



Women's Aid. Supporting Survivors. Restoring Lives.

ANNUAL REPORT 2025/2026

Restore Women's Aid – operating name of Bury St Edmunds Women's Aid Centre Ltd

Registered Charity No. 276883

Company Registration No. 1338724

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PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

Domestic Abuse is Unacceptable

Domestic abuse, in all its forms, impacts ordinary people and their families and experiencing it will always be traumatising. The women, men, children and young people we support, both in our Refuge and through our Outreach Services, are offered a non-judgmental service tailored to their individual needs. We believe that those impacted by domestic abuse need assistance, support, trust and a feeling of safety delivered in an honest, transparent and trauma informed manner.

We offer practical and emotional support to all and understand that the children who have lived in situations where there is domestic abuse, have also been affected by it and their needs may require addressing separately. The traumatic experience of living with domestic abuse is often surrounded by other complex issues that we help our clients and residents to address. RESTORE Women's Aid believes that we must take a holistic approach in order to empower our clients, our residents, and their children to live a life free from domestic abuse.

Vision: To live in a society where domestic abuse is unacceptable

Mission: To provide a safe, empowering and person-centred service to anyone who has experienced or is experiencing domestic abuse.

Values: To work alongside people who have experienced domestic abuse with honesty, respect, trust and fairness.

OUR AIMS

- to provide temporary accommodation at our Refuge for women* and their children who are fleeing domestic abuse also, to support these people as they settle into their new community
- to meet the needs of children and young people affected by Domestic Abuse through a dedicated Children and Young Person's Service
- to facilitate community-based education programmes that enable people to better understand the behaviours of an abuser and to empower them to take control of their own future
- to offer support and advice through our Helpline and Outreach Service to any person who asks for it
- to raise community awareness of Domestic Abuse issues and of the services we offer
- to provide therapeutic support to all survivors of domestic abuse who are using our services
- to provide practical support to people who have experienced domestic abuse.

**The refuge is a service for females only and males up to the age of 16, as is legislated for under the*

Equality Act 2010, Part 7, Paragraph 27 on single-sex spaces

DIRECTORS/TRUSTEES

Chairperson	Nicola Iannelli-Popham
Vice Chair & Company Secretary	Fiona Harbron
Treasurer	Elizabeth Larcombe
Trustee	Harry Badman
Trustee	Charlene Boyaram
Trustee	Jackie Burnett
Trustee	Andy Connacher
Trustee	Tina Dye
Trustee	Pat Leach
Trustee	Nicola Cottingham
Trustee	Hannah Stammers

PATRONS REPORT



Jeannie Bloomfield

I start my report this year by saying it's now over 50 years since we started offering our services to vulnerable women and their families who are victims of domestic abuse.

Our team of staff, trustees, volunteers and young ambassadors have done an amazing job to keep us in the spotlight.

The most memorable moment for me was in October 2025 when many victims, including myself, bravely stood on the stage at the Athenaeum to speak at the Restore 'Learning from Lived Experience' conference about their experiences of domestic abuse. We also placed 80 pairs of shoes inside the Athenaeum foyer to highlight the number of female victims who lost their lives to Domestic Abuse in the previous year.

I have enjoyed playing a role in fundraising and giving talks to local community groups; to raise awareness of the work we offer our vulnerable families. I also let people who attend my talks know about what's on offer at our refuge and how our qualified and caring staff and volunteers help victims start to feel safe again. I have been fortunate enough to be accompanied by members of staff and a volunteer to some of these talks.

I have enjoyed helping and attending our SODA (Survivors of Domestic Abuse) group and coffee mornings to offer support and understanding to our clients. It also gives them the opportunity to support and encourage each other to live free from abuse.

I feel very proud to play a small part by being involved with such a fabulous group of dedicated people who give vulnerable victims of Domestic Abuse hope and encouragement to move onto a better life.

CHAIR OF TRUSTEES REPORT



Nicola Iannelli-Popham

The start of 2025-2026 saw Restore Women's Aid in the midst of planning and executing its further 50th Anniversary celebration events which began in November 2024. One significant occasion was the fashion show/performance put on by the students of Abbeygate 6th Form College with fashion, art creations, poetry and plays produced entirely by the students. It was an inspiring evening that demonstrated how these young people had taken on board all they had learnt about domestic abuse and were able to express their reactions with an admirable depth of understanding.

The second big occasion was our *Domestic Abuse. Learning from Lived Experience* Conference held at the Athenaeum in October 2025 as the closing event of the anniversary year. The attendance at the event and the consequent feedback were overwhelmingly positive and the enormous amount of hard work that our staff and volunteers put in was rewarded by the great success of the day. The powerful and moving stories and experiences described by our speakers were testimonials to the empowering support and assistance that organisations such as Restore can provide.

All the activities undertaken to celebrate the 50th anniversary have contributed to raising our profile as an organisation and to increasing the awareness of domestic abuse in our society, as well as raising funds.

