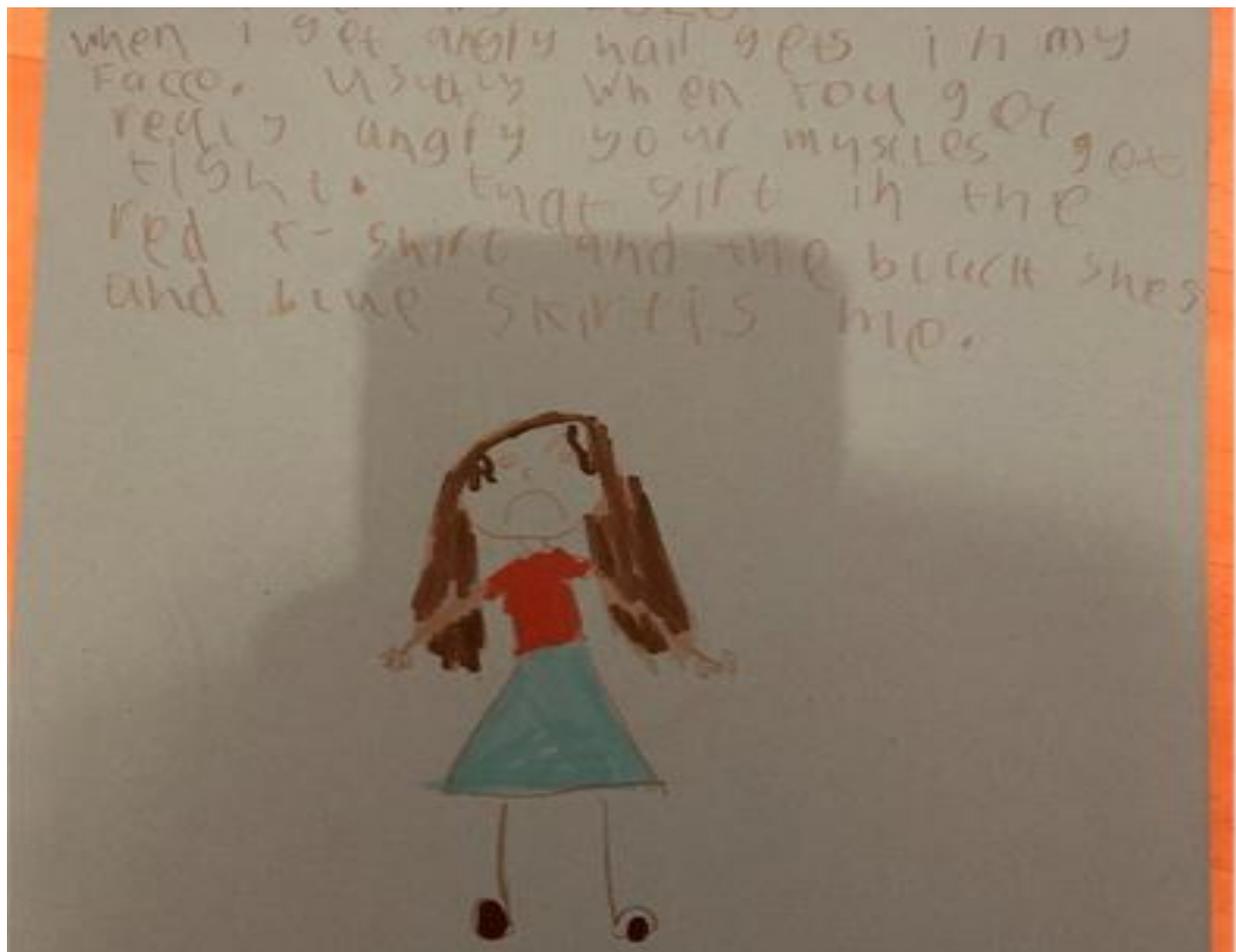


HEMAT GRYFFE WOMEN'S AID

ANNUAL REPORT 2020-2021



Flat 0/1, 24 Willowbank Street, Glasgow, G3 6LZ

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Providing refuge accommodation and outreach services to women, children, and young people primarily from the Asian Black & Minority Ethnic community experiencing domestic abuse, forced marriage and honour-based abuse.

