



**thrive**  
WOMEN'S AID



**Impact Report**  
2016 - 2020

# Foreword

We are pleased to introduce Thrive's Impact Report (2016-2020), our opportunity to showcase the progress that has been achieved against our strategic goals (prevention, intervention, progression and sustainability) over the last four years.

It's been a busy, sometimes testing, but overall successful time at Thrive. We started the beginning of the strategic cycle as Port Talbot and Afan Women's Aid evolving into Thrive in November 2018. Our new brand identity was an important step for us to take, one that better captures us as an organisation, what we are about and what we want to achieve. We are pleased that women, children and young people who use our services were able to drive the development of our new identity; selecting the name 'Thrive' and influencing the design.

We've seen a 38% growth to our income during the last four years, which is positive given the tough economic climate we've been working within. With this growth we've seen the addition of new services, enabling more families to move away from the trauma they have faced and to build the resilience and skills they need in order to thrive.

Over the course of this period we are pleased to see that three very important pieces of work that have been years in development have come to fruition.

The first is the Memorandum of Understanding that was signed on 12th December 2017 between Swansea Women's Aid, BAWSO, Hafan Cymru and New Pathways creating the Seren Môr Consortium of specialist organisations working in Western Bay.

The second piece of work that has substantially progressed over the last four years is the organisation's Social Enterprise, Thrive Group Wales. It is inspiring to see the enterprise go from strength to strength and we would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to the employees and Directors of the enterprise.

The third area of work which we are delighted to see complete is the development of our new office and outreach centre in Port Talbot. With the support of a Welsh Government VAWDASV Capital Grant and working with partners Coastal Housing we were able to

relocate to new purpose-built, ground floor accommodation enabling access for all.

In 2019 we were proud to celebrate our 40th anniversary – 40 years of supporting women, children and families in Neath Port Talbot to rebuild their lives following domestic abuse. We estimate that during this time we supported 3,900 women in the community and 1285 women and 1690 children in refuge.

Quality is always high on our agenda and we are delighted to see that during this strategic cycle we have been able to achieve two recognised quality marks; Trusted Charity Level 1 (previously PQASSO) and the Welsh Women's Aid National Quality Service Standard. Both of these quality marks provide us with the accreditation status to be recognised as a high performing and good quality organisation for our staff and our service users.

We are committed to capturing the impact of our work, analysing its effectiveness and constantly making improvements where we need to. In April 2018 we invested in a new case management system which has revolutionised the way in which we capture, monitor and report on our activities, outcomes and impact.

Looking to the future, we are about to embark on the development of a new 5 year Strategic Plan (2021-2026) in collaboration with service users and key stakeholders. We are excited to see how this work progresses and look forward to sharing our new strategic goals with you in the coming months. We are also acutely aware of the impact that coronavirus has had, and continues to have, on individuals, families and communities, particularly those who have been significantly impacted by domestic abuse and trauma during this time.

Finally, we hope that you enjoy reading 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. Seeing this change is what drives the passion in our organisation and our workforce.

**Louise White,**  
Chair of Board

**Lucy Reynolds,**  
Director



# Prevention

We will educate, raise awareness, support, challenge and innovative in order to increase safety and reduce risk of harm.

## What we've achieved

### Domestic Abuse Family Service

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.

The service aims to assess the family dynamic, identifying the primary perpetrators of abuse and offer a bespoke package of support to the whole family. A multi-disciplined approach is used to seek positive behaviour change in perpetrators, or those displaying unhealthy relationship behaviours, at the same time as offering support to victims and their children.

“100% beneficial. I have learnt so much about myself, things I wouldn't have believed of myself before. The support I had was incredible, I will forever be grateful to you all who helped and supported me and my children. Thank you.”

Parent

“My son absolutely loves his sessions and being listened to and having things explained to him around abuse done in a way that was not scary.”

Parent

Since October 2018:

- We've supported **255 individuals** from **151 families**
- We've delivered **595 interventions** in total, and of those interventions:
  - **431 one to one sessions** were delivered to children and young people
  - **40 STAR group support** sessions were delivered to children and young people
  - **131 one to one sessions** were delivered to parents
  - **13 STAR group support** session were delivered to parents

In 2019/20:

- **82% of families** reported an improvement in family resilience
- **81%** reported **improved** family relationships
- **76% of individuals** reported improved emotional and mental well being
- **75% of parents** benefited from a parenting intervention



**82% improvement  
in family resilience**



## Positive Relationships (April 2015 – April 2018)

Positive Relationships was a three year early intervention and prevention project funded by The National Lottery Community Fund which worked with children and young people, couples and young fathers at risk of becoming perpetrators, with the aim of breaking the cycle of domestic abuse through education, awareness and behaviour change.