Sadly, two of our Trustees, Sue Dearman and Siobhan O'Neill, resigned for personal reasons during this year, but we have been lucky enough to recruit two replacements – Nicola Cottington and Andy Connacher – who bring their own expertise and knowledge in a number of fields. I feel that our Board has become more diverse and professional as it has developed over the past few years and this will allow the organisation to tackle both current and future problems with greater assurance.

We were honoured to be visited at our Malthouse offices by both the new MP for Bury St Edmunds, Dr. Peter Prinsley, and by the High Sherriff, Gulshan Kayembe. Both have been immensely supportive of our work. Dr Prinsley talked about our activities and services in an address to the House of Commons and the High Sherriff has demonstrated great understanding of what we do on an everyday basis.

The work that our staff do in the Refuge, in our various Community Domestic Abuse Hubs and with children and young people has been consistently praised by both our clients and the various organisations with which we interact and partner. The Board of Trustees is extremely proud of all our employees, and they have contributed not only to the well-being and empowerment of the women, children and young people who use our services but also to the raising of awareness about the effects and presence of domestic abuse in our local society. Our vision and mission are, respectively, to live in a society where domestic abuse is unacceptable and to provide a safe, empowering and person-centred service to anyone who has experienced or is experiencing domestic abuse. We consider that the services we provide respect our mission in full and, we trust that the preventative and awareness raising work done in our schools and with young people is going some way to achieving our vision.

Our hope for the near future is the provision of a new Refuge with self-contained accommodation for women and children as our current, communal living premises do not fully answer the needs of those fleeing domestic abuse. This will require a huge effort on the part of all those involved with Restore, staff, Trustees and volunteers, but we look forward to achieving this goal with enthusiasm and thanks to all those organisations who are participating in its realisation.

We have encountered some considerable difficulties with our outreach premises since the start of the year but, again, this has been tackled by staff with resilience and intelligence, ensuring that our clients have not been disadvantaged or missed out on programmes. Hopefully, this situation will be resolved in the very near future.

In the meantime, as our long-standing and exceptional Finance Manager, Derek Gadd, decided to retire, we have recruited a new Finance Manager as well as a Finance Officer and an Outreach worker. The calibre of applicants for the positions has proved to be yet another demonstration of the increased profile and reputation of Restore.

Before retiring, Derek and the Board began the process of converting Restore to a CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation) rather than a Company Limited by Guarantee, as this will simplify our situation without losing any of the benefits. This process will take some time to complete but we have set the wheels in motion and look forward to achieving this aim in the coming year.

2025-2026 has been another challenging year with a considerable number of problems and changes however we look forward with optimism and hope, secure in the knowledge that we have valuable partners who support us and an exceptional workforce that works tirelessly to achieve our aims.



PRINCIPAL OPERATIONS MANAGER'S REPORT



Katherine Ahluwalia

Our Successes

Reflecting on the past year and recognising our achievements is an essential process, particularly as this has been another significant year of growth and development for our organisation.

To fully understand our progress, it is important to consider the wider UK context in which we operate. The domestic abuse sector continues to face unprecedented demand, with increasing numbers of survivors coming forward to access support. We are especially concerned about the rise in domestic abuse-related suicides, the increasing prevalence of abusive relationships among young people, and the growing complexity of trauma experienced by those we support.

The latest figures from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (year ending March 2025) highlight the scale of the issue:

- **3.8 million individuals** aged 16 and over experienced domestic abuse
- **2.2 million women and 1.5 million men** were affected
- **816,493 domestic abuse-related crimes** were recorded by police
- **54,987 prosecutions** were recorded
- **Fewer than one in five victims report abuse to the police**

Locally, it is estimated that **1 in 3 women and 1 in 6 men in Suffolk** will experience domestic abuse in their lifetime.

These statistics reinforce the critical need for continued, specialist, trauma-informed support and intervention for survivors. Addressing the root causes of domestic abuse remains vital, alongside ensuring accessible, responsive services.

Service Delivery and Community Impact

It is difficult to fully capture the breadth of our work; however, the following highlights demonstrate the impact of our services over the past year.

Rural Community Domestic Abuse Hubs

Alongside our refuge provision in Bury St Edmunds, we have continued to expand and strengthen our **Rural Community Domestic Abuse Hubs** across Bury St Edmunds, Haverhill, Newmarket, and Stowmarket.

These hubs are thriving and play a vital role in addressing gaps in local domestic abuse services, ensuring survivors can access specialist support within their own communities.

Partnership Working and Collaboration

Our achievements are strengthened through our commitment to partnership working. We continue to collaborate with organisations that share our values, adopting a multi-agency approach to deliver the best outcomes for survivors.

We have also expanded our engagement with local businesses, creating pathways for employees to access specialist domestic abuse support.

Most importantly, we recognise **our clients as key partners**. Their lived experiences shape our services, and we remain committed to listening, learning, and amplifying their voices in everything we do.

50th Anniversary Commemorations

We continued to commemorate the **50th anniversary**, a milestone which we celebrated through a year-long programme of events culminating in November 2025.