Welcome

Service provision changed dramatically with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020. As we were unable to provide direct face to face support, all areas of service were restructured to allow support to continue to women and children living in the refuge, the women and children living in the wider community receiving outreach services and to allow us to receive referrals from women fleeing domestic abuse requiring accommodation and additional support.

Staff moved to using online platforms whilst working from home. Policies, procedures, and risk assessments were amended to allow work and support to continue in a safe manner and following public health guidelines. The organisation crisis telephone number reverted to a BT cloud voice app downloaded to staff work mobile phones.

It was another busy year. At the start of pandemic, we saw an increase in referrals for refuge accommodation. As the refuge was full and we were unable to provide accommodation and women were supported to access temporary accommodation through Glasgow homeless casework teams.

Important statistics

In total there were 230 new referrals for women seeking our help, support, and protection, 16 women and 16 children were living in the refuge, 60 women and 19 children received outreach support. There was a decrease in the number of women and girls reporting Forced Marriage and Honour Based Abuse which we attribute to the restrictions on movement and the inability of women to access help during periods of lockdown as a result of them being at home with the perpetrator.

A substantial part of our workload involves supporting women who have no recourse to public funds. During the year women supported 43 women with an insecure immigration status as follows:

Spouse Visa Holders	35 - 15 women were supported to access leave outside the rules and apply for leave to remain as a victim of domestic violence
Visitor visa	1
Student visa	1
Dependent of Student	1
Unknown	5

We also provided support to 14 women seeking Asylum and 4 women who were EU nationals.

Despite the challenges we were confronted with as a consequence of the pandemic we continued to provide an effective service to victim/survivors of abuse. This was exemplified by the dedication and expertise of the staff team who pulled together to quickly and effectively respond to the demands and changes to service provision.

We hope that you enjoy reading the annual report.

Refuge Service

The refuge was locked down following Government guidelines. This resulted in the loss of face-to-face contact between the women and the refuge staff. Housing allocation was restricted and there was a hold on resettling women who were looking to move on from refuge. There was an increase in the referrals for refuge accommodation and women were supported by us to obtain temporary accommodation whilst working in partnership with the homeless casework team in Glasgow. 20 women were provided with access to support and accommodation through the homeless casework team. Immigration rules were also relaxed during lockdown and as a result women who had an insecure immigration status who had no recourse to public funds were provided housing accommodation and welfare benefits. We were able to support women fleeing domestic abuse who had no recourse to public funds with crisis payments and supermarket vouchers.

Staff were in contact daily with the refuge resident. Staff attended at the refuge ensuring social distancing and observing protective measures put in place. Risk assessments were implemented to ensure the safety of staff in relation when attending the refuge premises. A one-way system was introduced in the refuge to facilitate social distancing and floor markings directing safe passage for the women and the children in the communal areas. Posters in different languages were displayed throughout the refuge containing public health messages for example hand washing, social distancing requirements, information in relation to FACTS. Staff supported women who were self-isolating with shopping etc to meet their day-to-day needs.

Refuge accommodation had to be reduced from nine flats to seven flats following risk assessment as two of the flats were shared. These flats reverted to single occupancy at the height of the pandemic.

We maintained strong links with Social Work Services whilst supporting women and children and to advocate on their behalf.

Follow on service

There is a dedicated follow-on worker who supports the women who are leaving the refuge to live in permanent accommodation. Eight women were supported via the follow-on service. The sudden lockdown due to the pandemic isolated women and children.

Staff were however in regular communication with women: telephoned them and utilised video calling to help women cope with isolation. Women were supported at the beginning of Covid-19 and throughout lockdown with their mental health by providing telephone support and keeping them up to date with information about the latest government guidelines. The Government guidelines were explained to them in a language of their choice and emails and texts were also sent on how to keep safe.

The Community Care Grant element of the Scottish Welfare Fund was applied for but due to the lockdown there was a delay. Emergency funding enabled us to provide the women with white goods. The women were very appreciative as these items helped them settle into their new accommodation.

During lockdown a full Risk Assessment was carried out in order for a member of staff and the women to go and view the tenancy. All Government guidelines were followed when viewing the property, signing the lease, and moving into the tenancy to ensure that the move was as smooth as possible. Face masks, hand sanitising and social distancing rules were followed. Telephone support has continuously been provided for all women as well as texts and WhatsApp messages.

