



2023-2024 Impact Report

Foreword

2023 has continued to be both a challenging and progressive year for Thrive. We have responded to a significant increase in demand for services, alongside the individuals we support experiencing additional vulnerabilities, such as poor mental health, substance misuse issues and homelessness. This has been against the back drop of reductions in the availability of funding for services and a cost of living and housing crisis.

Over the year it has been essential to show flexibility, adapt to change and establish new partnerships to strengthen and stabilise the organisation in these precarious times.

As most charitable organisations can demonstrate, times in the third sector are tough. This, however, doesn't and never will prevent us from striving to achieve our vision to create safer communities where everyone can live free from domestic abuse, violence against women and sexual violence. At Thrive we believe everyone has the right to live in safety and have a future without fear. This is what drives the passion in our organisation and our team.

This year we are celebrating **45 years of service** to our community and empowering women, girls and families. During this time the county has faced many challenges and will continue to do so over the coming years. Thrive has been and will continue to be there delivering quality trauma-informed, holistic services to meet individual's needs.

We pride ourselves in the fearless approach we adopt to advocate for and support women, children and families who have or are experiencing domestic abuse



844 lives were impacted by Thrive from 2023-2024

We are very pleased to report that since the launch of Thrive Housing in 2022, in partnership with Social and Sustainable Capital we have now completed our journey of purchasing 20 local properties. This has enabled us to generate a sustainable income for the organisation and tackle the barriers facing those moving on from refuge accommodation due to the current housing crisis.

Over the coming year we will be focusing on the effective delivery of our strategic plan alongside continuing to actively improve our sustainability by increasing income from other sources in order to reduce reliance on statutory funding. The development and diversification of the services being delivered by Thrive Group Wales will be essential for us to achieve this goal.

We hope that you enjoy reading this report and about the outcomes we have enabled families to achieve, particularly the real life stories and testimonials that bring what we do every day to life.

Liz Downie
CEO

Louise White
Chair of Board

Looking To The Future



At Thrive we are dedicated to capturing the impact of our work, analysing its effectiveness and constantly making improvements where we need to in order to achieve our strategic goals.

As part of our **2021 - 2026 Strategic Plan** we set **4 key strategic priorities**, creating a framework which outlines what we want to achieve, what difference this will make and how we will measure our success.



Early intervention and prevention



Inclusive services



Suitable accommodation



Sustainable organisation

In order to maintain our progress towards our strategic plan, Thrive aim to address each key area by:

Early Intervention and Prevention

Implement targeted and evidence-based prevention programmes to reduce the onset and escalation of domestic abuse, so families are safer.

Inclusive Services

Expand and grow our work with marginalised women experiencing VAWDASV and our current crisis provision to meet growing demand.

Suitable Accommodation

Grow and diversify our suite of accommodation option across Neath Port Talbot to ensure they meet the needs of families and individuals.

Sustainable Organisation

Implement a revised business plan for Thrive Group Wales to enable a sustainable income to be reinvested back in to Thrive Women's Aid.



Overall Statistics

From 2023-2024 we received **844 referrals** across all services, this was a **21% increase** on last year's figure.

- **60%** of adults reported a need to **access support for housing** as a result of experiencing domestic abuse
- **23% of women** disclosed incidents of **non-fatal strangulation**
- **35%** of women **required support to report** domestic abuse and sexual violence to the police and **10%** of those needed **support through the criminal justice** process
- **59%** of women accessing support report experiencing **additional vulnerabilities** on top of their experience of DV, such as poor mental health, substance misuse issues and homelessness

“

At my lowest, Thrive has been with me all through my journey, my refuge (literally) and my strength. I am in debt to them—they have lived up to what they stand for; Being there for everyone through the toughest of times and celebrating our achievements, be it small or life-changing. **I thank you from the bottom of my heart.**

-Thrive Service User

”



844 referrals were received overall in 2023/2024



Counselling

From within a trauma informed approach our specialist counselling service provides a safe & confidential therapeutic space where adults who use our services can speak to a trained professional about issues and difficulties that may be causing distress as an aid to recovery from having experienced domestic abuse.

