



**ANNUAL REPORT 2022/2023**

**Registered Charity No. 276883**

**Company Registration No. 1338724**



**Bury St Edmunds Women's Aid Centre Ltd**

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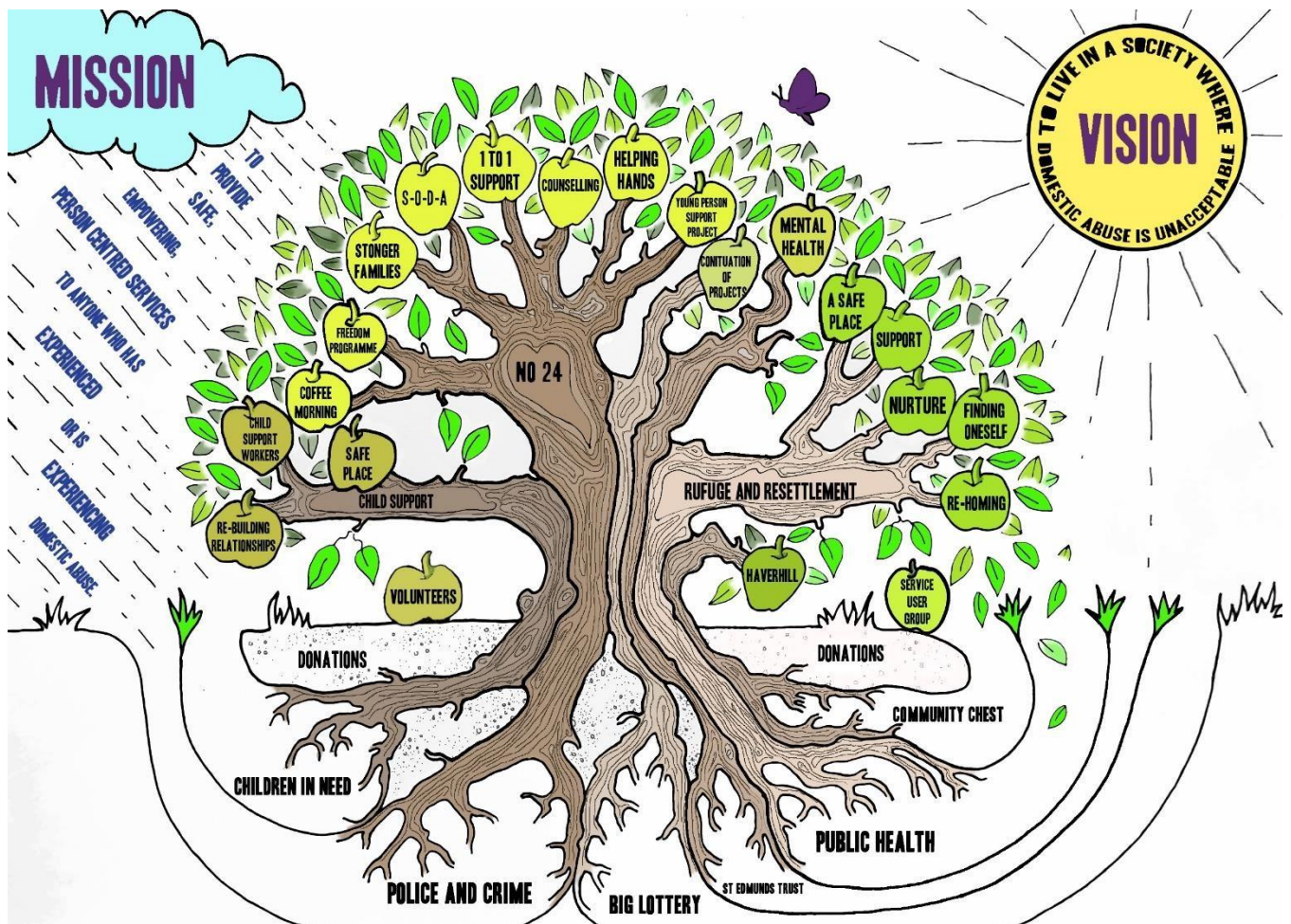


## **PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT**

### **Domestic Abuse is Unacceptable**

Domestic abuse impacts upon ordinary people and their families. Those affected by domestic abuse can find themselves living in extraordinary circumstances. People who leave the perpetrator will be offered a non-judgmental service tailored to their individual need. We believe that those impacted by domestic abuse need more than Refuge accommodation; they may also need help, support, trust and friendship to enable them to be empowered and regain control of their lives. Often the degradation that has been inflicted upon a person has caused a loss of self-esteem and is invariably surrounded by other complex issues that all need to be addressed if they are to successfully change their life. Bury St Edmunds Women's Aid believes that to enable a person to succeed in breaking the cycle of domestic abuse, a holistic approach to meeting their needs is essential.

