



thrive
WOMEN'S AID



2020-2021 Impact Report

Foreword

This year our impact report focuses on the coronavirus pandemic – what this has meant for our services and how we adapted to ensure those who needed our support could access it.

The coronavirus pandemic has placed an unprecedented strain on many sectors and services, and it is widely known that all forms of Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) have risen as a result of self-isolation and social distancing guidelines.

Our own data at Thrive shows us that we have consistently received a greater number of referrals into our services than we did during the same period last year, and that risk levels were greater than what we would usually expect.

This tells us that women are most likely waiting until abuse and violence at escalated

to a high level before reaching out for support – which is both dangerous and unsettling.

This year has been extremely challenging but our team has successfully risen to the challenge. Staff have balanced difficult home working and family arrangements alongside delivery of a consistent, trusted and high quality service. We cannot thank our committed team of key workers enough.

We also want to express our thanks to funders who have also risen to the challenge, ensuring that money poured into front line services quickly and effectively to ensure that we were able to cope with increased demand.

Louise White,
Chair of Board

Lucy Reynolds,
Director



Overall Statistics

During 2020/21 we received **546 referrals** into adult services – a **42% increase** on the previous year. During this time we supported **419 women**. Of those the highest proportion were aged between 31 – 40 years (higher than average age based on last year).

- **6% were black, Asian or from a minority ethnic group.**
- **30%** identified themselves as having a **disability**.
- **50% of women** stated they had a mental health condition.
- **6%** identified as **LGBTQ+**.
- **19% of women** had more than one vulnerability (mental health issue, substance or alcohol misuse).

“
I wouldn't be on this earth if I didn't have Thrive Women's Aid - you have all helped me live again.
”
Thrive service user

“
Thrive changed my life for the better
”
Thrive service user

“
Thrive is an organisation that has supported me through my toughest times when I've had nobody.
”
Thrive service user

**48 women
housed**



Residential Services

During the coronavirus pandemic we gained additional funding to change 2 existing move-on flats into dispersed refuge called Ty Codi. This enabled the organisation to respond effectively to increased demand for refuge accommodation, and to support individuals with additional vulnerabilities who respond better to support within self-contained accommodation.

This year **48 women** were supported in residential services.

Of those women:

- **90%** needed support with their mental health
- **16%** had a physical disability
- **17%** needed support with alcohol misuse
- **23%** needed support with substance misuse
- **58%** of women had more than one vulnerability
- **15** of the women had children and the total number of children between them was **33**.

“
It has got much better for me now that staff are here every day for someone like me who lives with such anxiety... especially for someone to talk to. Before we had to wait for staff to come, and hold onto feelings... It has made such a difference for my mental health especially now with Covid, just to know they are there when someone like me who has no family or friends to bubble up with or to call or would call me when I'm feeling lonely and alone. We've been so isolated in our flats... I think this is really good for us
”

Resident

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 2020/21 we supported **221 women** – that's **47** women more than the previous year (27% increase).

Of those women...

- **39%** needed support with their **mental health**
- **11%** had a physical **disability**
- **5%** needed support with **alcohol misuse**
- **6%** needed support with **substance misuse**
- **14%** of women had **more than one vulnerability**
- **143** of the women had **children** and the total number of number of children was **321**

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.

We've offered counselling to **57 women** in order to support their recovery and understanding of trauma.

- **100%** stated **improved health and well being**
- **96%** stated they are **better able to cope** with everyday aspects in life
- **88%** stated increased **feelings of safety**
- **100%** stated they are **better informed and empowered** to act

“

She (Thrive Counsellor) is my saviour, she saved me, she really did and made me believe in myself again and I'm not worthless.

”

Counselling recipient.

Case Study – Thrive Crisis service

Rachel* is a young woman with a baby who was concerned about her ex-partner sending her hundreds of text messages after their relationship ended. The crisis worker identified this as harassment and supported Rachel to report to the police. Initially, the police response was that Rachel should block her ex-partner and should not respond to the messages, and no further action was deemed necessary.

With her understanding of the complex nature of a coercive and controlling abusive relationship, the Thrive Crisis Officer challenged this response in an appropriate and respectful way, bringing it to the attention of a senior police officer involved in the MARAC process. She had recognised the indicators that Rachel's

ex-partner had the potential to be of significant risk to her.

