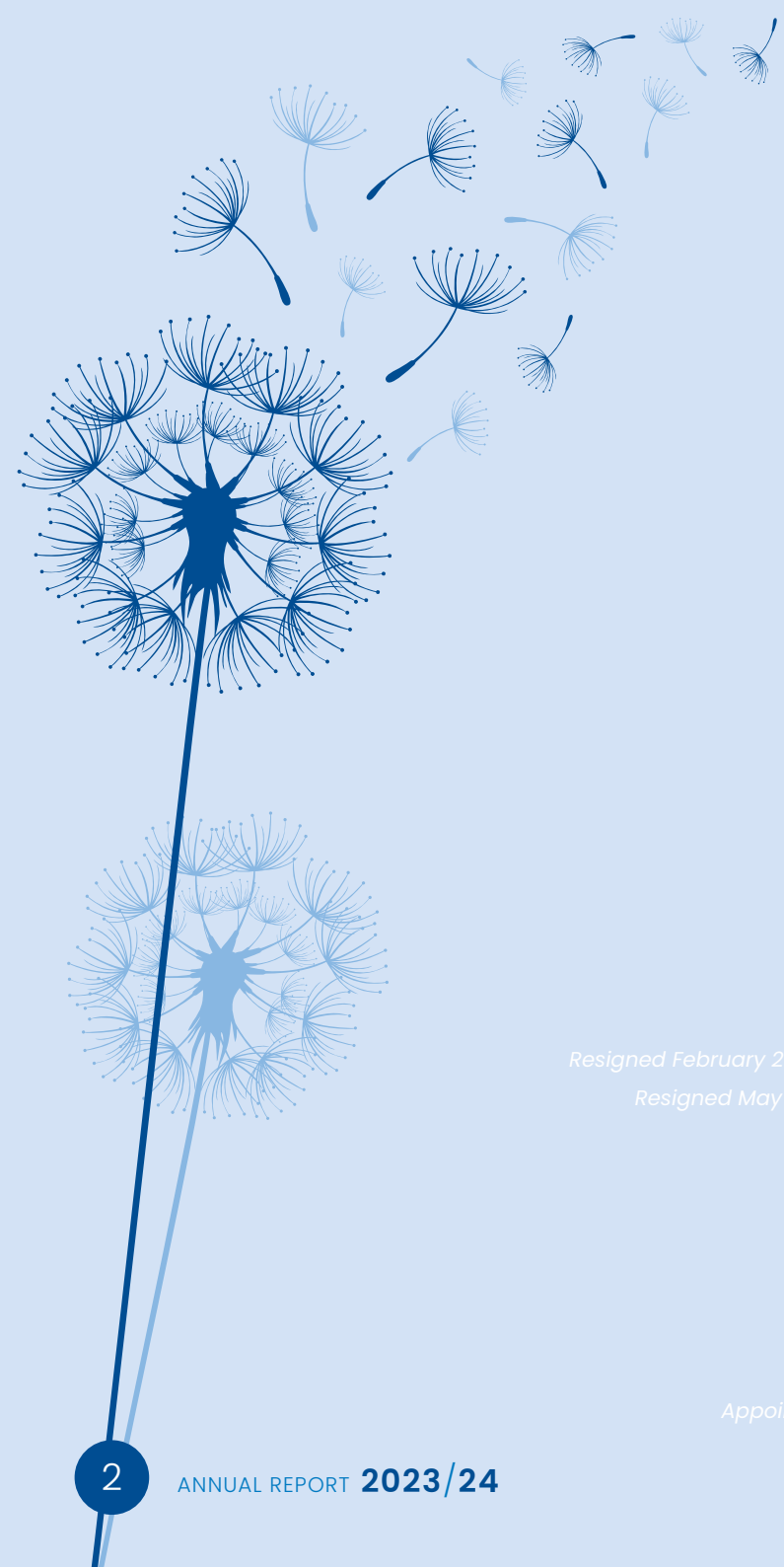


**Shetland  
Women's Aid**

ANNUAL  
REPORT

**2023/24**



## CONTENTS

- 3 CHAIR'S REPORT
- 5 ABOUT SHETLAND WOMEN'S AID
- 6 OUR WORK IN FIGURES
- 8 40 YEARS OF SHETLAND WOMEN'S AID
- 9 WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP  
THE POWER OF CREATIVITY
- 10 PREVENTION EDUCATION
- 11 SWA IN THE COMMUNITY
- 12 ACCOUNTS
- 14 COMMUNITY SUPPORT & FUNDRAISERS
- 15 HOW TO GET INVOLVED  
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