Whilst staying in the Refuge, even if this is for a brief time, women will be offered practical and emotional support. We understand that children who live in the Refuge with their mothers are also impacted by domestic abuse and that their needs may require addressing separately. Bury St Edmunds Women's Aid is committed to meeting the needs of children with patience, understanding and care. We believe that our facilities for children can help rebuild young lives through play.



**Vision:** To live in a society where domestic abuse is unacceptable

**Mission:** To provide a safe, empowering and person-centred service to anyone who has experienced or is experiencing domestic abuse.

**Values:** To work alongside people who have experienced domestic abuse with honesty, respect, trust and fairness.

This idea of our organisation as a growing, living thing has become part of the business plan. It shows how new funding could be added at the roots to provide new branches which in time will bear fruit.



## **OUR AIMS:**

- to provide temporary accommodation at our Refuge for women\* and their children who are fleeing domestic abuse also, to support these people as they settle into their new community
- to meet the needs of children and young people affected by Domestic Abuse through a dedicated Children and Young Person's Service
- to facilitate community-based education programmes that enable people to better understand the behaviours of an abuser and to empower them to take control of their own future
- to offer support and advice through our Helpline and Outreach Service to any person who asks for it
- to raise community awareness of Domestic Abuse issues and of the services we offer
- to provide therapeutic support to all survivors of domestic abuse who are using our services
- to provide practical support to people who have experienced domestic abuse.

*\*The refuge is a service for females only and males up to the age of 16, as is legislated for under the Equality Act 2010, Part 7, Paragraph 27 on single-sex spaces*



## DIRECTORS/TRUSTEES

Chair Person	Maureen Byrne
Vice Chair	Christina Dye
Secretary	Fiona Harbron
Treasurer	Elizabeth Larcombe
Trustee	Jackie Burnett
Trustee	Pat Leach
Trustee	Hannah Stammers
Trustee	Donna Higgins
Trustee	Nicola Iannelli Popham





## JEANNIE BLOOMFIELD, PATRON

I start my report as usual in awe of our amazing staff and volunteers who have worked tirelessly to make sure our vulnerable families are looked after.



The work at No. 24 never ceases to amaze me. It is such a hive of activity by so many people getting on with their important roles so everything runs smoothly.

We held a vintage tea party in my garden last year which was well supported and a considerable amount was raised for our Women's Aid and we hope to do the same again this year.

I have written several fundraising letters asking for help towards equipment and other items and funding is needed now more than ever as we are moving to new premises for our Outreach headquarters in the near future.

I have enjoyed giving talks to various organisations to inform them of what we do at Women's Aid and people have been so kind and supportive with donations and offers of help.

If you know of any organisation who would like me to give a talk to please do let me know.

I have visited our refuge on several occasions and to say I was impressed is an understatement. What an amazing place it is for clients and their children to come and know they will be safe and secure.

I was invited to attend an informal tea party at our Outreach Centre to celebrate International Women's Day which was well supported and bustling with ideas from our team for the future.

I was offered some rucksacks full of goodies for our children. "How many?" I was asked. I was just about to say is twenty too many when I was offered a hundred! Needless to say, I accepted and we have had lots of happy young recipients.

We have now expanded into Haverhill with a flourishing coffee morning where clients can drop in for an informal chat with our staff and volunteers.

I have attended our Freedom programme and I am impressed by how we get the word across to point our vulnerable ladies in the right direction for the future.

I would like to finish by saying how proud I am to play a small part by being involved with such a fabulous, caring group of people dedicated to giving vulnerable women the knowledge, hope and courage to move on to a safe and secure future.

**Jeannie Bloomfield**

**Patron**



## **CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT**

Dear Friends and Colleagues

Another year has passed with many challenges for our charity, particularly funding to ensure continuity of service for our clients and their children. Competing with other organisations for funding has been time consuming, however, I am pleased to report that we have continued to provide a first-class support service for our families that have joined us at the refuge. Not only do we provide a safe environment at the refuge we have our Outreach provision which has evolved. We have made significant additions in providing counselling, targeted courses, specialists services and a help line for the various groups. This encourages the outreach users to work with external agencies and professionals.



It is useful to remind ourselves that our Refuge has been at the forefront of shaping and coordinating services and support for our residents who have experienced domestic abuse. Our provision has been in the community for nearly 50 years. We must all continue to challenge the root causes of violence and address women's experience of systems of oppression. The potentials are endless, but only possible by the continued determination and support from our Trustees, staff, senior managers and collaborative organisations. It is true to say domestic abuse services are most effective when led by local and specialists' organisations that meet the need of our communities.

We are committed and continue in our staff training to develop strong confident staff. Our Business Plan will enable us to develop strategic pathways to reach those individuals isolated in our rural areas.

