates children's senses: touch, smell, taste, sight and hearing. Through sensory play, children explore and naturally use scientific processes while they play, investigate, create and discover new sensations. Sensory play is also linked to supporting early child development. We have created a sensory session for the mothers and babies within refuge, offering a safe, quiet, relaxing space for mother and baby to bond and for mothers with young babies to support each other.

Recently we transformed our playroom to be more Eco friendly, no plastic, all-natural products and craft instruments made by the children. We hope to promote an Eco-friendly nursery as this empowers children and raises environmental awareness.



Inspection March 2018

Quality of Care and Support -Excellent 6

Quality of Staffing- Very Good 5

Refuge accommodation

Women fleeing domestic abuse often suffer many forms of ongoing trauma, some of which will not even present itself until the woman is safely settled in accommodation, whether it's refuge or council temporary accommodation. Refuge accommodation is safe and secure, and she has access to regular emotional and practical support as well as advocacy services. This support is vital to the woman's recovery, while she may still be struggling to understand what she and her children have been through.

Stirling Women's Aid has 7 purpose-built self-contained refuge flats as well as 5 scattered properties in Stirlingshire. The 7 purpose-built properties consist of a 1-bedroom accessible flat, a 3-bedroom flat and five 2-bedroom flats, with the scattered refuges all being able to accommodate families. 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.

The women and children in the main refuge have their own flats but have access to 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.

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 to discuss any other matters, such as repairs. All are 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 also 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 created a 'fairy garden' this year and provides a weekly 'food-share' at weekends with various activities for all. The women are also offered access to a therapeutic group session which are run regularly and there are regular activity days for women and children alike.

The long-term aim 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.'



Inspection December 2018

Quality of Care and Support -Very Good 5

Quality of Staffing- Very Good 5

Family Outreach Support

Our Family Outreach Service supports women in the rural area who find it hard to get into our office. We have two outreach workers who worked with 67 women last year. Women who access the Family Outreach Service typically require support with legal issues, housing, court as well as support emotionally from their experiences which could have lasted many years. Women may experience continual harassment, stalking, disputes over child contact, problems with safe-guarding and feelings 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 a variety of power and control resources, equality worksheets, healthy relationship resources as well as resources on trauma, good boundaries, how to deal with stress and anxiety and low self-esteem issues.

As part of our Outreach Service we offer a focused group on domestic abuse. Giving women in similar situations an opportunity to share experiences with others in. This has also been important to women after the group has finished in terms of making friends and feeling less isolated.

This year we had a new pre organised summer programme for the women and their children. We planned trips that some of the families would not have thought to attend or had the ability to if we had not provided the opportunity and it was a huge success and everyone had a great time. We wanted to provide new opportunities for families so they could have a family day out with little expense, make special memories and still have fun. We arranged activities such as taking a picnic to the local "Play in the Park" day, attended The Battle of Bannockburn 3D experience, carved soap at the Engine Shed, went on walks and tried pet therapy. We also had several picnics at Plean Country Park, Doune Ponds, Kings Park and took train trips and finished with a Wellbeing Pamper day for families. Our pamper day was a way to promote wellbeing and provide a chance for families to come together in a relaxed atmosphere. We had volunteers offering free make up and hair, face painting, massage, reiki, nails, arts and crafts and free photo shoots. It was great to see women and children relax and spend time together. All these activities were a chance for women to socialise whilst feeling supported with their children. For many families these activities are a really important as due to low income, feelings of isolation and anxiety and lack of transport many families have not got the opportunity or ability to undertake this kind of activity by themselves.

This year saw the end of the 5 year of funding we had received from Big Lottery and we submitted a new application to Big Lottery to continue the work and we have been granted a further 3 years of funding enabling us to continue this valuable project. Thanks to BIG!!

"Many thanks for the help and support, it's good to know that there are some genuinely nice people out there who are willing to hold someone's hand. Don't ever forget how valuable that is!"

"Thank you so much for helping me, you don't know how much I appreciate you being here for me"

67 Families accessed the Family outreach service

38% of families report taking on work, studies, counselling, etc

70% of families report being able to look forward and plan for the future

58% of families report feeling more confident and able to do daily activities

87% of families report having a better awareness of domestic abuse and their options for support

53% of families report feeling safer in their own homes

50% of parents report an improvement in their relationships with their children

80% of parents report having the confidence to seek information and support they need

69% of families report having a safety plan

"Thank you so much you really are the loveliest woman I have ever met and I don't know what to do without you as no other like you. I know myself if it wasn't for your help and encouragement, I would have went back with him and I am so proud it didn't happen".