### CHARITY TRUSTEES

Chair Dr Val Turner

*Resigned February 2024* Joint Secretary Susan Brunton

*Resigned May 2023* Joint Secretary Diane Barnes

Treasurer Tracy Williamson

Dr Mary Hepburn

*Resigned April 2023* Anna Mainland

Hazel Lambert

Brenda Wilcock

*Resigned September 2023* Lori Bulter

Sharon Gilburd

*Appointed November 2023* Emma Geddes



# CHAIR'S REPORT



2023/24 has been another busy year for Shetland Women's Aid. The refuge has been busy, with four women using it during the year. Meanwhile, the adult team has seen 227 cases closed, and 41 children and young people have completed their term in service. Of those who have used the service, 80% report that they are now living free from abuse, which is a credit to our staff's hard work and commitment.

The Board has continued to meet online throughout the year, and we are grateful to the Board members who live outside Shetland for their significant contributions to Women's Aid's governance.

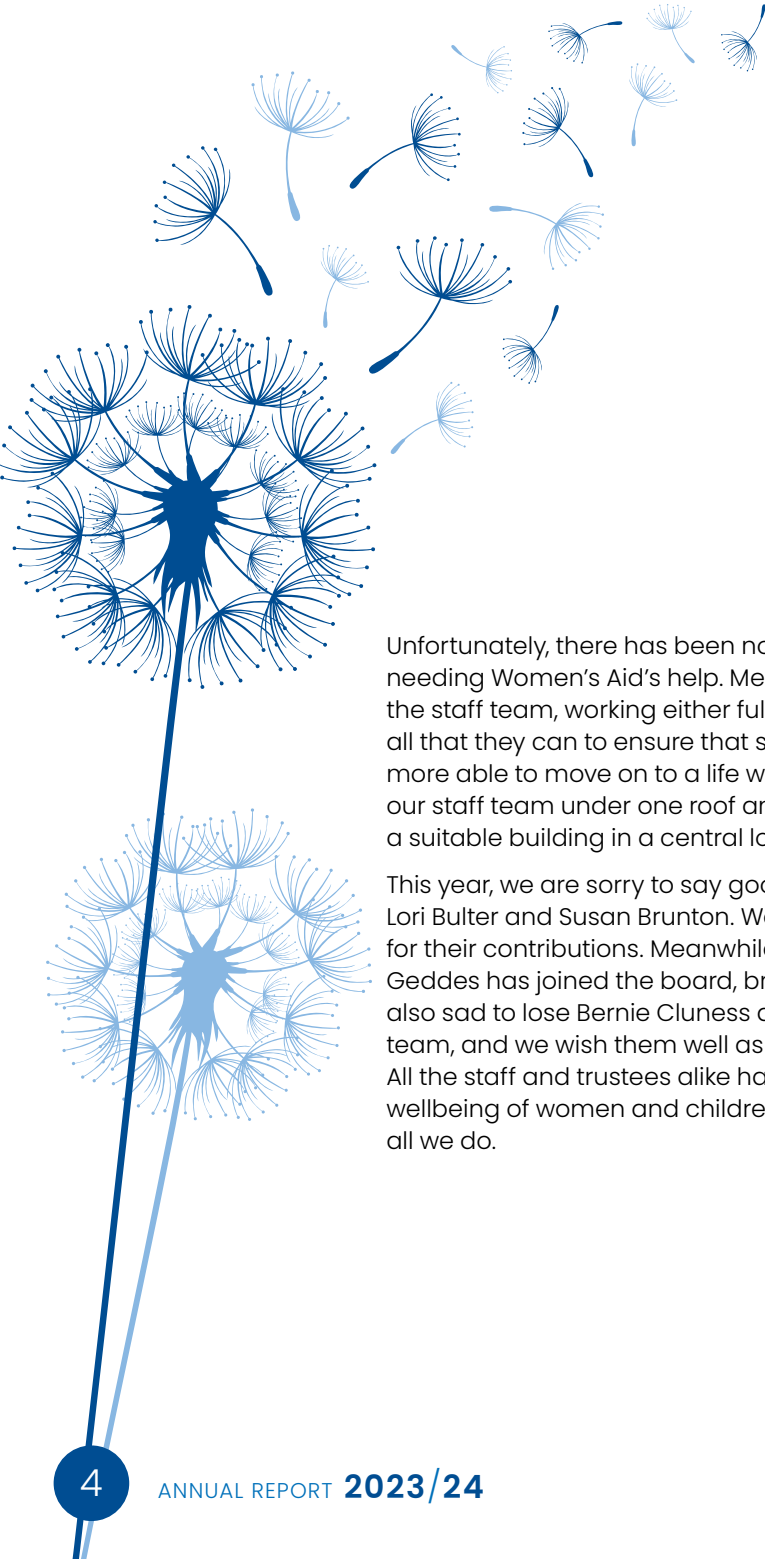
A face-to-face away day at the end of March was a testament to the collective spirit of our staff and trustees. Held in the beautiful surroundings of Voe House, Upper Voe, and facilitated by a trustee, Hazel Lambert, the day was a platform for everyone to contribute ideas and shape our future working practice. We are grateful to Aimee Irvine for generously enabling us to use her family's house, a gesture that made everyone feel included and valued.