### In 3 years:

- We delivered healthy relationship education and awareness raising sessions to **9649 children** and young people – **100%** of these children reported a greater understanding of domestic abuse and healthy relationships
- We educated **152 children and young people** who were identified as 'at risk of becoming aggressive or abusive' in pupil referral units or alternative settings including the local Youth Offending Team
- We supported **42 children and young people** we were displaying violence or aggression - **87.5%** of **parents** reported an improvement in behaviours
- We delivered training to **182 professionals** – **100%** reported a better understand of domestic abuse and coercive control
- We supported **10 couples** who were experiencing domestic abuse within their relationship to have improved understanding of positive relationship behaviours – **70%** of **couples** reported improved relationships or separated as a result of our intervention

- We delivered the Caring Dads programme to **52 fathers** who were at risk of becoming perpetrators - **89%** of **professionals** and referral partners confirmed that participants had been able to identify their negative behaviours and utilise skills learned during the course to address them

“[The Respect Programme provided] fantastic support to my son. We saw a gradual difference in his behaviour. [There was a] massive difference on ending to what it was like when we started using the service. Really positive outcome for my son in all areas of his life. ”

**Parent of Young Participant**

“ My son says I'm not a monster anymore. ”

**Caring Dad participant**

“[I learned] to understand the seriousness of events and how they can escalate, the impact on my children if they hear me arguing with my partner and the impact my behaviour has on my relationship and on my partner. ”

**Caring Dad participant**



### Video Interaction Guidance project (April 2016 – Sept 2020)

With the support of several funders including Trusthouse Charitable Foundation, Moondance Foundation, Coles Medlock and the South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner Victims Fund we developed a unique project which uses a bespoke and proven method called Video Interaction Guidance (VIG).

VIG involves filming an interaction between mother and child in order to improve **communication, attachment** and **bonding** that may have been affected by Domestic Abuse.

**42 families** have received VIG support

**100%** of VIG clients have felt an increase in confidence in their own parenting.

“ I feel like I'm getting closer to my son; noticing how he responds to me is helping us bond. ”

Parent

“ I can see it's the little things that I am doing that are making things better. ”

Parent

### Professional Training

Capacity building for professionals is a vital part of our work and provides front-line staff, such as nurses and social workers, with the skills required to recognise and tackle signs that domestic abuse may be affecting their service users.

Since 2016 we've delivered training to **1103 professionals** – **96%** reported increased awareness of domestic abuse.

“ I really enjoyed the training, I learned lots and found open discussion interesting and thought provoking. The trainers were really engaging! ”

Trainee



**1103 professionals trained**

“ [The course] was informal and we were able to discuss experiences freely. The trainer's knowledge is excellent and I found the session useful and relevant to my practice. ”

Trainee



## Jane's story

Jane was referred to us by her employer, who got in touch with us asking for some advice. During her first appointment Jane suddenly left halfway through saying that she had received a phone call from her mother and had to leave.

Another appointment was arranged and Jane admitted that it was actually her perpetrator (Paul) who had contacted her during the first appointment, causing her to leave. Jane was assessed as being at high risk of serious harm and was referred to MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference).

Jane told us that she was still currently in a relationship with Paul and wanted support to leave him safely. She was staying at the hospital as her daughter was an inpatient, and hospital security meant that he could not get onto the ward. Whilst we were there, we completed a safety plan with her. We discussed the possibility of going into refuge but she declined for a range of reasons, and it was agreed that when she left the hospital with her daughter, they would either stay with Jane's mother or her father. We requested markers for both addresses.

A few weeks later, Jane was involved in a car collision with Paul; he had been driving and crashed the car intentionally, injuring Jane. She had been severely injured with a broken sternum and ribs.

During one phone call Jane made it obvious that she was unable to talk freely and when we asked whether she wanted us to call the police, she said yes. The police were contacted and arrived promptly because of the marker. Paul had been at the address but had fled before police arrived. After this, a regular police watch was put on the property.

Jane admitted that she was petrified of Paul

and she feared the consequences of leaving. We explored other potential safety measures such as a non-molestation order and Jane was referred to a solicitor for advice. Jane was supported to attend an appointment with social services, where they communicated their concerns regarding Jane's daughter and their intentions to escalate the case to child protection due to their concerns about her daughter's exposure to domestic abuse.