Having built excellent working relationships with the Domestic Abuse Unit the Crisis Officer was able to take her concerns to the right people. Within three weeks this case, which had initially been deemed as nothing more than 'six of one and half a dozen of the other' had been escalated to CID to manage after the perpetrator was arrested on multiple serious charges involving several women and a child.

Without the crisis worker's input and appropriate application of her skills this perpetrator of multiple offences against multiple victims would have continued to remain unchallenged.

*Names have been changed to protect the identity of individuals we support

Families First

Our domestic abuse family service (funded by Families First) offers a suite of specialist, targeted and age appropriate interventions and programmes that are family focused and offer choice for families. This year we thought differently about the way we delivered support. We ran walk and talk sessions, offered online support, provided home learning packs and delivered socially distanced face to face sessions.

This year we supported **157** individuals and **93** families.

- **441** sessions of support were delivered.
- **97%** of people said that their emotional/mental well-being improved.
- **94%** of families reported an improvement in family resilience
- **87.5%** of parents benefitted from a parenting intervention

“

I don't feel I completely achieved my goals but I am definitely on the right path and I am working towards getting to where I want to be with a more positive outlook.

”

Parent

**157 individuals and
93 families supported**



LIFE (Liberty, Independence, Freedom, Empowerment)

The LIFE Project is self-help programme supporting individuals who are impacted by domestic abuse. The project aims to provide support during critical transition periods and to improve mental health, self-confidence, resilience, support networks, independence and the ability to cope and move on.

“

“The amazing LIFE project was introduced to myself and all I can say is wow and thank you! The support, friendship and guidance from staff and service users show to each other, is outstanding. I can honestly say I love everything involved with the project. I would recommend it to anyone”

”

LIFE recipient

Because of the group peer support nature of this service it has been one of the most challenging to maintain during the pandemic. We delivered online group support sessions and utilised social media to engage and communicate with people in order to encourage friendship and supporting relationships amongst peers. When restrictions lifted we ran weekly walk and talk sessions which were very well received.

39 women benefitted from LIFE project activities this year.

“

Your LIFE programme really did improve things for me, I came off my anxiety medication just before Christmas and have been in a positive mind-set since.

”

LIFE recipient.

Equality Diversity enGagement and Education (EDGE)

EDGE supports women who have experienced domestic abuse and further are marginalised for being Roma, Gypsy and Traveller, Older or Disabled.

The EDGE project delivers direct one to one support for vulnerable women who have experienced domestic abuse and multiple disadvantage. EDGE also delivers training and awareness raising amongst professionals, organisations and communities in order to raise awareness of the barriers that victims/survivors of domestic abuse and minority groups experience when accessing services and support them to make active changes to address these.

In response to the coronavirus pandemic and with the support of Comic Relief we have adapted the project to include marginalised women from the black and minority ethnic community and to improve our digital training and awareness raising.

This year we've worked with **8 women who are black, Asian or minority ethnic, 22 women who are disabled, 3 older women and 2 Gypsy Traveller women.**

Of those marginalised women...

- **100%** report **increased knowledge of domestic abuse**
- **80%** report **increased knowledge of human rights**
- **100%** state they know how to **recognise an unhealthy relationship**
- **100%** report **increased knowledge of how to seek help**



35 women benefitted from EDGE this year

We delivered VAWDASV equality and diversity training and awareness raising sessions to **168 professionals.**



168 professionals trained

“

The knowledge that I gained out of the training today will be very beneficial to me within my job role, and will help considerably in giving the right support

”

Trainee

Children and Young People Services

In 2020/21 we received **124 referrals** into our specialist children and young people service – that's a 35% decrease based on the previous year. This reduction does not reflect the data and evidence captured from our adult services or indeed from other services including the Police. We believe this reduction is likely to be an outcome of reduced contact with vulnerable children within education, health and social services.

“

I've made new friends and it's helped me with my family problems.

”

Child

“

It's helped me deal with situations with Dad and Mum

”

Young Person

With thanks to our funders



The Henry Smith Charity



Contact 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.

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