One Trustee attended a self-defence class offered to staff, clients, and trustees, and two joined a wellbeing writing session led by Genevive White. Both sessions were felt to be excellent additions to our offer for women in service. Some of the pieces produced during the wellbeing writing sessions will be included in an upcoming book to be published by Shetland Women's Aid.

This year, we belatedly celebrated Shetland Women's Aid's 40th birthday. Trustees, staff, guests, and visitors assembled at the flower park at various points throughout the day. It was a joy to hear founding staff and volunteers reminiscing on the early days of the service, which operated out of a portacabin on Victoria Pier.

As part of the 16 Days of Activism, several projects related to gender-based violence were undertaken, including recording and filming for the Meander—a survivor-led creative project with theatre practitioner Stephenie Georgia, in partnership with the Compass Centre. The plan is to launch the finished result in the form of 16 videos with accompanying art installation this coming year.

Laura Stronach, our Service Manager, has continued tirelessly applying for funding in a situation where obtaining funding has become increasingly difficult. She has also continued to Chair the Shetland Violence Against Women Children and Young Peoples Partnership (SVAWCYPP), and Rebecca Sim, Co-ordinator of the Shetland VAWCYP partnership, was part of our staff team until the end of the year.



Unfortunately, there has been no drop in the number of women needing Women's Aid's help. Meanwhile, the remarkable women in the staff team, working either full or part-time, are continuing to do all that they can to ensure that survivors are safe, supported and more able to move on to a life without abuse. We still aim to house our staff team under one roof and continue exploring options for a suitable building in a central location, whether to rent or buy.

This year, we are sorry to say goodbye to our outgoing trustees, Lori Bulter and Susan Brunton. We are very grateful to all of them for their contributions. Meanwhile, we are delighted that Emma Geddes has joined the board, bringing HR skills with her. We were also sad to lose Bernie Cluness and Holly Johnstone from the staff team, and we wish them well as life takes them in new directions. All the staff and trustees alike have a strong feminist ethos, with the wellbeing of women and children in our community at the heart of all we do.

In the current climate, it remains vital than ever that Shetland Women's Aid continues to work on the three-stage trauma recovery model, which helps survivors towards a full recovery from domestic abuse and gender-based violence. Everyone who comes to the service is treated as an individual at their point of need. We work in a person-centred, trauma-informed specialist way with our service users. Our over-arching aim is to end domestic abuse and other gender-based violence in our community. We support women, children, and young people in their right to choose to live free from the threat of abuse or coercion. We believe in achieving greater gender equality. We seek to intervene early and effectively to prevent abuse and maximise the safety and wellbeing of women, children, and young people. We encourage services and our wider community to challenge perpetrators' behaviours and to speak out against violence against women and children.

Finally, I would like to express our gratitude to our partners, funders, and those fundraising or donating to the work of Shetland Women's Aid. We were delighted to be awarded funding by Lerwick Community Council, as chosen by the community. Young people in schools across Shetland chose to represent Shetland Women's Aid as a cause to support during their annual Youth Philanthropy Initiative project, and we are delighted that those pupils in Sandwick and Aith secured funding for our services through their efforts. Fundraising is a continuous challenge, and we rely heavily on the support of the Shetland community as we continue to respond to high-risk situations, relieving the negative impact of domestic abuse and gender-based violence and promoting understanding by providing high-quality, life-changing services.

