

Women's Aid Orkney

Supporting women and children in Orkney

Annual Report

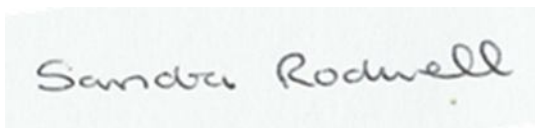


2011-2012

Chair's Comment

This Annual Report presents an account of the achievements of Women's Aid Orkney during our first full year of independence from Voluntary Action Orkney.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Sheila Garson, the previous Chairperson, for guiding Women's Aid Orkney through the initial transition period. Sheila stood down as Chairperson in December 2011. I would also like to thank the staff team and Board members for their continuing support and commitment to the work of the organisation. As evidenced in this report the service provided to women, children and young people who are living with, or have lived with, domestic abuse continues to develop in line with our aims and objectives.



Sandra Rodwell
Chairperson Women's Aid Orkney

Women's Aid Orkney's Aims & Objectives

Aims

- Provide safe, temporary, accommodation, information and support to women, children and young people who are experiencing, or have experienced domestic abuse
- Raise public awareness and challenge attitudes, through education and publicity, with a view to drastically reducing domestic abuse within the Orkney Islands

Objectives

- To empower women and their children to live their lives free from domestic abuse
- To inform the wider community of the issues surrounding domestic abuse
- To help develop and maintain a multi agency approach to supporting those involved in domestic abuse
- To the sustainability of the project and ensuring the service grows and develops in order to meet the needs of the women and children who access services as well as addressing the existing gaps within the current service provision

WAO is committed to promoting its strategic aims and objectives within the community, ensuring that every intervention is part of an effective community based response to the needs of women and children. WAO maintains it's commitment to working towards eradicating violence against women and children which ultimately can only be achieved by tackling the root causes of violence against women which is gender inequality. All links in the community are vital to achieving a strong, resilient and supportive community.

Women's Aid Orkney's seven key principles

Both the strategic and operational work of Women's Aid Orkney is underpinned by the seven Principles for a Fair Society. WAO understands that by using these guiding principles to assist with decision making, delivery and planning of services, the organisation is working towards building increased well-being and greater independence for individuals within the community.

1. **Family**—we give families the support they need to look after each other
2. **Citizenship**—we are all of equal value and all have unique and positive contributions to make
3. **Community**—we root support and services in local communities
4. **Control**—we have the help we need to be in control of our own life and support
5. **Capacity**—we are helped to be the best that we can be
6. **Connection**—we all get chances to make friends and build relationships
7. **Universal**—we all share the same basic rights and entitlements



Inspirational artwork commissioned from local artist Britt H Marcus on display in the communal stairwell at Phoenix House

Achievements and performance

The services WAO provide include:

- Refuge accommodation and support
- Drop in and telephone support
- Outreach for women, children and young people
- Follow-on support for women, children and young people
- Court Support Service

Women's Aid Orkney offers a reactionary and pro-active on-call service which operates 24 hours a day 365 days of the year. Women's Aid Orkney provides a place of safety for up to 4 women and their children at any one time in Phoenix House, with a total of 4 self contained flats.

The on-call telephone service is a distinct competency and, being the only service provider of refuge in Orkney, absolutely vital for women and children when they are at their most vulnerable and at risk of harm.

Towards the end of the 2011-2012 financial year, Women's Aid Orkney commissioned some original and inspiration artwork for display at Phoenix House by local artist Britt H Marcus.