Key highlights included:

- Launch of our **new brand identity and website**
- Establishment of a thriving **Adult and Young Ambassadors Programme**
- Delivery of our **Lived Experience Conference by Experts**
- A wide range of **community fundraising events**, including pub quizzes, café pop-ups, a 50,000 steps challenge, and a swimathon
- A **Creative Showcase** developed with Abbeygate Sixth Form College featuring fashion, media, drama, photography, and art

We are deeply grateful to everyone who contributed to these events and helped raise awareness of our work. We will continue to build on this increased visibility moving forward.

Additional events and highlights throughout this year included:

- The first **Reclaim the Night March** in Bury St Edmunds
- **International Women's Day** events
- **White Ribbon Campaign** activities
- Mayor of BSE - Charity of the Year 2025

- Bury Free Press Charity of the Year 2025
- Accredited Living Wage Provider

Staff Wellbeing

Our staff are our greatest asset, and their wellbeing remains a top priority.

Working in the domestic abuse sector involves continuous exposure to trauma, increasing the risk of **vicarious trauma**. To support resilience, we provide:

- Regular **Clinical Supervision**
- Structured **Management Supervision**
- Monthly **Wellbeing Hour**
- Annual **Wellbeing Days**

We are currently working towards achieving the **Good Health at Work Gold Award**, funded by Suffolk County Council.

Despite being a small team, our staff achieve extraordinary outcomes. This year, we were also pleased to welcome **four new team members**, strengthening our capacity and expertise.

Professional Development

As a learning organisation, we are committed to continuous development. Our highly skilled team actively engages in training throughout the year.

Recent funding has enabled us to expand our training provision, equipping staff to deliver a broader range of **psycho-educational programmes**, further supporting clients in their recovery from trauma.

Promoting Our Services

Raising awareness of domestic abuse and increasing access to support remains a key priority.

Over the past year, we have delivered numerous:

- Training workshops
- Presentations to community groups, businesses, and statutory organisations
- Sessions for professional networks, housing providers, and agencies

We have also contributed to **local and national media**, helping to highlight the realities of domestic abuse and how survivors can access support.

Funding Successes

We are delighted to report our success in securing funding this year, including grants from:

- The National Lottery
- Lloyds Foundation
- BBC Children in Need
- The Thriving Communities Fund
- Bury St Edmunds Town Council
- Lentonbrook Foundation

These, alongside statutory funding from **Suffolk County Council Community Safety** and the **Police and Crime Commissioner**, have enabled us to sustain and develop our services.

We will continue to diversify our fundraising strategy, including expanding into **corporate partnerships**.

Challenges

Alongside our successes, we recognise the ongoing challenges we face.

We remain concerned about:

- Pressures within the judicial system and poor court outcomes for survivors of domestic abuse
- Ongoing funding uncertainty and budget constraints
- Rising operational costs (utilities, salaries, services)
- Reduced charitable giving due to the economic climate

At the same time, demand for our services continues to increase, driven in part by the cost-of-living crisis, with more individuals requiring support with housing, legal matters, mental health, and basic needs.

Despite these challenges, we remain resilient, adaptive, and committed to delivering high-quality services.

Future Plans

Looking ahead, a key priority is the development of **self-contained refuge accommodation**.

Our current communal model presents challenges for survivors experiencing trauma, including:

- Hyper-vigilance
- Emotional distress

- Difficulty engaging in shared environments

Self-contained accommodation will provide:

- Greater privacy and safety
- Space for individual healing
- Improved capacity for trauma recovery

Alongside this, we will continue to facilitate **safe opportunities for community connection** when survivors feel ready.

We also have a number of exciting collaborative projects planned for 2026 and look forward to sharing further developments as our services continue to develop across Suffolk.

Thank You

Finally, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to:

- Our dedicated staff team
- Our Chair and Board of Trustees
- Derek Gadd, our Finance Manager, upon his retirement
- Our Adult and Young Ambassadors
- Our volunteers
- The communities who support our work

Your commitment and support make everything we achieve possible.



SUPPORT SERVICE MANAGER REPORT



Zoe Gordon

What a whirlwind 2025 was, with the continuation and then conclusion of our 50th Anniversary celebrations! We concluded in October with our amazing conference at the Athenaeum, a highlight for all of us who helped arrange, organise and facilitate on the day, but particularly for our outstanding speakers and appreciative guests. This really was a day to remember. It rounded off the full year of celebratory events which kept us all very busy!

We have increased our Children's Services this year, with the addition of a new playworker, who looks after children whilst mums are attending empowerment groups or our coffee mornings.

Our Young Person's provision has continually grown too, with more schools asking us to provide healthy relationship work both in groups and individually.

Our refuge clients have increased in complexity, and the peaks and troughs of occupancy have continued. It is becoming increasingly obvious that communal living is not always suitable for our very traumatised mums and children.

The two outreach hubs that we introduced in Newmarket and Stowmarket last year continue to grow, albeit slowly. Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill hubs are always hives of activity with well attended Coffee Mornings and regular one to ones.

Our collaboration with Good Health at Work has been very productive, we have achieved both our Bronze and Silver awards and are currently working towards our Gold award. The actions are tailored to our service and staff, ensuring we look after ourselves and each other as well as looking after our clients.