**Val Turner**

Chair of Board of Trustees

# ABOUT SHETLAND WOMEN'S AID

For over 40 years, Shetland Women's Aid has been the lead organisation working to prevent and eradicate domestic abuse and other forms of gender-based violence (GBV) in Shetland. We exist to protect the rights and wellbeing of women, children and young people who have been subjected to abuse, and we support them as they rebuild their lives and look towards a future free from harm.

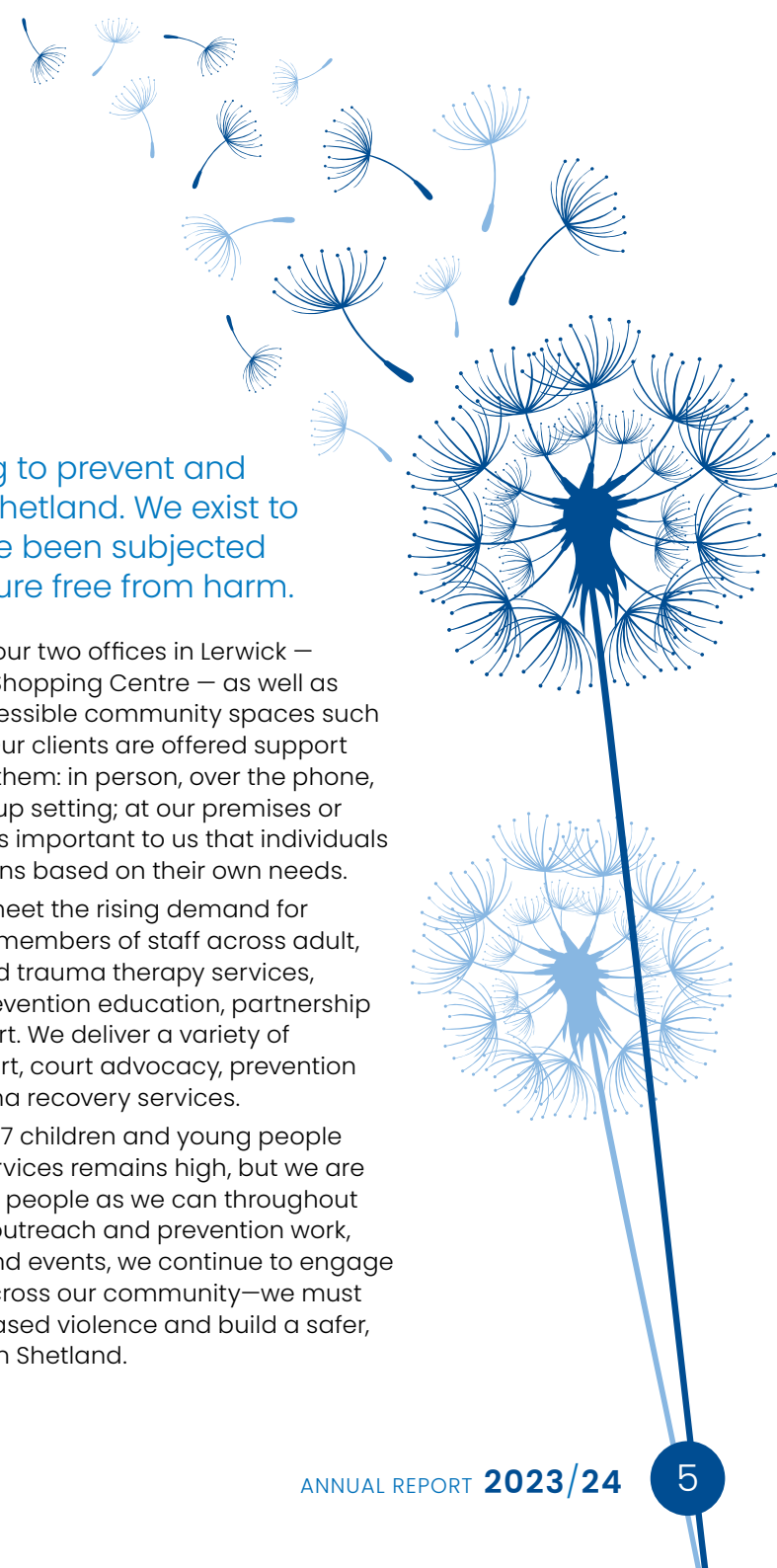
Domestic abuse is rooted in women's inequality, and the harmful gender roles and stereotypes perpetuated in our society. Domestic abuse is not limited to physical violence; it can include emotional and verbal abuse, coercive control, sexual abuse, financial manipulation, and digital abuse. No one type of abuse is more serious than another, and many women tell us that the psychological and controlling behaviours they endured had the most profound and lasting impact. Abuse is rarely a one-off incident. It is a pattern of behaviour used to assert power and control over someone, and it can continue long after a relationship ends. Our specialist practitioners help our clients to recognise the signs of abuse, break the cycle, and leave their relationship safely where appropriate. There is a life after domestic abuse, and we want the women, children and young people we support to own it, and feel hope again.