Two days after this meeting Jane told us that social services had removed her daughter and placed her with her grandfather (Jane's father). Jane was inconsolable. She had started using alcohol as a coping mechanism and social services were concerned that she was also drinking around her daughter. We supported Jane to make an appointment with the GP due to concerns about her mental health and unhealthy coping methods.

During appointments Paul would constantly call Jane. We advised Jane not to answer and encouraged her to log these incidents with the police as potential harassment. Jane agreed to report all the abuse that she had suffered to the police and we supported her to do this. A few weeks later Jane was reported as a missing person and was found with Paul. The police had tracked them down and then arrested Paul. After this incident Jane entered refuge was able to access daily support. She settled well in refuge and was referred to the Freedom Program. She started seeing her daughter again which Jane was delighted about.

Jane wants to be rehoused outside of Neath Port Talbot for a fresh start and she stated that she has a positive outlook on her future. She had given her statement to the police and their investigation is ongoing.



# Intervention

We will build on the success of our services, constantly evolving to ensure we always meet the needs of women, children and families.

## What we've achieved

### Residential Services

Since 2016 we've provided direct support and housing to **182 women** fleeing abusive relationships with our 6-bed refuge and 5-bed second stage move on accommodation.

We've supported 3 women with no recourse to public funds, ensuring that individuals and families can access a safe place to stay regardless of their immigration status.

In 2019/20:

- **82%** of women **felt safer** after entering and being supported within residential services
- **70%** had **improved mental health**
- **68%** said that they are **better able to manage their own finances**
- **78%** said that they are now **leading a healthy and active lifestyle**

**182 women housed**



“Since accessing support from Thrive 10 months ago, I have achieved independence and learnt a lot of basic and independent skills. I've learnt to love my freedom of being away from my perpetrator. Coming into refuge has been the best thing for me, I am working and doing a college course, something I was told I would never achieve. I'm also working for Thrive Enterprise, I now have motivation to do so much in life. Thank you Women's Aid, you're truly amazing.”

Resident

“ I hadn't slept properly for two years before coming to refuge. It felt like a massive weight had lifted from my shoulders. ”

Resident

**82% women felt safer**





## Specialist support for Children and Young People

We provide targeted specialist domestic abuse interventions including one to one's, trips, activities and group support to children and young people who have been impacted by domestic abuse.

Over the last four years we've worked intensively with **86 children** who are deemed above the early intervention and prevention threshold.

We have delivered S.T.A.R group programmes working with children from aged 7 to 11, and parents to help them improve their parenting.

We've also delivered the Recovery Toolkit programme, the young people who completed the programme reported that it helped to develop positive lifestyle and coping strategies.

Thanks to Children in Need funding we've organised a range of new activities including horse-riding, dolphin watching, surfing, outdoor pursuits, rock climbing and a residential stay.

In 2019/20 the following outcomes were achieved:

1. Children feeling less worried and happier
  2. Children are more engaged and be able to express themselves and join in
  3. Children have increased self-confidence and resilience in dealing with a range of situations
- **43%** of children we supported achieved **significant progress** in the outcome areas
  - **57%** of children we supported achieved **some progress** in the outcome areas
  - **0** children achieved **no progress** in the outcome areas

**100% of children achieved progress**



“ Since I have been coming here, I am going upwards instead of downwards. ”

Child

“ The [support] has helped my youngest immensely, she used to be so shy and quiet, now she is more outgoing and finds it easier to mix with others. It has definitely helped her, she has come out of her shell and now realises she is not the only one in this situation. ”

Parent





## Community and Outreach Services

Since 2016 we've supported **727 women** in the community who are experiencing domestic abuse and who have left their abuser or want support to transition away from abuse.

We provide practical support designed to increase safety, resolve individual issues arising as a result of domestic abuse such as housing, debt management, criminal and civil justice, support with children and child contact arrangements.

At the same time we provide emotional and therapeutic support to combat physical and mental ill health, enabling women to overcome the trauma they have experienced.

In 2019/20:

- **63%** of women **felt safer** after our intervention
- **72%** had **improved mental health**
- **68%** said that they are **better able to manage their own finances**
- **71%** said that they are now **leading a healthy and active lifestyle**

**72% had improved mental health**



## EDGE (Education, Diversity, Engagement and Empowerment)

In June 2019 we were awarded funding from Comic Relief to establish a new service for women who have experienced domestic abuse and are further marginalised because they are older, disabled or from the Gypsy, Roma or Irish Traveller community.

So far we have supported 40 women; 34 who are older, 7 from the Roma or Gypsy Traveller community and 6 who are disabled.

Of those, **95%** reported **feeling safer** after our intervention, and **82%** report **increased knowledge** on domestic abuse, their human rights and how to recognise unhealthy relationships.