We have seen our relationships with commissioners grow over the last year, and new exciting projects have been launched – watch this space!

Our staff team continues to amaze me every day – the work we do is tough, but every single staff member goes over and above to ensure our clients are well supported and safe. I could not be prouder of the work we do, the outcomes we achieve and the team spirit I see every day.

Good Health @Work Employer



Good Health @Work Employer



REFUGE SUPPORT REPORT

In the past year we have supported 26 women and 33 children in our refuge. Of these women, we have had 18 leave with 5 of those being resettled into new homes. As these figures reflect, we have seen an increase in more complex cases and are once again reminded that not all our clients follow the same path. While our ideal outcome for refuge residents is that they successfully move into a new home, we have to remain mindful of the fact that this will not always happen.

With this in mind, we continue to tailor our support to each individual depending on their needs. This bespoke service allows us to remain flexible with our approach and alter the advice and support we provide accordingly. We have continued to effectively work with multiple agencies to try and achieve positive outcomes for our clients.

Future plans

As more complex cases arise, we will increase our multi agency work accordingly, striving to have links with other professionals to help us achieve the best we can for our clients.

We are also hopeful of a new refuge to accommodate residents in a self-contained environment. This will provide residents the space and privacy they need to process their trauma. Adult and child survivors of domestic abuse often experience heightened sensitivity and vulnerability, along with hyper-vigilance, emotional numbness, and memory fragmentation.

These impacts of trauma make it difficult for survivors to fully engage in their surroundings and in communal settings they can feel disconnected, exposed and overwhelmed which is why we want to provide a refuge that gives them the space and privacy they need to process and recover from the trauma of domestic abuse.

YOUNG PERSONS' SUPPORT REPORT

The Young People's Provision has continued to grow in strength, reputation, and reach over the last year, building strong partnerships with schools, colleges, and community organisations across West and Mid Suffolk. Through direct support, preventative education, and community engagement, the service has continued to empower young people to recognise unhealthy behaviours, build resilience, and access support safely. I have found some of the media around misogyny this year to be quite disheartening; in setting up the empowerment groups and creating and delivering Gender Allyship workshops, I hope to counter act that feeling.

Training and Professional Development

To ensure practice remains current, informed, and responsive to emerging issues affecting young people, I completed a range of specialist training, including:

- Incels and Misogyny (ongoing refresher training to remain informed on current trends)
- Love or Leverage – Child Criminal Exploitation
- Advanced Non-Fatal Strangulation
- Understanding the Impact of Cultural Stigmas on Mental Health and wellbeing
- Keeping young people safe online
- Relational and Developmental Trauma
- Signs of Safety – Positive Endings
- Non-Fatal Strangulation and Young People Conference, Birmingham

Attendance at the Birmingham conference, sponsored by WSCC, significantly increased my confidence and knowledge when discussing non-fatal strangulation with both clients and professionals. This has strengthened my ability to identify risk factors, support disclosures, and provide informed safety planning.

Events and Outreach

I represented Restore at several countywide events, delivering interactive and educational engagement opportunities for young people and professionals.

Events attended included:

- Freshers' Fairs at West Suffolk College and Abbeygate Sixth Form
- Launch of the @YPRestore Instagram account
- Design competition for temporary tattoos

- Two wellbeing events in Haverhill
- Stowmarket Fun Day
- Crucial Crew at West Suffolk College, reaching 1,162 Year 6 students
- Abbeygate Sixth Form Showcase
- Reclaim the Night March - I organised this event - we had 28 people show up and all keen for it to be a yearly event.

The Abbeygate Showcase was particularly inspiring. Students participated in a domestic abuse workshop delivered by me, Cia, and volunteer Claire. Cia shared her lived experience of fleeing domestic abuse and living in refuge accommodation before rebuilding her life free from abuse.

Students responded creatively through mixed media, fashion, art, drama, and dance, producing powerful and moving work. Cia also performed her spoken word piece publicly for the first time, demonstrating significant growth in confidence and self-esteem. Her participation highlighted the positive impact of survivor-led work and the importance of creating safe opportunities for young people to share their voices.

These events and outreach opportunities increased awareness amongst young people around domestic abuse, healthy relationships, and available support services. Young people demonstrated improved confidence in accessing support and speaking openly about difficult experiences, particularly within peer-led and survivor-informed sessions. Engagement across schools and colleges also strengthened the visibility and accessibility of the Young People's Provision, helping more young people become aware of the support available to them.

One-to-One Support

Referrals from schools for one-to-one support remain consistent. I continue to support young people affected by domestic abuse, unhealthy relationships, trauma, and low self-esteem through:

- Exploring relationship red flags
- Teaching boundaries and healthy relationship behaviours
- Supporting emotional regulation and resilience
- Providing safe spaces for reflection and disclosure
- Building confidence, self-worth, and safety awareness

Support has been delivered within:

- Sybil Andrews Academy
- County High School

- King Edward VI School
- Stowupland High School
- Stowmarket High School
- Castle Manor Academy
- Samuel Ward Academy
- West Suffolk College

Young people accessing one-to-one support have shown improved understanding of healthy and unhealthy relationships, alongside increased confidence in setting boundaries and recognising abusive behaviours. Many have developed greater emotional resilience and self-esteem, while also becoming more willing to seek support from trusted adults. Having access to a consistent and trusted support person has reduced feelings of isolation for several young people, with some going on to engage positively in group work, peer support opportunities, and wider school activities following intervention.