It is important to recognise that domestic abuse is both a cause and consequence of women's inequality. We take a gendered approach to understanding and addressing the issue. This means recognising the differences in how women, men, and all people from marginalised backgrounds experience violence – and how societal inequality shapes those experiences. A gendered intersectional lens helps to ensure our services are tailored to those who require the most support, and are free from discrimination, while also enabling us to tackle the root causes of abuse at a community and societal level.

Our services are delivered from our two offices in Lerwick – St Olaf Street and the Toll Clock Shopping Centre – as well as across Shetland in safe and accessible community spaces such as health centres and schools. Our clients are offered support in whichever way works best for them: in person, over the phone, or online; one-to-one or in a group setting; at our premises or somewhere of their choosing. It is important to us that individuals are empowered to make decisions based on their own needs.

Our team continues to grow to meet the rising demand for support in Shetland. We have 15 members of staff across adult, children and young people's, and trauma therapy services, along with dedicated roles in prevention education, partnership coordination, and service support. We deliver a variety of therapeutic and practical support, court advocacy, prevention and community work, and trauma recovery services.

We supported 263 women and 87 children and young people in 2023/2024. Demand for our services remains high, but we are committed to reaching as many people as we can throughout the isles. Through our variety of outreach and prevention work, public awareness campaigns and events, we continue to engage with individuals of all genders across our community—we must together to challenge gender-based violence and build a safer, more equal future for everyone in Shetland.



# OUR WORK IN FIGURES

Throughout 2023-2024, Shetland Women's Aid continued to provide specialist support to women, children and young people experiencing domestic abuse across the isles. This is a snapshot of the women, children and young people (CYP) we supported on the last day of the financial year:

ON SUNDAY, 31ST MARCH 2024, WE HAD 97 ACTIVE CASES IN THE WOMEN'S SERVICE, OUT OF THOSE:



were waiting for or **UNDERGOING ASSESSMENT**



women were in **SUPPORT SERVICE**



were in **THERAPY**

IN ADDITION TO 97 ACTIVE CASES, WE HAD:



were supported by **INDEPENDENT DOMESTIC ABUSE ADVOCATE SERVICE**



were in **TRAUMA RECOVERY**



on the **WAITING LIST FOR SUPPORT**



ON THE SAME DAY, 32 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WERE BEING SUPPORTED BY OUR CYP TEAM, OUT OF THOSE:



were waiting for or **UNDERGOING ASSESSMENT**



children were in **SUPPORT SERVICE**

IN ADDITION TO 32 ACTIVE CASES, WE HAD:



on the **WAITING LIST FOR SUPPORT**



were in **THERAPY**

IN THE YEAR BETWEEN APRIL 2023 & MARCH 2024, SHETLAND WOMEN'S AID HAD:



**CYP SERVICE REFERRALS**



**ADULT SERVICE REFERRALS**



**TOTAL CYP SUPPORTED**



**TOTAL WOMEN SUPPORTED**



**CLOSED CYP CASES**



**CLOSED WOMEN'S CASES**



**WOMEN IN REFUGE**



## THE AVERAGE LENGTH OF SERVICE WE SUPPORTED WAS



FOR WOMEN



FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE



Throughout 2023-2024, our refuge (safe house) was always full, with a total of 4 women living there over the year. Our Independent Domestic Abuse Advocacy (IDAA) Service advocated for 42 women over the year, and 17 were referred to the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC).