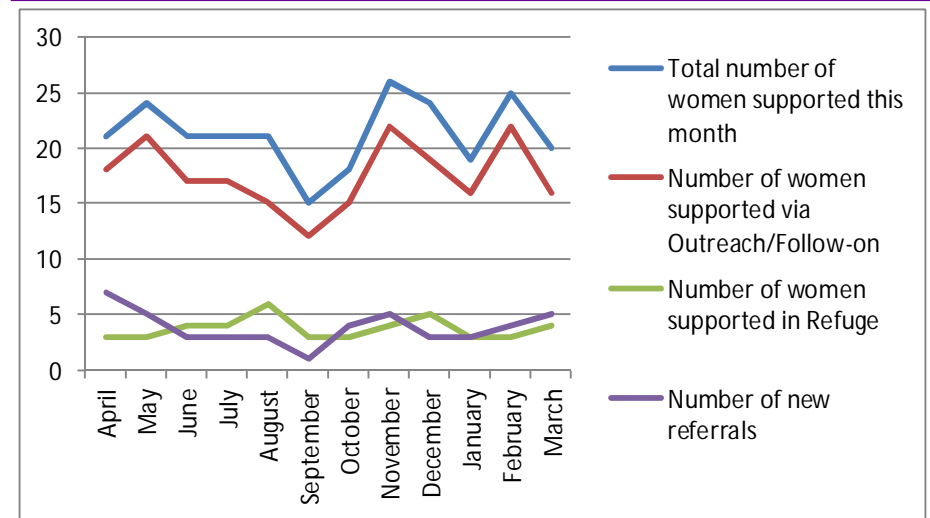
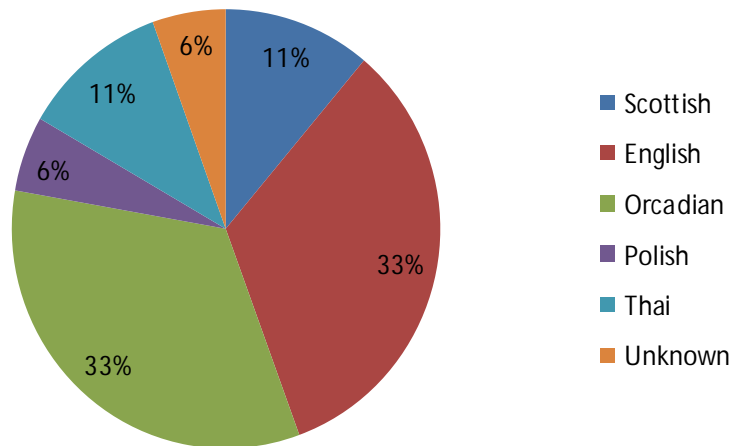
Residents' communal area at Phoenix House

Refuge and Outreach Services

Throughout 2011-2012 the flexible, responsive and professional services offered by Women's Aid Orkney have seen:

- 70 women supported through Outreach—a 25% increase on previous year
- 13 women supported through Refuge / Follow On—no change on previous year
- 12 women have been housed at Phoenix House
- Occupancy rates for Phoenix House overall for 2011-2012 was 81% a 1% decrease on previous year
- 29 children and young people were supported through the Outreach service

Nationality of women accessing service



"The entire experience was a godsend and we cannot be thankful enough for everything that has been done for us. Our young person's worker was professional and a tower of strength just when we really needed it."

"X you are so wonderful I wish we could just have you based in KGS, you are such a help, thank you."



Children's area at Phoenix House showing the inspirational artwork commissioned from local artist Britt Harcus



"Just wanted to say a huge thank you for all the help and support you have given myself and X throughout the most stressful time of our lives. Thank you for giving us the strength and opportunity to seek a new life for ourselves. Will never be able to thank you enough."



"I am really grateful to you, it means so much to me to be able to pick up the phone and speak to someone who never judges me and always listens."

"I was on my own worrying and I couldn't seem to think straight, I knew if I came to speak to you it would help because you always seem to make things right."



Pictures of residents' flats from within Phoenix House

Publicity and Fundraising

In 2010-2011 the board of Directors decided to form a Fundraising Sub Group to develop and implement a positive and pro-active approach to Fundraising which was thought to be especially important in the current financial climate. Monies raised from these activities have since been used to form the basis of a Hardship Fund which is used to support clients who find themselves in real hardship.

An Orkney version of "Strictly Come Dancing", was held in 2011 to tremendous success. £6,857.90 was raised and massive publicity was gained for Women's Aid Orkney in the local media.

Women's Aid Orkney also contributed to and assisted with the organisation of an event to mark International Women's Day, which took place on Saturday 2 April 2011 in Kirkwall Town Hall. There were a variety of stalls and talks all aimed at women's themes. This was in association with the charity Asha.

Along with 22 other organisations, a promotional and fundraising opportunity was taken by having a stall at the Charities Christmas Bazaar. £125.70 was raised to support WAO's work.