The Women's Group

There has been a variety of workshops taking place online over Zoom for the women in the last financial year. On average between 8 and 10 women attend the group weekly. With Covid-19, lockdown restrictions in mind, women's mental and physical health were the top priority when deciding what workshops should take place. In order for the women to participate in the group they required computer/laptop and for a lot of women this was not affordable. With the assistance of emergency funding, it was decided all of women should be given Tablets to allow them to remain connected and to allow them to keep on participating in the Womens group and for them to keep on benefitting. These were ordered and delivered to their home address.

A 10-week Mindfulness workshop took place over Zoom. In these workshops' meditation breathing exercises, seated exercises and Chi Gong were practised. Hand and feet reflexology were also covered, and all women were provided with a chart for each hand and foot and how to massage and how they were all linked to different parts of the body. Women were also provided with Mindfulness colouring books which is a form of art therapy and can relax both the mind and body. Each week motivational stories were also shared and discussed.

For a few weeks' healthy nutrition, mindful eating and facial yoga were explored. Women participated in an 8-week Pilates class. Women were provided with Yoga mats and resistance bands for comfort and safety reasons. Women learnt different techniques including balance techniques.

Women thoroughly enjoyed the 8 weeks Pilates classes. They felt the classes not only helped them physically but mentally as well.

We also worked in partnership with a few organisations such as WSREC (West of Scotland Regional Equality Council) where zero waste cooking was covered.

Glasgow Clyde college where a student adviser gave information on how to complete application forms and what the criteria was to enrol onto different courses.

A representative from the Scottish Beauty Academy was invited to discuss beauty courses and how to apply for ITA funding. As all courses were related to beauty the women seemed really interested. A separate session was then held, and all women were helped to complete the application form and helped them to apply for ITA. A total of 5 women applied for different courses. Once they completed the short course, they received a certificate.

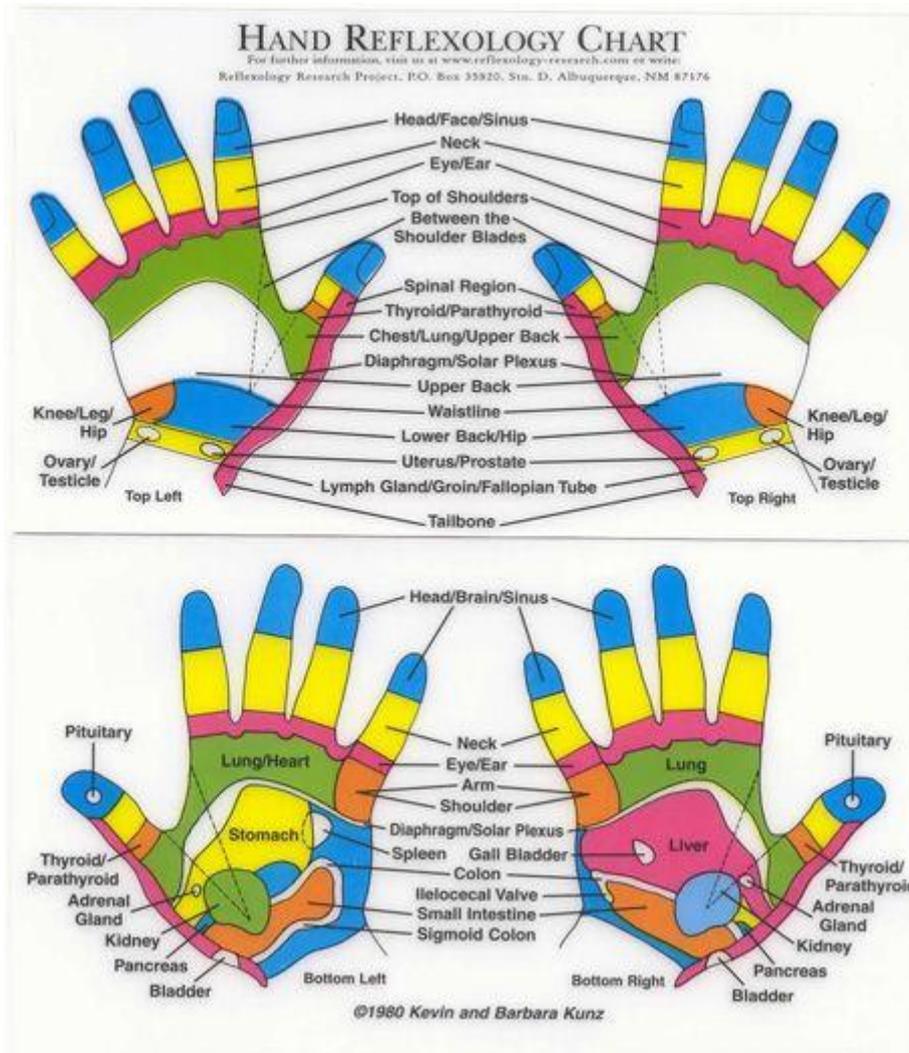
BrightHer candles worked with women over a 5-week period. A lot of topics and discussions took place such as goal setting and vision boards, entrepreneurship and failure, a talk given by a people development coach, public speaking and confidence building was also discussed and how to overcome any fears of speaking in public and what long term plans were of each women.