## Manager's Statement Annual Report 2023/24



*This year, we took time to honour the women who began Shetland Women's Aid and whose vision and courage created a vital space for safety, justice, and change. They recognised the deeply rooted inequalities that shaped women's and children's lives and challenged the harm caused by men's violence. Their determination sparked a movement that has continued to grow in strength and solidarity over the years.*

*This report is dedicated to those women who led the way and to all who have given their time, energy, and commitment to this service. It is also dedicated to the women, children, and young people who have sought support from us, whose courage, resilience, and voices continue to shape the work we do and the change we strive for in our community.*

*We know that too many still face barriers to getting the right support at the right time. That is why we remain committed to advocating for long-term, sustainable funding so that no one in Shetland is left without safety, support, or hope when facing domestic abuse and gender-based violence.*

*On behalf of Shetland Women's Aid, I want to thank everyone who has supported us this year, from partner organisations to funders, from our dedicated staff and trustees to our wider community. Together, we continue to work towards a future where women, children, and young people can live free from violence, respected and empowered in every aspect of their lives.*





## 40 YEARS OF SHETLAND WOMEN'S AID

In 2023, Shetland Women's Aid proudly celebrated 40 years of supporting women, children, and young people across the isles. Founded in the early 1980s by a small group of passionate and forward-thinking women, our service began as a grassroots response to a glaring gap in support for those experiencing domestic abuse. With courage and care, they laid the foundations of what would become a vital lifeline in Shetland's social fabric.

Over the past four decades, our work has grown and adapted, but our mission has never wavered. From the earliest refuge accommodation to our current therapeutic, educational and advocacy-based support, everything we do is grounded in feminist values and shaped by the experiences of those who came before us. We continue to challenge the societal attitudes that allow gender-based violence to persist, and offer specialist, trauma-informed services that empower individuals to move forward in safety and dignity.



To honour this milestone, and remember our herstory, we hosted a birthday celebration on International Women's Day 2024 at the Lerwick Flower Park. We were delighted to be joined by founding members of the service, former and current trustees, supporters, funders, and representatives from our partner organisations. Together, we reflected on four decades of commitment, resilience, and progress—and we looked ahead to the work still to come. The event was not only a celebration, but a reminder of the collective effort it takes to end violence against women and girls in our community.

Our anniversary was also a chance to reconnect with our roots, share stories, and recognise the tireless dedication of everyone who has contributed to the journey—from campaigners and volunteers to staff, fundraisers, and the women and children who have shared their stories and trusted us with their care.

As we look to the future, we remain as committed as ever to our vision of a Shetland where everyone can live free from fear, violence, and coercion—and where the rights of women and children are respected, protected, and upheld.

# WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

The **Shetland Violence Against Women, Children and Young People Partnership (SVAWCYP)** brings together local statutory and third-sector organisations to prevent and respond to all forms of gender-based violence.

Shetland Women's Aid proudly co-chairs the partnership with **The Compass Centre**, with both respective Service Managers helping to shape strategic priorities and ensure survivor voices remain central to decision-making.

This year, the partnership has continued to lead on implementing the Safe & Together Model, strengthening Shetland's multi-agency response to domestic abuse and ensuring services are trauma-informed, and perpetrators are held accountable for their actions.

Through collaboration, shared training opportunities, and improved referral pathways, the partnership is helping build a Shetland where violence is not tolerated, prevention is prioritised, and survivors of GBV are fully supported.



# THE POWER OF CREATIVITY

Creativity is more than expression — it's a powerful tool for healing, empowerment and social change.

This year, we launched a series of **Wellbeing Writing Workshops** for women who have experienced domestic abuse. Led by local writer Genevieve White, the sessions offered a safe and supportive space for participants to explore their voices through storytelling, poetry, and personal reflection. From rewriting fairy tales to journalling their journeys, the workshops helped women reconnect with themselves, build confidence, and find community through shared creativity.

We also introduced our **Craftivism Club** — welcoming intersectional feminist space where creativity meets activism, for anyone in our community who wants to make a difference through arts and crafts. In our first few sessions, participants created posters for Shetland Pride, sent anonymous thank-you cards to trauma-informed local organisations, and began planning a community mural for the local Sexual Assault Referral Centre. These creative acts of solidarity are raising awareness, spreading kindness, and amplifying messages of support for survivors across Shetland.

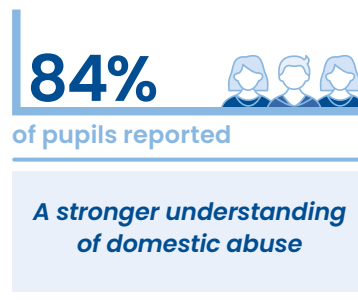
Whether through words, art, or action, women are using their voices to inspire change — not just in their own lives, but across our community.



