



The Haven Wolverhampton Impact Report 2023/2024

Supporting women and children
who are affected by domestic
abuse and homelessness



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Vision & Mission



The Haven's Vision

We envision a world that is free from oppression, homelessness, violence and abuse; a world that promotes and upholds dignity and human rights for all women and children.



The Haven's Mission

We support women and children who are vulnerable to domestic violence, abuse, and homelessness by providing safe, emergency accommodation and community-based practical and emotional support services.

Welcome

As we reflect on our 50th year, I am filled with gratitude and admiration for the journey The Haven Wolverhampton has embarked upon since its founding in 1973. Our Jubilee Year offered an opportunity to celebrate our legacy while acknowledging the persistent challenges we face. The dedication of our staff, volunteers, trustees, and supporters has been instrumental in transforming countless lives, and I am humbled by their continued commitment to our mission.

This year's report highlights our accomplishments and the resilience of those we support, reflecting on the progress we have made and the work that still lies ahead. Our services remain crucial for many in our community, but the increasing complexity of needs, and limited resources within the sector pose significant challenges especially at a time when societal and economic pressures have intensified.

Despite these challenges, we remain committed to empowering survivors beyond providing secure housing and supporting them to regain their autonomy.

We have continued to develop our therapeutic support as well as embrace opportunities for survivor-centred initiatives that address the diverse needs of those we serve. By offering a holistic approach that combines emotional healing, practical resources, and community building, we are strengthening our capacity to create lasting change and improve the lives of survivors.

As we look forward, we remain steadfast and focused on creating a world free from violence and fear. We owe tremendous gratitude to our supporters and partners, whose dedication and generosity make our work possible. Together, we will continue to build on this legacy, ensuring that every woman and child can live free from abuse and thrive in a supportive community.

Thank you for standing with us on this journey. Your support is invaluable, and with it, we can continue to make a profound difference in the lives of those we serve.



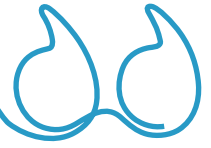
Lynne Moran
Chair of the
Board of Trustees



What Women Are Saying

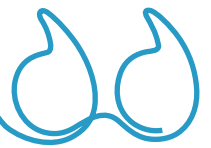
“The Haven has been our saving grace. My daughter and I arrived with nothing but the clothes we were wearing. The grant we received changed our lives, allowing us to buy a fridge and food for our new home. As a struggling single mom, this support has meant the world to us, giving us a fresh start and a chance to rebuild our lives.”

Martha*



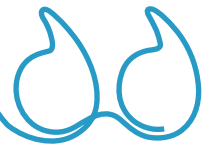
“The compassionate support and guidance I received through counselling has helped me heal from the trauma of domestic abuse and I am regaining my strength. I am forever grateful for The Haven’s dedication to helping survivors like me rebuild our lives.”

Nisha*



“I really enjoyed going out to the Wildside Activity Centre with the other ladies and children. It was so nice being out in the fresh air. The event was well run with something to do for all ages.”

Jane*



“I was worried coming to The Haven knowing that I would not be able to celebrate Eid with my family. But I have found a new family here and I am so happy that I made the decision to leave. The support has been out of this world! Eid Mubarak to everyone.”

Geela*



Our Jubilee Year

50 years of supporting women and children affected by domestic abuse and homelessness

Since Colin Brown and Honor Pringle cofounded The Haven Wolverhampton in 1973, we have grown from a single safe house to an ever-evolving lifeline, offering practical and emotional support and resources to those escaping domestic abuse and homelessness. Over the past five decades, our dedication has resulted in numerous pioneering initiatives, such as the establishment of our 24-hour helpline in the 1980s and the launch of specialised support services for children in the 1990s.

Reflecting on our history, this year we launched a stories campaign as well as our history timeline honouring the lives transformed through our services and celebrating key moments like the national 'Women and Violence Conference' in 1991, which united over 30 agencies in the fight against domestic abuse. As we reflect on our history, this kind of partnership working has been crucial to our organisation's legacy and success.

Our collaborative approach has not only transformed the lives of countless survivors but also strengthened the community's response to domestic abuse.

While we recognise the unfortunate reality that our services have been necessary for the past 50 years, we must honour the impact we have had on countless lives.

This year we hosted a series of events that engaged our supporters and brought joy to our community. The Welsh Three Peaks Challenge saw participants cover 17 miles and a total ascent of 2,334 meters in 24 hours, climbing Pen Y Fan, Cadair Idris, and Snowdon. Jump 50 featured 50 adrenaline enthusiasts skydiving from 14,000 feet. The celebrations culminated in our 50th Anniversary Ball at the prestigious Grand Station, with Porsche Wolverhampton adding a touch of glamour to the event.

As we look back on our journey, we pay tribute to the exceptional individuals who have shaped it. Over the last 50 years, our devoted staff, volunteers, and supporters have worked relentlessly to create a secure refuge for those in need. Their dedication and hard work have been pivotal to our accomplishments, and we cannot thank them enough for their invaluable contributions. Today, our current staff continue to honour the rich legacy of our founders, working tirelessly to uphold our mission to create a society where oppression, homelessness, violence, and abuse no longer exist.

As we look toward the future, we are inspired by the incredible stories that testify to our impact. Within this report, you will read heartfelt accounts from women and children who have courageously broken free from the cycle of abuse to reclaim their lives. These stories embody the essence of our mission and serve as a powerful reminder that, together, we can continue to create a world where every individual is safe, supported, and empowered to thrive, and where every woman and child's human rights are cherished and protected.



1975 - The Friends of The Haven donated a moped for The Haven's first full-time worker, Ailbhe Davine, to travel between refugees.*



1991 - Involved in the first national Women and Violence Conference, 'Perspectives for Change.' Pictured: Diana Lamplugh, Councillor Norman Davies, Professor Norman Tuff, and Dr. Betsy Stanko



1976 - Students from Hatfield, Birmingham, and Swansea Universities joined placements at The Haven in 1976, as we proudly opened two new refugees.*



2009 - The Haven received funding to create its first IT suite. The referral line was also extended and the helpline was launched.



2010 - Our inaugural 'Walk a Mile in Her Shoes' campaign invited men to slip into heels and walk a mile to raise awareness of domestic abuse.



2017 - The Haven Wolverhampton wins the Princess Royal Training Award. The award recognises businesses that prioritise employee development.



2020 - Won the Digital Agenda Impact Award for our digital tool You Matter in the Social Transformation - Tech for Good category.*



2022 - The Haven Wolverhampton was chosen from more than 350 charities across the UK as one of the 10 winners of the 2022 GSK IMPACT Awards.

*Images courtesy of the Express & Star Photo Archive (photo-archive.expressandstar.co.uk)

Our support services

Discover how our tailored support services have empowered women and children to rebuild their lives after domestic abuse.

From safe accommodations to specialised counselling and legal advice, we provide a lifeline for those in need, ensuring they receive the comprehensive care and guidance necessary for healing and recovery.



Helpline

Our Helpline operates 24/7 as the primary point of contact for those seeking our assistance and serves as the single point of contact for the Wolverhampton area. This year, we responded to over 8,500 calls and messages through our Helpline, WhatsApp, and Live Chat services, highlighting the immense demand for our support.

Feedback from women like Freya* highlight the impact of our work: "I am grateful for your support for taking your time to listen to me and you stayed professional during the whole process. Thank you so much to you and the whole team, you are all doing valuable work for women in the community."

Since it was established in the eighties, our Helpline has not only offered emergency assistance, it has also provided a compassionate and professional touch, guiding women through our holistic support services and helping them to reclaim their lives.

The dedication of our Helpline team ensures that every woman who reaches out receives the understanding, support, and guidance necessary to navigate their journey towards safety and empowerment.

The Haven has achieved the Helplines Partnership Helplines Standard Certification 2022-25. This nationally recognised quality standard defines and certifies best practices in helpline work.

This year as an accredited service, we have continued to work with Helplines Partnership to improve our service delivery, ensuring our helpline adheres to industry best practices and efficiently supports our service users. Achieving and maintaining this certification reaffirms our commitment to excellence in the services we provide.

For more information on the Helplines Standard Certification, please visit [helplines.org](https://www.helplines.org)



Total calls to Helpline:

8,478

Total chats with women via Live Chat:

171

Total messages from women via WhatsApp:

92

Fostering a Legacy of Helpline Excellence

1. Quality Standards and Certification

Helplines Standard Certification: Maintained certification through Helplines Partnership to ensure adherence to industry best practices.

Quality Assurance Reviews: Regular internal audits and external assessments to uphold service quality and compliance.



2. Staff and Volunteer Development



Training Programmes: Continuous professional development and skills training for staff and volunteers.

Safeguarding Focus: Specialised training sessions on safeguarding and handling sensitive disclosures.

3. Survivor-Centric Service Delivery

Feedback Integration: Collecting and analysing user feedback to improve service delivery and responsiveness.

Cultural Competency: Providing services in multiple languages and adapting to diverse user needs.



4. Technology and Accessibility



Multi-Channel Support: Maintaining access via phone, WhatsApp, and Live Chat for flexibility and convenience.

System Upgrades: Implementing technological enhancements for more efficient service operations.

5. Community Engagement and Partnerships

Collaborative Initiatives: Partnering with local organisations to expand outreach and support networks.

Awareness Campaigns: Conducting educational campaigns to raise awareness about domestic abuse and available resources.



Accommodation

This year, we have remained committed to providing secure housing options and supportive spaces for women and children. Cynthia* expressed her gratitude, saying, “I just want to say thank you to everyone at The Haven who helped me when I had nothing or no one. You always gave me physical, mental, and financial support. Everything I have achieved is because of you all. Now I am feeling at ease because I got everything I need for survival.”

Understanding the importance of creating a homely and welcoming environment, we replaced the communal flooring areas (corridors, kitchen, lounge, and laundry room) at two of our accommodations. Each site, consisting of 11 units, supports around 80 women and children annually. These upgrades were essential as the flooring experiences extensive use over time and desperately needed replacement.

Adjusting to communal accommodation can be incredibly challenging, and for some women, it can come as a shock. Therefore, maintaining well-presented and homely spaces is crucial. When women arrive at their new temporary home, the first impressions can determine whether they stay to receive support or return to their abuser, where they may face serious harm.

A welcoming environment ensures women feel safe and cared for, encouraging them to stay and access our range of holistic support services, including dedicated key worker support, counselling, life skills training, women’s programmes, and expert services for children and young people. Through this support, women’s risk of harm decreases, their safety and wellbeing improves, and their confidence grows, allowing them to move forward with their lives.

Mena* shared, “I now see a future for us and staying here has helped me sleep better as I feel safe. It has really supported me and my daughter to become independent and live a full life. We have a quality of life we didn’t have before.”

Additionally, this year we have hosted various engagement activities within our safe accommodations to foster a sense of community and celebrate the diverse backgrounds of the women and children we support. These events have included religious holidays, as well as more general events like pizza days, bake-offs, pampering days, and outings. These activities have been instrumental in promoting healing and recovery by providing opportunities for relaxation, bonding, and the creation of happy memories during a challenging time in their lives.