Group Work

- Continued delivery of *Escape the Trap* across multiple schools
- Facilitated evening *Escape the Trap* groups at the outreach centre for 18–24-year-olds, including one male and one female group. Thank you to our volunteer Rachel for supporting me.

Group sessions created safe and supportive environments for young people to discuss relationships, gender expectations, abuse, consent, and emotional wellbeing. Young people benefited from increased peer support and reduced isolation, while also developing greater confidence in discussing difficult topics. Participants demonstrated improved understanding of coercive and controlling behaviours, and both male and female attendees engaged positively in conversations around healthy masculinity and respectful relationships. Many young people reported feeling more empowered to challenge harmful behaviours and seek support when needed.

School Engagement – Drop-Down Days and Bespoke Workshops

King Edward VI School

Delivered two Drop-Down Days covering:

- Domestic Abuse
- Sexism, Sexual Harassment, and Peer Accountability

Sessions reached approximately Year 9 and 10 students and encouraged open discussion around harmful behaviours, accountability, and respectful relationships.

Sybil Andrews Academy

Facilitated a bespoke session for a targeted Year 8 group focused on:

- Gender stereotyping
- Sexual harassment
- The effects of pornography

This intervention aimed to challenge problematic behaviours early and encourage empathy, accountability, and respectful attitudes.

Action for Children – Care leavers semi-supported accommodation

Delivered a Healthy Relationships workshop for the housemates – they team everything up with food. The session was called Pastries, Partners and Profiteroles!

WS Training – Haverhill

Delivered a Healthy Relationships workshop for students attending alternative education provision.

West Suffolk College

Facilitated a staff PD Day session on Gender Allyship, supporting staff confidence in addressing sexism, misogyny, and gender-based behaviours within educational settings.

Centre Academy East Anglia

Delivered two workshops focused on accessing help and support. Young Ambassadors Cia and Tasnia attended to share their lived experiences.

Their contributions had a powerful impact on students, demonstrating the value of peer-led engagement and helping young people feel more connected to support services.

Across all school engagement activities, students demonstrated increased understanding of healthy relationships, consent, sexism, misogyny, and peer accountability. Young people engaged positively in discussions around gender-based behaviours and showed greater confidence in identifying trusted adults and support pathways. Staff also reported increased confidence in addressing gender-based issues within educational settings. Peer-led sessions encouraged empathy, openness, and meaningful reflection amongst participants, further reinforcing the value of lived experience within educational work.

Future plans

There are also plans to deliver girls' empowerment groups within schools, aiming to encourage girls to support one another, build confidence, and challenge unhealthy competition and stereotypes.

Alongside this, work is progressing on developing a monthly male group with male volunteers and our male Young Ambassador, promoting positive masculinity, emotional openness, and gender allyship.

We have been working on a media project with SCC VAWG Lead and Cia (Young Ambassador), which has been very interesting and exciting to be a part of.

The theatre project is also continuing to develop into an exciting collaborative piece of work involving the theatre, Brave Futures, and our service. This project aims to creatively explore themes affecting young people while amplifying youth voice and lived experience.

Moving forward, the Young People's Provision will continue to focus on prevention, early intervention, empowerment, and creating safe spaces where young people feel heard, valued, and supported.



CHILD SUPPORT REPORT

Over the past year, the Child Support Team has continued to expand and strengthen the support available to children and families accessing our refuge and wider services.

One of the most significant developments this year has been the recruitment of an additional member of staff in the role of play worker. This role was introduced to provide childcare support while parents attend support groups, meetings, or appointments with refuge workers, as well as allowing parents valuable time to access other support or rest.

The addition of the play worker role has allowed us to increase the amount of direct work undertaken with children in refuge. We have introduced a new process for families entering refuge, which includes providing each child with a memory box which they are invited to personalise through decoration. These boxes are used to collect creations, achievements, memories, and meaningful items throughout their stay with us. Prior to families moving on, the memory boxes are reviewed with the child so they can decide what they would like to keep and what they no longer need. The completed boxes are then wrapped and sent with families to open within their new homes, helping children retain positive memories and recognise their journey and progress.

This year we also introduced One Page Profiles for all children living in refuge and for children attending childcare sessions. These profiles help staff quickly understand each child's individual needs, preferences, worries, and the strategies that may support them when they are feeling sad, frightened, anxious, or emotionally overwhelmed. The profiles are working documents that evolve as relationships are built and understanding develops. They have also strengthened communication and partnership working with schools by helping to bridge support between education settings and refuge services.