# PREVENTION EDUCATION

At Shetland Women's Aid, prevention is a core component of our work. Through our school programmes, we equip children and young people of all genders with the knowledge and confidence to recognise abuse, understand healthy relationships, and challenge harmful behaviours in a safe and empowering way.

In 2023/24, our Prevention Education Coordinator delivered sessions to S3 pupils across Shetland, exploring the realities of domestic abuse, coercive control, and the perceived barriers to leaving and seeking help. Feedback was powerful:



In addition to our regular school sessions, in May 2023 we took part in the Shetland Public Protection Committee's **Virtually Safe, Virtually Sound** event at the Anderson High School. The aim of the event is to raise awareness of digital safety with young people in Shetland, and we delivered a session on Digital Abuse & Young Peoples Relationships. We presented to 6 different S1 classes, reaching approximately 150 pupils over the course of one day.

Throughout the year, we also developed and delivered training to frontline professionals including Police Scotland and SIC Adult Social Work. By educating young people and professionals alike, we are sowing the seeds of a safer, more equal future for Shetland.

## Pupil Feedback



Great for knowing what to look out for in the future.

I loved the videos, and it illustrated that abuse isn't just punching, hitting, etc.

It's really good that we get this education to make us more aware.





## SWA IN THE COMMUNITY

Creating meaningful change starts with connection. Throughout 2023-2024, Shetland Women's Aid has been out in the community more than ever—raising awareness of our work, building relationships, and ensuring our support reaches those who need it most.

From attending all five County Shows to hosting a stall at Shetland Pride, we've been present in every corner of the isles — meeting people face to face, having honest conversations about violence against women, and breaking down stigma around domestic abuse.

At UHI Shetland, we ran drop-in sessions and listened directly to students—particularly young men—about their views on relationships, respect, and how we can better reach all genders. We also hosted a powerful Information and Networking Event during the 16 Days of Activism, bringing together professionals from across sectors to “Imagine a Shetland without Gender-Based Violence” and build stronger referral pathways.

Being visible in the community isn't just about promotion — it's about prevention, accessibility, and creating a culture where abuse is no longer hidden or tolerated. Every conversation brings us one step closer to a safer Shetland.



# ACCOUNTS

## SHETLAND WOMEN'S AID SCIO

AUDITED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR  
THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

	UNRESTRICTED FUNDS £	RESTRICTED FUNDS £	TOTAL 2024 £	TOTAL 2023 £
<b>INCOME FROM</b>				
Donations and legacies	24,231	-	24,231	13,005
Charitable activities	-	630,837	630,837	578,673
Investments	1,427	-	1,427	6
other Income	954	0	954	1,510
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>26,612</b>	<b>630,837</b>	<b>657,449</b>	<b>593,194</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE ON</b>				
Charitable activities	2,231	683,772	686,003	683,687
<b>NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE) FOR THE YEAR/ NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS</b>	<b>(86)</b>	<b>(28,468)</b>	<b>(28,554)</b>	<b>(90,493)</b>
Fund balances at 1 April 2023	191,761	106,074	297,835	388,327
<b>FUND BALANCES AT 31 MARCH 2024</b>	<b>191,675</b>	<b>77,606</b>	<b>269,281</b>	<b>297,834</b>

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.  
All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.



## SHETLAND WOMEN'S AID SCIO

AUDITED BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 2024

	2024 £	2024 £	2023 £	2023 £
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>				
TANGIBLE ASSETS	-	88,526	-	90,757
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>				
DEBTORS	6,889	-	17,797	-
CASH AT BANK AND IN HAND	193,573	-	257,969	-
	<b>200,462</b>	-	<b>275,766</b>	
<b>CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR</b>	(19,707)	-	(69,689)	-
NET CURRENT ASSETS	-	180,755	-	207,077
<b>TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		<b>269,281</b>		<b>297,834</b>
<b>INCOME FUNDS</b>				
RESTRICTED FUNDS	-	77,606	-	106,073
UNRESTRICTED FUNDS	-	-	-	-
GENERAL UNRESTRICTED FUNDS	152,475	-	152,561	-
REVALUATION RESERVE	39,200	-	39,200	-
		<b>191,675</b>		<b>191,761</b>
		<b>269,281</b>		<b>297,834</b>



# COMMUNITY SUPPORT & FUNDRAISERS

We are incredibly grateful to the individuals, groups, and organisations who have raised vital funds and awareness for Shetland Women's Aid this year. Your generosity helps us deliver life-changing support to women, children and young people across the isles.