Total number of
women supported:

190

Total number of
children supported:

176



CASE STUDY:

“I felt a glimmer of hope...”

Kira’s* Story

My journey with The Haven Wolverhampton began on a day I will never forget. After enduring years of domestic abuse and being subjected to homelessness as a result, I called The Haven’s helpline in desperate need of a safe place for me and my four children. I was scared and unsure, but from the moment they answered the call, I felt a glimmer of hope.

When we first arrived at the refuge, it felt like a new beginning. We had been living with my youngest child’s father, who was possessive and often verbally and physically abusive, especially when he drank. My children had witnessed far too many of these terrifying episodes, and I knew I needed to find a way out for their sake and mine.

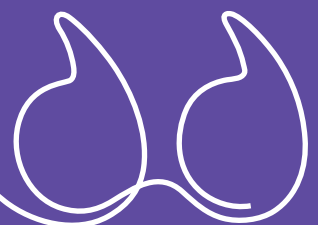
Initially, we stayed at a temporary accommodation provided by the council, but it wasn’t safe or suitable for my family. My oldest child, who has special needs, managed to leave our room on more than one occasion, raising my fears about the busy street outside. The relief of entering The Haven’s refuge was overwhelming; it was more than just a roof over our heads—it was a sanctuary.

The team at The Haven provided us with more than just a safe place to stay. They offered holistic support that helped us to start healing. My children received 1-2-1 therapeutic interventions, which were crucial in helping them to process the trauma they had witnessed. The progress they made was amazing, and it gave me strength knowing they were in caring hands.

The Haven also supported me through some very challenging times. I was given emotional support when my mother passed away and helped navigate legal issues and family dynamics. The staff were there for me, ensuring I didn’t face these trials alone.

A significant part of our healing journey was the empowerment and guidance The Haven provided. They assisted me in applying for grants that enabled us to move into a new home and start afresh. This support was life-changing, giving us the opportunity to reintegrate into the Wolverhampton community with a renewed sense of safety and stability.

Today, my children and I are settled in our new home. We are happy, and for the first time in a long time, we feel hopeful about the future. The Haven Wolverhampton was not just a temporary shelter for us; it was a turning point, a place where we found the strength to rebuild our lives.



Kira's* Story: Before & After

	Before	After
Living situation	Kira and her children were living with her abusive partner and later moved to unsuitable temporary accommodation.	Now residing in a safe and stable home within the Wolverhampton community, away from the abusive environment.
Financial status	Dependent on the abusive partner, with concerns about financial security and housing stability.	Received support to apply for grants, enabling a fresh start in a new home with financial independence.
Emotional wellbeing	Kira and her children were traumatised by the abuse and living conditions, with Kira suffering from stress and fear.	Improved emotional wellbeing through therapeutic interventions for her children and emotional support from The Haven's staff, helping her regain confidence and strength.
Parenting skills	Struggled to protect children from witnessing abuse, leading to concerns about their safety and emotional health.	Gained support in improving her parenting skills, ensuring her children receive necessary emotional and educational assistance, including managing her oldest child's special needs and medical condition.
Awareness	Limited awareness of available support and resources, leading to a sense of isolation and helplessness.	Enhanced awareness of available resources and legal rights, leading to empowered decision-making and proactive steps towards ensuring the family's safety and wellbeing, with ongoing support from community services and networks.

Spotlight: Bringing Joy Beyond Trauma

At The Haven Wolverhampton, we understand the importance of engaging with women and children beyond their trauma. This year, we continued to focus on creating joyful experiences through various activities and initiatives, both in our safe accommodations and within the community.

This year staff in refuge launched an allotment project which allowed women and children to grow their own fruits and vegetables, which they used to cook fresh meals. This initiative not only promotes healthy eating but also fosters a sense of accomplishment and connection to nature.

We also supported religious and cultural festivities, such as Eid, Diwali, Christmas, Easter, Black History Month, Halloween, World Pizza Day, and Valentine's Day. These celebrations provided opportunities for bonding, sharing, and cultural exchange. For instance, during Diwali, women and children prepared samosas and spicy chole from scratch using vegetables from our allotment, enhancing the sense of community and participation.

Outings like the trip to Weston-Super-Mare, offered families a much-needed escape and the chance to create happy memories together. Building sandcastles, enjoying ice cream, and playing in the sea provided a fun-filled day where families could bond, relax, and create new experiences that will be cherished for years to come.

During our EMPURPLE Week Campaign, women shared their visions for a fairer world, highlighting the importance of education, dismantling harmful religious rules, and removing fear and stigma associated with seeking help. On International Women's Day, we invited everyone who use our services to join us for some tasty treats with a cup of tea. Birthday celebrations were made special with themed cakes provided by The Cake Initiative, bringing smiles to children's faces with Roblox, Frozen, and Batman-themed cakes.

These shared moments of joy and laughter help foster hope and strengthen family relationships. By creating a positive and supportive environment, we enable the women and children to heal, grow, and look forward to a brighter future.



A Frozen birthday celebration



A Roblox birthday celebration



Delicious plates for Diwali



A visit to the allotment



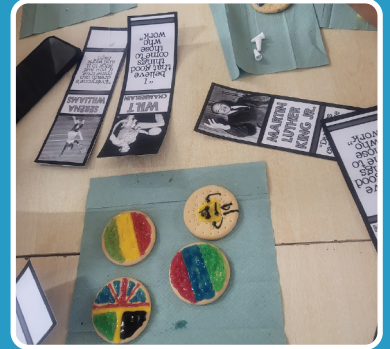
Easter egg hunt



Easter egg selection



A feast for Eid



Flag biscuits for Black History Month



Ice cream by the seaside



Handmade paper flowers for Valentine's Day



Advent calendars for all



Halloween fun

Case Study: Christmas at The Haven

A Very Porsche Christmas – This year Santa arrived at The Haven in a Porsche full of gifts and good cheer, thanks to our friends over at Porsche Wolverhampton.

Christmas can be an incredibly difficult time for the women and children we support. Many women are still grappling with trauma while also worrying about how to create a special holiday for their children.

At The Haven Wolverhampton, we strive to ease this burden by transforming Christmas into a time of joy and warmth. The generous support from the community ensures that each family receives gifts, delicious meals, and opportunities for festive activities. These celebrations help create a sense of normalcy and hope, as evidenced by the words of some of the women who spent Christmas with us this year.



To find out how you can support Christmas at The Haven contact give@havenrefuge.org.uk



"I was wondering how I would make my children's Christmas better after all the confusion of moving them from their family home. This made me feel even more sad, but due to the kind support I have received from The Haven. I was able to make my children's Christmas wonderful."

Ade*

"I loved all the chocolate gifts, I had a selection box, chocolate coins and candy canes. My mom said not to eat them all."

Marie*

"I only arrived at refuge three days before Christmas. I was wondering how I would make my children's Christmas better after all the confusion of moving them from their family home - this made me feel even more sad. Due to the kindness and support I have received from The Haven and all the wonderful gifts, I was able to make my children's Christmas wonderful. Thank you everyone, I will never forget this."

Erica*

"Honestly, I had written off Christmas this year as I just couldn't afford to get anything for my children. When my key worker called me to tell me there were donations and I could come and collect some I was overwhelmed, I didn't expect to walk in and find this, and be able to pick presents. It's amazing, my kids will be so happy on Christmas Day now, thank you all so much."

Nata*

"I can't believe you have done all this for us, I'm so grateful I could cry. I really wasn't expecting all these presents, thank you all so much."

Indira*

"I had a baby doll and Barbies, I love them lots."

Misha*

Community

Our community team plays a vital role in supporting women and children within Wolverhampton, regardless of their living situations, to reduce domestic abuse-related risks and enhance safety and wellbeing.

We support women who remain with their perpetrators as well as those who live independently, providing practical and emotional support like access to counselling and safety planning through a domestic abuse keyworker, as well as support from our Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVA).

This year, we have seen a rise in women arriving at our head office seeking immediate assistance. In such cases, our helpline team works closely with the community team to ensure these women receive timely support and guidance. Our community team also partners with the Public Protection Unit (PPU) and the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) to keep those at highest risk safe.

To help those rebuilding their lives after abuse achieve some financial stability, we launched the Home Efficiency Service, supported by the Energy Redress Fund.

This pilot project assists women with the cost of living, focusing on energy efficiency to secure financial wellbeing in the long term. Our community support also extends to high-risk young people through our CHISVA/CHIDVA* services, which help address risks of sexual and domestic abuse, providing safety plans, healthy relationship guidance, and essential support for their parents.

The case of Dee*, who was supported by our community team's Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA), exemplifies the impact of our services. After suffering years of abuse in her marriage, Dee attended support groups that provided emotional support and information on topics ranging from healthy relationships to court support. With our help, Dee decided to leave her husband.

She expressed her gratitude, saying she would never have left the marriage without our support and now feels "free and happy." These services remain an essential lifeline for those who do not require refuge. Our holistic approach to supporting women in the community ensures every woman has access to the support and resources needed for a safer, healthier, and empowered life.

*CHIDVA: Children's Independent Domestic Violence Advisor
CHISVA: Children's Independent Sexual Violence Advisor

Total number of women supported:

1,248

Total number of children supported:

61



CASE STUDY:

“I am free and happy.”

Anita’s* Story

Two years ago, I took the first steps towards reclaiming my life by walking into The Haven Wolverhampton’s Waterloo Road office. After more than 45 years of marriage, I finally sought support because I knew what I was going through was not right. For the first time, I revealed the years of physical, verbal, and coercive control, as well as sexual violence, that I had endured in silence. My husband’s behaviour was incredibly intimidating, but until that moment, I had never called the police or spoken to any other professional about the abuse.

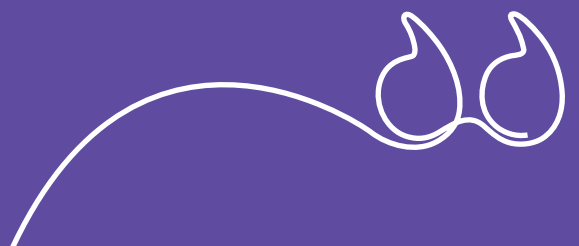
I met my husband in the 1960s, and as a white British woman married to an Asian man, my family disowned me. This isolation left me with no one to confide in as my husband’s controlling behaviour escalated. His influence extended beyond me to our daughter, and I felt trapped, unable to turn to his family due to cultural expectations that placed the blame on me. I was afraid of not being good enough and I did not want to prove the naysayers right.

Throughout the years, I faced criticism and intimidation. He belittled my cooking, demanding traditional Asian dishes, and if I spoke up, he would violently throw food across the kitchen. His oppressive behaviour made me afraid to ask for help until I finally heard about The Haven and found the courage to reach out to them for support. I could have picked up the phone, but I really wanted to speak to someone face to face.

The open-door policy at The Haven was instrumental in my journey. I was referred to the sexual violence support group. Joining The Haven’s support group provided a safe and confidential environment where I found strength among women who shared similar experiences. The group addressed domestic violence, sexual violence, coercive control, and healthy relationships, helping me to understand the impact of abuse on our children.