I am pleased to report we have a number of applicants to be considered as Trustees. These colleagues will be interviewed by board members and provided with information and details of the work they will be undertaking if they agree to join us.

As a result of funding from the Haverhill Town Council we have been able to provide coffee mornings, in the town, which includes the provision of courses to work alongside people who have experienced abuse who welcome our advice and support.

I am able to report that we have trained staff who work with schools and colleges to raise awareness of domestic abuse. To live in a society where domestic abuse is unacceptable.

Our Refuge includes clients from various cultures and backgrounds and we provide appropriate facilities for them to be able to practise their individual faiths.

**Maureen Byrne**

**Chair of Board of Trustees**



## PRINCIPAL OPERATIONS MANAGER'S REPORT

This has been a complicated and, at times, difficult year for Bury St Edmunds Women's Aid with the arrival of a number of new staff members and the departure of some others. We have not had a Principal Operations Manager in post since February 2023 but have been actively recruiting for this role. Our Support Supervisor also left in February but was replaced fairly quickly in March 2023 with the promotion of our Administrator, Zoe Gordon, to the position which she has enthusiastically and most efficiently taken over and made her own.

The rest of this report is based on a collation of the previous Principal Operations Manager (POM)'s reports to the Board of Trustees.

### **Staffing:**

There has been a considerable amount of staff sickness and absence over the year which has caused ongoing staffing problems and has meant that members of staff have needed to work extra hours to cover for colleagues.

With regard to staffing, a full-time Outreach Worker was taken on in May 2022, on a fixed term contract, to work between Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill. Bea worked particularly well with the Bury St Edmunds coffee morning group, establishing an excellent and participative relationship with the attendant clients.

A new, full-time play-worker, Alison, started work in October 2022 and has become a highly valued member of the team.

It became necessary to readvertise for a housekeeper in November 2022 and this position has now been successfully filled in January 2023 by Amanda, a very willing and effective member of the team.

A new Resettlement worker began in January 2023 based in the Refuge and to work alongside the Refuge Support workers. Unfortunately, Gemma did not complete her probation period and left the post in April.

Despite all these changes, our staff have continued to provide all the various support programmes with diligence and enthusiasm, providing a very good standard of service to both the Refuge residents, our clients and their children.

### **Refuge:**

The Refuge has maintained a high level of occupancy throughout the year and, although in May 2022, there were some vacancies, by November 2022, there were 8 adults and 8 children resident in the Refuge. The Teen hut had been completed by this time and was regularly used



by two of the older children for doing homework and some quiet time. This level of occupancy has more or less continued.

**Fundraising, bids and help from volunteers:**

On 1 May 2022, a music, tv and film quiz was held and again, the following day, in Colchester raising £500.

In September 2022, Public Health began a tender process for Accommodation, Support and Outreach, covering six different areas of Domestic Abuse: refuge, specialist safe accommodation, dispersed accommodation, sanctuary schemes, second stage accommodation and other forms of emergency accommodation. The POM at the time approached Orwell Housing to discuss the possibility of a joint bid – particularly with regard to dispersed accommodation – but, ultimately, this did not go ahead. By November, 2022, aided by our Finance Manager, Derek, the Suffolk Public Health tender was submitted and was successfully awarded in January 2023. Unfortunately, we are not able to offer the dispersed accommodation as yet but it is still possible to take up the Public Health funding for this should we find the suitable premises.

Preparation for the National Lottery Community Fund bid also began in September 2022 and progress has been made although the articulation of the bid has still not been completed.

An award of £2,000 was made by Suffolk Community Foundation in the same month to provide raised beds in the Refuge Garden to grow fruit and vegetables.

Various amounts were raised over the run up to and during the Christmas period with a teddy tombola at the Bury St Edmunds Christmas Lights switch on (£356) and by the Aquarius Singers (£1,108). Office furniture was also purchased through locality budget funding from the Bury St Edmunds Town Council, while another donation of £750 from Santander was matched by Town Council locality budget to fund VOICE training for staff. A further generous donation was provided in the form of tool and cleaning kits to be given to women leaving the Refuge for resettlement.

**Activities for clients:**

We have continued to provide the SODA programme for Refuge residents, which became mandatory for them in December 2022, as well as the Freedom Programme for people with learning difficulties. The VOICE programme has also been provided in both Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill and the coffee mornings have continued in both locations throughout the year.



## **Properties:**

At the start of the new year, 2023, it was decided that, in the best interests of the organisation and the way forward, we should break the lease for no. 24 St Andrew's Street North due to its excessive costs, constant need for expensive repairs and overall size. The process has been begun to leave the building and comply with the dilapidation repairs required by the lease and the landlord.

## **SUPPORT SUPERVISOR REPORT**

This year has been both challenging and rewarding for Bury St Edmunds Women's Aid. We have continued to make a lasting impact on the lives of those affected by domestic abuse.