From 2023-2024 Thrive received **57 referrals** into the specialist counselling services. Out of these referrals, 36 of these were accepted into our services.

“ I cannot express how I feel having opened up by talking to you. These last few weeks have made me realise my self-worth and start to 'love' myself again and to heal.
I am not a victim but a survivor
I will never give anyone the power to hurt me again. ”



95% of those who accessed counselling reported an increased feeling of safety



33 women attended counselling sessions in 2023/2024

Out of the 33 women that received regular counselling:

- **100%** report that attending therapeutic sessions helped them to recognise abusive behaviour
- **100%** found the counsellor approachable and took the time to listen
- **85%** report increased confidence and self-esteem
- **85%** feel better informed, and empowered to act to address issues in the future
- **60%** feel that having attended therapeutic sessions has given them more resilience, and helped identify people who can support them
- **85%** reported that as a result of counselling, they feel better able to cope with aspects of everyday life



Residential Services

From 2023-2024, Thrive provided direct support and housing to women fleeing abusive relationships within our 6-bed refuge and 5-bed second stage move on accommodation. This year, we received **30 Referrals** into our **Residential Services**

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

67 out of hours calls received from 2023/2024



- **In our refuge**, we have supported **18 women from 2023-2024**
- In **move-on**, we have supported **7 women**
- **7 children** were supported across our residential services

Housing First

After launching the Housing First project in March 2022, we built partnerships with local Registered Social Landlords, who would provide the properties and our Housing First Officer would deliver the intensive support required. From 2023-2024 we:

- Supported **7 women** in the project
- **3 of the women** who were supported have successfully moved into their own accommodation and are sustaining their tenancies with our ongoing support.
- Our Housing First project is the **first in Wales** specifically for female survivors of VAWDASV.



Thrive supported 7 women in the Housing First project from 2023-2024

Thrive Housing

Thrive Housing provides survivors of domestic abuse and their families with a home, the ability to maintain their own tenancy, emotional and well-being support as well as support to be integrated into a new community.

We assist in providing safety plans and measures in order for them to continue on their new, independent journey of recovery. Due to the varying needs of the victims, support can look very different from tenant to tenant.

We have purchased all **20 properties** that we aimed to have by March 2024 and **15 of them are tenanted**.

From 2023/2024, we supported **15 women and 21 children**.

“ You believed in me when I didn't even believe in myself, sometimes all you need is just one person to hear you out and cheer you on.
- Thrive Housing Tenant ”

Thrive Housing Case Study

Annie came to Thrive Women's Aid for support in January 2022 and was accepted into our refuge provision. Annie suffered from emotional abuse, financial abuse and harassment from her perpetrator. She was also suffering with an alcohol addiction. Her mental health was poor and she had admissions to hospital to address these issues.

Over the course of her stay in refuge, Annie completed a self-empowerment course which allowed her to understand herself more, She re-engaged with her son and now has a meaningful relationship with him, gained control of her finances independently and pressed criminal charges against her perpetrator. Annie moved into our move-on provision in June 2022 which enabled her the opportunity to live more independently.

She suffered with anxiety issues that isolated her but she worked through these tremendously and eventually felt strong enough to apply for a property with Thrive Housing, she was accepted and given a move in date

Due to her anxiety, this had to be postponed twice as she was undecided if she would cope with this level of independence. We eventually moved her into the property in March 2023 and we have seen a huge improvement in Annie's confidence, so much so that she even travelled to Devon independently. She has made huge steps to re-engage with her eldest son and extended family and now has a wider support system around her which makes her so much more settled, which enables her recovery.

**Names have been changed to protect the identity of individuals we support.
This case study is an example of integrated support work and partnership working with high risk domestic abuse perpetrator agencies.*

Community and Outreach

In 2023/24 we supported **465 women** who had experienced domestic abuse or who were seeking support to transition away from abuse.