A couple of focus groups also took place. One of them was on the subject of Mental health and Lockdown where women shared their experiences of how difficult it has been and how they have felt during the past year. Another focus group was on Forced Marriage, considering what is meant by Forced marriage is, how a person feels when they are being forced, where a person can go for support and what the law says.

We also invited an NHS practitioner to discuss Breast Screening and how important it is to attend appointments and look after your health. Women found this extremely beneficial as it is something that was good knowledge to have for themselves and also for them to share with family and friends.

Women also participated in a Virtual Xmas party, Eid party and International Womens day. Positive and motivational stories were shared along with recipes.

Over the past year a variety of workshops have taken place which included physical, mental, educational and learning new skills.



Feedback from Service Users

"Today's Zoom class was soo interesting and exciting. We could not divert our attentions anywhere even for a minute. The atmosphere was so relaxing and comforting that we forgot all the worries of the world. Every single one was brought forward and given their chance to contribute and enhance their confidence whilst having fun. Looking forward to see more activities like these... it made my day, thank you!"

"Today's class was very helpful and interesting. Thank you very much"

"I would like to thank you for organising these workshops for us. I really appreciate for not only boosting our confidence but expanding our knowledge too. These classes have given me a better understanding, a sense of more confidence, self-love and positive perception irrespective of our circumstances. Besides demonstrating different future plans, the way all respectful guests shed light on other topics was amazing and easy to understand. It was a welcoming environment for everyone to put forward their views and opinions and I really enjoyed participating in each one of them. Learning in a fun way was great. Looking forward to more workshops like these."

"I love how we lift and empower each other"

"Every day we need to do some exercise for the body. I have benefitted a lot by exercising. I will miss the class".

Feedback from Partnership Organisations

"Thanks for coming along to our 🌿Nature Wellbeing Session 🌿 it was great to meet you all and myself and Eilidh really enjoyed ourselves too - so much that we lost track of time!

Thanks again for such a lovely morning - what a great group of women you have! Myself and Eilidh would love to do another session for you "

Wellbeing and Resilience Coach & Speaker

"Thank you both so much for the support. I very much enjoyed working with you both and hope to continue working with you this summer and beyond even outside of the BrightHer project sphere."

BrightHer Enactus

Crisis /Outreach support

There were 230 new referrals received during the year.

The women's support service has been extremely busy as a result of the pandemic. We used a combination of remote and direct approaches across all our project outcomes to provide support. The Scottish Government Guidance was followed when implementing effective Risk Assessment and Management to ensure the safety of women, children, young People, and staff.

Women received one to one culturally sensitive, bilingual support catered to their individual needs. This service is available to women experiencing domestic abuse who are living within difficult domestic situations and not accessing refuge accommodation but require support. Advocacy support was available on a number of issues such as housing, financial, child custody and criminal and civil justice, this list is not exhaustive.

Outreach and crisis support was provided to 60 women. This involves regular communication with the women, risk assessments were conducted, and support plans in place with the women. The support provided may involve one to one listening ear sessions, advocating on behalf of the women or referring them to alternative agencies for example for legal advice.

Women were provided with resources to access remote support. They were supported and directed on how to access different services online. This involved a substantial part of our work as many of the women were computer illiterate or had limited knowledge or awareness how to access remote and online access services. Women found it easier to access services over the phone and via zoom but did miss the face-to-face contact.