### **Ongoing Coffee Morning and VOICE Programme in Haverhill**

Our commitment to providing a safe space for clients to share their stories and access help and support in Haverhill has remained steadfast. The weekly Coffee Morning sessions have served as a vital support network, allowing clients to connect with others who have experienced similar challenges. Additionally, the VOICE (Victims Of Intimate Coercive Experience) program has empowered clients with valuable skills and resources to rebuild their lives and regain control. We are incredibly proud of the positive impact these new initiatives have had on the community. This successful pilot programme has made us more determined to investigate taking our service onto more rural communities.

### **Refuge**

The demand for our refuge services has remained high throughout the year, reflecting the urgent need for safety for women and children experiencing domestic abuse. Our small but dedicated team has worked tirelessly to ensure that every client has received the support and care they deserve. While the consistently full refuge highlights the extent of the issue, it also emphasizes the critical role our charity plays in providing immediate assistance and protection to those in need.

### **Resettlement**

As we continue to expand our services and accommodate the growing number of clients, we have observed a shift in the resettlement process. To enable our clients to experience a more culturally diverse community, we have focused our efforts on securing safe accommodation for those that decide to live further away from Bury St Edmunds. While this change presents new challenges, we remain dedicated to supporting clients during this transitional period,



ensuring they have the necessary resources and support networks to start anew in their new home.

### **New Staff and New Ideas**

In the last year we welcomed a new playworker, a new housekeeper and a new resettlement worker. All have brought fresh perspectives and new ideas to further enhance our programs and services. We look forward to welcoming more new staff in the year to come.

I would like to say thank you for the unwavering support of our community, volunteers and staff, alongside all of our amazing donors and fundraisers who make more of a difference than perhaps they realise!

**Zoe Gordon**

**Support Supervisor**



## **REFUGE SUPPORT SERVICE**

Our role as Refuge Support Workers is to provide consistent emotional support, on a one-to-one basis to the women who have fled to the Refuge and during their temporary stay with us.

A weekly house meeting is run every Wednesday morning enabling our residents to highlight any concerns or issues they may have during their stay, arrange support appointments with us and discuss any activities that may be coming up. Our weekly one to one support sessions are provided to all residents on an individual basis, providing them with protective time to provide support with topics such as benefits, finances, legal issues, GP registrations, health and wellbeing, work and learning opportunities.

We provide support to the residents with exploring the local area and surroundings; we do this by providing maps of local parks, amenities, bus stops, transporting and supporting them to important appointments. We also provide support to the residents by making links within the wider community, for example accessing ESOL (English speaking for other Languages) courses at the college.

**Lauren and Victoria**

**Domestic Abuse Support Workers**



## YOUNG PERSONS' SUPPORT

This year we have taken many more referrals from schools and colleges across West Suffolk, Mildenhall and Haverhill which have resulted in us offering more one to one support within schools, as well as small group programmes around healthy and unhealthy relationships.

I have presented with the Multi-Agency Road Show (MARS) headed up by the Early Help Team as part of the Local Authority. We have been into several High Schools in Bury St Edmunds, Abbey Sixth and West Suffolk College to talk to students about healthy relationships, boundaries and consent. I teamed up with Terence Higgins Trust to deliver some workshops around healthy sexual relationships and as a result have built up a good



partnership and an opportunity for further joint working.

Here are the numbers we have reached over five months of running the Road Shows.

Participants – 644;

Male – 311, Female – 333, Ethnic Minorities – 45, Disability (EHCP) – 5

We attended the Freshers' Fairs at Abby sixth and West Suffolk College, where we promoted Domestic Abuse awareness and calling out sexist behaviour







I have continued in developing the young person's Padlet, The Junction, information is given out by a QR code to students.

The one-to-one work I do with students is developed around the areas they need support in. I aim to improve their self-awareness, self-esteem, their ability to communicate their needs and feelings with trusted adults. How to deal with strong feelings, how to communicate boundaries.

Heathy



relationships/unhealthy relationships, red flags.

**Louise**

**Young Persons Domestic Abuse Support Worker**



## CHILDREN'S SERVICE

How quickly another year has passed, and it is time for an annual update of what we have achieved in the last year.

During the six-week summer holidays we planned for all the families, a trip to the beach, family cook days with Outdoor Explore, ten pin bowling, cinema, and the splash park too. Also, this year we have hired a swimming pool for the families.

We welcomed Alison in October; Alison became our full time Play worker. Alison ran all the group childcare and facilitated the Helping Hands programme.

