thrive
WOMEN'S AID



2022-2023 **Impact Report**

Foreword

2022 has been both an exciting and challenging year for Thrive. We are very proud that our previous hard work has come to fruition with the launch of the RAPID project and a significant increase and diversification in our accommodation-based services. All of this has been in the midst of a housing and cost of living crisis. This has resulted in women experiencing multiple challenges and disadvantage, which have had a significant impact on their lives and the way in which we deliver support.

Post-pandemic partnerships have been an integral part of our work this year. We have demonstrated this through formal partnerships with South Wales Police and informed networks with our colleagues across the sector.

With the launch of Thrive Housing we have commenced the journey of purchasing 20 local properties to enable us to deliver services to meet individual needs and to provide survivors of domestic abuse with safe homes.

Looking to the future, with a new CEO at the helm of the organisation, we are committed to delivering the objectives of the 2021 – 2026 strategic plan whilst ensuring our values are at the forefront of our operations.

We will continue to deliver person-centred services and take a holistic approach to capturing the impact of our work. This will be through analysing its effectiveness and constantly making improvements where needed to meet the changing needs of families and communities.

This report outlines the considerable impact we have had and will highlight the progress we're making. We remain dedicated to taking meaningful action which enable individuals and families to thrive.



Over 800 lives impacted by Thrive



Louise White
Chair of Board



Liz Downie
CEO



Kate Jones
Deputy CEO



Overall Statstics

During 2022-23 we received **697 referrals** into our services – this was in line with the number we received the previous year and did not decrease at the end of the pandemic as had been predicted. Out of those referred:

- **30%** reported to us that they had experienced **non-fatal strangulation**
- **50%** had been victims of **stalking and harassment**
- **6%** have been victims of **coercive control**
- We saw a **10% rise** in disclosures of **sexual violence**
- **18%** had experienced **tech-abuse**

697 referrals were received overall in 2022/2023

Thrive RISE Awards

As well as supporting survivors through their experience with domestic abuse, the staff members at Thrive provide tremendous support to each other when working in what can often be distressing situations.

Every month during our team meeting, staff members at Thrive hold the **RISE Awards** to recognise colleagues who embody the values and behaviours of our organisation.

> Working closely with Seren has assisted me in gaining knowledge, understanding and patience. She is so dedicated to the women she supports and is an inspiration to others. She has worked hard to engage service users into the Housing First project and will do her utmost to ensure their safety. Seren uses her intuition when something doesn't feel right and no matter how chaotic the situation, there is no judgement from her, this ensures a trusting relationship is built.
>
> - Thrive Service User

Community and Outreach

In 2022/23 we supported **454 women** who had experienced domestic abuse or who were seeking support to transition away from abuse. This was an **8% increase** on the previous year.

Out of these women we have supported:

- **210 women** with housing, family court and criminal justice issues. This is a **5% increase** on the previous year and the also reflects the increase in complex situations that survivors are experiencing.

> The support I have received from the C&O team at Thrive has shown me how to believe in myself again and trust in my intuition. You guided me through - from breaking down and sinking into not wanting to exist anymore - to rebuilding myself, as a mother and a better version of myself. I've grown wiser and stronger by enabling myself to reach out and being OK with not being OK. I always knew you had my back, and for that I will be forever thankful.
>
> - Thrive Service User

- **356 women** received support with **emotional health and well-being** including accessing support in relation to children and parenting, drugs and alcohol, mental and physical health, grant funding, sexual health, community relationships, accessing education, work and training, counselling and signposting to other agencies.

Case Study - Thrive Crisis Service

A survivor contacted us with concerns that she was experiencing stalking and harassment from her ex-partner. She was extremely frightened and did not know what to do or indeed if there was anything that could be done. Her ex-partner was constantly emailing, texting and calling her and was turning up at her home un-invited and leaving her gifts. Her case was assessed as high risk and she was referred to the Crisis support officer.

During support, her ex-partner's behaviours escalated and he was contacting her from over 50 different mobile phone numbers obtained via the internet, sent her over 1,500 emails and went to the extreme of impersonating professionals in order to have phone contact with her which was extremely concerning.