Volunteers took part in a bag-packing event at Tesco in March 2012 at which £1,032.54 was raised.

Children and Young People's (CYP) Services

During 2011-2012, there were 3 CYP Workers who provided support for 37 CYPs who were either resident in Phoenix House or who were being supported on a follow-on or outreach basis. A high proportion of the work which C&YP Workers do is family work which involves working with the children and their mums and siblings in order to improve relationships.

C&YP Workers focus on assisting the child or young person in achieving the following 7 key areas which are set out by the Scottish Government:

1. CYP's diverse needs are met better
2. CYP's social and leisure activity needs are met better
3. CYP's have more involvement in decisions about their lives
4. CYP's have an increased understanding of how to maintain and develop healthier relationships
5. CYP's have a better understanding of their feelings and how to deal with them
6. CYP's have increased understanding of domestic abuse and how it effects themselves and others
7. C&YP feel safer

These 7 key areas form part of the support plan devised by the CYP Workers; the children and young people themselves, plus any other relevant people in their lives, are also included in the formulation of their support plans.



Inspirational artwork commissioned from local artist Britt Harcus on display in the children's room

Respect Programme

Throughout the year, the Respect Preventative Education Programme was delivered to 298 pupils in primary, secondary and further education establishments across Orkney.

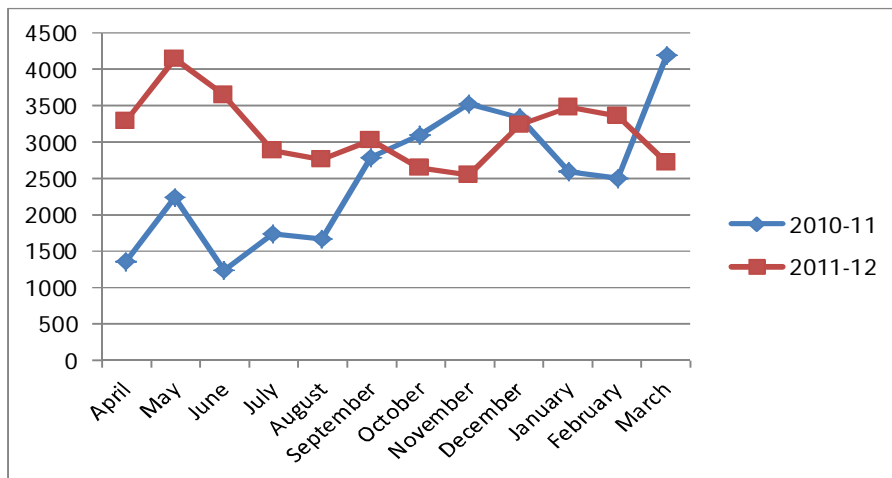
As a result of the service delivery which is undertaken by WAO, children and young people are able to achieve an increased understanding of how best to develop and maintain healthier relationships with their peer group, family, friends and individuals within the community. Children and young people are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions and how these impact on others around them as well as the environment. In the appropriate manner the ethos within the UN Convention on the Rights of a Child is strongly embraced and reinforced to children and young people within the service as are their responsibilities to others. The breadth of the materials and resources used, as well as workers' encouraging and responsive approach, allows this outcome to be achieved through their real belief in helping C&YP to build positive and healthy relationships both within their families and within their communities.

"I felt the course was worthwhile and made me realise how many people of my age and younger suffer from domestic abuse."

"It was eye-opening and informative. Personally I found it interesting when the CYP worker told her personal stories I was shocked. It was brave of her to tell us all. Thank You."

Web-site and IT

The Women's Aid Orkney website continues to be revised and updated to become more user-friendly, relevant and accessible. The total number of hits has increased from 30276 (2010-11) to 37747 (2011-12) – an increase of nearly 25%. At the beginning of the financial year, Women's Aid



Orkney completed the upgrade of their IT system to include a server and also purchased the domain name www.womensaidorkney.org.uk. The website at www.orkneycommunities.co.uk/womensaid continues to be used, with any user accessing www.womensaidorkney.org.uk being automatically redirected. As a result of this upgrade, all staff email addresses are now in the format @womensaidorkney.org.uk, adding to the corporate identity of Women's Aid Orkney. There is also a general email address (info@womensaidorkney.org.uk) which all WAO staff can access and which is the contact used on all publicity for all enquiries. Since this upgrade, the IT system is noticeably more reliable.