Participating in sessions and activities at The Haven, including sessions with The Geese Theatre Company who specialise in supporting vulnerable people through drama, helped me gain confidence and reflect on my future. I began 1-2-1 sessions with an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA), where I could finally speak openly about the abuse. This newfound confidence empowered me to confront my husband, and while I initially chose to stay with him, I ultimately found the strength to leave.

This year, I returned to The Haven to share my decision to divorce my husband. With its continued support, I secured a two bedroom flat and finally felt free. The encouragement and understanding I received from The Haven and the support group were pivotal in helping me break free from the cycle of abuse. Today, I am happy and independent. I am forever grateful to The Haven for helping me to understand coercive control and find my freedom. My parting words to them were, “I am free and happy.”



Anita's Story: Before & After

	Before	After
Living situation	Anita lived in an abusive household for over 45 years, feeling trapped and isolated in her marriage as she was estranged from family.	Residing independently in a two bedroom flat, free from the abusive relationship. Taking steps to reconnect with her extended family.
Financial status	Financially controlled by her husband, lacking independence and support due to cultural expectations.	Secured finances through divorce settlement, achieving financial independence.
Emotional wellbeing	Intimidated and fearful due to years of coercive control, abuse, and sexual violence, exacerbated by cultural differences and isolation.	Empowered, confident, and happy, having regained control of her life and embracing her identity.
Parenting skills	Controlled in raising her children by cultural expectations, feeling inadequate and unsupported.	Empowered to make her own decisions regarding her family and children, feeling capable.
Awareness	Unaware of her rights within the marriage due to cultural pressures and coercive control dynamics.	Educated about domestic violence and coercive control, enabling her to seek help and support others.

Case Study: Abuse is Ageless

This year, we have seen older service users seeking help, including one victim who was in her 80s. This demographic is often underserved with barriers to communication, highlighting the need to understand the unique dynamics of domestic abuse in older populations. Abuse in older adults can manifest differently and may involve partners, children, or carers.

Age-related factors such as physical frailty, cognitive decline, and social isolation can exacerbate the experience of abuse, increasing the risk of serious harm.

One of the key challenges in supporting older victims is addressing barriers to engagement. Many older individuals may not recognise their experiences as abuse, especially if it comes from a family member or carer.

They may also face physical and emotional barriers, which can include both visible and invisible disabilities and impairments, as well as deep-rooted emotions of shame and fear. To effectively support these individuals, it is crucial to identify and respond to adult safeguarding concerns promptly. Our team is trained to recognise the signs of abuse in older adults and to take appropriate actions to ensure their safety and wellbeing.



Additionally, we acknowledge the profound impact of historic abuse. Many women carry the trauma of past abusive relationships long after they have ended.

Our services are designed to support these women, providing a safe space to process their experiences and heal. We offer specialised training titled “Domestic Abuse: Over 55’s – Abuse is Ageless” to help those who may come into contact with older victims, understand their experiences, and offer appropriate support.

The impact of reaching this demographic cannot be overstated. By extending our services to older individuals, we are ensuring that no one is left behind, regardless of age. We are committed to providing comprehensive support that addresses the unique needs of older victims, helping them to break free from abuse and live safely and independently.

Our efforts in this area reflect our dedication to understanding and responding to domestic abuse across all stages of life.



Children and Young People (CYP)

Wolverhampton ranks among the 10% most deprived areas in the UK, with a third of its children living in poverty. For those in abusive homes, this is often worsened by financial control from the perpetrator. These children face severe disadvantages and risk exclusion from mainstream society.

Our Children and Young People (CYP) service offers 1-2-1 therapeutic support and play therapy for younger victims. This year, we've seen an increase in children with complex needs, mental health issues, and Special Educational Needs (SEN). To address this, we have expanded our services and introduced new sensory equipment, significantly improving engagement and the effectiveness of our interventions, especially for children with sensory needs and behavioural issues. The sensory items, such as light sticks and a ball pit, have been particularly useful in alleviating anxiety and fostering a calm environment.

In line with the Domestic Abuse Act recognising children as victims in their own right, our support has shown tangible results. For example, Abi*, who struggled with eye contact, gained confidence through our sessions and now feels happier and more comfortable engaging with others.

Zoe*, who was self-harming, developed coping techniques and saw improvements in self-esteem and confidence. One survey indicated that 90% of the children asked reported progress in their wellbeing.

Our CYP workers continuously devise creative initiatives to engage children, including hosting fun events and activities both in and out of our refuges. Day trips, especially, remain a favourite. Thanks to our partnership with National Express, this year we organised special trips or families from all our safe accommodation sites.

Trips like these are often a rare opportunity due to financial constraints, and they allow families to create cherished memories and foster relationships, boosting their confidence and social skills.

Julie* shared, "Myself and my children really enjoyed the trip to the beach. It was my children's first time, and they really enjoyed the day. We created a lot of memories and it's a day my children will remember. Thank you for a great day."

Total number of children supported:

237



What CYP Are Saying

“Thank you for all of the new things that you have given us! I think that the new ball pit is so much better than the old one.”

Olivia*



“I like the green spinny thing (whizzy dizzy spinner) so much! It is my favourite thing to play with when I come to sessions.”

Matt*



“My favourite thing is the fish tank. When I am mad, I can just stare at it and it calms me down.”

Fatima*



“I had never been to the beach before, so it was really exciting. I can't wait to go back again someday!”

Ella*



CASE STUDY:

“I’m not scared anymore...”

Mia’s* Story

I live at The Haven with my mom, two sisters, and brother. When we first arrived here, I was really scared and felt like I couldn’t do anything right. I couldn’t read or write like the other kids, and that made me feel really sad and different.

My mom explained that our frequent relocations due to my father being abusive led to gaps in my education. It made me feel like I wasn’t smart enough. But then I met the amazing people at The Haven, and everything started to change.

One of the best things that happened was my 1-2-1 sessions. The CYP worker told me that we were going to start with the basics, and she promised to help me learn. We began with the alphabet, and it was so much fun! We used puzzles and games to make it exciting.

My favourite was the alphabet puzzle – each piece had a letter and a word that started with that letter. It helped me learn not only how to spell, but also how to sound out words. She used all kinds of cool things to help me learn. We had whiteboard books where I could

trace letters and practice writing. Sometimes, we used toys and did arts and crafts, which made learning feel like a big adventure. There were also educational videos that showed me how to say different sounds like ‘th’ and ‘nd’ and how to spell small words.

Every time I learned something new, she would cheer for me and tell me how proud she was. This made me feel really good about myself. Soon, I started to read small words and even understood the sounds of certain letter combinations. One of the best moments was when I could spell my siblings’ names all by myself. I was so proud and couldn’t wait to show my mom and everyone else at The Haven.

The 1-2-1 sessions made me feel so supported and happy. I went from not knowing how to read or write anything to reading small words and writing them down. Now, I love to tell everyone about the words I can read and spell. It makes me feel confident and smart. I’m still having 1-2-1 sessions and we keep learning more every day. We also have group sessions sometimes, which are fun because I get to learn with other children. These sessions help me feel even more confident in my learning.

Thanks to The Haven, I’m not scared anymore. I know that I can learn and do well. I can’t wait to get a school placement and show everyone how much I’ve learned. I’m so grateful for all the help and support I’ve received here. The Haven is a special place that helped me believe in myself. I know now that I can do anything I set my mind to, and that makes me happy. Thank you, Haven, for helping me find my smile again.



Initial Situation

Living in Refuge: Mia arrived at The Haven with mom, two sisters, and brother.

Fear and Low Self-Esteem: Felt scared and unable to do anything right.

Educational Challenges: Struggled with reading and writing due to frequent moves and missed schooling.

Support Provided

1-2-1 Sessions: Personalised support from a CYP worker.

Fun Learning Tools: Used puzzles and games to make learning exciting.

Creative Methods: Whiteboard books, arts and crafts, and educational videos to teach letter sounds and spelling.

Encouragement: Continuous support and cheering for each achievement.

Outcome

Literacy Improvement: Learned to read small words and spell siblings' names.

Increased Confidence: Felt proud, smart, and supported.

Group Sessions: Enjoyed learning with other children, enhancing social skills.

Positive Outlook: No longer scared, Mia is excited for future school placement, and grateful for The Haven's support.

CASE STUDY:

“His smile is back...”

Josh’s* Story

My 3-year-old son, Josh, and I have been living at The Haven for 10 months. Our life before coming here was filled with fear and uncertainty. Josh witnessed his dad being violent and abusive, and it left deep scars on his little heart. When we first arrived, he was terrified of anyone who wasn’t me. The sight of a stranger, especially a man, would send him into a state of panic. He would cry, scream, and hurt himself by banging his head on the floor or with his hands. It broke my heart to see him so distressed, and I felt helpless.

At The Haven, the staff understood our situation and immediately put a support plan in place. The goal was to help Josh build confidence, trust, and independence through 1-2-1 play sessions. In the beginning, I stayed with him during these sessions. He was so scared that he would cover his face with his hands, too frightened to look at anyone else. The patient and caring staff encouraged us both, even when progress seemed slow.

For several weeks, we attended the play sessions together. The consistent routine helped Josh know what to expect, and slowly, very slowly, he started to relax. The staff were incredible, always supportive and encouraging me to keep bringing him. It wasn’t easy. There were days when I thought we would never see any improvement. I remember telling the staff, “It’s never going to change,” feeling defeated.

But they didn’t give up on us, and slowly, Josh began to change. He started to participate in the sessions, first with me by his side, and then for short periods on his own. We started with just five minutes of separation, and gradually increased it to fifteen, and then an hour.

Each small step was a victory, and with each session, his confidence grew. The day he attended a session on his own for the entire duration felt like a miracle. He not only participated but was excited for the next play session. Josh now enjoys group sessions as well, engaging happily with other children and staff. He loves trying new activities like sand play and arts and crafts. The smile on his face when he shares his new creations is priceless.

The transformation in Josh has been nothing short of amazing. He has built positive relationships with other women, staff, and children at The Haven. He’s always smiling and happy, a stark contrast to the scared and withdrawn boy who first arrived. The sessions have not only improved his wellbeing but also provided me with much-needed respite. Knowing that Josh is in a safe and supportive environment allows me to take a breath and find my own strength again.

I never imagined that Josh would be able to go to nursery, but now, thanks to the support and dedication of The Haven’s staff, I believe it’s possible. We still have challenges, especially when meeting new people, but Josh’s progress gives me hope and confidence.

I am profoundly grateful for the support we’ve received. The Haven has given us both a new beginning. Josh’s excitement for every session and his big smiles are a testament to the incredible impact of their work. We look forward to continuing this journey of healing and growth, knowing that with each day, we are moving towards a brighter future.

Thank you to The Haven, for giving my son his smile back and for helping us find peace and happiness again.

Initial Situation

Living in Refuge: Josh and his mother lived at The Haven for 10 months.

Fear and Trauma: Witnessed domestic abuse and violence, leading to fear and distress around strangers, especially men.

Behavioural Issues: Panic attacks, self-harming behaviours, and extreme distress in unfamiliar settings.