**86 professionals** have participated in awareness raising and **100%** reported a **better understanding** of how to identify domestic abuse and vulnerability.

**95% felt safer after our intervention**



“ I can see that I am not alone – even though I believed I was. ”

Service user



## Therapeutic interventions

We've delivered the **Recovery Toolkit Programme** to **77 women** which aims to provide women who have experienced domestic abuse with the resources to maximise their own potential, and rebuild self-esteem and confidence.

Over the last four years, **101 women** have benefited from delivery of the **Freedom Programme** – with the majority of women reporting increased confidence and the ability to more easily recognise and reject abusive and controlling behaviours and relationships.

We've offered **counselling to 66 women** in order to support their recovery and understanding of trauma.

**83%** of women said counselling had **positively influenced their health 'a lot'**.

**83% said counselling improved their health**



“ This course has been a life line. It has helped me feel supported, less isolated and empowered through one of the most frightening, traumatic experiences of my life. ”

**Freedom Programme participant**

“ I feel empowered to be assertive when needed and it's helped me recognise and let go of events I had kept replaying in my mind. ”

**Recovery Toolkit participant**

“ The part I found most beneficial was when the counsellor explained to me the reasons why I am the way I am and why I act as I do, it is all part of trauma. This was huge for me because I actually thought there was something wrong with me. ”

**Counselling recipient**



## Martha's story

The EDGE team attended a Learning Disabilities event to raise awareness about the project and provide access to our service for anyone who needed support for domestic abuse. At the event we met Martha who is on the Autistic Spectrum, had been diagnosed as being Bipolar, has an eating disorder and had recently had a mental breakdown while at university.

The team engaged with Martha and she began to open up about her experience of domestic abuse and struggles with mental health.

After this, Martha started to access support at Thrive and through coproduction we tailored a support plan focusing on finance, her eating disorder, housing, education, confidence building and rebuilding the relationship with her family. We liaised with Pobl, Hafan Cymru, an ASD specialist and a psychiatric nurse to help with this.

Through support, Martha has become debt free and has new bank accounts, an issue which had caused her much anxiety. Martha moved into new accommodation and has started to attend our coffee mornings where she has gained more social confidence.

The group has been a safe place for Martha to chat with others who have experienced abuse, reduced her isolation and helped start to overcome barriers she previously faced by being female, a survivor of domestic abuse and having a disability.

After applying for a travel card, Martha started to use public transport by herself; a huge achievement as previously she did not feel safe or confident enough to travel alone and relied on others for transportation. We have worked on healthy eating and meal planning and have helped to contact organisations who can support her eating disorder; after encouragement she has returned to a specialist and has been referred for treatment.

Martha aspires to start the second year of her University course and we have liaised with a number of professionals to ensure an appropriate and robust learning support plan can be put in place when she decides that the time is right.

Martha has gained huge amounts of confidence and although there are still challenges ahead she feels positive and has reignited hopes with better awareness of her rights and the support available to her.



# Progression

We will provide opportunities for women, children and families to enable them to reach their potential and flourish.

## What we've achieved

### Material Girls (2016 – 2018)

Material girls was an upcycling and recycling social enterprise offering weekly sessions to empower women with skills and confidence to improve mental health and wellbeing and reduce isolation.

From 2016 to 2018 we worked with **68 volunteers, 3 of which progressed into employment.**

Many women who volunteer with Material Girls are unemployed or stay at home mums who find themselves in low moods or suffering from poor mental health. Being involved offers a sense of personal satisfaction and a purpose.

Volunteers have helped to coordinate, organise and participate in annual fashion shows which were attended by over 400 people. The events showcased the new found skills and confidence of volunteers. We have seen women transform since starting the Material Girls Project.

From April 2018 the work of material girls continued within the LIFE Project.



**3 volunteers went on to employment**

“ I now feel like I can talk to people I don't know very well, I'm happy to offer my opinion when I feel like I need to. ”

**Material Girls volunteer**

“ Before volunteering, my confidence was at rock bottom but now I feel so much better, volunteering has given me purpose. ”

**Material Girls volunteer**



**Supported by  
68 volunteers**



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

The LIFE Project is self-help programme to support 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 ability to cope and move on.

LIFE is a partnership project between Thrive and Neath Port Talbot Mind.