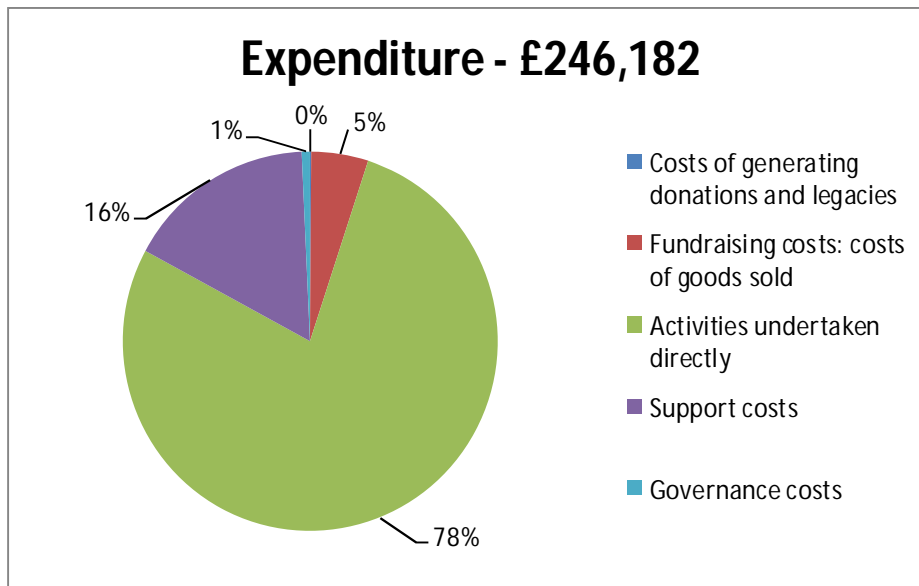
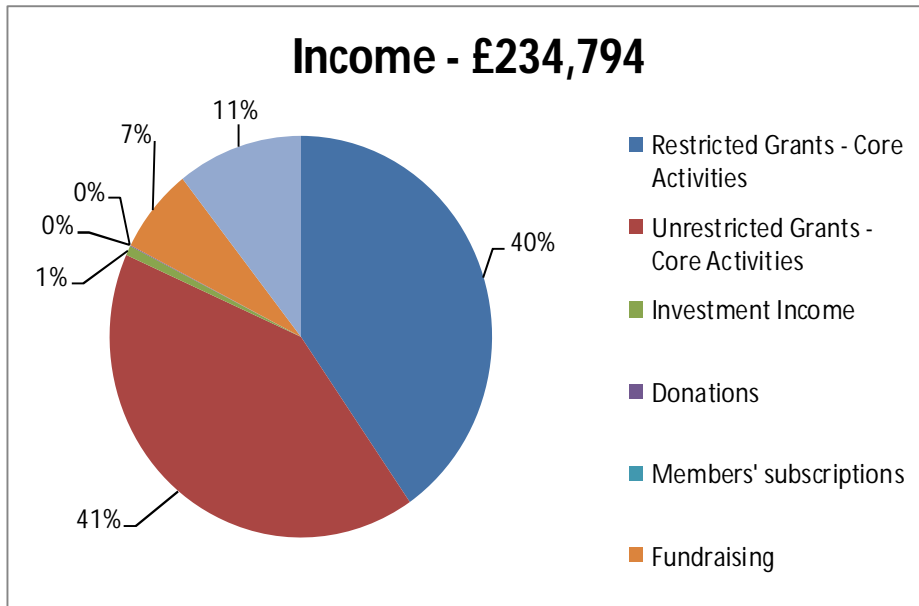
Finance

Incoming resources for the year totalled £234,794. Total resources expended amounted to £246,182. Therefore funds decreased by £11,388 over the course of the year. At the 31st of March 2012, the overall balance of funds was £131,267 of which £18,021 was held for restricted purposes.