We continue to provide support to women on spousal visas to access Destitution Domestic Violence Concession (DDV). This enables women who are destitute to apply for access to public funds for a period of 3 months and also seek the services of a solicitor to assist them make an application for leave to remain as a victim of domestic abuse. Women unable to access the DDV concession are referred to a specialist immigration Solicitor for immigration advise.

43 women who had no recourse to public funds were referred to us for support. Fifteen women who were spouse visa holders who successfully applied for welfare benefits and housing having obtained leave outside the rules using the DDV concession.

We introduced weekly online surgeries with Fleming & Reid, Solicitors and women requiring advice concerning a matters involving civil and criminal law.

DEVELOPMENT WORK

The organisation work in partnership with a range of statutory organisations, providing expertise.

Participating in seminars and conducting training session to raise the awareness of the complex needs and the barriers women from the Asian and Minority Ethnic communities face.

We facilitated a session via zoom with Mr Brian Cooney, Solicitor, Fleming & Reid, Solicitors in Glasgow involving the three women's aid groups in the city. The purpose of the session was to discuss the virtual court process instigated by the Scottish Courts Administration as a result of the pandemic. Mr Cooney was the first Solicitor in Scotland to appear in a civil court matter utilising a digital platform.

Staff have been involved in research and providing evidence to effect change in policy at strategic levels.

We continued to provide feedback to raise awareness on the effects of the lockdown as a result of the pandemic on the lives of women fleeing domestic abuse. HGWA were part of the VAW recovery strategy and planning meetings providing feedback on homelessness and pathway to housing. Attended digital inclusion and voids meeting facilitated by VAW partnership discussed availability of supported accommodation.

We provided feedback and received regular updates from Scottish Women's Aid, our funders, the Commissioning team, and the Care inspectorate.

We continued to take to part of the Scottish Government forced marriage network and Police Scotland Domestic Abuse Forum. We participated in regular meetings of the Glasgow Standing Group on Violence to confront issues locally.

Staff facilitated training on EEU nationals and Brexit and the impact of same upon individuals living in the UK. We continue to be proactive in ensuring that our partnership with Police Scotland is maintained by engaging with the domestic abuse, forced marriage and honour-based violence

Children's Service

This year due to the impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic, the children's services have been delivered in a very different way. Staff learned new skills to enable them to provide access via remote support sessions, to ensure that the children and young people who access our services were able to communicate with their worker and be supported in a way that suited them taking account of Scottish Government guidelines in place to keep us all safe.

Refuge

Throughout the year we supported 16 children and young people who were living in refuge and 4 children and young people who moved on from refuge to their permanent home through our follow-on service. Remote support was provided daily, by the children's workers through the use of mobile phones, email, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, conference calls and Whats App.

Children and young people have been able to take part in 1-2-1 sessions with their worker as well as group activities designed to help them explore their feelings and emotions, healthy and unhealthy relationships, build self-esteem and confidence.

With the assistance of funding provided by the Scottish Government and Children in Need we were able to provide children and young people with mobile devices to ensure they could communicate remotely with their worker, engage in support and activities as well as be able to access work set by school.

In addition, Children in Need funding, provided a range of essential items and resources to children and young people including toiletries, clothing, arts and crafts, toys, books, and games.

Children and young people in refuge struggled during lockdown particularly when the schools and nurseries were closed. Having access to remote support and resources helped them occupy leisure time. This was invaluable in improving their mental health and helped develop positive minds and ease boredom.

Some of the activities children and young people took part in included:

- A 10-week mindfulness Zoom sessions accessed and enjoyed by the children and young people in refuge.
- 4-week Yoga class which the children enjoyed as it was their first experience. This helped strengthen their growing bodies in a fun way, and eases stress and anxiety which was beneficial during this pandemic.
- Staff and children celebrated virtual Halloween and Christmas parties this year. This was a new experience for us all. Children and young people were asked what outfits snacks and treats they would like for these parties, and we provided this for them

Feedback from CYP in refuge



Hi I would like to thank you for the yoga classes. My kid really enjoyed them; it was good to see him indulging in non-competitive activity. He appeared much calm and increased his concentration. Much appreciation to you once again and regards

I appreciate the much concern love and affection shown towards us. The help you provide whether it is a voucher or an iPad for my child goes a long way in helping is during this struggle we have to face.



