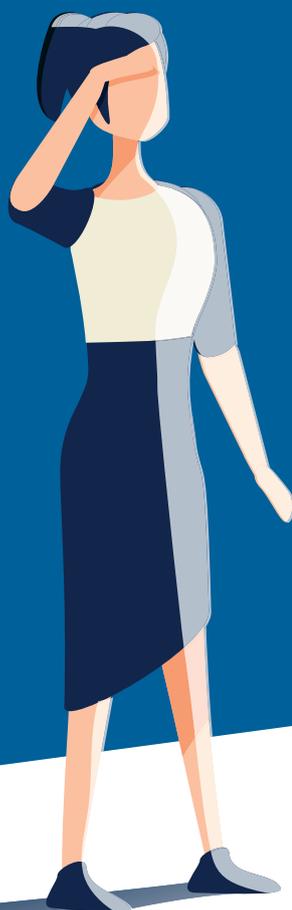


**Border Women's Aid**

# **Annual Report 2020-2021**



**BWA**



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**Prepared by Trustees & Staff of BWA**

## ABOUT BWA

### Mission

Women supporting women to live empowered lives free from domestic abuse in all its forms.

### Vision

A community where all women and children can be safe and strong.

### Values

Equality...

Respect...

Commitment...

Trust

#ChooseToChallenge



## KEY SERVICE STATISTICS

### 20/21 Summary

**5 Women**

In Refuge

**63 Women**

Given Advice & Information

**76 Women**

Used The Outreach Service

**525 Days**

Women Spent In Refuge

**6,428 Days**

Women spent in Outreach Service



## 20/21 ACTIVITIES

### Adapting to support women

The global pandemic, with all the constraints and difficulties it brought for women experiencing domestic abuse, was a catalyst for change at Border Women's Aid.

As the world locked-down, our service broadened and we were able to respond to an increasing number of women in ways they had told us they wanted. Our outreach service launched and instantly provided a way for more women to contact us for advice and help with understanding and leaving abusive relationships.

We divided our 4-bedroom shared accommodation into 2 self-contained units, so households were separated and Covid protocols rigorously followed. Whilst this reduced capacity in refuge, we were right-sized for demand.

Our staff worked tirelessly, supporting women over the phone and face to face. Basing themselves largely at home they not only launched the new outreach service, providing support to 76 women, but also created innovative means of support, such as facilitating online groups in mindfulness, wellbeing, and art therapy. They continued to engage in professional development training.



An ad on Radio Borders ran for 3 weeks in June, to ensure that women knew we were still 'here to help them out' despite the lockdown. We engaged in various social media campaigns, particularly during the United Nations' 16 days of activism in November, to communicate the dynamics of domestic abuse, raise awareness of intersectional abuse, and highlight the possibilities of positive outcomes for women.

By running a live online presentation at the virtual Freshers Fayre at Borders College we raised awareness of healthy relationships amongst young people.

Existing relationships in the Violence Against Women Partnership were strengthened – for example, by working on a joint initiative with Children 1st which involved writing to schools to raise awareness of the support that could be offered to children living with domestic abuse during lockdown.

The community response has been amazing this year, with so many people having got in touch with donations and offers of help. We appreciate all the efforts of everyone who gifted their time and money to BWA, including the volunteers who befriended women and upcycled worn furniture at the refuge to extend its lease of life, the children who raised money doing sponsored walks, and the community groups who donated proceeds from a cookery book.

Most importantly, feedback from the women we support has been highly positive. Quite clearly, we are helping women hope and plan for a better future. Some 83% of women considered their future positively, with one woman commenting:

**“I feel more in control and hopeful for the future because of BWA support.”**

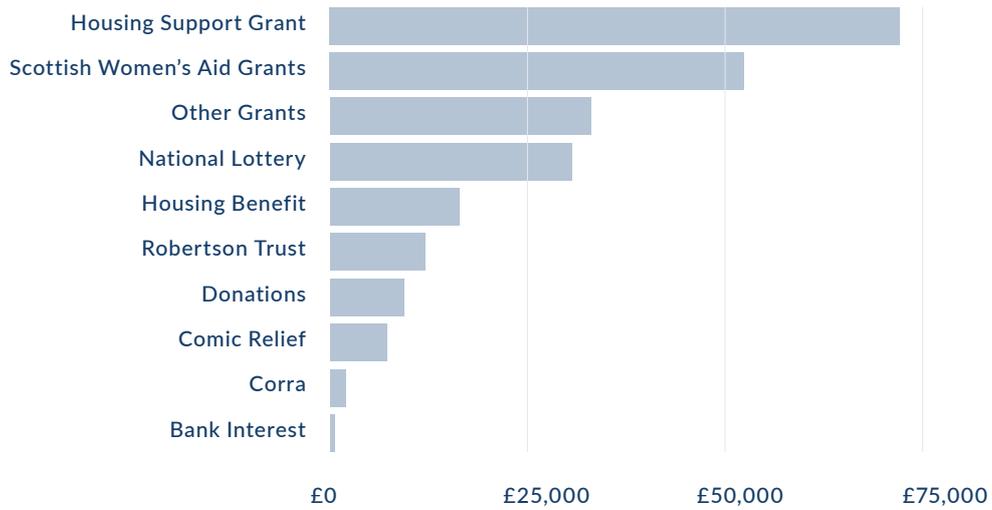
Following our help, some 59% of women reported an improvement in their wellbeing.

Our service has changed, both in response to Covid and also despite it. We are fortunate to have funders who understand the challenges presented in this unique time, and who have supported us to focus our resources where they're needed most, as well as enabling us to build resilience in the service.

With 92 women self-referring to us, there is more demand than ever for the services Border Women's Aid offers. We are proud of the work we achieved this year, and will continue to grow and adapt in 2021 / 2022 to ensure our service is as resilient as possible, and that we can carry on delivering the excellent person-centred care we are fast becoming known for.

## INCOME & EXPENDITURE

### Total income : £231,909



### Total expenditure : £148,443



## OUTCOMES & FEEDBACK

**We helped 89% of women using the service to understand the dynamics of domestic abuse.**

“I had time to process what was happening in my relationship, somewhere to retreat to knowing I can walk away if he does not change.”

**83% of women who received our support spoke about their dreams and aspirations.**

“I feel a huge weight has been lifted off my shoulders.”

**Women tell us they are feeling more like their 'old self' and dealing with things like they did before meeting their abusive partner.**

“I am getting back to the girl I once was.”

**Women have increased confidence in calling the police, leading to them feeling less fearful, stressed and anxious.**

“I still struggle with anger and denial, but I'm learning to be independent and trust myself more. I'm slowly rebuilding the confidence that was questioned and destroyed, and becoming who I am and was meant to be.”

## Our thanks to:

Barrie Knitwear Hawick  
Border Sovereign Chapter No 24  
Carrie Duthie  
Chris Sharrard  
Eildon Housing  
Ella Ross  
Gill Gibbens Yoga  
Gillian Anderson  
Jacqueline Forrest  
Jean Wood  
Longformacus Wild Swimmers  
Margaret Fenner  
Outside the Box  
Peter Davey  
Real Wood Studios Ancrum  
Saints & Sinners  
Sandra Delap  
Sophie Lawson  
Tweed Valley Cooks  
Unite the Union

and

Everyone who donated anonymously to BWA