Out of these women we have supported:

- **150 women** received support to **access legal support** for child contact issues and reporting to police and to navigate criminal justice services
- **Over a quarter** of service users were **referred to MARAC** and **268 were provided with support** and advice with regards to identifying risk, safety planning, safeguarding and safety planning improving their feeling of safety
- **Over 100 women** received support with their **housing and finances** including successfully applying for grant funding.
- **365 women** received support for their **emotional health and well-being** including children and parenting, drug and alcohol use, mental, physical and sexual health, accessing counselling and recovery programmes, access to work and training and signposting to other agencies.

“

I am so thankful for the support and for staff just being there when I need someone to speak to.

Thank you for everything and helping me find my courage. If it wasn't for you listening to me and understanding my situation I don't like to think where I could be now. I really appreciate the flexible approach to support which was tailored to my personal needs.

- Thrive Service User

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Crisis Support Services

From 2023-2024 we supported **52 women** in our Crisis service. This service provides support to women by:

- Referrals to MARAC where necessary
- Access to legal advice
- Support to navigate family / criminal court processes
- Onward referral to longer-term support if required.
- Addressing immediate safety needs
- Safety planning
- Reporting domestic abuse to police
- Accessing homelessness services
- Applying for property markers & target hardening



Case Study - Thrive Crisis Service

Having been in a 16-year relationship where I suffered horrific domestic violence. I completely broke down, using alcohol as a coping mechanism. I hid my abuse from my family and friends. Nobody knew what went on behind closed doors. Feeling overwhelmed, scared and not knowing who to turn to or open up about the abuse to.

I then contacted Thrive and a wonderful woman named Andrea answered the phone. Her warm and friendly voice invited me down to the office for a cup of tea. I felt that I could speak to her about the years of hidden abuse. I could finally offload my fears and concerns and do so in a safe environment.

There was no judgement, only plenty of encouragement and support, plus hankies to wipe away my tears. Thrive has provided me with safety equipment to keep me safe in my home, they have called to check on my progress, supported me by attending court dates, provided counselling for my children and many more support networks to ensure me and my children are supported in every way possible.

Thrive even provide coffee morning with other women who have experienced or are experiencing domestic violence. It's a safe place where just having a coffee with other women can build confidence and know that you aren't alone.

There is nothing that Thrive could do to improve on their services, they have saved my life and given me a completely new start. Without Andrea who is the salt of the earth, and her guidance and support, I would still be hidden in my horrific situation. If there was more Andrea's in this world, it would be a safe, strong and beautiful place.

I urge women experiencing domestic violence to pick up the phone and let your voice be heard. It's **the best call I made**, and I know that me and my girls are safe. Thank you Thrive from the bottom of our hearts.



Equality Diversity enGagement and Education (EDGE)

Our EDGE project aims to support women who have experienced domestic abuse and are part of marginalised groups such as women who are an ethnic minority, disabled, are older or who are part of the Gypsy, Roma or Irish Traveller community.

The EDGE project also delivers training and awareness raising amongst professionals, organisations and communities. This training helps to raise awareness of the barriers that survivors of domestic abuse and minority groups experience when accessing support.

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.



36 women received support within our SWAN services, an **80%** increase from last year

- **33 referrals** were made into the EDGE project
- **17** of the women benefitting from the EDGE project identified as having a **mental health disability**
- **11** of the women using the EDGE services were from **ethnic minorities**

“ ‘I am happy, genuinely happy. I have full control over my body and mind again’
– EDGE service user ”

In 23/24, we supported **36 women** who were 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

LIFE (Liberty, Independence, Freedom, Empowerment)

The LIFE Project is a self-help programme that supports 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.

- Thrive received **41 referrals** into the LIFE project.
- From 2023 - 2024, **210 sessions** were held through the LIFE project.