The Crisis officer worked closely with South Wales Police and MARAC as well as supporting her to access legal representation. As a result, her ex-partner was arrested and on release received strict bail conditions whilst the case was presented to the CPS for a charging decision. Following this, via the Public Protection Unit, the service user has obtained a Stalking Protection Order which is one of the first in South Wales to be issued.

Counselling

This year through additional funding we've been able to maximise our therapeutic counselling at a time where women need it the most.

Out of the **44 women** that received counselling throughout 2022/2023:

- **100%** report that attending therapeutic sessions **helped them to recognise abusive behaviour**
- **85%** report **increased confidence** and self-esteem
- **95%** feel better **informed**, and **empowered** to act to address issues in the future



100% of women found that the counsellor was approachable and took the time to listen

> "Counselling's been amazing, it took me a few sessions to actually open up about my feelings but that was due to my own fears, it has been a massive help to me."
>
> - Counselling Client

Case Study: Counselling

Client A made the decision to access counselling having previously received support from within our internal projects throughout the process of ending her relationship with an abusive partner. She reported having felt trapped in the relationship and had not expected to continue to feel trapped after it had ended. The client said that this had left her feeling angry, confused and frustrated, left with raising her young family alone, feeling that she lost herself. The main focus of the work we undertook together was to address feelings of anger toward her ex-partner and that she had held toward herself. The client said that she had felt frightened of how powerful it felt that it scared her and so had been trying to supress them out of shame for feeling them.

We explored reframing anger as our 'fight response' that we can be taught from a young age that it would be wrong to express. Over the course of our sessions, the client said that in reframing in this way it became less frightening and less shameful to feel.

Instead, the client focused upon using the energy it generated for strength, courage and for self-compassion.

The client reports that in having a safe therapeutic space she had begun to feel able to trust that she could freely express her emotions thoughts, and feelings without judgement. The client decided to write a letter to her ex-partner with no holds barred, for her eyes only, which the client said she found helpful in releasing her feelings in a safe way.

The client said that a feeling of sadness had emerged and that she gave herself permission to begin to grieve the loss of her hopes and plans for their future together. The client was open and willing to gently challenge her belief that she had 'allowed' herself to be controlled, and her perception that this was what her life would always be like. Through the counselling she saw new possibilities were beginning to emerge. and towards the end of her sessions, the client said that she had noticed she had more energy and the courage to join a group for mums that she said helps her to begin to feel a part of a normal life again.

Equality Diversity enGagement and Education (EDGE)

EDGE supports women who have experienced domestic abuse and are in marginalised groups such as women who are disabled, from ethnic minorities, are older women or who are part of the Gypsy, Roma or Irish Traveller community.

The EDGE project also delivers training and awareness raising amongst professionals, organisations and communities. This training helps to raise awareness of the barriers that victims/survivors of domestic abuse and minority groups experience when accessing services and support them to make active changes to address these.

25 Women benefitted from EDGE this year

- **72%** of the women referred to EDGE had a **disability**
- **8%** of the women benefitting from the EDGE project were **older**
- **16%** of the women using the EDGE services were from ethnic minorities

> I thought domestic abuse means that you get physically abused. Until I walked into the doors of Thrive and understood the real meaning of domestic abuse and that was when I realised that I was actually a victim. I was abused mentally, emotionally and physically, I lost myself along the way I didn't know who I was. Without the support of Thrive especially my support worker, Hollie, I wouldn't have recognised all the signs of control and all the other things in the abuse. I wouldn't be in a better place mentally right now if it wasn't for Hollie!
>
> - EDGE Service User

> To plant the herbs, it gave me something to look forward to. After a week of growing it gave me hope for the future and when I saw the results, I was happy, surprised and grateful to see how things can grow, just like me!
>
> LIFE Service User

LIFE (Liberty, Independence, Freedom, Empowerment)

The LIFE Project is a self-help programme that supports individuals who are impacted by domestic abuse.

The project aims to provide support during critical transition periods and to improve mental health, self-confidence, resilience, support networks, independence and the ability to cope and move on.