For children and young people, moving into Refuge can be a struggle. For the young children play is important, and for older children one-to-one and group sessions are offered. Our aim is to make the children's stay as enjoyable as possible, to build strong connections with the children to restore the children's confidence, self-esteem and development through play of any age. Working with vulnerable families, multi-agency working is key, we have strong links with Schools, Nurseries and Social Care and other outside agencies to ensure that children have their needs met and that the women are supported in parenting. We also link in with wider services, a Health Visitor and School Nurse and monthly meetings with the schools.

We ran our usual sessions of after school club, well-being Wednesdays, talking and drawing ,1:1 sessions and Freedom, SODA and Coffee morning Childcare with added childcare in Haverhill on a Tuesday and Friday Morning.

The Stronger Families Programme for the ages 9-11 years, ran also Helping Hand Group too. On the back of running these groups 1:1 Drawing and Talking group was taken into school to support some of the children who needed extra support after the group sessions.

Jabba The Hut- The older children's room in the garden, is fully operational and the children are loving the extra space to do homework and play on the Xbox.

At Christmas we had a Therapy horse come to No 24 with Father Christmas and we opened 24 to past resident and children.

We have a volunteer (Jean) who helps in the garden, we now have now raised beds with lots of vegetables already growing.





Our new project is to have a forest schools garden, we are working on plans as we speak! At the moment it's a large overgrown area so watch this space, we have some exciting ideas



Also, we would like to thank some local companies for their support and donations they are, Abbey Hind Labels, Veronalder Ltd and White-Water Display. They are always on the end of the phone if need be.

**Sarah Hart and Alison Chambers**

**Children's Support Worker**



## **RESETTLEMENT SERVICE**

We have found in the last year or so that the resettlement process has become more complex. Many of our refuge residents arrive with outstanding immigration issues that need to be resolved before they can even register for housing. It has also become more common for women to arrive with no identification, either because it's been removed or destroyed by the perpetrator. This poses many problems and is a huge obstacle to opening a bank account and claiming benefits.

Another layer to the process is debt that has been incurred, often without the resident's knowledge or permission. Our Resettlement Worker liaises with many different organisations and agencies to work through this problem.

With a more multicultural group of residents we are finding fewer families choose to stay in our area. We now often find we are looking further afield for residents' new homes to enable them to access all their cultural needs.

Despite the longer distances involved we still visit our newly rehoused residents on a regular basis before eventually handing them over to services more local to them. Telephone support is ongoing and families are always keen to keep us updated on their progress!

**Zoe Gordon**

**Support Supervisor**



## **OUTREACH SERVICE**

### **Outreach Support**

Another amazing year has passed and what great things we have achieved this year. The Outreach team has grown and we have embraced many new challenges over the last year. The new triage system has really worked meaning we are now able to respond to those in crisis faster using a traffic light system.

We have welcomed Louise and Bea into the team who have worked hard in Outreach and their specialist areas (young people and mental health) to give a great service and they have brought some amazing new ideas with them.

The outreach team have been actively listening to our clients, we are all working towards being able to offer some group talks to clients to enable them to understand more about domestic abuse. There are many areas that we have identified that we need a more bespoke approach to, these include domestic abuse within the home from either the parent to the child or the child to the parent and how to raise boys in a time when social media influencers are promoting misogyny.

We are looking forward to moving to new offices in the future and the opportunity that we all cherish to help people be safe and lead a more fulfilling life.

### **Freedom Programme**

Freedom has been running twice a week to catch up after the pandemic. We have taken with us some of the learnings and now run hybrid Freedom groups enabling women to attend both in person and online. I would like to take this moment to get excited at how good I have become at hosting these sessions and finding angles to hide my double chin.

I am really excited to announce that we will be starting the VOICE programme in Bury St Edmunds, it has been run successfully by Louise in Haverhill so we are going to bring it here. It is a new updated program that covers the same subjects but in a new dynamic way that works better; it gives a greater understanding whilst working on improving your wellbeing.

### **Tracy**

#### **Outreach Support Worker**



### **Mental Health Outreach Support**

When creating a support plan with any client, their mental health and neurodiversity are essential elements to be considered in order to fulfil the underpinning service philosophy of Bury St Edmunds Women's Aid, namely using a comprehensive and inclusive person-centre approach.

The daily reality of working with clients who have experienced domestic abuse and, thus, high levels of prolonged trauma, is that their mental health needs will likely be complex. All the clients we see will have some form of mental illness. The majority of our clients have moderate to severe symptomatic presentations of anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation, self-harm, obsessive-compulsive disorder, borderline personality disorder, bipolar disorder, complex post-traumatic stress disorder, body dysmorphic disorder, eating disorders, premenstrual dysphoric disorder, psychosis and schizophrenia.

In addition, in line with recent emerging academic research which suggests a correlation exists between neurodiversity and a higher likelihood of experiencing domestic abuse, our client base – including both adults and children – reflects a high neurodiversity rate. A number of our clients, whether in refuge, in public groups or under our outreach programmes, have Autism, ADHD and Functional Neurological Disorder.