Support Provided

1-2-1 Play Sessions: Personalised support to build confidence and trust.

Parental Involvement: Initial sessions with mom present to provide comfort and stability.

Gradual Independence: Slowly increasing time spent away from mom during sessions.

Play Therapy: Engaging in activities like sand play and arts and crafts to foster engagement.

Outcome

Increased Confidence: Transitioned from fear to excitement about play sessions.

Social Engagement: Enjoys group sessions and interacts positively with peers and staff.

Creativity and Joy: Thrives in new activities, sharing creations with pride.

Positive Relationships: Built trust with other women, staff, and children at The Haven.

Spotlight: Animal Therapy

What: Giant African Snails
Where: Group Sessions
Who: Children and young people

The Children and Young People (CYP) team introduced animal therapy with Giant African Snails to help children and young people experience the benefits of positive sensory touch. By interacting with these gentle creatures, participants learn that not all forms of touch are negative and that contact can be positive and healing.

In the group sessions, the snails served as a metaphor for the children themselves – fragile beings requiring care, feeding, nurturing, and love from a supportive third party. This helps children understand the importance of self-care and the care they deserve from others. This form of therapy also aims to foster

resilience, showing participants that with the right support and guidance, they can achieve their goals and overcome challenges.

All the children were able to follow simple daily instructions to help support the snails. To make the experience inclusive and accessible for children with Special Educational Needs (SEN), the team created tailored fact files about the snails and used YouTube videos to provide additional visual and auditory aids. This approach helps participants gain knowledge about the species and develop a deeper connection with these unique creatures.



"I love helping the snails eat their veggies every day, and now I enjoy eating healthy meals too!"

Ajay*, aged 6



"I wash my hands all the time now because I like to take care of the snails!"

Fatima*, aged 5



"Caring for these snails has helped me feel more confident and strong, even though I used to be shy and fragile like them."

Kai*, aged 14



"Thanks to the CYP team and the snail's diet, my son who loves to feed them now eats tomatoes, grapes, and even broccoli! I couldn't have imagined a healthier diet for him before this."

Amara*, mum



"I never thought I could be brave enough to hold a snail, but now I feel like I can do anything if I believe in myself!"

Jaden*, aged 14



"The team has made such a difference in my daughter's life - she now loves washing her hands regularly and is proud of earning those reward stickers!"

Maria*, mum



Counselling and Wellbeing

Our Counselling and Wellbeing Service addresses the profound impact of abuse on mental health. Women can self-refer or be referred by external agencies to access person-centred counselling. This year counselling was offered in seven languages: English, Turkish, Russian, Lithuanian, Urdu, Punjabi, and Hindi. This multilingual approach ensures accessibility for women from diverse backgrounds.

Counselling plays a crucial role in helping women recover from their trauma, providing them with a safe space to process their experiences and rebuild their self-esteem, facilitating healing and empowering them to regain control of their lives.

Beyond counselling we prioritise the holistic wellbeing of women and children in our care throughout their journey, starting from their first interaction with our services to their transition to independent living. In line with this commitment, we have launched a Life Skills Programme this year, aimed at equipping individuals with the essential tools and resources needed to achieve sustainable, longterm stability and success.

Samantha*, a stroke survivor with multiple needs, completed the Life Skills Programme, which helped her with budgeting and improved living skills. Reflecting on her progress, Samantha* noted that having control over her finances and receiving support had significantly improved her mental health, giving her a sense of financial comfort and independence.

To support this transition, we also provided small grants for essential items like microwaves and fridge freezers, easing the financial strain often faced when moving on from an abusive relationship. This kind of practical support is instrumental in reducing stress and fostering a sense of control and security.

Our specialised programmes such as the Freedom to Transform and the Dolphin Programme have continued to empower women with the tools to recognise and understand domestic abuse and equip them with the skills to help their children heal.

Our counselling and wellbeing services are integral to the recovery and empowerment of the women we support, ensuring they have the confidence and resources to fully recover and rebuild their lives away from abuse.

Total number of women supported:

220

Total number of women supported with small grants:

223



CASE STUDY:

“I felt truly heard...”

Avana's* Story

When I first walked into the counselling room, I was a mess—tearful, broken, and feeling like a shadow of my former self. I was trapped in a life that felt like a prison, living with an ex-partner who constantly undermined me.

My childhood had been tough, and the recent loss of both my parents left me drowning in grief and guilt. I was barely surviving and knew I needed help to rebuild my self-esteem and find the strength to face the chaos in my life. The first session was nerve-wracking, but stepping into that quiet, private room, I felt a flicker of hope. My counsellor greeted me warmly, and for the first time in a long while, I felt truly heard. She explained the process, and we agreed on steps to take together. Despite her still being in training, I sensed her commitment to helping me, and I realised this might be a chance to start healing.

In our sessions, I unpacked a lifetime of pain—years of abuse, guilt, and grief. These feelings had become so ingrained that I believed they defined who I was. My mind was full of negative thoughts, and at times, I questioned if life was worth living. We discussed these thoughts, and just saying them out loud made them seem less powerful. My counsellor helped me see that these thoughts weren't who I was, but rather the result of what I'd been through.

We explored my feelings of guilt and self-blame, particularly around the loss of my parents. My counsellor gently challenged these beliefs, helping me see things from new perspectives. We used exercises like the empty chair technique, where I voiced my thoughts

to those who had hurt me. It was terrifying but freeing, and it gave me confidence to have those difficult conversations in real life. There were low points. I felt trapped financially, unable to leave the toxic environment with my ex-partner.

My physical health was suffering, and some days, I questioned why life was so hard. But even in those dark moments, I felt myself starting to change.

Gradually, things improved. I found the courage to set boundaries with my ex-partner. Journaling and writing letters, as my counsellor suggested, helped me process my emotions. I began taking better care of myself, not out of obligation, but because I wanted to. It felt good.

The biggest breakthrough came when I realised I could set goals and achieve them. I was no longer just surviving; I was starting to live again. With my counsellor's support, I found my voice, confidence, and strength. The last few weeks have been the best I've felt in years, and I'm on the right path.

Looking back, I'm amazed at how far I've come. I didn't think counselling would change anything, but it did. I'm grateful for the support—it's helped me move forward in ways I never thought possible. I know there will still be challenges, but now I feel equipped to face them. I've found my way back to myself, and for that, I am incredibly thankful.

Avana's Story*: Before & After

	Before	After
Living situation	Avana* lived under the same roof with an ex-partner in separate rooms, feeling emotionally trapped and unsafe.	Developed the confidence to set boundaries with the ex-partner, leading to a more manageable and less stressful living situation.
Financial status	Felt financially trapped, which exacerbated feelings of helplessness and limited options for leaving the toxic environment.	Received referrals for financial advice and Personal Independent Payment assessment, leading to improved financial planning and increased options.
Emotional wellbeing	Overwhelmed by grief, guilt, and low self-esteem; experiencing negative automatic thoughts and contemplating self-harm.	Improved emotional wellbeing with enhanced self-esteem, managed negative thoughts through journaling, and developed resilience and self-care routines.
Awareness	Limited self-awareness, with feelings of guilt and self-blame being internalised; difficulty seeing new perspectives.	Enhanced self-awareness through therapy, changing perspectives by recognising responses to trauma, while also gaining a deeper understanding of personal strengths and aspirations.

1973

The Haven is founded by Colin Brown and Honor Pringle. The first refuge opens to help women and children in need

1976

Two new refuges open

1975

Moped donated for first full-time worker to travel between refuges



years of support

10

1983

1987

First purpose-built refuge opens

1988

Now one of the UK's largest women's refuges, housing over 400 women and up to 500 children

50 years of

1993

20

years of support

1989

Supports the development of West Midlands Police's training and action programme to combat domestic violence

1992

Launches counselling services for the first time

40

years of support

2013

Hosts inaugural Empurple Day to mark International Women's Day



2010

First 'Walk a Mile in Women's Shoes' launched to engage men

2017

Receives The Queen's Award for Voluntary Services as well as the Princess Royal Award for Training

For 50 years, we have been supporting women and children who are vulnerable to domestic violence, abuse and homelessness in and around Wolverhampton.

Our journey is a testament to who we are today as we reflect on our work promoting and upholding human rights for all women and children.

The Haven

1995

Wolverhampton mayor releases 700 balloons to represent each woman supported in refuge in the previous year



1999

Launches first website to reach more women in need

2001

The Haven's CEO and 11 others climb Mount Kilimanjaro to raise funds



2003

Co-founder Honor Pringle wins lifetime excellence award

30 years of support

2008

Features on GMTV where two service users tell their story and comment on the National Domestic Violence Delivery Plan

2004

Becomes an Open College Network (now AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group) accredited domestic abuse training provider

2022

Secures first Helpline Standards Certification, a nationally recognised quality standard demonstrating best practice



Receives record-breaking donations in Big Give's first Women and Girls Matched Fund campaign

Wins GSK Impact Award

2023



50th Anniversary: Charity Ball in Pictures

What an amazing night! Thank you to all our sponsors including our headline sponsor IT-Works. A special thanks also to all our dedicated team of volunteers and our extraordinary guests who made this evening sparkle!



Steve Bull - former Wolves player and ongoing supporter



A night of glamour



A night to remember



Team Haven in attendance



Fun on the dance floor



IT-Works - our IT partner and headline sponsor of the event



Jay Baso of Elegant Frames with MP Jane Stevenson on his table



Mayor Michael Hardacre and the Mayoress Lynn Plant



Porsche driving home the red carpet style



Singing the disco classic 'Oops Upside Your Head



Anthem Voices - the fantastic flash mob choir



Haven Fundraising Team with our Architect of Stories

No Recourse To Public Funds

Migrant women often find themselves excluded from vital conversations about victims of abuse. This is glaringly evident in the lack of specific considerations for their needs within the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and traditional funding models. Their complex situations, driven by immigration status, frequently lead to a reluctance to seek help due to fear of deportation. Many are also isolated with no support networks, and struggle with language barriers.

We firmly believe that immigration status should not make anyone more vulnerable to abuse and violence. Despite funding limitations, we have continued to support those who come to us with safe accommodation when needed, food parcels, and legal and financial advice. We have also been able to expand our offering by forming strategic partnerships with local organisations like the Refugee and Migrant Centre (RMC). These partnerships enable us to advocate for migrant women's rights and provide practical support.

A notable success this year involved successfully organising the repatriation of Sia*, a migrant woman with no recourse to public funds, who sought to return to her family after escaping abuse. This achievement highlights the importance of collaboration and resource sharing in addressing the needs of those we support and advocating for their rights.

**Total number of
women supported:**

12

MIGRANTS WELCOME



CASE STUDY:

“I finally feel a sense of hope...”

Zaara's* Story

I was born in Iraq, where, in 2018, I was forced into an arranged marriage. My husband, chosen by my brothers, quickly revealed his abusive nature once we were married. Moving to the UK, my hope for a fresh start was crushed as he controlled every aspect of my life, subjected me to physical and sexual abuse, and isolated me. My mother and sister knew about his behaviour, but they were powerless to help, and my brothers threatened to kill me if I even thought about ending the marriage.