The Directors have examined the requirement to maintain free reserves and concluded that the most appropriate level is between six and nine months operational expenditure. The Directors consider that reserves at this level will ensure that, in the event of a significant drop in funding, they will be able to continue the charity's current activities whilst consideration is given to ways in which additional funds may be raised.

* A full copy of Women's Aid Orkney's Directors' Report and unaudited accounts are available on request.

Finance



Volunteers

Women's Aid Orkney has six trained volunteers to support and compliment the work of the organisation, three of them are young volunteers. Linda Shearer is the Volunteer Co-ordinator.

The volunteers support the delivery of a Monthly Support & Friendship Group for service users as well as being able to offer evening, weekend and resettlement support as additional services to individual clients. Volunteers have also assisted with office and administrative support.

Volunteers have contributed to fundraising opportunities for Women's Aid Orkney by running a stall at the Charities Christmas Bazaar and by bag-packing at Tesco in March.

Young volunteers have been involved in assisting with CYPs group outings and activities.



Ensuite bathroom with disabled access at Phoenix House



Residents' communal area at Phoenix House

Directors

S Rodwell	(Chairperson, from January 2012)
K Scholes	(Vice-Chairperson, from January 2012)
S Garson	(Chairperson, to December 2011)
A Cromarty	
G Herd	
T Irvine	
L Shearer	
L Lennie	(appointed September 2011)
R Guthrie	(appointed September 2011)

Stakeholder Group

Sally Inkster	Orkney Housing Association Ltd
John Richards	Housing Department, Orkney Islands Council
Frances Troup	Head of Housing and Homelessness, Orkney Islands Council
Dawn Sherwood	IT & Support Services, Orkney Islands Council
Rosemary Colsell	Commissioning, Contracting & Procurement Manager, Orkney Islands Council

Staff

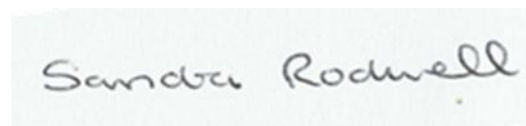
Leigh Dowie	Manager Women's Aid Orkney
Anna Rendall	Assistant Manager Women's Aid Orkney
Ann Clark	Children/Young Person's Support Worker
Lilian Wylie	Children/Young Person's Support Worker
Elaine Young	Children/Young Person's Support Worker
Corinne Seatter	Women's Support Worker
Helen Woodsford-Dean	Office Administrator

Plans for the Future

2012 has already presented Women's Aid Orkney with a number of challenges. However, challenges also create opportunity. In order to continue to develop a service which is responsive to the needs of women, children and young people who have experience of domestic abuse, the Board and staff team are committed to proactively seeking opportunities to:

- Identify and secure funding to ensure sustainability and continuity of the service.
- Develop and operate within good governance structures to ensure the delivery of a quality service in line with Scottish Women's Aid Quality Assurance Standards (2011) and other bodies such as the Care Inspectorate. This will be achieved in the first instance through a review of our policies and procedures.
- Review and develop the structure of the service in order to ensure that existing resources are used effectively.
- Establish closer links with other Women's Aid organisations in order to share best practice. We have already hosted a joint training session here in Orkney with the Caithness group. The training was delivered by Scottish Women's Aid.
- Support continuous professional development through the development of training strategy and the identification of training opportunities for Board members and the staff team.
- Continue to develop our working relationships with other organisations in both the public and third sector within Orkney in order to facilitate a co-ordinated approach to service delivery.
- Raise awareness and provide training opportunities for staff within the public and third sector in order to raise the standard of response of all services.

It looks as if 2012/13 is going to be a busy and interesting year with new challenges to embrace.



Sandra Rodwell
Chairperson Women's Aid Orkney



Women's Aid Orkney gratefully acknowledges financial and practical support from the following:

- ♦ **Orkney Domestic Abuse Forum**
- ♦ **Orkney Housing Association Ltd**
- ♦ **Orkney Islands Council**
- ♦ **Salvation Army**
- ♦ **Scottish Government**
- ♦ **Talisman Small Grant Scheme**
- ♦ **The Life Centre**
- ♦ **Voluntary Action Orkney**

**Women's Aid Orkney (WAO) is a charitable company limited by guarantee.
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