Drop In Support and Independent Domestic Abuse Advocacy

845 women have accessed our drop in service
51 Survivors were assessed as high risk of serious harm or homicide
49 of high risk survivors provided with individualised safety plans
34 Marac referrals for multi-agency support
36 High risk survivors given housing support
46 High risk survivors supported with advocacy with other services
18 Crime care referrals
18 Referrals for specialised legal support
78% High risk survivors report feeling safer
64% High risk survivors recorded a reduction in violence on the severity of violence grid
88% High risk survivors felt more able to voice their needs with services
94% High risk survivors reported being better at identifying positive and negative relationships
80% High risk survivors report having a better relationship with other services through SDWA
94% High risk survivors report having a better understanding of domestic abuse and its effects

Our central Stirling office is the hub for all of our activities, and this is where we provide our drop in service and our IDAA (high risk victim service). Service users can drop in at any time between 9-4.30 or call in and make an appointment. The premises are accessible for any woman or child experiencing domestic abuse in any form. We support women who experience coercive control, physical, mental, emotional, financial or sexual abuse. We find that most of the time survivors will be experiencing a variety of forms of abuse often with coercive control at the centre with intermittent violence, emotional abuse and sexual abuse. Often the abuse they experience will change and vary over time. Many might not recognise all the forms of abuse they experience as it has become part of daily life and so commonplace that they have stopped questioning if it is acceptable to be treated that way. Often survivors carry a burden of shame, guilt, self-blame and feel responsible for the abuse they experience making it more difficult to seek support

At the initial point of contact from a woman or agency that refers a woman and or family we can offer a variety of support which is client focused to reflect on what the woman chooses. This can

range from an initial assessment to identify support, identifying the domestic abuse, healthy relationships, self-esteem, empowerment & safe boundaries. We provide a range of supports ranging from practical support to emotional support, legal support, assistance to housing options and safety plans and recovery. We support women with their choices whether they chose to stay with the offender or leave to find a safe home. The support we provide is confidential and we will seek permission from the individual if we believe it would be beneficial to work with other partners to support a service user.

We use a person-centered approach and will support her in every step that she chooses. We will listen, support and offer advice and advocacy. We strive to prioritise and problem-solve and provide an advocacy service to minimise the number of agencies a person has to deal with. We also have two groups running. One is an issue-based group discussing the effects of domestic abuse and this gives our Woman the chance to meet and hear other woman's experiences in a safe and confidential way. The other one is an activities group where the woman get to socialise attending different activities every week. When someone present at the service we ask about their experience and work to assess their risk level. We try to assess what the risks are, safety plan to make sure that she and her family is safer and use this to decide what measures needs to be taken to make the person safer. We do this using a Risk Identification Checklist. This helps us identify the risk formally what the level of risk is and depending on what the woman wants we reach a suitable safety plan. For those deemed high risk we can refer to the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) and support the woman through this process. We use the Multi agency approach to ensure the woman and or children have as much help and support as possible.

Case Study Outreach.

Annie presented at our drop in to ask for advice regarding her finances as she was struggling to provide for her children as her partner withheld all the finances from her. When we undertook her risk assessment it became clear that Annie and her two children was at significant risk. Not only did she not have any access to money, she had not access to transport and was very isolated having no friends or family around. Her her partner did not allow her to access any groups, activities or to have a job and she felt very stuck and unable to get out of her situation. Annie felt that she could not leave the relationship and that if she did, he would find her and punish her. Over the course of a couple of months we supported Annie to identify what she would like to change in her life and how we could support her to make this happen. Her confidence improved and she discussed with her children what they felt and what they wanted to do. Annie decided that she would leave, and we supported her to present at homeless services and Annie was provided with homeless accommodation. We worked with Annie to support her to move out of the house one morning once her partner had gone to work and helped her move into her new accommodation. We continued to support Annie and her children practically and emotionally for some time and gradually Annie's confidence grew, the children felt happy in their new home and although there are still issues around child contact the Annie and her children is in a much better place. Annie has now got a part time job and have made friends at her work as well as at the women's aid group she has attended. She is happier and feel safer and more able to be the mum she wants to be.

Prevention Project

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 and YOI 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 33 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.

Cornton Vale – Case study

Lucy sought support from Women's Aid whilst serving a sentence in Cornton Vale for shop lifting. She had been in a relationship a couple of years ago where she regularly experienced physical and emotional abuse. After a very serious assault Lucy pressed charges on her partner and moved into refuge with Women's Aid. Lucy stayed in refuge for a few months but did not engage well with the support that was offered.

Lucy was in a new relationship before coming to Cornton Vale, she knew that this relationship was toxic and could identify the emotional abuse that she had been experiencing and how much control her partner had over her. Until arriving at Cornton Vale Lucy was a heroin addict, she felt that her confidence was at an all time low and that she allowed friends and partners to consistently take advantage of her.