Since April 2018:

- **147 women** have become members of the LIFE Survivors Network Membership
- **106 women** have attended coffee morning or regular project activities including self-care and self-nurture sessions, mindfulness, yoga, craft sessions, actif woods and exercise sessions.
- **38 volunteers** have supported the project, with **10** regularly committing their time
- **43 women** have accessed counselling with **262 sessions** taking place at Thrive and NPT Mind

Outcomes feedback from the **106 women** that have attended the project so far has shown:

- **94%** reported increased mental health and well-being as a result of being involved in the project.
- **94%** reported increased ability to cope independently as a result of their engagement with the LIFE project
- **100%** group attendees reported increased ability to recognise unhealthy relationships
- **95%** reported reduced isolation
- **94%** reported feeling more positive about the future.



**94% reported reduced isolation**



**262 counselling sessions since 2018**

“ I owe my life to this project. It has taught me to deal with everything in life in a very positive manner. ”

**LIFE Member**



# Sustainability

We will be a sustainable business which recognises and values its main asset; our workforce.

## What we've achieved

### Thrive Group Wales

Thrive Group Wales is a social enterprise with the purpose of developing a sustainable income stream to support the work of Thrive Women's Aid.



The enterprise has 3 commercial areas:

- Commercial and domestic cleaning
- Catering services
- Playhem softplay

Since its inception in 2017 the enterprise has contributed **£17,941** in the way of management and overhead charges to the charity. The enterprise has also fully absorbed the salary costs of the Business Development Manager which was previously funded by Thrive Women's Aid.

We have created sustainable employment opportunities for **54 local people** furthest away from the job marketplace. Of those employees many are victims of domestic abuse who have been supported through Thrive Women's Aid,

others have barriers to employment including being disabled, young people and those with low skills or qualifications.

We've provided **62 training opportunities** in areas such as manual handling, first aid and food hygiene. 1 person has also completed an ILM Level 3 qualification.

### Holly's story

Holly received support from Thrive's Community and Outreach Team after being in an abusive relationship. When she first came into services, her confidence and self-esteem were very low.

When she felt she was ready to move back into employment she applied for a cleaning post of 20 hours in the enterprise working alongside Bouygues at their site in Margam.

Holly remained at this site from the start to the very end, which was from May 2017 to August 2019 and since then Holly has been provided cleaning services on a range of different sites, sometimes helping out at Playhem too.

Holly is an extremely valued employee and the longest standing member of the team.



## Financial activity

In what has been a challenging period we are proud that we've been able to increase the organisation's total income, and further expand our sources of income in a bid to improve sustainability.

Total income increased from **£572,006 in 2016** to **£790,495 in 2020** – a **38% increase**.

We are a growing organisation, our staff base has increased from **15 to 21 people** and the number of projects and services available have doubled from **4 to 8**.

## Seren Môr Consortium

The Seren Môr Consortium is a partnership of specialist organisations working together to end Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence. Partners include Bawso, Hafan Cymru, New Pathways, Thrive Women's Aid and Swansea Women's Aid.

## What we've achieved:

- In April 2018 we held a launch event with over 100 key stakeholders, partners and service users.
- We co-developed a psychoeducational course called 'Bridging the Gap' to help stabilise, self-manage and cope with the effects of trauma. We piloted this programme with 26 service users and all participants who provided feedback benefited from an increase in their mental wellbeing.
- We developed a peer-support project focusing on mental health and wellbeing of women affected by VAWDASV.

- In December 2019 we held 2 learning events to raise awareness and improve understanding of Welsh Government VAWDASV campaigns. 17 service users and 64 professionals attended separate events.

## Quality matters

Quality service provision is a high level priority for Thrive across all of its services and practices (both as a service provider and as an employer).

In January 2019 the charity was awarded the **Trusted Charity Mark (Level 1)** quality standard recognising the excellent work that we do as a third sector organisation. We were assessed against the 11 standards of effective practice in Trusted Charity, including in governance, leadership and management, managing staff and volunteers and managing money and proved to have met all standards.



In June 2018 Thrive was awarded the **Welsh Women's Aid National Quality Service Standards** which were specifically designed for specialist domestic abuse services in Wales in order to demonstrate the way in which specialist services meet needs and achieve real change that lasts in the lives of survivors of domestic abuse.

In December 2019 Thrive was highly commended in the **Cymorth Cymru Promoting Independence Awards** under the Supporting Survivors category.

With thanks to our funders



The Henry Smith Charity



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:

 [thrivewomensaid.org.uk](http://thrivewomensaid.org.uk)

 [facebook.com/ThriveWomensAid](https://facebook.com/ThriveWomensAid)

 [@ThriveWomensA](https://twitter.com/ThriveWomensA)

 [linkedin.com/company/thrive-women-s-aid](https://linkedin.com/company/thrive-women-s-aid)