When we moved to the UK, instead of the fresh start I hoped for, my life became a nightmare. He controlled every aspect of my life. He bought me expired food, sometimes leaving me with nothing but bread for days, while he ate out. The abuse was relentless. He punched me, raped me, and forced me into acts that were not only painful but also forbidden by our religion. I lived in constant fear, hiding knives under my pillow and rarely leaving the house because I didn't have a key. After an especially violent incident, I called the police. They were very supportive, and I was offered temporary accommodation in a hotel. They took my statements seriously; they referred me to The Haven and kept me informed about the legal process.

My time at The Haven wasn't easy. I was identified as a high-risk victim of domestic abuse, and the staff worked tirelessly to support me. The terrifying threats from my family in Iraq continued and made me fear for my life. Despite these challenges, the support I received was life changing. The Haven helped me with a housing application in Manchester, where I have a friend. My application was eventually accepted and I started to bid on

properties and hoped for a safe place to call home. I also began attending classes in the community to improve my English. This boosted my confidence and helped me communicate better with the staff and other residents.

I left with only a bag of essentials, so I relied on donations and support from The Haven to get by. Through the help of the Refugee and Migrant Centre (RMC), I secured my Domestic Violence Concession (DDV) and ultimately, my indefinite leave to remain. This gave me financial independence and relieved the fear of being sent back to Iraq, where my life was at risk.

As the pressure from my family continued, and referrals to refuges in Manchester were unsuccessful while I waited for suitable housing, I decided to withdraw the police complaint. I reached out to my friend in Manchester, who offered me a place to stay. While The Haven provided me with safety, I felt like I would feel safer out of the area, with someone I already knew and trusted. With the help of The Haven, I managed a safe move to Manchester, where I continued to bid on properties.

Though the journey has been incredibly tough, I finally feel a sense of hope. The support from The Haven was instrumental in getting me here. They provided me with safety, helped me find my voice, and supported me in becoming independent. I am forever grateful for their support and kindness. My journey is far from over, but I know that with the foundation The Haven has helped me to build, I can face whatever comes next with courage and strength.

Zaara's* Story: Before & After

	Before	After
Living situation	Zaara was married to an abusive husband in Iraq, isolated, and controlled. Moved to the UK, lived in fear, and was not allowed to leave the house.	Moved to Manchester to stay with a trusted friend and has a housing application with Manchester Council.
Financial status	Dependent on her husband, with no access to finances, lived on expired food, and had no income or benefits.	Secured DDV concession and indefinite leave to remain, gained financial independence, and received support for essentials and welfare.
Emotional wellbeing	Experienced physical and sexual abuse, threats from family, lived in fear, and was isolated.	Attending English language classes, improved confidence, received police support, and feels safer. Still experiences family pressure but has a support network.
Awareness	Limited understanding of her rights, isolated, and unaware of support services.	Aware of legal rights, has access to police and IDVA support, and understands the criminal justice process.

Alcohol and Substance Use

In our efforts to address the complex and multifaceted needs of women affected by domestic abuse, we continue to recognise the critical importance of providing specialised support for those grappling with substance use. Many victims turn to alcohol or drugs as a coping mechanism to deal with the trauma of abuse. In some cases, perpetrators introduce their victims to alcohol or drugs as a means of control and manipulation, further complicating their path to recovery.

The impact of substance use is profound, particularly for mothers who are striving to provide stability for their children amidst chaos.

There is a significant correlation between poor mental health and substance use, often compounded by feelings of shame, guilt, and stigma that make seeking help even more daunting. Understanding these challenges is vital for us to tailor our services effectively, ensuring they meet the unique needs of each woman.

Our partnership with Recovery Near You is pivotal in crafting interventions that safeguard victims and guide them towards recovery from both abuse and addiction. Together, we are dedicated to providing a safe space where women can focus on healing and rebuilding their lives.

By addressing the intertwined issues of abuse and substance use with compassion and expertise, we aim to break the cycle of trauma and empower women to achieve lasting recovery and independence.



CASE STUDY:

“Putting the pieces back together...”

Fiona’s* Story

For years I struggled with alcohol and cocaine addiction while trapped in an abusive relationship. This destructive cycle led to the heartbreaking loss of custody of my youngest child. This year I sought refuge at The Haven, determined to change my life.

I knew I needed help. I was open with the substance misuse caseworker, admitting how out of control my addiction had become. I often drank heavily on nights out, which led me to use cocaine. This was my way of numbing the pain so that I could cope. I agreed to regular drug testing to support my court case and committed to weekly sessions to learn healthier coping strategies. Cooking, cleaning, and attending Narcotics Anonymous meetings became my new routines.

At first, I didn’t believe that support groups would help, but after attending my first Narcotics Anonymous meeting, I found hope in hearing others’ stories. Week by week, my drug tests came back negative, and I started feeling better - both physically and mentally. I learned to set boundaries with friends who encouraged my substance use, and I began drinking in moderation.

Despite my progress, I lost the court case and my youngest child was put up for adoption. It was a devastating blow, and for a time, I didn’t feel like talking to anyone. However, The Haven continued to support me, and I was able to see my other children from time to time and on special occasions.

Today, I’m still in the refuge, waiting for permanent housing. I would love to enrol on to a beauty course at college and work towards getting back into full time work. Maybe one day I can even start my own business. I spend a lot of time watching beauty influencers on YouTube and I’ve been using some of the other women who live here as my muses, doing their makeup to gain experience and develop my skills.

I am putting the pieces back together and rebuilding my life one step at a time. The weekly support from my key worker is invaluable and remains a vital part of my recovery, as I focus on developing healthier habits and creating a better future for myself and my children.



Fiona's* Story: Before & After

	Before	After
Living situation	Fiona was living in an abusive relationship with her partner and dealing with addiction issues.	Living in refuge with ongoing support and waiting for permanent housing. Engaged in positive daily routines to rebuild her life.
Financial status	Financially unstable due to addiction.	Looking to improve her financial independence. Planning to enrol in a beauty course with aspirations to work in the beauty industry and start her own business.
Emotional wellbeing	Struggled with feelings of helplessness due to abuse and violence. Relied on substances to numb the pain.	Improved emotional resilience and self-awareness. Actively participating in Narcotics Anonymous (NA), feeling hopeful, and setting boundaries with triggering friends.
Parenting	Lost custody of her youngest child due to addiction. Limited access to other children.	Although unable to regain custody of her youngest, Fiona can see her other children more frequently, especially on special occasions and remains committed to her recovery for their future.
Awareness	Limited awareness of healthier coping strategies and self-care.	Developed a strong understanding of substance use triggers, coping mechanisms, and recovery tools. Attending NA meetings and actively working with a caseworker.

*Name changed. Image is for illustration purposes only.

Sexual Abuse and Violence

Our team of Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVA) and Children's Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ChISVA) provide essential support to survivors of sexual abuse and violence. This support is critical in helping survivors pursue justice; a step towards regaining control over their lives.

Navigating the criminal justice system can be a daunting and emotionally taxing experience for survivors. Our ISVAs and ChISVAs assist with accessing health services, including GP registration, sexual health testing, and pregnancy tests. They also guide survivors through the complexities of the legal process, from writing impact statements to understanding court procedures through pre-trial visits.

Our advisors attend court dates with survivors, providing moral support and advocating for special measures, such as screens to protect them from direct confrontation with their perpetrators. This personalised care and advocacy ensure that survivors feel supported and empowered throughout the process.

The impact of this service cannot be understated. By offering a safe space and personalised care, we help survivors find their voices and empower them to advocate for themselves. Our broader advocacy efforts aim to drive societal change and combat sexual violence, creating a safer environment for all.

Total number of
women supported:

60

Total number of
children supported:

63*

*Including high-risk supported by ChIDVA



CASE STUDY:

“I started to feel more confident...”

Lily’s Story*

When I was just five years old, my biological father began abusing me. It continued for years, until I found the courage to report it to the police. Unfortunately, the case was closed, but my parents separated, and my father no longer has contact with me.

Even though the abuse had stopped, I struggled to cope with what had happened to me. I was diagnosed with ADHD and suspected autism, which made it even harder for me to process my emotions. I would often say things like, “I want dad back, he used to make me feel special,” even though I knew what he did was wrong.

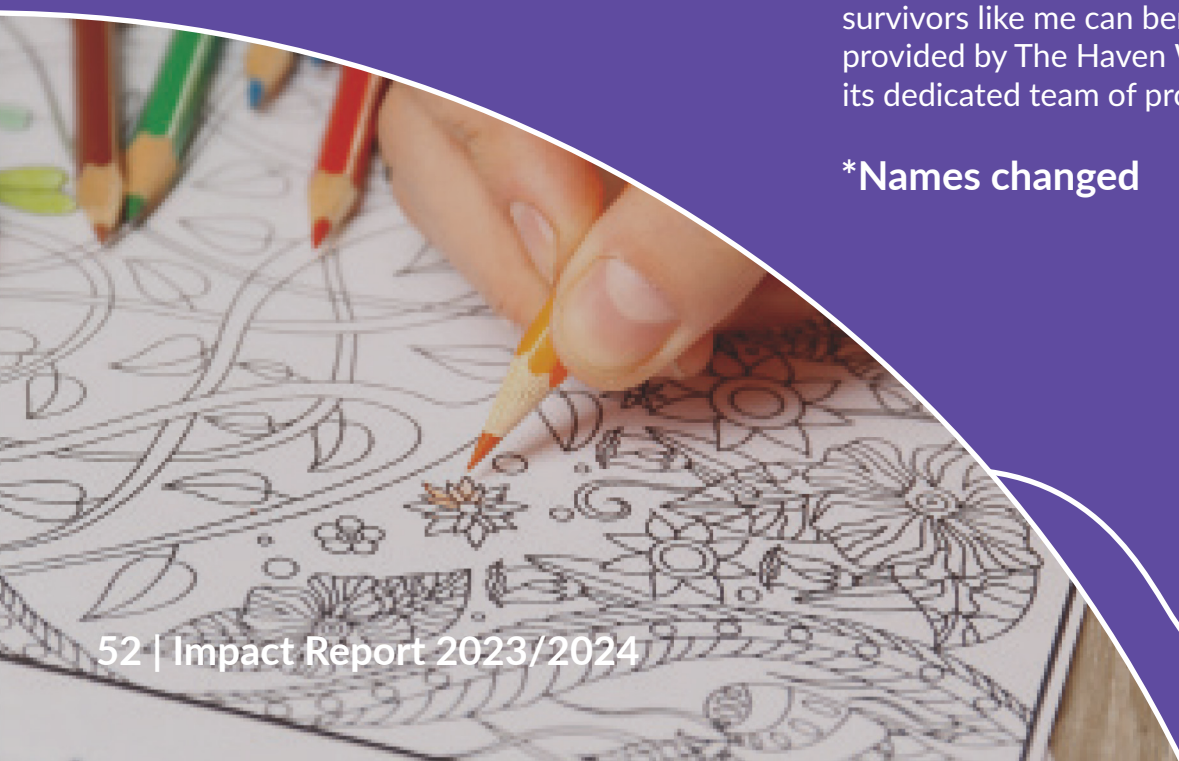
At school, I was on a reduced timetable and didn’t participate in lessons or schoolwork. I spent most of my time with a teacher’s assistant because I would often walk out and refuse to participate. Sometimes, I would even lash out at staff and become violent. I knew I needed help, but I didn’t know where to turn. That’s when I was referred to The Haven

Wolverhampton by the early help team. I was hesitant at first, but the Children’s Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (CHISVA) quickly put me at ease. They asked me about my favourite things, and when I mentioned Harry Potter, they promised to bring me some colouring pages. This small gesture helped me feel more comfortable to open up.