Lucy wanted to discuss the domestic abuse that she had experienced and requested support to help build her confidence and self-esteem, adamant that she could use the time in prison to turn her life around and create a more positive future for herself and her child. Each week Lucy would request further information focusing on domestic abuse – we looked at the power and control wheel, Mr Wrong/Mr Right, we did significant work on healthy boundaries, increasing self-esteem and work focusing on positive personal qualities and creating a safe and positive plan for her future. Lucy took away this information and would often return the following week asking questions about what she had read and relating this to her own experiences. Lucy also often discussed this focus work with her roommate and helped her to identify a pattern of abusive behaviour within her own relationship.

During her time in Cornton Vale Lucy really changed her outlook on her future, she became increasingly confident and had a positive plan for her future, arranging to move to a different town, to engage with continued support from Women's Aid which would be available to her when she leaves. Towards the end of her sentence Lucy had been off heroin for several months, she had started to gain weight, and had also managed to begin rebuilding relationships with her family.

Training and Awareness Raising

This year we have had a very busy year providing training to professionals, volunteers, students and members of the public on domestic abuse, how MARAC processes work, how to risk assess, how to spot and address domestic abuse and what impact domestic abuse have on children. We believe that the more people who understand the dynamics of domestic abuse, the more responsibility society will take collectively to tackle it. Our Prevention service provides practitioner based training and awareness raising to other agencies, community groups, local colleges and schools. As well as providing targeted multi agency training, sessions can be tailored to individual groups.

This free programme is available to any relevant group organisation or school who feels it would benefit and can be tailored to a full or half day or even shorter, bespoke inputs on specific aspects of domestic abuse.

Over the past year, we have delivered sessions to professionals from a wide range of organisations such as social work, housing and community safety, Forth Valley College, Stirling University, teachers, Health Visitors, Midwives as well as to local Church Groups, youth groups and local schools. These sessions have focussed on the dynamics of domestic abuse, as well as helping professionals best approach and support women experiencing domestic abuse. Sessions in schools and youth groups have looked at gender, what domestic abuse is, what controlling behaviour is and giving young people a chance to think about how domestic abuse might work in their own relationships.

This year we have delivered training to 245 professionals or which 72 have had Marac training (half day), 64 (full day) domestic abuse in a family context and 47 domestic abuse and working with vulnerable adults (full day) as well as 62 individuals who attended purpose-built training for their teams, organisations and staff. The training to professionals has been very well received and 97% of participants have rated the training as excellent or very good and we have also as a result of the training more professionals engaging with our drop-in service and IDAA service. 98% of participants report feeling more confident dealing with domestic abuse cases and have a better understanding of the dynamics of domestic abuse. In addition, 96% also report that they have better understanding of the complexities of domestic abuse cases and how to signpost and better work with these cases.

In addition, we have delivered awareness sessions to 386 members of the community ranging from college students, and youth groups to church groups and community groups. These sessions vary in length and content but has the purpose of raising the awareness of domestic abuse, understanding what abusive relationships look like and improve the understanding of what supports are available and how to access them.

Excellent training. Lots of info, lots of discussion. Will recommend it to my colleagues

"I know what to look out for when it comes to identifying domestic abuse"

Annual Accounts

Income	Unrestricted Fund	Restricted	Total Funds 31.3.18	Total Funds 31.3.18
Income and Endowments				
Donations and legacies	2741		2739	9898
Charitable Activities				
Children and Young People funding		74064	74064	74064
Women's Support funding	138028		138028	151831
Refuge Income	90954		90954	83413
Lottery Outreach Program funding		60799	60799	71712
Comic Relief IDAA funding		32261	32261	29351
Prevention		50146	50146	39453
Other activities				
Investment income	6795		6795	7410
Total	238518	217268	455786	467132
Expenditure On				
Raising Funds	228		228	567
Charitable Activities				
Children and Young People		74812	74812	81993
Women's Support	114114		114114	136934
Refuge	22813		22813	13819
Lottery Outreach		62787	62787	74561
Comic Relief		36723	36723	33456
Prevention		57272	57272	39478
Other	87416		87416	79411
Total	224571	231594	456165	460219
Net income (Expenditure)	13947	(14326)	(379)	6913
Transfer between funds	(14326)	14326		
Net Movements in funds	(379)		(379)	6913
Total funds brought forward	101467	2755	101467	94554
Total funds carried forward	101088		101088	101467

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.

Finally

We would like to thank everyone who has supported the organisation over the last year, including:

Our funders:

- Stirling Council
- Violence against Women's Fund and Impact Funding Partners
- Big Lottery Fund

Members of the public, local faith groups, schools and businesses for their invaluable contributions.

Our Volunteers and Trustees

Drummond Laurie our accountants

Caledonian Bookkeeping

We could not do the work we do if it was not for the support from yourselves!

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