This year our activities included: Recovery Toolkit, Own My Life programme, walk and talk, coffee mornings, kitchen garden, arts and crafts, and special events

48 referrals into the LIFE project



Residential Services

From 2022-2023, we've provided direct support and housing to women fleeing abusive relationships within our 6-bed refuge and 5-bed second stage move on accommodation. This year, we received **52 Referrals** into **Residential Services**

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

- In **refuge**, we have supported **25 women**
- In **move-on**, we have supported **7 women**
- **10 children** were supported across our residential services

34 women supported within Residential Services



> I would not have been able to go this far if you didn't support me all throughout. Thank you so much from the bottom of my heart it was a pleasure being with all of you. They have helped my son and have done amazing support for us.
>
> - Refuge Resident

> Thank you for all your hard work and for taking us all in and helping and supporting us throughout. Literally cannot fault the staff at all, they are all hard working, supportive, respectful, caring. Thank you all so much :)
>
> - Refuge Resident

52 out of hours calls received from 2022/2023



Refuge Story: told by support worker, Sarah

At refuge, we have supported a women who had originally fled from Sudan to Wales. She had no money, no bank account and no access to health care or support. The survivor was a victim of Female Genital Mutilation and Domestic Abuse. Despite language barriers we all worked hard to ensure that we could support her to overcome the difficulties with her emotional and physical health issues that she'd experienced in her life.

In time, the survivor had learnt to communicate with staff and residents and we'd giggle together about English slang words that she would tell us about, such as Oh my god! The survivor had a new found confidence, from coming into refuge completely isolated to attending local library groups and taking college courses. She made new friends with local women with similar experiences and loved nothing more than to have a chat with staff at the end of the day.

She is now looking forward to the future, she says that we have helped and taught her so much, but in reality, we have learnt far more about life than she could realise.



Thrive Housing

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

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

We have completed work on **5 properties** so far and 4 of them are tenanted. We have an additional 4 properties in conveyancing so that leaves us with 11 properties left to buy as we committed to purchasing **20 properties by March 2024.**

> “By providing me with safe and supported accommodation, Thrive have provided me with the 1st step towards getting my children back
>
> - Thrive Housing Tenant ”

Volunteering

This year we had 12 volunteers who collectively dedicated **251 hours** to volunteering with Thrive Women’s Aid.

> “It was an absolute pleasure to have taken part in volunteering with Thrive over the past few months and I have absolutely loved every minute. Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to get involved.
>
> -Thrive Volunteer ”

We held **9 “Ask Me” training Sessions**, supporting people in the Neath/Port Talbot community to give a better response to survivors as well as be proactive in challenging unhelpful myths, attitudes and stereotypes that enable and normalise abuse.

Our volunteers dedicated 251 hours to Thrive this year



RAPID (Rapid Domestic Abuse Intervention Project)

This year, we launched our RAPID project, which is a 5-year partnership between Thrive Women's Aid and South Wales Police, aiming to increase education and awareness of domestic abuse, coercive control, stalking and harassment for Police Officers as well as enhancing safety for victims.

100 police personnel trained

The RAPID project aims to improve victim experience following an incident of domestic abuse, coercive control, stalking and harassment. This results in increased confidence to report and ensures that the voice of survivors being heard and listened to. This enables approaches to tackling domestic abuse, coercive control, stalking and harassment to be enhanced and transformed.

We would like to sincerely thank **The National Lottery Community Fund** for investing in this vital work.

> "Rosie from Women's Aid has been an absolute angel and without her support the last few days would have had a very different outcome"
>
> RAPID Service User

Since launching the RAPID project, we have:

- Had **100% of women reporting positive experiences with RAPID**.
- Made **34 referrals** to specialist services.
- Delivered **7 specialist training sessions** to Police Officers and staff to increase the knowledge of VAWDASV and local support services.
- **100% of survivors** said they would seek support from SWP again.

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Children and Young People Support Services

Our Children and Young People Service supports children aged 0-18. This year we had **159 referrals** and supported these children and young people through:

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

> "I am proud of myself because I've come a long way and overcome difficult challenges."
> - CYP Service User

159 Children & Young People referred for support

> "At the start it was difficult but now it's much easier"
> - CPY Service User

Families First

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

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

> "Thrive has given me the knowledge into safeguarding myself and my children which wasn't clear before. Without the support, I wouldn't feel so confident in making future decisions regarding my children and safe contact."