41 referrals into the LIFE project from 2023-2024

This year our activities included:

- Recovery Toolkit
- Own My Life
- Coffee Mornings
- Kitchen Garden
- Writing Group
- Arts and Crafts
- Special events

“ Women at thrive don't realise I'm coming out of my shell, in a safe place amongst lovely staff, volunteers and women I can warm up to. ”

Volunteering

This year we had **17 volunteers** who collectively dedicated **724 hours** to volunteering with Thrive Women's Aid. This was an **189% increase** from the previous year

Our volunteers supported various **projects and services** within Thrive including:

- Recovery Toolkit
- Own My Life
- STAR
- Arts and Crafts
- Coffee Morning
- Reception, Admin and Social Media
- Youth Club
- Beach clean
- Writing Group
- SWAN van
- Mr X/ Christmas

Initially, my therapist thought it would be helpful if I got back into a routine, in the past I've been most stable when employed. I went through some options with CVS then Thrive came up.

Being someone with a lot of lived experience of DV I felt that I could make a difference with Thrive. Since I started volunteering last June I've seen the work you do & truly believe in the charity.

-Thrive Volunteer



Our volunteers dedicated **724 hours** to Thrive this year

Children and Young People Support Services

Our Children and Young People Service supports children aged 0-18. This year we had **49 new referrals** and supported these children and young people through:

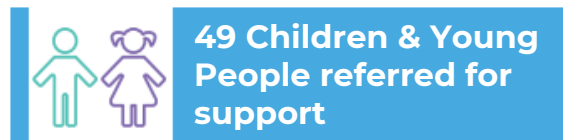
- 1-1 support
- STAR Program
- Young Person's Recovery Toolkit
- Trips and activities

“ I can't describe how I feel right now but I can show you. **The young person opened her arms wide, took a deep breath and smiled** that's how you've made me feel. ”

Families First

Our Families first service provides support to all members of the family through specialist, targeted and age-appropriate interventions and programmes. These programmes include:

- STAR
- 1-1 Children & Adults
- Recovery Toolkit/Own My Life
- CLEAR (a programme for men displaying unhealthy relationship behaviours)



RESPECT (Respect Young People's Programme)

In 2023, we launched our **RESPECT programme**, which is an intervention for families where children or young people aged between 8 and 18 are abusive or violent towards the people close to them, particularly their parents or carers.

The programme works with young people and their families, encouraging everyone to take a role in stopping the abuse and learning respectful ways of managing conflict, difficulty, and intimacy.

This year we had **65 referrals** into our Families First services this is **20 more** referrals from the previous year.

467 sessions were delivered including groups and one to ones for adults and children.

Families First Case Study

Olivia was referred to Thrive with her 6 year old daughter. She was visibly anxious and stated that she is currently under a mental health nurse. During her initial assessment, a DASH was completed to ascertain whether she was at high risk of harm. Upon completing the DASH she scored 18 which meant that she was potentially at a high risk of harm. She disclosed that her alleged perpetrator was on bail due to criminal damage of her personal belongings.

Olivia had experienced emotional & financial abuse, coercive control and was also be contacted by the alleged perpetrator directly and indirectly, via family and social media. Olivia was made aware that the direct and indirect contact was a breach in bail for the alleged perpetrator and was encouraged to report each incident to the police. Olivia's support worker contacted the police, DAU and a solicitor to ensure that Olivia received the most appropriate support. All safety markers were put on Olivia and her property, a safety plan was also completed with her.

During the criminal court proceeding of the alleged perpetrator, emotional support was provided to her and she was awarded a 5 year restraining order against the alleged perpetrator. The support worker would liaise with each professional regularly to ensure that the risk level continued to be monitored and in-turn reduced.

Shortly after the criminal proceedings, the alleged perpetrator applied for a non-molestation order and occupation order against Olivia. This increased her anxiety and made her question whether she had experienced domestic abuse. The support worker reassured her that she is believed and listened to, we also highlighted that the alleged perpetrator taking her back to court, is him trying to maintain control. She was advised that she should attend the court during the hearing for a non-molestation and occupation order however her support worker put special measures in place she she felt supported by Thrive during the hearing.