Over the course of this past year, I have worked with nearly 70 clients under outreach and spilling over from Coffee Morning. I have logged that roughly three quarters of all my clients have been seeking information on mental health and neurodiversity. I have also noted that over half of all my outreach clients this past year have openly discussed suicidal ideation, suicidal attempts and self-injurious behaviour.

Due to their domestic abuse, our clients will generally have been discouraged from accessing medical help for both physical and mental illnesses. In addition, they will frequently have been labelled as 'menta' by their perpetrators and will therefore be reticent to disclose any illnesses or seek assistance. As such, it is one of our priorities to create a welcoming and open environment to reinforce positive mental health habits and to dispel harmful stereotypes and myths which block our clients from accessing the mental health support they need and deserve.

Thus, to best support our clients whilst being mindful of the mental health and neurodiversity overlap with people who have disproportionately experienced domestic abuse, we engage in an empathetic, informed and inclusive approach whereby we actively encourage them to identify and share any accommodations regarding how best we can support them. The type of support we offer ranges from tailored one-to-one sessions to signposting, referring and accompanying our clients to appropriate mental health services, crisis services or emergency



services. Whether in one-to-one appointments, Coffee Mornings or group settings, we seek to encourage reflection on self-care, emotional regulation, grounding techniques and understanding the fight-flight-freeze-fawn response.

Over the course of this year we have also forged collaborations with external organisations to further improve the mental health and emotional wellbeing service provision we are able to offer. This has included starting a project with Suffolk Mind to introduce a modified version of their Emotional Needs Audit into all levels of our service, from refuge residents to group attendees and outreach clients. We have also worked with Suffolk Healthwatch to ensure our clients are aware of where they can turn to should they encounter difficulties within the healthcare service. In addition, we have piloted the Essex Healthwatch trauma cards with our clients who have provided positive feedback regarding the initiative.

Looking forward, we are aiming to continue furthering staff knowledge of mental health and neurodevelopmental conditions and expanding the inclusive nature of the service we provide at all levels.

### **Outreach – Bury St Edmunds Coffee Morning**

The overarching aim of Bury St Edmunds Coffee Morning is to provide a safe environment for our clients to discuss a wide array of topics whilst still maintaining a comfortable and relaxed atmosphere. The clients have provided positive feedback regarding the need to have a consistent fixture in their weekly calendar where they know they can eat cake, have a coffee, ask questions, make new friends and ask for advice. This has been reflected in the positive response to keeping Coffee Morning running throughout the Christmas period and school holidays.

The flagship Bury St Edmunds Coffee Morning has seen a steady increase in participation following the pandemic. The clients who attend are introduced to Coffee Morning through a variety of channels. We refer internally to outreach clients, other group participants and refuge residents whom we feel would benefit from engaging in a more collaborative approach in understating the domestic abuse they have experienced and in combating the isolation that all too often has been an integral component of their domestic abuse. Coffee Morning allows our clients to expand their support network and to learn new concepts in an informal manner. In addition, we have received a steady number of referrals from external organisations and third-party professionals. Sessions can see attendee numbers ranging from 5 to 22 depending on school holidays. On average, there are roughly 50 clients who regularly attend Coffee Morning over the course of a month. Childcare, offered during term time, has continued to play an important role in rendering Coffee Morning accessible to a broader range of clients. During the holidays, family-friendly sessions have been run with success.



Topics of conversation during each Coffee Morning vary week on week and develop organically from clients' questions and interests. We have discussed: the red flags of toxic relationships and the green flags of healthy relationships; the impact of harmful gender stereotypes and how to foster a positive body image; the different types of domestic abuse and the cycles of abuse; the key terminology surrounding domestic abuse to empower clients in being able to describe their experiences and advocate for themselves; emotional agility, emotional dysregulation and self-soothing techniques; the fight-flight-freeze-fawn trauma response; the importance of proactive self-care; books, documentaries and other resources covering domestic abuse and emotional wellbeing.

### **Outreach Support Worker**





## FINANCE REPORT

The last few years have been challenging and that to 31 March 2023 was no exception. Whilst the effect of the Covid 19 crisis has receded and refuge occupancy recovered and actually exceeded that budgeted, inflationary pressures have become ever more apparent across our cost base. Covid recovery funding has largely ended; some of our core funding has reduced to below pre-covid levels and we were unsuccessful in renewing our grant with BBC Children in Need which helps fund child support costs. On a more positive note, the charity has started to secure medium term core funding both for the refuge and outreach services. We successfully tendered to Suffolk County Council Public Health Directorate for refuge support services contract which commenced in April 2023 for a minimum term of 3 years. In addition, core funding for outreach services from Suffolk Police and Crime Commissioner has been granted until March 2025. The Charity has also greatly benefitted from unrestricted grant funding from Lloyds Bank Foundation - applied to outreach services - as well as support from Suffolk Community Foundation, West Suffolk Council and Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill Town Councils, and the generosity of many members of the public and some local companies.