Another important development has been the implementation of the *Who's in Charge* programme, which offers therapeutic and educational support to parents experiencing child-to-parent conflict or abusive behaviours from their children. Feedback from participants has been extremely positive, with many parents reporting reduced feelings

of guilt and isolation, alongside increased emotional support and confidence in managing challenging situations.

Future plans

Finally, after significant preparation and funding applications, we are delighted to have secured funding for our Children's Book Project. This exciting initiative will begin in the coming weeks and will involve creative workshops led by professional authors and creatives. The project will capture the voices, experiences, and imagery of children and young people affected by domestic abuse, resulting in the creation of a book designed to support children moving into refuge accommodation when fleeing domestic abuse.

As a team, we remain committed to ensuring that children and young people feel heard, supported, safe, and valued throughout their time with Restore, and we are proud of the progress made over the past year in strengthening the support available to families.



OUTREACH SUPPORT REPORT

Our Outreach Team has recently expanded, and we are pleased to welcome Rosie to the team.

Throughout the year, we have continued delivering outreach support services across West and Mid Suffolk. Our team supports clients through face-to-face appointments, delivery of programmes, and our Coffee and Chat sessions in Bury St Edmunds, Haverhill, Newmarket, and Stowmarket.

Our Outreach Team remains committed to meeting each client's individual needs, with support tailored accordingly. We focus on developing personalised support plans, discussing safety planning, and ensuring clients feel informed and empowered to make decisions for themselves. Risk-led support continues to be the foundation of our service.

Clients can access support through our Coffee and Chat sessions, Freedom Programme, SODA (Survivors of Domestic Abuse), V.O.I.C.E. (Victims of Intimate Coercive Experience), and through direct outreach support.

A Note from Rosie

I am Rosie, the new Outreach Support Worker for Bury St Edmunds and Stowmarket.

Going forward, I will be facilitating the Recovery Toolkit Programme and have recently completed training to deliver the Freedom Programme. I am also looking to establish both a men's group and an additional women's group at Turning Point in Bury St Edmunds.

I currently run Coffee and Chat sessions in Bury St Edmunds and Stowmarket and will continue supporting clients through one-to-one outreach work across both areas.

Coffee and Chat *(formerly known as Coffee Mornings)*

This year, we rebranded our Coffee Mornings as "Coffee and Chat," as we felt the new name was more welcoming and appealing to our clients.

Our Coffee and Chat sessions continue to run in Bury St Edmunds, Haverhill, Newmarket, and Stowmarket. These sessions provide female clients who have experienced domestic abuse with a safe and supportive environment where they can meet others with similar experiences.

Our Haverhill Coffee and Chat sessions continued at the Haverhill Arts Centre while we explored alternative venues. We were invited to view the new Wellbeing Centre at

Stourview, which will provide storage facilities and a separate childcare area, allowing clients to benefit from two hours of uninterrupted self-care and support.

As a team, we continue to feel that Coffee and Chat sessions are an important part of many clients' weekly routines, offering structure, social connection, and emotional support. These sessions allow clients to relax in a safe space, access advice, learn new crafts, and build meaningful support networks.

Most importantly, these sessions provide a non-judgemental environment where clients can simply be themselves. We recognise that attending for the first time can be a significant step, and we remain mindful to ensure no pressure is placed upon clients once they arrive.

Newmarket continues to thrive, and referrals in Stowmarket continue to increase. We regularly work alongside professionals to ensure our services are well publicised and continue to receive referrals from local GPs, Social Prescribers, Social Services, ACT, IDVAs, and Housing Officers. The continued growth in these areas highlights the ongoing need for our services.

We have also welcomed a range of professionals to our Coffee and Chat sessions throughout the year, which has been a valuable addition to the support available to clients.

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank our volunteers, whose dedication continues to make our Coffee and Chat sessions possible. Their support allows us to provide more focused support to clients when needed.

V.O.I.C.E.

The V.O.I.C.E. Programme is a 12-week programme that continues to run successfully in Bury St Edmunds, Haverhill, Stowmarket, and Newmarket.

The programme is delivered face-to-face and incorporates a variety of learning styles, including discussion, self-reflective exercises, visual media, and active participation. This approach helps generate learning in a supportive, regulated, and trauma-informed environment.

Louise (Young Person Outreach Support Worker) continues to facilitate V.O.I.C.E. in Haverhill, Ellie facilitates in Newmarket, and Ellie and Lee-Ann jointly deliver the programme in Bury St Edmunds.

Participation in the programme often leads to ongoing outreach support and further risk assessment work. The sessions also provide clients with increased awareness of available support services, helping them make informed decisions moving forward.

Feedback is always encouraging from this programme with many clients sticking to practices they have learnt through the programme.

A huge thank you goes to our volunteers, Tina, Liane, Jean and Claire, who supported our facilitators throughout these sessions.

Freedom Programme

The Freedom Programme continues to be an important part of our support structure for clients.

Although the programme paused temporarily due to staffing changes, we are pleased that Rosie is now fully trained and hopes to restart delivery in the near future.

The programme supports clients in understanding domestic abuse and making sense of their experiences. It also helps survivors recognise potential future abusive behaviours, while encouraging increased self-esteem, confidence, and empowerment.