Over time, my CHISVA adapted their approach to suit my needs, using talking and play-based sessions to help me learn about safety planning, boundaries and healthy relationships. I began to understand that what my father did wasn’t safe for me, and I started to feel more confident and self-assured.

With the support of The Haven Wolverhampton and my CHISVA, I started attending school full-time and participating in my lessons. I’m now doing well academically and have made significant improvements in my behaviour. I’m forever grateful for the help and guidance I received, and I know that other survivors like me can benefit from the services provided by The Haven Wolverhampton and its dedicated team of professionals.

*Names changed



Initial Situation

Disclosure: Lily suffered sexual abuse from her biological father since the age of 5.

Early Challenges: Diagnosed with ADHD and suspected autism.

Behavioural Issues: Struggled with emotional and behavioural issues at school.

Support Provided

Emotional Support: Lily was referred to a Children's Independent Sexual Violence Advisor.

Customised Therapy: Adapted sessions with a focus on talking and play-based activities.

Safety Planning Education: Personal space and boundaries and identifying trusted individuals.

Outcome

Building Trust: Lily became more open to discussing difficult topics.

Emotional Growth: Improved emotional well-being and self-confidence.

Academic Progress: Lily's behaviour and academic performance at school significantly improved.

Spotlight: Our Collaborative Approach

Partnership working is at the heart of The Haven Wolverhampton's mission to support women and children affected by domestic abuse. By collaborating with diverse organisations, we can amplify our impact, access more resources, and provide comprehensive support tailored to the needs of our service users.

This year, some of our key partnerships include:

City of Wolverhampton Council (CWC)

The City of Wolverhampton's Domestic Abuse Strategy exemplifies the power of strategic partnerships. Through this initiative, agencies from across statutory and voluntary sectors are collaborating to develop the city's strategic aims for the next three-five years. We have been actively involved in crafting an overarching plan that will guide all domestic abuse and support services in the city, ensuring a unified and effective approach to tackling domestic abuse.

Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)

We are a key partner in Wolverhampton's MARAC process. Our Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) service attend weekly MARAC meetings where we collaborate with agencies across Wolverhampton—such as Police, Housing, Social Care, and Health services—to build safety and support plans for women and children from a multi-agency perspective.

P3

Our collaboration with P3, a national service supporting individuals experiencing homelessness, has been transformative. During this first year of our partnership with P3, our Community Domestic Abuse Keyworkers are stationed at P3's accommodation units every Wednesday.

This drop-in service supports women who are rough sleeping or receiving aid from P3's team, providing essential domestic abuse safety planning, ongoing support, and referrals to additional services. This partnership extends our reach and ensures that even the most vulnerable individuals, some of whom may not be able to reach us, receive the help they need.

Recovery Near You (RNY)

Recovery Near You has been instrumental in supporting women in our services struggling with alcohol and substance use. We have also delivered sessions on Clare's Law and accessing support at its Women's Empowerment Group, along with ongoing safety planning advice from our Independent Domestic Violence Advisor service.

Refugee and Migrant Centre

We have continued to refer women with no recourse to public funds to the Refugee and Migrant Centre for additional support. It provides advice and guidance tailored to the individual needs of these women. It also refers women to us when it identifies domestic abuse cases during its assessments.

This partnership has been so successful that we are in the process of developing formal referral pathways.

Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust

We work closely with the Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust health visiting service, which comes onsite to support women and children living in our safe accommodation with healthcare services.

Wolverhampton Homes

Wolverhampton Homes is a vital partner, providing housing for women we move on from accommodation and offering emergency temporary accommodation where our community-based services can continue to provide support. We collaborate closely on MARAC referrals and allocate support accordingly. They also manage the Wolverhampton Sanctuary Scheme, where we refer women to receive target hardening and assessments on their homes, enabling us to help them stay safe.

Wolverhampton University

Our partnership with Wolverhampton University has continued to strengthen as we offer placements to students within our counselling and accommodation teams. This collaboration not only provides invaluable practical experience for students but also enhances our services with fresh insights and additional support, enriching the care we provide to women and children.

These partnerships illustrate our commitment to working collaboratively to aid our service delivery in Wolverhampton. By leveraging the expertise and resources of our partners, we can offer more comprehensive and effective support, helping to build a safer, more supportive community, further solidifying our impact and dedication to creating lasting change.



Our early intervention initiatives

Discover how we educated and empowered the wider community by providing essential training, supporting employers to create safer workplaces, engaging with young people in schools to dispel myths and stereotypes, and campaigning to raise awareness.



The Haven Training

Our training initiatives have been pivotal in raising awareness and driving positive change both internally and externally. Through our Purple Pledge initiative, we continue to engage employers in implementing domestic abuse policies, fostering safer and more supportive work environments.

Working with Telford and Wrekin Council, we delivered Domestic Abuse Awareness and Domestic Abuse Ambassador/Champion training, reaching employers, employees, and the community. Our specialised training on topics such as supporting over 55s, female genital mutilation, and non-fatal strangulation have been particularly well-received by healthcare and multi-agency professionals.

We also had great success engaging with West Mercia Police as part of our work with Telford and Wrekin Council. This partnership with Telford and Wrekin Council alone has allowed us to train over 500 attendees, including housing providers, commercial organisations, medical centres, schools, community organisations, the fire service, councillors, and others.

To expand access to our training, we launched Domestic Abuse Awareness and Female Genital Mutilation e-learning courses this year. These courses provide a flexible and cost-effective way for individuals to empower themselves, offering consistent, high-quality content, and interactive features.

By equipping attendees with knowledge and tools, our training programmes contribute to a more informed and supportive community, aiding in the prevention of domestic abuse and the promotion of safer environments for everyone.

Total number of
people trained:

2,203

CREATING SAFER



WORKPLACES

The Purple Pledge Conference

The Haven Wolverhampton has continued to drive systemic change in addressing domestic abuse through our Purple Pledge campaign and this year, we organised the inaugural Purple Pledge Conference, bringing together a diverse group of stakeholders, including victims, survivors, changemakers, and professionals. The conference featured outstanding speakers, such as Jess Phillips, MP; Tom McNeil, Assistant Police and Crime Commissioner; and Rubie Marie, a survivor. Virtual contributions included Nicole Jacobs, the Domestic Abuse Commissioner, and Andy Street, Mayor of West Midlands. The event also hosted impactful workshops by organisations like She Beasts CIC and Fearless Female Education, focusing on holistic approaches to rebuilding confidence and empowering women through self-defence.

Topics covered during the conference included domestic abuse and men, forced marriage, honour-based abuse, the law and policing, childhood domestic abuse experiences, spiking, wellbeing and fitness, co-parenting and domestic abuse, violence against women and girls, and training and education.

By convening such a wide range of voices and expertise, the Purple Pledge Conference reinforced our commitment to fostering dialogue and collaboration in the fight against domestic abuse.

The conference was a resounding success, with an impressive turnout that highlighted the community's commitment to addressing domestic abuse. This collaborative event created a powerful platform for dialogue and networking. Attendees had the opportunity to engage with the impactful speakers, expanding their insights into critical issues. To extend the conference's reach and impact, a digital download of the event, including all talks and shared information, is available on our website. This resource ensures that the conference's valuable discussions and knowledge continue to inspire and educate beyond the event itself.



Welcome



What's on



Fundraising



Lunch is served



MP Jess Phillips with the Training Team



Our Family Wizard



Rubie Marie tells her story



She Beasts CIC



Dawn Dines from Stamp Out Spiking



Tom McNeil - Assistant Police & Crime Commissioner

Case Study:

Millennium Point

Millennium Point, a Birmingham-based charity focused on advancing STEM education in the West Midlands, has long been committed to the wellbeing of its small but dedicated team of around 32 staff members. Recognising the importance of creating a supportive work environment, this year, Millennium Point joined The Haven Wolverhampton's Purple Pledge campaign.

Even before signing up to The Haven's Purple Pledge, Millennium Point already had a strong emphasis on health and wellbeing in the workplace. However, its efforts lacked specific measures related to domestic abuse. This gap became evident during its participation in the West Midlands Combined Authority's Thrive at Work programme, which encouraged employers to develop comprehensive health and wellbeing strategies that included support for domestic abuse.

Millennium Point's journey with The Haven's Purple Pledge began with the development of a formal domestic abuse policy. This policy was designed to provide a clear framework for supporting employees, ensuring that they had access to the necessary resources and assistance when dealing with domestic abuse. To effectively implement this policy, the organisation trained several staff members as Domestic Abuse Champions, ensuring that there were both male and female representatives available to offer support.

Communication played a critical role in the successful rollout of the new policy. The organisation used a multi-faceted approach,

including email communications, team briefings, and a dedicated health and wellbeing newsletter. These efforts were supplemented by visible reminders in the workplace, such as notice boards and table talkers, ensuring that all employees were aware of the support available to them.

The presence of Domestic Abuse Champions who are trained to respond to disclosures of abuse and provide appropriate support has reinforced the organisation's commitment to providing a safe and supportive environment. Additionally, the introduction of a "Flee Fund," offering financial assistance to employees needing to escape abusive situations, has further demonstrated the organisation's dedication to supporting its team members in times of crisis.

The organisation's Thrive at Work survey, which assesses employee awareness and the effectiveness of health and wellbeing initiatives, revealed a 100% awareness rate of the domestic abuse policy among staff. This high level of awareness highlights the success of Millennium Point's communication efforts and the effectiveness of the Purple Pledge in integrating domestic abuse support into the workplace culture.

Looking ahead, Millennium Point aims to further enhance its support for employees by focusing on line manager training. This training will equip managers with the skills needed to sensitively handle disclosures of domestic abuse and provide appropriate support. Additionally, the organisation plans

to continue sharing information about The Haven Wolverhampton with other businesses and organisations, advocating for the wider adoption of domestic abuse policies in workplaces across the region.

Millennium Point's commitment to The Haven's Purple Pledge has not only provided essential support to its employees but has also fostered a culture of openness and trust. By addressing domestic abuse as a workplace issue, Millennium Point has set a powerful example of how organisations can play a vital role in supporting the wellbeing of their staff, ensuring that no one has to face such challenges alone.



The Purple Pledge: Domestic Abuse Champion Training Testimonial

“The Domestic Abuse Champion training which I received from The Haven was brilliant. It was delivered in an extremely sensitive, knowledgeable, and informative way. The course was a real eye-opener and has really made me think about possible scenarios which could occur to colleagues, friends or family, both in the workplace and my personal life. The course has given me the confidence to know how to address any possible situations and how our company can provide the best support. As a result of the training and as part of our Health and Wellbeing Strategy, our company introduced a ‘Flee Fund’ which reinforces the message of support to our staff members. I would highly recommend the Domestic Abuse Champion training to all organisations.”