This year we had **45 referrals** into our Families First services.

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



Case Study - CLEAR Integrated Support

John & I met at school when we were both 15 in 1985. We moved in together after 6 brilliant years. It was then that I became victim to my first domestic attack. These have continued periodically throughout our relationship both mental and physical. Sparked by early use of drugs and years of alcohol consumption, the attacks were random yet severe and John became more narcissistic over time. This had a devastating effect on my mental health.

In May 2022 whilst on holiday I was physically attacked by John and subsequently decided to share my secret and speak to someone. That came in the form of Thrive!! Upon returning home we decided to abstain from alcohol as this was found to be the root cause in our situation.

During my first meeting with my support worker Leanne, it became apparent that I needed protection away from John and measures were put in place swiftly for my safety. John was placed on the Marac register and I left the family home. Leanne acted as my voice during meetings and was in contact with me very regularly checking on my well-being and offering any updates or advice if I asked for it. She was always just a call away. A place was offered to John on the Drive programme (which he accepted) and if I'm honest it was amazing. Leanne collaborated with Drive and together ensured that both programs worked. John responded so well to the programme that he was removed from the Marac register and I returned to the family home. We have worked with and been monitored by both professional parties throughout to ensure that everything is safe and working well.

Throughout this, Leanne has been my constant support. Without Thrive I would have had no one and nowhere to turn when I needed it most. I cannot thank the teams enough. I understand that my outcome is different to most, however the support I needed was just the same. I think this service has a vital role to play. Cannot think where I would be without it

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

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

SWAN Project (Support, Wellbeing, Advocacy & eNablement)

The SWAN project works with women who are exploited by the sex industry. We give emotional and practical support to help women overcome the barriers and prejudice they face on a daily basis

We supported **20 women** who were involved in:

- Street work
- Stripping
- Lap dancing
- Performance in pornography
- Phone or internet sex (cam-work, Only Fans)
- Parlour work
- Any other exchange of sexual services for financial or material gain

Housing First

We launched the Housing First project in March 2022 following funding from Nationwide for a 2-year period. We built partnerships with local Registered Social Landlords, who would provide the properties and our Housing First Officer would deliver the intensive support required. Since starting the project:

- We had **2 social landlords** on board with the project which has now **increased to 3**, each providing a total of **9 tenancies** to the project.

- We opened up referrals initially with **5 spaces**, within 2 weeks we had over **20 referrals.**

- Our Housing First project is the **first in Wales** specifically for female survivors of VAWDASV.



Thrive Group Wales:

Thrive Group Wales is a social enterprise, founded in 2017, with the key purpose of developing a sustainable income stream to support the work of Thrive Women's Aid, by creating employment opportunities, developing the skills of disadvantaged people and building the capacity of local communities.

> We use Thrive Group Wales to do weekly cleans at some of our offices, and short notice void cleans in some of our accommodation units. Our experience has been positive, the staff are friendly, efficient and always happy to help.
>
> - Thrive Cleaning Client

This year we made a number of **improvements** to the Playhem building including:

- **Replacing the roof**
- Fitting a **boomerang digital screen** which displayed our upcoming events, offers on meals and party deals to all of our valuable customers

> Kier chose Thrive as it guarantees that we are supporting the local employment market, offering support to local, real people, who over the years have become part of the Kier family. Great people, great work ethic, who are now friends thriving in their roles.
>
> - Kier, Thrive Cleaning Client

This year:

- Thrive Catering branched out with an **enhanced menu**
- We have broadened our work with **36 commercial sites and 5 domestics.**
- The team has expanded from **24 to 33 cleaning operators.**
- Gained **new clients** with Morganstone, Helix 21, Walters Group, Plaza and YMCA
- Expanded geographically to **Rhonda Cynon Taf and Pembrokeshire**



We have grown our team to 33 cleaning operatives

thrive CATERING

Playhem play centre

thrive CLEANING

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