



**thrive**  
WOMEN'S AID



2021-2022 Impact Report

# Foreword

2021 marks the start of our new organisational strategy which sets out our ambitions over the next five years. Following consultation with staff, stakeholders and service users we've set out 4 key priorities creating a framework which outlines what we want to achieve, what difference this will make and how we will measure our success. These priorities are; early intervention and prevention; inclusive services; suitable accommodation and sustainable organisation.

We are delighted to see that this year we have already made good progress against our targets. We are particularly pleased to see the development of two new services; SWAN, a project which provides practical and emotional support to women exploited by the sex industry, and a volunteering programme which has helped boost capacity in our organisation at the same time as developing the skills of our local community.

This year we've invested time in some major developments which we will see come to fruition in late 2022, including significant investment into our accommodation-based services and a new project working in partnership with South Wales Police.

As ever we would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to our staff, volunteers, board members and funders who are a critical foundation of our organisation. We are forever grateful for their commitment, passion and drive to ensure that our organisation is successful, viable and delivers impact for the community we serve.



Louise White,  
Chair of Board



Lucy Reynolds,  
CEO



## Residential Services

Our key focus is on delivering a harm reduction, trauma informed approach to support.

We developed Ty Codi and repurposed the old 'cwtch' into an office; enabling residents to have a private space for support sessions and improving working conditions for the team.

This year **58 women and 26 children** were supported in Residential Services.

- In **refuge** we have supported **43 women** and **21 children**
- In **Move-on** we have supported **7 women** and **1 child**
- In **Ty Codi** we have supported **8 women** and **4 children**

We also received **108** out of hours calls covering referrals to refuge, emotional support, welfare checks, police call outs, missing persons, safety related calls and housing management and maintenance calls.

## My Story – Refuge Resident

I left an abusive relationship that was so bad I was admitted to a mental health ward, where a doctor said I should not return home, but stay on the ward until a safe place could be found for me. Staff arranged to meet me and my dad in a safe place and brought me to the refuge.

At first I felt scared and at the same time felt safe too. The staff showed me around and I met the other residents but at first I just kept to myself. The support from staff made it easier for me to settle in and without it, I don't think would have stayed.

When I came into refuge I felt such a mixture of different emotions and the staff understood that I needed time until I felt ready. I can talk to the staff about the difficulties I have had and they never judge me, they understand what it is like to live in an abusive relationship and how hard it can be to get out, even when you really want to.

It feels strange to be asked what I like and what I want to do and the things I need help with to make that happen. The staff have listened and have helped me to see that it is ok to ask for help and now I am also working with other agencies that are supporting me to move forward with my life. I feel proud of myself for that.

My partner controlled all of the money, I had nothing for myself at all. Now for the first time I have my own bank account and I can manage my own money. It was such an emotional day when I walked out of that

bank, I felt like I matter now. At first though, I struggled with picking things that I like to eat and, just the other day, I looked at some simple ear pods and thought 'I can't buy those', then after a moment 'of course I can', and so I did. I did feel anxious but at the same time it felt good because he controlled everything.

Now I have started cooking again and remembering how much I used to enjoy cooking healthy meals from scratch for my children, sometimes I cook for the other residents and have even showed them how to make a bolognaise.

Being in refuge has given me the space in my head to think about what I want for my future. I have decided to settle on an area that I have become familiar with, where I want to make a home, where I will have ongoing support when I leave which, even though I feel so much stronger, I know I will need for a long time.

As I get stronger I have asked for support from staff to get in touch with a solicitor to help with having contact with my children. I have also joined the LIFE project with Thrive and I am also waiting to start the Own My Life course because now I feel stronger and ready to.

I know there is still a long way to go but for the first time I can make plans for the future. I want to be able to work again and make a good life for myself and rebuild my family.

## Community and Outreach

Through additional funding we were able to increase capacity into our outreach service in order to effectively respond to an increase in demand.

In 2021/22 we received referrals for **414 women**, which was a **29% increase** on 2020/21

- **190** received **support with safety issues** including MARAC referrals, risk assessing, safeguarding, safety planning and target hardening.
- **302** received **support with emotional health and well being** including accessing support in relation to children and parenting, drugs and alcohol, mental and physical health, grant funding, housing, sexual health, community relationships, accessing education, work and training, counselling and signposting to other agencies. **104** received support with **legal issues**



**414 referrals received this year**

## Crisis Services

Our crisis service worked with **59 women** needing immediate intensive support to help stabilise their situation and get urgent safety measures in place. We also received **229 Public Protection Notices** from the police and offered ongoing support after an incident.

“I feel they are personally concerned about my wellbeing and my safety - it's an amazing feeling.”

Service user

## Counselling

This year through additional funding we've been able to maximise our therapeutic counselling offer at a time where women need it the most.

**49 women** received specialist counselling support this year.

“My counsellor has helped me more than I can write. I would not be where I am now without her patience, kindness and empathy. Thank you”

Counselling recipient

Of those that completed an evaluation:

- **89%** had **increased ability to identify abusive behaviour**
- **89%** had **increased confidence and self-esteem**
- As a result of counselling, **100%** felt **better informed, and empowered to act to address issues in the future**
- **100%** felt that attending therapeutic sessions had given them **more resilience** and helped identify people who are able to support them
- As a result of counselling, **89%** felt **better able to cope** with aspects of everyday life
- Having attended therapeutic sessions, **100%** felt they have **gained new skills or knowledge to help them move forward with their life**



**49 women received specialist counselling**

## Families First

Our Early Intervention and Prevention service supports families through several individual and group programmes.