During the first few sessions Lucy's feelings seemed to focus on worry and fear, she would draw pictures of her crying and would follow up that she was scared she would be hurt. When having discussions around this, Lucy was unable to explain what would or could hurt her she was just scared of this. Lucy would always sleep in bed with mum and was upset if mum would leave the room at any point. Lucy's support worker discussed this in depth, about what she was worried about if she was in the room on her own, while mum was cleaning downstairs or making her packed lunch for the morning. As support sessions developed the support worker has seen a noticeable positive change in Lucy. She has now transitioned from having to be in the same room as mum to allowing mum to put her to bed and then leave the room. Lucy's 1-1 support consisted primarily of activities from the STAR program and by using the big problem, small problem, no problem exercise.

Olivia has since graduated from university and has also secured a new job in her chosen field. She stated that without the support worker, she would not have received the positive outcome that she has had. She is extremely thankful for the support that she and her daughter have received and is grateful for feeling listened to and believed.

Olivia's 6 year old daughter was also supported by Thrive, receiving weekly 1-1 support within school. Lucy was very excited to meet her support worker and was always very bright and willing to talk. Lucy loves colouring and drawing and would ask to do any sessions with colouring or drawing.

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

This case study is an example of integrated support work and partnership working with high risk domestic abuse perpetrator agencies.

CLEAR Services for Male Victims and Perpetrators

Alongside the delivery of perpetrator programmes to males aged 18 and over residing in NPT who are displaying abusive behaviour, we provide ISS (Integrated Support) to children and the current partners/ex partners of the perpetrator.

This seeks to raise awareness in children, young people and adults the importance of a safe, equal and healthy relationship and empowers them to make positive personal choices. This is achieved through **trauma-informed education** and **awareness raising**, with the women and children, about the different types of perpetrator behaviours and how domestic abuse can be experienced and recognised.

Through needs-led and trauma-informed practice we allow the women and children to explore their own feelings around the impact of domestic abuse. We explore positive coping mechanisms as well as individual safety plans to ensure all risk needs are being met.

“

Without you stepping in when you did, I wouldn't be here today. I will be forever grateful for all you have done.

- CLEAR Male Survivor

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The completion of perpetrator programmes is intended to hold those displaying abusive behaviours accountable. CLEAR is an early intervention and prevention programme intended to ensure the perpetrator is able to recognise and identify concerns raised either by themselves or others around their behaviours to reduce escalation in harm and offences being committed. We explore the consequences of negative coping mechanisms and promote positive strategies such as effective time out and de-escalation techniques.

We also improve their knowledge around VAWDASV, how this is viewed by society and recognises the impact on children in the home.

The programme also explores gender roles and how our upbringing can impact on our values and morals, alongside the power and control wheel to further educate men on the impact that domestic abuse has on their partners and children.

Being able to recognise and regulate their emotions is key to reducing conflict within the relationships and this is featured throughout the programme using a body map and feelings wheel to enhance understanding of how the emotions manifest in their body. The ability to name those emotions and recognise negative emotions will support to ensure early intervention and prevention on a personal level.



RAPID (Rapid Domestic Abuse Intervention Project)

Our RAPID project aims to improve victim experience following an incident of domestic abuse, coercive control, stalking and harassment.

This results in increased confidence to report and ensures that the voice of survivors being heard and listened to.

From 2023-2024, our RAPID project had:

- **180 call-outs** relating to domestic violence which is approximately **1.6% more** than the previous year
- **208 adults** in total were supported with an additional **113 children and young people**
- **91 referrals** made into specialist services

RAPID Case Study

Two RAPID Officers attended a call after an assault had occurred the previous night; the victim would not make a complaint and the perpetrator was outstanding for arrest.

The victim had sustained a broken nose and injuries to her arms and shoulders from where she had been kicked whilst on the floor and she required hospital treatment which the RAPID Officers accompanied her to receive.

After the team's engagement, the victim made a full complaint, and the perpetrator was later arrested. The victim was referred to MARAC, requested a Clare's Law disclosure and is now being supported by the IDVA team who she told that, "**Without RAPID I would not have had the courage to make a complaint; the extra support made the difference**".