Due to that support, careful cost management against a challenging economic and operational backdrop, and very prompt payment of significant grant income close to the year end, the result for the year shows a deficit of £7,800. In addition, and again due to some wonderful support and the hard work of our staff, we have managed to fund and establish outreach services in Haverhill; a welcome step-up of our outreach provision.

We thank all who have supported the Refuge in helping us meet our financial commitments. This year has been no exception with generous cash donations, Christmas gifts, toys, toiletries, clothes and Easter eggs. We have been overwhelmed by people's generosity.

Income and expenditure for the 12 months to 31st March 2023 amounted to:

Income	£458,986	(2022: £404,266)
Expenditure	£466,786	(2022: £398,449)

In the main Refuge accommodation is funded from Housing Benefit which for 2022/23 amounted to £141,188 on an occupancy rate for the year of 89.7%, comfortably above that budgeted. In addition, Bury St Edmunds Women's Aid Centre continues to receive financial support from Suffolk County Council Public Health Directorate for our Refuge services by way of a support grant of £89,504 inclusive of a cost-of-living uplift payment of £5,695.

Our outreach services and project work are mostly funded by grants and donations. Grant income amounted to £186,346 and comprised:



<b>Grants</b>		£
Suffolk Police & Crime Commissioner - Resource centre outreach funding		50,000
Lloyds Bank foundation - Unrestricted funding utilised for outreach		52,250
Funding for Children's work and Young Persons Support Project		
BBC Children in Need - Children's support workers staff costs		40,225
Suffolk County Council - Children's support Funding for Haverhill Outreach Project:		12,980
West Suffolk Council - Community Chest Grant		16,225
Haverhill Town Council	(Including gift in kind) Funding for other projects:	3,969
Bury St Edmunds Town Council	Office furniture	1,817
Bury St Edmunds Town Council	Training	2,130
West Suffolk Council -UK Shared Prosperity Fund	Cost of living	4,750
Suffolk Community Foundation through the following fund:		
Denbury Charitable Foundation	Garden projects	2,000
		<b><u>£186,346</u></b>

Donations received throughout the year amounted to £27,595 including Gift Aid. These are broken down as follows;

	£
Restricted Donations	4,922
Unrestricted Donations	21,610
Gift Aid	1,063
	<b><u>£27,595</u></b>

### **Gifts in kind**

During the year the Charity received generous gifts in kind which have been valued and included in the financial statements as part of grant income as follows:

	£
Lloyds Bank Foundation Six laptop computers	1,644
Haverhill Town Council Leiston Centre rooms provided without charge for Outreach work in Haverhill	<u>3,322</u>

The Charity is very fortunate to receive many gifts in kind each year mostly for our service users and most of modest monetary value. Individual gifts valued at under £200 are not included in these financial statements.



### **Intangible income - Voluntary staff**

The charity remains dependent on services provided by volunteers. Without these volunteers, wage costs would be much higher and we are very thankful for the time volunteers give to the Charity.

The value provided by volunteers is not costed for the purposes of these financial statements.

### **Reserves Policy**

The Charity's reserve policy is to hold unrestricted net current asset reserves equivalent to four to six months of projected operating costs to cover any temporary shortfall in cash flow that may occur due to the timing of receipts.

Unrestricted net current assets at the end of the financial year were,

**£197,796** (2022: £187,857).

As of 31 March 2023, reserves cover was 5 months. This is slightly down from that of March 2022 (5.3 months) but well within the policy range and substantially better than was forecast earlier in the year due to the prompt payment of grants amounting to £33,000 which were expected to be received in the ensuing year.

### **Auditor**

Bury St Edmunds Women's Aid accounts are audited by Knights Lowe of Bury St Edmunds and it is proposed that the Charity continues to use their services as auditor.

### **Future Plans**

In January 2023 the decision was made to move our Outreach services to more appropriate and cost-effective premises in the centre of Bury St Edmunds. That transition is in progress and will be completed in the first half of 2023/24.

The organisation aims to ensure that current services are fully funded, and we are able to increase our capacity to deliver those services. The current economic outlook will continue to present funding challenges as will the expected increase in demand for our services in the coming months and years. We continue to look for opportunities to increase our work with teenagers and young adults and, subject to available resources, extend the geographical reach of our outreach services.

As always, I thank my colleagues and our trustees who have supported me in my role this year.

Derek Gadd

**Finance Manager**



## **HIGHLIGHTS**

Beach Day! All residents and staff travelled together for our annual beach day. We swam, we ate chips, and we got sun burnt!