Lily Francis, People, Learning and Development Adviser, Millennium Point

MENgage & EmpowHER Programme

Our MENgage and EmpowHER programme is a vital component of our preventive work, focusing on challenging harmful stereotypes and promoting gender equality to foster healthier, more respectful relationships among young people. In the year 2023/24, approximately 700 Year 9 pupils from various Wolverhampton schools participated, highlighting our growing reach and impact.

The programme is designed to raise awareness among young boys and girls about the connection between stereotypical gender-role expectations and violence. Participants develop the skills and confidence necessary to assert their rights, challenge unacceptable behaviour, and foster a more equitable and respectful society.

Building trust and engagement with students is a huge part of our success with this programme. Many stay after sessions to share experiences and seek advice. Our surveys showed that 72% of students changed their thinking about gender roles and expectations, and 75% committed to making positive changes, such as listening more to women and supporting mental health.

However, we faced challenges, such as managing classroom disruptions. Some schools handpicked students for the sessions, leading to concerns about being “targeted” as problem students. The influence of online culture, especially from figures like Andrew Tate, challenged our message, as some boys expressed misogynistic views and were initially resistant to our teachings. In one school, we observed an issue with boys hitting girls, which was framed by students as “banter” or akin to “messing about with your brother.” This normalisation of toxic behaviours highlights the urgent need for this programme.

Looking forward, we will continue to seek opportunities to stay current with youth trends, allowing us to quickly debunk harmful attitudes and ensure our message resonates. We are developing a comprehensive toolkit to train new programme leads, enabling wider programme delivery and equipping other groups to replicate our success.

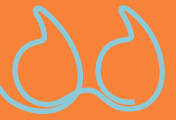
Through MENgage and EmpowHER, we are committed to shaping a future where respect and equality serve as the bedrock of society, and we are dedicated to expanding our impact and proactively tackling emerging challenges as they arise.

Total number of students reached:

699

“I think this is a really good programme for the children. It is so important for them to have these conversations. You handled those difficult questions and comments very well.”

PSHE Teacher



“It’s really helpful talking about these things because most of the time teachers and parents don’t talk about it and these conversations are important for our development as young people.”

Student



“I now understand that I don’t have to be superman, or super strong. I can just be me.”

Student



“I can now see that if we fight for equality, things get better for everyone.”

Student



Championing Change: Our Community and Campaigns

In the past year, we have significantly leveraged our digital platforms to connect with our audience and raise awareness about domestic abuse and violence. Our strategic use of awareness days and survivor-led campaigns has amplified our message and engaged our community of supporters, survivors, and allies. Through our pro bono collaboration with Costello, we designed a history timeline and produced promotional videos that narrate our journey and achievements. These visual elements have enriched our storytelling and brought our history to life for a wider audience.

Our ongoing connections with the media, particularly with The Express & Star and WCRFM, have bolstered our outreach efforts.

We were also featured on the BBC Radio and website for our impactful “Buy a Brick” campaign, highlighting the importance of safe housing for those escaping domestic violence. Our community and campaign initiatives reflect our ongoing commitment to raising awareness, fostering community engagement, and driving societal change. These initiatives have resulted in increased reach and engagement across all platforms, further evidenced by our improving Google reviews rating. Here are some highlights:

50th Anniversary Stories and History Timeline

We celebrated our milestone by sharing compelling stories from our history, showcasing the evolution of The Haven, and our ongoing fight for women’s rights. We also launched our history timeline.

Mayor’s Chosen Charity

We were honoured to be named one of the mayor’s chosen charities during the mayoral inauguration celebration in May. Subsequently, we were featured alongside a survivor who has been in our services in a promotional video by the mayor’s team. This recognition highlights the importance of our work in the community and strengthens our commitment to supporting women and children.

Community Partnerships:

We were featured in Dudley Building Society’s Community Support Fund video and benefitted from its generosity. Body Shop Wolverhampton also supported us during its last Christmas campaign before closing, demonstrating the power of corporate partnerships in driving change.



Mayor's Chosen Charity

16 Days of Activism

This year's theme, "UNITE! INVEST to prevent violence against women and girls," allowed us to focus on 'The Cost of Leaving,' highlighting the financial and emotional barriers faced by survivors. We aimed to shift the narrative from 'Why didn't she leave?' to 'Why didn't he stop?' We also supported the Wolverhampton City Council's Orange Wolves campaign and we were stationed in the Mander Centre for a few days promoting our services to the community.

Welcome To Wolverhampton

We participated in two events to welcome new refugees to the city, informing them about our support services and demonstrating our commitment to inclusion and diversity.

Helpline Awareness Day

Our drop-in stakeholder networking event provided agencies with insights into our 24-Hour Helpline, now accredited by Helplines Partnership and our referral pathways.

Empurple Week

Inspire Inclusion: Embracing the global theme "Inspire Inclusion," we encouraged our community to celebrate women's achievements and promote diversity and empowerment. We shared inspiring stories of women making history and amplified the voices of survivors, highlighting how inclusion and empowerment can create a brighter future for all.



Total social media reach:

79,000+

Total website clicks:

12,000+

Total website sessions:

60,000+



Welcome to Wolverhampton event

Our fundraising initiatives

Discover how our fundraising efforts have empowered us to provide crucial support to women and children affected by domestic abuse.

From creative community events to impactful corporate partnerships and generous donations, these initiatives have been vital in sustaining our services and expanding our reach, ensuring that we can continue to make a difference.



Fundraising

This year was a special milestone for The Haven, and it inspired a remarkable year of fundraising activities. Our efforts were recognised with an award for Marketing Activity of the Year at the Enjoy Wolverhampton's BID Excellence Awards. This award was for our 104 Challenge, which highlights the tragic statistic of 104 women killed annually by current or former partners in the UK, resonated deeply with the community. Supporters were encouraged to walk, run, or cycle 104 miles, with businesses and individuals participating enthusiastically. The event has raised nearly £20,000 since its inception, with creative spins like Porsche Wolverhampton's team completing 104 laps at Aldersley Running Track.

Our Christmas appeal was a testament to the generosity of our community, as supporters donated gifts, decorations, and items for Christmas dinner. Thanks to their kindness, we provided a full Christmas experience for those in refuge and festive-themed food parcels for those we support in the community.

This year, we also launched The Haven Lottery as part of The Wolverhampton Community Lottery. Although still in its early stages, it has already raised £500, offering an easy way for supporters to contribute while having a chance to win prizes. We were also privileged to meet Prince Edward at a Coronation event celebrating local charities.

Our key fundraising highlights include:

- 50th Anniversary Ball: Our 50th Anniversary Ball was a highlight of the year, held at the magnificent Grand Station on October 6th. This extraordinary event saw over 400 guests gather to celebrate five decades of impact, making it four times larger than any previous ball. Guests enjoyed a lavish three-course meal, accompanied by live entertainment, including The Voice's Megan Reece and a surprise flash mob performance featuring seemingly ordinary guests and waiters. The event was a resounding success, raising an impressive £20,000.



Branded cookies for our networking event



Marketing Activity of the Year - Winners for the 104

- **Welsh Three Peaks Challenge:** As part of our 50th celebrations, we introduced the Welsh 3 Peaks Challenge, where 13 determined participants conquered three of Wales' highest peaks within 24 hours. This challenging feat showcased the dedication and resilience of our supporters. We raised over £6,000.

- **Golf Day:** Our annual Golf Day at Oxley Golf Club was another sold-out success, bringing together local businesses and friends for a day of golfing, camaraderie, and entertainment by ex-Wolves legend Matt Murray. The event further strengthened community ties raising over £7,500.

- **The Big Give:** Matched giving campaigns with The Big Give were another highlight. Our Christmas appeal raised £17,000 and the Kind2Mind campaign generating nearly £10,000.

- **Donations:** Donations of hope from one-off donors and monthly givers have been instrumental in enabling us to plan for the future and ensure access to vital support. Collectively we raised nearly £40,000.

Our 50th Anniversary year has been one of celebration, gratitude, and impactful fundraising. The generosity and support of our community have been nothing short of inspiring, reinforcing our commitment to providing a haven for those in need. We are profoundly grateful to our donors, supporters, sponsors, and to all event attendees, whose commitment to our cause has been essential in providing vital support to women and children fleeing domestic abuse. We deeply appreciate the ongoing kindness and commitment of our community, and we look forward to building on this momentum in the coming year.



Santa's workshop was full to capacity



Telling Prince Edward about The Haven at a Coronation Party

50th Anniversary: Fundraising Events in Pictures

From our Welsh Three Peaks Challenge, to our JUMP 50 Sky Dive, this was certainly an eventful year! We are thankful for all our Haven Heroes who are always quick to jump on a challenge or attend an event to support the work that we do at The Haven.



Galentine's networking event with Claire



Climbing the Welsh 3 Peaks



BNI Mander Team at our Golf Day



Golf Day winning team



Networking at its finest



Quiz night fun



Saturday JUMP 50 Skydivers



Supporters IT-Works on Golf Day



Team 104 challenge



The top of Cadair Idris



TRIM Team on Golf Day



Women who network together rise together

Spotlight: Our Jump 50 Heroes



Who: 50 Haven Heroes - brave supporters of The Haven Wolverhampton

What: Jump 50 (Sponsored skydive event)

When: June 2023

Why: To raise awareness and vital funds for The Haven, supporting its mission to help vulnerable women and children escape abuse and build safer futures.

This year, our Haven Heroes bravely supported The Haven's mission by taking on challenges to help raise awareness and funds for women and children fleeing abusive situations. One of those challenges was Jump 50, a skydiving event celebrating The Haven's 50 years of support. We were in search of 50 skydivers, each representing a year from our history. The response was overwhelming, with 56 participants.

Community support is essential for organisations like ours. It amplifies our efforts and extends our reach, allowing us to provide a lifeline and resources to those in need. Our heroes' courage and enthusiasm help us not only raise funds but also inspire others to join our cause.

The thrill of their 14,000 ft freefall and the breathtaking views they experienced serve as a reminder of the bravery it takes for women and children to leave abusive environments and start anew. This exhilarating experience symbolises the journey of survivors who summon their inner strength to overcome adversity and embrace a brighter future.

The overwhelming response to our call for skydivers has been truly inspiring leading us to bring back this challenge. We are grateful for the enthusiasm and support from participants and spectators alike. Stay tuned to our website for updates on future events, as we continue to create opportunities for empowerment and exhilarating experiences.



Up up and away Jade goes



Team Porsche

“When the plane doors opened, I froze and didn’t think I would be able to do it, but remembering why I was doing it gave me the motivation to jump! I wanted to do something that pushed me completely out of my comfort zone to show everyone who sponsors me for all my challenges, just how much The Haven means to me.”

Laura Cahill

“Challenge Complete! It was awesome! The real heroes are the women who are brave enough to make a stand and take back their lives. Thank you for letting me be a part of the challenge!”