Thrive Group Wales

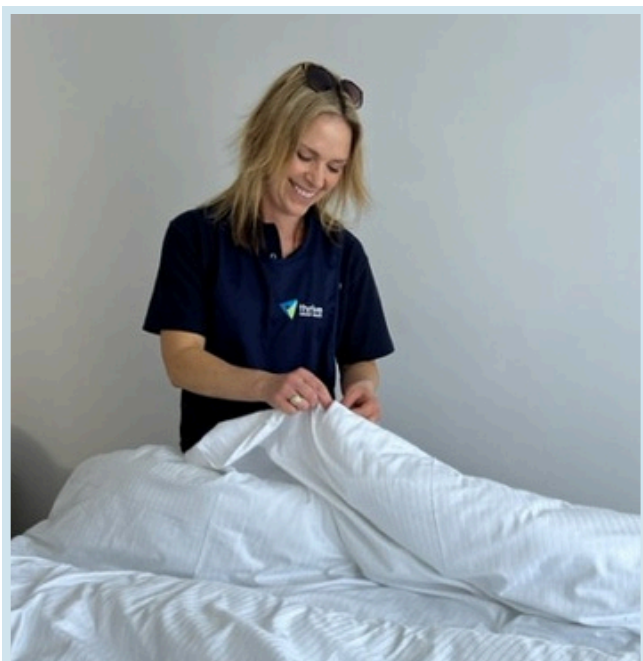
The Thrive Group Wales Social Enterprise was established in 2017 where we began with only a small cleaning company; Our key purpose was to develop a sustainable income stream to support the work of **Thrive Women's Aid**.

The enterprise delivers high-quality commercial cleaning services to businesses and organisations, in both public and private sectors across South Wales.

At our social enterprise, we create family-friendly employment opportunities for those furthest from the labour market.

From 2023-2024 Thrive Group Wales:

- **Had over 50 staff members** employed at Thrive Group Wales Cleaning Services
- Worked closely with businesses such as **Kier, Morgan Sindall, Morgan Stone, Bouygues UK** and **Andrew Scott**



In 2023, despite the best efforts of staff and trustees, Thrive Group Wales made the difficult decision to close the catering section of the enterprise.

This followed on from the closure of Playhem Play Centre in December 2023.

Since the closure of Playhem, we have signed our lease over to **Dreamz Fun House**.



Our main focus now is to continue to deliver a high standard commercial cleaning service. Our contracts are primarily with the construction industry, who have secured new developments (schools & hospitals) including other projects that were within the local authority of NPT & Swansea Areas. We also have a small team located in the RCT & Haverfordwest/Pembroke.

Within the construction industry, our team provides the on-site daily cleaning of the welfare facilities. This ensures that the contractors can offer their workforce a clean & safe environment within their workplace.

Our cleaning service also provides regular cleans for office space, domestic houses & end of tenancy deep cleans.

Organisation Achievements: Staff Health and Wellbeing



TOTM Period Positive Workplace

In 2023, Thrive became a “**Period Positive Workplace**” with Welsh sustainable period brand “**TOTM**”. Thrive now provide **FREE** sanitary pads and tampons for all menstruating staff members while in our office. Thrive are passionate about ending period poverty and providing staff with basic necessities while working in our office.

35 Hour Working Week

After trials and deliberation, the Thrive Women’s Aid board of trustees granted the **35-hour working week** for staff members at the organisation. This was done to boost productivity as well as promote improved staff wellbeing.



Westfield Health for Staff Members

In 2023, Thrive supplied **health & wellbeing cover** with **Westfield Health** for all of staff members. The cost-of-living crisis and the impact of the pandemic hit everyone hard, even those working at the organisation - that's why Thrive believed it was necessary to provide a **basic level of cover for all staff members**. This cover includes dental costs, optical tests, diagnostics, chiropody, therapy and money-off gym memberships.

Living Wage Employer

Thrive Women’s Aid gained their **Living Wage Employer accreditation** in late 2023 from the Living Wage Foundation. Ensuring that all staff members at Thrive are earning a wage that is enough to live on is vital for the organisation.



With special thanks to our funders



THE LEATHERSELLERS



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