Christmas Lights at Ickworth were as beautiful as they were last year, it's a real treat to see the children's faces!

We were visited by Father Christmas and his Christmas pony at the Outreach Centre – hot chocolate and mince pies were handed out along with presents for our Outreach families.

Various summer trips included Tostock Farm to see the alpacas, the cinema and bowling.



### FEEDBACK FROM CLIENTS - Thank You letters

*"When I came I didn't know anything, staff helped with everything, I was even scared to go out. You have helped with everything, everything! I'm scared to leave but I'm happy too. Thank you to everyone who has helped me, I am truly grateful! You have been my family.*

*They helped with my drinking and self confidence Very grateful to have a safe place to stay. Very kind and helpful staff who have given me lots of support in all areas. Helped me with housing, counselling and freedom programme. Thank you. The staff truly are a credit to women aid, they have been very supportive, understanding. They all have gone above and beyond their job to support myself and children, I did not know about women aid until I was put in to contact through next chapter. I cannot thank the staff enough for all their help. Very safe space and lovely people. It was the best experience in my life. the staff were amazing, they make sure we get to our appointment on time. honesty my best experience ever thank you."*

To hayley sue zoe lauren  
sarah  
Louise kay victoria  
Tracey  
Thankyou you all so much  
for all the help and support  
you have given me blake  
saphira peyton while we  
have been here  
We will all really miss u  
Love

p.s. Thank you for all of the lovely little bits we had over the weeks, from lollies to travel board games and soaps. We looked forward to having a browse each week.

Dear Sarah and Alison  
Thank you for helping us to learn about our feelings. Thank you for the fun activities we did. We especially enjoyed the ginger-bread decorating week and the Smarties you gave us.  
Thank you for letting us be ourselves.

Good luck with your move 😊

★ Thank you all for all the help and support you gave me, you let me feel I'm a human have ★ right, and learn a lot from all of you  
...it means a lot  
Zoe, Victoria, Sarah, Tracy  
alison and all the staff left.  
Wish you all the best  
I'll miss you all  
lots of love and blessings

Merry Christmas  
+  
happy New Year  
Love all the refuge  
family \*\*\*



## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

If you'd like to volunteer with our organisation please have a look at our Padlet:

<https://padlet.com/BSEWomensAid/Volunteers>

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A huge Thank You to all of our supporters, big and small, local and further afield, who have donated money, time and many lovely items!

Our Volunteers

Aquarius Singers

Bridge Church

Bury Lions

Bury Rotary

Gatehouse

Gee Gee's Ranch

Green Light Trust

HC3

Ickworth House

Kids Out

Lloyds Foundation

Love Grace [www.lovegrace.co.uk](http://www.lovegrace.co.uk)

Marks and Spencer

Mothers Union

Realise Futures

Rickshaw Riders

Round Table

Stuart and Christine Samuels (Father and Mrs Christmas!)

Tesco

The Buckingham Emergency Food Appeal (BEFA) [www.befafoodappeal.co.uk](http://www.befafoodappeal.co.uk)

Theatre Royal

Toolbox

Tostock Animal Park

Unite the Union

Vineyard Church

Waitrose

Women's Institute

Wooster's Bakery



## Bury St Edmunds Women's Aid Centre Ltd



We would also like to thank our donors who choose to remain anonymous. Without the continued support of our donors, we would not be able to offer the high level of services and support to the people that need them.

If you would like to donate in any way, please visit our website

[www.burystedmundswomensaid.org.uk](http://www.burystedmundswomensaid.org.uk) <https://www.justgiving.com/bse-womensaid/>

**or call us on 0330 551 9495**

Stay up to date with our news and events at:

[www.burystedmundswomensaid.org.uk](http://www.burystedmundswomensaid.org.uk)

Twitter



Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/BSEwomensaid>



## **SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS**

Interested in hearing more about our work? We are happy to provide a speaker for your organisation or group, please email at [admin@burystedmundswomensaid.org.uk](mailto:admin@burystedmundswomensaid.org.uk)

## **CURRENT SERVICES**

We provide many services which are accessed by women from the local community and from outside Suffolk:

23-bed Refuge

Male Victim Support

Telephone Advice Helpline

Resettlement Support

Outreach Service

Child Centred Groups

Freedom Programme

Counselling Service

VOICE

Survivors of Domestic Abuse (SODA)

Coffee Morning (Bury St Eds and Haverhill)

### **Advice Helpline:**

**0330 551 9495**

01284 753085

E-mail: [admin@burystedmundswomensaid.org.uk](mailto:admin@burystedmundswomensaid.org.uk)

Website: [www.burystedmundswomensaid.org.uk](http://www.burystedmundswomensaid.org.uk)

Post: PO Box 715, Bury St Edmunds, IP33 9HQ