A huge thank you goes to **RSM UK's Lerwick office**, whose staff raised over £13,000 for Shetland Women's Aid through a series of events including the Edinburgh Half Marathon, quiz nights, Soup and Sweet, book sale, and more—all as part of the RSM Together challenge. Their efforts were part of a UK-wide initiative, and the Lerwick office proudly finished third out of all participating teams.



We also extend our thanks to school pupils across Shetland who chose Shetland Women's Aid as their cause for the **Youth and Philanthropy Initiative (YPI)**. Their passion, insight, and commitment to social change is inspiring, and we're proud to have been represented by such thoughtful young advocates. While the £3,000 prize can make a huge difference, it is the awareness-raising and willingness to break down stigma and talk about a difficult subject that means the most to us, and the women and children we support.

A special thanks to **Elsie Crawford** and **Nayana Stephen**. Following their experience with YPI, they went on to volunteer for Shetland Women's Aid during the summer of 2023, attending some of the county shows and conducting a survey to better understand the public's perception of our Children and Young People's Service.

Community support like this fuels everything we do. Thank you for standing with us.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Shetland Women's Aid would like to thank the following funders and organisations who have supported our work over the past year:

- Scottish Government – Delivering Equally Safe
- Shetland Charitable Trust
- Shetland Islands Council
- Scottish Womens Aid  
– 100 Days Scottish Government Funding
- Foundation Scotland
- The National Lottery Community Fund
- The Robertson Trust
- Shetland Alcohol & Drug Partnership
- NatWest Safelives Circle Fund
- Voluntary Action Shetland  
– Communities Mental Health & Wellbeing Fund
- Safe Deposits Scotland
- RSM Lerwick
- Sound Community Association
- TL Dallas
- Shetland Needleworkers
- Shetland Gas Plant Community Fundraising Team
- EnQuest
- Donations from County Shows

We are also grateful to the many individuals in our local community who have donated and fundraised on our behalf, with a special mention to **Jenny Peterson for her annual spam party fundraiser**, and to **Gillian Ramsay for her raffle**.

Designed by **jackson**  
DESIGN

Photography by



Odd Poppy  
Photography



## HOW TO GET INVOLVED

There are several ways that members of the community can get involved with Shetland women's Aid. You can call us to discuss your suggestions for our service, on 01595 692070, and you can donate and fundraise through the following:

### PAYPAL

<https://www.paypal.com/uk/home>

### JUSTGIVING

<https://www.justgiving.com/shetlandwomensaid>

### EASYFUNDRAISING

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/>



## SUPPORT AVAILABLE

If you or someone you know is affected by domestic abuse, we are here to help. You can contact us Monday – Friday, 9am – 4pm. Our team offers confidential, specialist support to women, children and young people across Shetland.

T: 01595 692070 E: [office@shetlandwa.org](mailto:office@shetlandwa.org)  
[www.shetlandwa.org](http://www.shetlandwa.org)



## Shetland Women's Aid

Principal Office: 121A St Olaf Street, Lerwick, Shetland, ZE1 0ES  
Additional Office: Unit 5.1, Toll Clock Shopping Centre,  
26 North Road, Lerwick, Shetland, ZE1 0PE  
E: [office@shetlandwa.org](mailto:office@shetlandwa.org) T: 01595 692070

[www.shetlandwa.org](http://www.shetlandwa.org)

Charity Number: SC015199



Thank you to our larger funding providers for without their support, Shetland Women's Aid would be unable to provide our specialist service.



When our service is closed, support is still available 24/7 through Scotland's Domestic Abuse and Forced Marriage Helpline, operated by Scottish Women's Aid. The helpline is free, confidential, and open to anyone of any gender. Text and webchat support is also available.



T: 0800 027 1234  
E: [helpline@sdaafh.org.uk](mailto:helpline@sdaafh.org.uk)  
[www.sdaafh.org.uk](http://www.sdaafh.org.uk)

You are not alone. Help is here when you're ready. **If you are in immediate danger, please do not hesitate to call 999.**