Feedback from clients who have attended continues to be extremely positive. Many participants report that they had not previously recognised their experiences as abuse, reinforcing the continued need for this programme.

SODA

Our SODA sessions remain a vital part of the support we offer. These sessions can be adapted and delivered over varying lengths of time to suit individual client lifestyles and needs.

The sessions provide focused support, and Outreach Workers contact clients directly when we feel they may benefit from upcoming sessions.

Most recently, we delivered the “*Who’s in Charge*” programme, facilitated by Sarah and Sophie, which proved very popular.

As our new team continues to grow, we hope to expand the range of SODA sessions available to clients. Planned additions already include Confidence Building and the Recovery Toolkit Programme.

Outreach

Our outreach caseload continues to grow steadily. As a team, we have continued working together to streamline our services and ensure that all clients receive a consistent level of support regardless of location.

We provide a one-to-one support service tailored to each client's individual needs. This enables clients to gain knowledge, understanding, and access to services related to domestic abuse.

Support is predominantly risk-led and may include:

- Signposting to relevant services
- Safety planning
- Boundary-setting support
- Assistance with Non-Molestation Orders
- Legal aid support letters
- Housing support
- Funding applications
- Emotional reassurance and validation
- Providing a non-judgemental listening ear

The Empowerment Star continues to be an invaluable tool in identifying each client's key support areas. This enables us to structure outreach support effectively and create personalised action plans to meet clients' needs.

We regularly complete DASH risk assessments with clients identified as being at risk, ensuring that support remains appropriate and proportionate.

Counselling sessions continue to be offered to clients engaging with our service. These are delivered either by a BACP-qualified and registered professional counsellor or by final-year counselling students from the University of Suffolk completing placements with us.

Counselling is currently available in Bury St Edmunds for clients who are able to travel and online to anyone who is unable to get to our office. We are hoping this will expand in September 2026, so we have a counsellor face to face available in each hub.

We continue to prioritise strong working relationships with external professionals, recognising how important collaborative working is in providing effective support. This includes:

- Keeping referrers updated
- Attending Core Group Meetings
- Attending Child Protection Meetings
- Supporting clients in court
- Attending local events and networking opportunities

Our team remains committed to supporting clients in achieving safer and more stable lives — something everyone deserves.

We are also pleased to continue offering childcare support for clients accessing some of our services. This enables clients to attend programmes and Coffee and Chat sessions more easily.

A special thank you goes to Jess, Sarah, and Sophie for their continued support with childcare provision.

Monitored Clients

This year, we introduced a new client category: Monitored Clients.

This allows Outreach Workers to retain contact with clients who may not require full outreach support but would still benefit from ongoing connection and limited support.

This has become an important additional layer within our service and allows clients continued access to support in a more flexible format.

Examples include:

- Clients unable to attend groups or programmes but needing social interaction
- Clients waiting to begin a programme
- Clients requiring counselling support after programme completion

This has proven to be a valuable and vital addition to our overall support offer.

Male Support

Although our male group service is currently suspended, we continue to support male clients through our outreach service and signpost or refer them to organisations able to provide group support.

We are keen to restart our male drop-in sessions and support groups as soon as possible.

Counselling continues to be offered to male clients who require this support, and feedback regarding this service has been extremely positive. The counselling provision has proven to be a vital part of many clients' recovery journeys.

Highlights of the Year

- Generous donations of Christmas gifts for clients from Haverhill and Newmarket Fire Service. These gifts were a wonderful addition to our Coffee and Chat sessions and helped clients feel valued and supported.
- Continued partnership work with REACH Haverhill, who attend monthly Coffee and Chat sessions to support clients with budgeting, benefits advice, and financial support through grants and loans.
- Attendance at networking and community events, including:
 - The Wellbeing Bus
 - Future Female Society events
 - Volunteering events
- Welcoming professionals to Coffee and Chat sessions, including:
 - Social Prescribers
 - REACH
 - Sexual Health Services
 - Realise Futures
 - Feel Good Suffolk
 - Housing Officers
- Pumpkin donations from Moat Farm for pumpkin painting activities during Coffee and Chat sessions.
- Crafty Fox attending a Coffee and Chat session to help clients build a scarecrow for display in Abbey Gardens in support of RESTORE.
- Raising awareness through attendance at the Domestic Abuse Conference.

Future plans

Our goals for the coming year are to continue developing and streamlining our processes, updating forms, and improving efficiency across the service.

We believe these improvements will help reduce administrative pressures, enabling us to provide support to more clients and continue delivering vital services to those affected by domestic abuse.

We are also looking forward to:

- Launching our new Recovery Toolkit Programme
- Re-establishing male support services
- Introducing support services for family members and friends of victims and survivors

Thank You

As a team, we would like to extend a special thank you to everyone who has given their time and support to our outreach services throughout the year.

Your contributions never go unnoticed, and we are incredibly grateful for the ongoing support shown to both our team and our clients.