We are actually very sad that we have to go during this pandemic as we haven't really been able to see them in their normal capacity. But from the bottom of my heart ^{may} god bless all of you who have helped us along the journey and given us the strength & courage to make the steps we needed to take.

Children's Follow-on Service

During lockdown 4 children were supported when moving with their mum move from the refuge to their permanent home.

Support was provided using virtual platforms, mobile phones, what's app and video call. Social and fun activities were also carried on using virtual platforms.

Children in Need funding allowed us to purchase items chosen by the children themselves, for their new bedroom. Before the pandemic workers would take the children and mum's shopping but given the Government restrictions in place to keep us safe, all items and equipment were purchased online.

One child had selected a football theme and was delighted when he received all the items he had asked for his bedroom, he sent us the picture below.



Children's Outreach service

During the pandemic we supported 19 children between March 2020- 2021. Children and young people were able to access 1-2-1 support and communicate with their worker using digital platforms such as Zoom and Microsoft teams.

Funding from Children in Need enabled us to provide digital devices to children and young people to make it possible for them to communicate with their worker and access school resources during lockdown.

Children and young people were also provided with items to meet their basic needs as well as toys and resources to replace those left behind when they had to leave their home due to domestic abuse.

Throughout the pandemic we have continued to work remotely through Zoom, Microsoft teams and conference calls with our partner agencies including legal teams, Social Work and Education, Police, Barnardo Safer Choices, Housing, and any other necessary agencies to ensure that children and young people are being best supported virtually to meet their individual needs.

We worked with the support of schools, colleges, and universities to provide remote support to our children and young people including Woodfarm High, Williamwood High, Notre Dame High, Lochend High, Tinto, Craigton and St Ninians Primary, Kelvinside College and Glasgow Caledonian University.

Children and young people accessing remote services are involved in their support sessions and decisions about them and engage in activities which help them develop safer coping strategies to deal with anxiety and stress. Support provided helped them to explore positive ways to cope with difficult situations including anxiety, pressures at home, negative relationships, problems at school, or at home.

Workers provided sessions to help children and young people understand what they can and cannot control in their daily lives and recognise that they are not responsible for the behaviours or actions of others. They were supported to recognise that although they may not be able to control how they feel about the actions of others, they are able to control or influence their own actions and behaviours.

Workers listened to and supported children and young people to access information to keep them safe, have a better understanding of their rights, what domestic abuse is, what is meant by forced marriage and honour - based abuse or control.

Feedback:

"Thank you so much for the laptop it's going to make my online school so much easier. I am very excited to start using it and it means that I can access my work and classes so much easier than before."

"I am really grateful that I have been given this laptop for my schoolwork thank you so much! could not afford one."

"This iPad is a great help, as it allows me to complete all my online learning on it. I also enjoy using it to talk to my peers at school who I am not able to see due to the pandemic. The iPad allows me to have everything I need for school learning in one place, which really simplifies competing schoolwork online for me."

Although it was essential to provide remote support during the pandemic, we also wanted to encourage children and young people to be active outdoors to boost their physical and mental health. We asked them to provide us with lists of physical equipment they would like, such as bikes, scooters, and other outdoor toys. Due to funding from Children in Need we were able to purchase these online and sent directly to children and young people. Being able to access these resources has improved their mood, well-being, and energy levels by helping to reduce stress, anxiety and depression.

Feedback:

*“Hey **HEMAT GRYFFE**, I just wanted to say thank you for your support in getting all those wonderful things. X specially wanted to ride a bike for a long time but my mum being a single parent could not afford one.”*

“Ever since he got a bike, he spends every day on it, which is also something he wouldn’t do. He would normally spend most of his time playing video games but now spends a lot more time outdoors. This is a life changing gift for him, and he and our family really appreciate the gift and support.”

Partnership Feedback

“I just wanted to say thank you for your support earlier in the week. You were an excellent help to me and my client. I thought that it was really great that you were able to assist my client with such little notice. You were extremely knowledgeable on the matter, and I felt assured after speaking with you. In addition, my client was very thankful for your support and asked me to pass on her thanks to you.”