- **STAR**
- **1-1 Children & Adults**
- **Recovery Toolkit/Own My Life**
- **RESPECT**
- **CLEAR (for men displaying unhealthy relationships)**

This year:

- **155 referrals** were received
- **74 individuals** received support
- **242 sessions** were completed

“It’s been really helpful having the ability to have a holistic support package offered to most members of the family including the children given the complex family dynamics in this case. I think Thrive has provided Mum in particular with the needed emotional support and has helped gain her insight into the risks posed by her ex-partner. I think Thrive has also played an important part in supporting her to maintain her separation from her partner, although there are still some doubts about their relationship, the ongoing support and regular communication between Thrive and Social Services has helped relay the concerns from a different angle to Mum. It’s also supported Mum to help her understand the decisions made by Social Services.

Feedback from Social Services”

## LIFE (Liberty, Independence, Freedom and Empowerment)

The LIFE Project is a self-help programme to support individuals who are impacted by domestic abuse. We create a safe space where our members can learn new skills and make friends.

The groups are therapeutic, educational and activity based.

“I’ve started to question why things have happened through my relationships and how I can move on.”

LIFE recipient

This year our activities included: walk and talk, coffee and chat, advice, beach-combing, crafts, consultations, volunteering, positive affirmations, bingo and play your cards right.

**55 women** benefitted from the LIFE Project

“I really enjoyed going to group to talk to women who understand about domestic abuse.

LIFE recipient”

“I felt I could talk about anything, even sexual things. No one judged and made me realise I need further help

LIFE recipient”



**55 Women took part in LIFE activities**

## Children and Young People's Services

Our Children and Young People Service supports children aged 0-18. This year we supported **53 children and young people** in the community through:

- **1-1 support**
- **STAR Program**
- **Young Person's Recovery Toolkit**
- **Trips and activities**

Of those we supported this year:

- **5** were aged **0-5**
- **23** were aged **6-10**
- **20** were aged **11-15**
- **5** were aged **16-20**

“I definitely can do it. I'm more aware of what healthy relationships look like.”  
Child

“I feel more safe after the whole support offered by my family and by Thrive.”  
Child

“The experience I've gained over the last few months has made me stronger and more confident.”  
Child

## We completed 1 STAR group

“I feel way better. I do not think too much about the past and worries. I started to talk more about myself.”  
Child

“I found it very supportive. It made me think about all the problems I have.”  
Child

“I feel happier! I can see small things that make me happy.”  
Child

- **87%** said that they **felt safer**
- **100%** said that they **felt happier**
- **87%** said they had **increased confidence** to deal with changes in their lives
- **87%** said they had **increased knowledge of how to seek help**
- **87%** said they can **better identify an unhealthy relationship**



**87%** said they felt less worried

## SWAN Project (Support, Wellbeing, Advocacy & eNablement)

The SWAN project works with women who are exploited by the sex industry. We give emotional and practical support to help women overcome the barriers and prejudice they face on a daily basis.

*Prostitution is a violence against women issue – a gendered form of violence that is a cause and consequence of gender inequality*

The women we work with may be involved in:

- **Street work**
- **Stripping**
- **Lap dancing**
- **Performance in pornography**
- **Phone or internet sex (cam-work, Only Fans)**
- **Parlour work**
- **Any other exchange of sexual services for financial or material gain.**

This year:

- **9** women were supported in total
- **6** women were supported with **health issues** caused by sexual exploitation

## Volunteering

This year we secured funding for a Volunteer Manager, which is funded by the South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner (SW PCC), and awarded the Commissioner's Ministry of Justice Uplift Award until October 2022.

This year **8 volunteers** worked across **5 projects**, volunteering **107 hours**.

“ I chose to volunteer at Thrive because of the positive impact that they have as an organisation on people's lives.

Since joining I have met new people and in turn have gained confidence and new skills. I would like to thank Thrive for this great opportunity.

Volunteer”

“ After a conversation with a manager of another domestic abuse organisation in October of last year, she advised me to volunteer, to gain relevant experience to enable me to reach my end goal. Domestic abuse organisations like Thrive are very important to me. Since leaving an abusive situation with the help of Newport Women's Aid, I have started a new education and career path in supporting survivors and eventually want to qualify as an IDVA. This is what has lead me to volunteer with Thrive. The experience I have gained and the difference I feel I have made in the ladies lives, makes me even more determined to reach my career goals.

Volunteer”

## The EDGE Project

Funding from Comic Relief helped us to focus on Equality, Diversity, enGagement and Education.

This project enabled us to specifically address domestic abuse experienced by Older, Disabled, Gypsy Roma and Irish Traveller women and those from the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities.

Of those supported

- **8** were **Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic**
- **19** were **Disabled**
- **1** was from the **Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller community**
- **8** were **Older women**

We also trained professionals working in the community to increase their awareness of the additional barriers faced by these groups of women.



## Thrive Enterprise Group

Thrive Group Wales is a social enterprise, founded in June 2017, with the key purpose of developing a sustainable income stream to support the work of Thrive Women's Aid, by creating sustainable employment opportunities, developing the skills of disadvantaged people and building the capacity of local communities.

The Thrive Group comprises of three enterprise elements:



This year:

- We were shortlisted as **finalists in the Social Business Wales Awards 2021**
- We launched a new sandwich van service **which has exceeded our expectations for income generation**
- We **met and exceeded our financial targets** to Thrive Women's Aid
- At Playhem, **we have worked with the NPT Youth Service** to provide play sessions and ensure that those in need have access to social activities.

At the year-end period we employed 37 people and held 34 cleaning contracts across 24 clients.



With thanks to our funders



Contact [info@thrivewa.org.uk](mailto:info@thrivewa.org.uk) or call  
01639 894 864

Our staff are available from 9am to 5pm  
Monday to Friday.

For 24/7 advice you can contact the National  
Live Fear Free Helpline on 0808 8010 800.

Always call 999 in an emergency.

Find us online:

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