Claire Secker

“Through this challenge, we wanted to honour the bravery and resilience of the women at The Haven, and contribute to the vital work being done by The Haven Wolverhampton to support those in need. It has pushed us outside of our comfort zone, testing us personally, but we have shared an incredible experience together.”

Team TPSquared

“Completing the Skydive for The Haven Wolverhampton was an unbelievable adventure that brought our team at Porsche Wolverhampton together in ways we could never have imagined. It was an experience that will forever hold a special place in our hearts.”

Porsche Wolverhampton

Total raised: £30,000

Empowering Our People: Building a Stronger Workforce

This year, we have focused on improving our Human Resources function to directly benefit our staff in various ways. Recruitment remains a sector-wide challenge however by reviewing and improving our employee benefits and prioritising the health and wellbeing of staff, we aim to attract and retain talented individuals and create a positive work environment for everyone. Another key priority has been enhancing internal communications to keep the team consistently informed and celebrated, promoting transparency and a sense of accomplishment.

We've also made significant investments in advanced data systems, reducing administrative burdens and allowing staff to focus more on core responsibilities. This fosters a more efficient and fulfilling work environment, ultimately reducing stress and boosting productivity.

Training and ongoing professional development have been crucial considerations for us as we support staff. We continued building on our toolbox talks, which provide staff with the opportunity to come together for half-hour discussions on key topics that impact our collective work. In addition, we introduced Development Days this year, where each employee is given two days annually to expand their skills. Whether gaining knowledge within their own team or exploring another department, these days help staff to upskill, pursue career development goals, and ignite new interests across the organisation.

We remain committed to prioritising staff wellbeing, recognising the importance of a supported and healthy workforce. Initiatives such as bake sales, virtual quizzes, and social events have fostered camaraderie, improved engagement, and enhanced team morale.



Quizzing with the Mayor of Wolverhampton



Judges for the first team bake-off of the year



Happy Halloween from Team Haven

This year's 50th Anniversary Ball saw the highest turnout of staff at one of our events. To celebrate their dedication, staff were offered free tickets, and the atmosphere was simply amazing. The event not only recognised the contributions of our team but also provided a unique opportunity for staff to connect and celebrate together, strengthening team spirit and reinforcing a sense of unity across the organisation.

Looking ahead, we are excited to strengthen two-way communication through the relaunch of our Employee Voice Forum, giving staff an active role in shaping workplace culture. These initiatives are part of our commitment to creating a supportive, transparent, and responsive environment for our dedicated staff.



Christmas jumper day in Santa's Workshop



Winner of our last team bake-off of the year



Reflecting on Our Challenges and Looking Ahead

Our final thoughts as we embrace the future with resilience and hope

Our jubilee year was a remarkable year for us. As we celebrated our 50th anniversary with various initiatives and supported numerous vulnerable women and children, we also encountered challenges that ultimately helped us grow and improve.

One such challenge was data collection and management. Our Case Management System (CMS) had limitations, which led to manual data handling by some teams. Although this hindered our ability to innovate and precisely measure our impact, it provided a valuable opportunity to refine our processes and explore more effective solutions.

We have invested in a new CMS and a Data and Systems Officer to support our Strategic Lead: Data and Technology. This digital transformation is set to help us innovate, map the journey of those we support, measure our impact, refine our services, improve efficiency, inform strategic decisions, and identify areas where staff can be upskilled.

Recruitment has also been a persistent challenge, reflecting a broader issue across the sector. The increasing complexity of needs among the women and children we support has meant that their stays with us are often longer, adding to the strain on our resources. Additionally, the ongoing housing crisis has exacerbated this situation, making it difficult for those we support to move on from our services as quickly as we would like.

This year, West Midlands Police realigned the Local Policing Areas (LPAs) to improve collaboration on violence against women and girls (VAWG), requiring us to review and adjust our internal processes. West Midlands Police also introduced a Domestic Abuse Desk in April 2023, leading to an increase in their attendance at domestic abuse incidents. We maintain a strong partnership with the Domestic Abuse Safeguarding Officers (DASO) and the MARAC team, enabling us to offer robust support to high-risk women.

However, for women not deemed high-risk,

the lack of clear information-sharing pathways has been a challenge.

We often struggle to obtain updates on legal cases, such as bail conditions or custody status, due to restrictions on information sharing and GDPR compliance. This creates barriers for the women we support in accessing vital information about their cases.

Moreover, ongoing challenges with the entire criminal justice system have highlighted delays and difficulties in securing justice for women. Systemic issues, including inadequate training for new officers, cases being marked as 'No Further Action' without Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) review, lenient sentences, and prolonged court adjournments, create a system unfit to support victims of abuse. This was evident in Emma's* case, where her perpetrator repeatedly requested adjournments for assessments.

The court granted these, despite the trauma this caused Emma*, delaying sentencing by seven months until CPS intervention halted further postponements. These systemic issues further strain our resources, as we strive to provide continued emotional and practical support throughout extended legal processes. Despite these challenges, we are optimistic about the future.

As we navigate these challenges, we are deeply grateful to our funders and partners. Thanks to their valuable support, we can carry out our mission effectively. We are eager to continue our joint efforts and make a meaningful impact in the lives of those we serve.



	Challenge	Looking ahead
Case management and data collection	Our Case Management System (CMS) was limited and we struggled to record meaningful data, leading to some teams managing data manually.	We have invested in a new Case Management System (CMS) and hired a Data and Systems Officer to support the Strategic Lead: Data and Technology. This will help us to collect meaningful data, map service journeys, measure impact, refine services, improve efficiency, inform strategic decisions, and identify staff training needs.
Recruitment	A sector-wide issue impacting our ability to hire and retain essential staff.	We are reviewing our recruitment strategies to attract and retain skilled staff, despite sector-wide challenges.
Increasing complex needs	More women and children coming to us with complex needs, resulting in longer stays.	We are expanding our services to cater to the more complex needs of the women and children we support.
Housing crisis	Prolonged stays due to housing shortages.	We are collaborating with housing authorities and other organisations to find long-term housing solutions for our service users, helping to alleviate the extended stays in our accommodations.
Criminal justice partnerships	Information-sharing barriers. Systemic issues within the justice system, including delays in sentencing, inadequate officer training, and frequent adjournments, further complicate support for victims.	We are recruiting a Criminal Justice Independent Domestic Violence Advisor to improve communication between the women we support and our criminal justice partners. This role will also help us strengthen our links with the Crown Prosecution Services, witness care, police, and HM Courts & Tribunals Service. We have also joined the Black Country Magistrate Court User Group, which will help us contribute to the development of policies and practices.

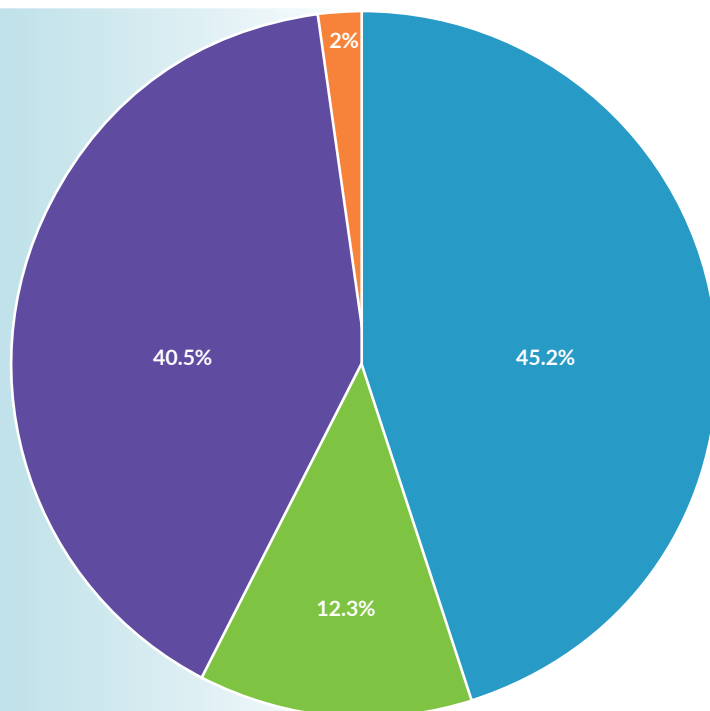
Finances

Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2024	Unrestricted Funds (£)	Restricted Funds (£)	2024 Total Funds (£)	2023 Total Funds (£)
Fixed assets tangible assets	2,098,134	-	2,098,134	1,971,366
Current assets	338,029	1,172	339,201	255,959
debtors	290,816	257,793	548,609	1,198,306
cash at bank	628,845	258,965	887,810	1,454,265
Creditors amounts falling due within 1 year	(383,412)	(141,606)	(525,018)	(310,883)
Net current assets	245,433	117,359	362,792	1,143,382
Total assets less current liabilities	2,343,567	117,359	2,460,926	3,114,748
Creditors amounts falling due after more than 1 year	(502,120)	-	(502,120)	(499,959)
Net Assets	1,841,447	117,359	1,958,806	2,614,789
Funds	-	-	1,841,447	2,271,231
unrestricted funds	-	-	117,359	2,614,789
restricted funds	-	-	-	-
Total funds	-	-	1,958,806	2,614,789

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to charitable companies subject to the small companies regime.

How The Haven is funded: Based on the total annual income of **£3,128,516**

Grants & Contracts	45.2%
Fundraising	12.3%
Accommodation Charges	40.5%
Other	2%



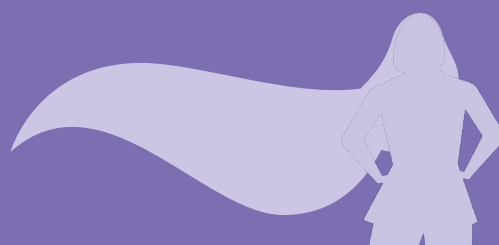
93% of our expenditure was spent on services.

Industry average is 85%.



Together with our supporters, we raised **£385,040** this year, making a life-changing difference for women and children through our essential services.

Our senior management team costed **7.4%** of our total expenditure.



The generosity of our supporters led to a significant **8.36%** increase in donations.

Acknowledgements

The Haven Wolverhampton's board, staff, and volunteers would like to express our gratitude to all our partners, funders, supporters, and stakeholders who have made our work possible. Your invaluable contributions have allowed us to provide essential support to women and children affected by domestic abuse and ensure their voices are heard.

We'd like to acknowledge some of our significant funders and supporters from the past year:

29th May 1961 Charitable Trust

BBC Children in Need

Charles Plater Trust

City of Wolverhampton Council

Deloitte Digital Grants

Energy Industry Voluntary
Redress Scheme

Eveson Trust

Hemraj Goyal Foundation

Henry Smith Charity

National Express Foundation

National Lottery Community Fund

Nationwide Community Grants

Norfolk Community Foundation
through Bolton Trust Revenue Fund

Sandwell Metropolitan
Borough Council

Santander UK Foundation Limited

Severn Trent Community Fund

Telford & Wrekin Council

The Eaton Fund

The Rowlands Trust

The Steel Charitable Trust

The WISH Fund Catalytic Grant
Programme supported by the
Clothworker's Foundation







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Call us for free, at anytime of the day.

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