“Hemat Gryffe’s relationship with Williamwood High school is a very important and beneficial one. When assisting with our young people the team are tactful, experienced, and reliable. They approach problems in a solution focused way and are dedicated to improving situations for the students they have worked with. I have seen a benefit to our young people, as well as to their families. They are skilled practitioners who have added a different dimension to the help we can offer at the school”

Finance

Glasgow City Council core grants were paid in full; housing benefit awarded an uplift from October 2020. The Childcare Strategy/Integrated grant awarded payment covering a period of six months and this funding stopped in September 2020 resulting in a loss of fourteen staff hours.

The Scottish Government Equally Safe Fund (SGESF) Childrens and Women's Funds allocated from July 2020 to September 2021 supported staff hours as well as children and young people accessing the refuge, follow on and outreach services. Monies from these grants were used in relation to the COVID 19 pandemic.

A grant from Children in Need allocated from 2019 to 2021 was used to support children and young people (CYP) accessing one to one support, purchase resources and equipment, to support the health and wellbeing of CYP by providing therapeutic support; crisis payments were made, items for bedroom refurbishment for CYP leaving refuge and moving to permanent accommodation. Activity and resource packs as well as digital equipment was provided to CYP to allow assist with online learning

Cash for kinds made an individual grant award for children accessing refuge, follow on and the outreach service.

The Scottish Sadaq Charitable Trust continues to make a monthly donation to the project used primarily to support women with no recourse to public funds. In addition, a one-off donation of £5000 was also made during the year.

Covid 19

The charity positively responded to the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic upon service provision. The service was restructured to allow support to be provided to women, children, and young people. A range of online platforms were utilised to provide direct support to service users, to allow staff and board members to meet, provide training, participate in conferences, attend meetings as well as organise weekly meetings for women to receive legal advice from the project Solicitor.

The charity successfully accessed additional emergency grant funding from Comic Relief, the Rosa Foundation, Children in Need, STV Children's Appeal, Cash for Kids as well as grant assistance from the Scottish Government administered by Scottish Women's Aid.

This additional funding allowed crisis payments to be made to women fleeing their perpetrator. A new website was developed to include a live chat facility to allow referrals to be made and basic information provide. There were regular reoccurring radio adverts on Radio Awaz to ensure the visibility of service provision for domestic abuse victims particularly during lockdown and during the stay-at-home rule. We provided white goods, electronic and digital equipment to women, children, and young people. PPE for staff and service user was purchased, gift cards were provided to support children and families for whom CV19 had heightened the impact of poverty, equipment and stationery was provided for staff working from.

We received a substantial number of toiletries after a Facebook appeal. We received toys and vouchers from the Sarwar Foundation and continue to receive regular financial support from the Scottish Sadaq Trust including received a one-off monetary donation.

Thanks

We thank our funders: The Scottish Government, Glasgow City Council, Cash for Kids, Children in Need, Charity Aid Foundation; Comic Relief; Imkaan; Rosa Fund; STV Children's Appeal for core funding and for additional emergency funding during the pandemic.

We acknowledge and offer our sincere thanks to the following.

Grateful thanks to the Scottish Sadaq Trust for continued support and monetary donations to the charity. We also congratulate the principal of the Trust who was awarded an MBE during the year. It is wonderful to be recognised for the hard work and support proved to the community and we are grateful for the support received to the organisation.

Scottish Women's Aid, Shakti Women's Aid, Glasgow East Women's Aid, Glasgow Women's Aid, and all Women's Aid groups across Scotland and beyond.

Glasgow West Housing Association, Charing Cross Housing Association, Sanctuary Housing as well as Glasgow City Council Homeless Services and case work teams whom we continue to enjoy positive working relations.

Education Services and schools in their cooperation in supporting children and young people and raising awareness of domestic abuse in BME communities including Woodfarm, Notre Dame and Shawlands.

We also thank Glasgow Council Social Work Services, Children and Families Commissioners for their continued support, the housing benefit team and homelessness case work teams.

We are grateful for the support that we receive from J Bruce Andrew, Chartered Accountants and Thomas Barrie & Co Chartered Accountants. Fleming and Reid, Solicitors Advocates, Glasgow, R H & Co, Solicitors, Glasgow, T C Young Glasgow. Special thanks are given to Alan Neary and his team at Kiswebs.

To all our partners and funders without whom the project would not be the success that it is today.

***Finally, to the women, children, and young people
accessing help, support, and protection from us,
your bravery continues to inspire us.***

HEMAT GRYFFE WOMENS AID

'A River of Courage'



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