FINANCE MANAGER REPORT

Derek Gadd

Restore Women's Aid remains in reasonably good financial health, allowing for continued growth of both our adult and children and young people's support services in West and Mid Suffolk. The result for the year to 31 March 2026 is an overall surplus of £16,935 providing stability in reserves cover against a backdrop of continuing cost inflation and low refuge occupancy - 60% against 77% in 2024/25 - hence lower than budgeted Housing Benefit income.

A great deal of resource has been applied to grant funding applications with some success; income from those sources has increased again compared to the previous year. Just as pleasing is the level of support given to the Charity from the public, local companies and other organisations. Donation and legacy income was boosted during the year by the receipt of a wonderful legacy second tranche ; the amount received in July 2025 was £22,969. For all discretionary giving we are very grateful.

Medium term core funding both for refuge support and community services in Bury St Edmunds and West and Mid Suffolk is secure. Suffolk County Council Public Health Directorate fund refuge support services under a contract which commenced in April 2023 for a minimum term extended to 5 years. In addition, core funding for community services from Suffolk Police and Crime Commissioner and National Lottery Community Fund have been granted until March 2028 and May 2028 respectively. The Charity also benefits from medium term grant funding support from Lloyds Bank Foundation, BBC Children in Need and Masonic Charitable Foundation.

Whilst inflationary pressures have eased the operational environment remains challenging. In particular, staff costs have increased rapidly over the last few years and now comprise nearly 70% of total expenditure. However, costs are carefully managed and, together with the generous support we continue to receive and the considerable work we put in to grow and diversify our sources of funding, the Charity is well placed to finance on-going service provision on a consistent basis.

We thank all who support our work, helping us deliver and enhance support to our clients. This year has been no exception with generous cash donations, Christmas

gifts, toys, toiletries, clothes and Easter eggs. Every year we are overwhelmed by people's generosity.

Income and expenditure for the 12 months to 31st March 2026 amounted to:

	2026	2025
Income	£550,373	£536,000
Expenditure	£533,438	£494,351

In the main refuge accommodation is funded from Housing Benefit which for 2025/26 amounted to £112,970 (2025: £130,033) on an occupancy rate for the year of 60% (2025: 77%), well below that budgeted. In addition, the Charity continues to receive financial support from Suffolk County Council Public Health Directorate for our Refuge services by way of a support grant of £98,601 (2025: £94,816).

Our outreach services and project work are mostly funded by grants and donations. Grant income amounted to £252,292 and comprised:

Grants	£
<u>Core funding</u>	
Lloyds Bank foundation - Unrestricted funding utilised for outreach	25,000
Masonic Charitable Foundation - unrestricted	5,000
<u>Funding for Children's and Young People's Support</u>	
BBC Children in Need - support staff and associated costs	35,865
West Suffolk Council Thriving Communities Fund - Young People work	15,000
West Suffolk Council - Training grant for Young People's Support	250
Tesco's Stronger Starts - Young people's programmes	375
The Lentonbrook Foundation - Young people's programmes	14,250
<u>Funding for Community Hubs including Community Support Staff costs:</u>	
National Lottery Community Fund - staff and other operating costs	91,615
Suffolk Police & Crime Commissioner - Bury St Edmunds	50,000
Hub Suffolk Community Foundation through the following	
- for community support staff costs:	
Denbury Charitable Fund	3,000
Scrutton Bland Grantmaking Programme	2,409
Oak Grantmaking Programme	5,000

Funding for other projects:

Good Call Mobile - replacement mobile handsets	658
Bury St Edmunds Town Council -staff training	3,870
	£252,292

Donations received throughout the year amounted to £58,370 including Gift Aid. These are broken down as follows;

	£
Restricted Donations	1,190
Unrestricted Donations	55,377
Gift Aid	1,803
	£58,370

Gifts in kind

The Charity is very fortunate to receive many gifts in kind each year mostly for our service users and most of modest monetary value. Individual gifts valued at under £200 are not included in these financial statements.

Intangible income - Voluntary staff

The charity remains dependent on services provided by volunteers. Without these volunteers, wage costs would be much higher, and we are very thankful for the time volunteers give to the Charity.

The value provided by volunteers is not costed for the purposes of these financial statements.

Reserves Policy

The Charity's reserve policy is to hold unrestricted net current asset reserves equivalent to 3.5 to 5.5 months of projected operating costs to cover any temporary shortfall in cash flow that may occur due to the timing of receipts. Whilst the general economic backdrop continues to be challenging, the policy has been reviewed and left unchanged for the ensuing year.

Unrestricted net current assets at the end of the financial year were £167,766 (2025: £165,586), and reserves cover was 3.4 months being a modest decrease in that held at March 2025 (3.5 months) and slightly below the lower threshold of the policy range.

Auditor

Bury St Edmunds Women's Aid's accounts are audited by Knights Lowe of Bury St Edmunds and it is proposed that the Charity continues to use their services as auditor.

Future Plans

Primarily the organisation aims to ensure that current services are fully funded in the medium term, and we are able to increase our capacity to deliver those services.

Whilst the current economic outlook continues to present funding challenges, the ever-increasing demand for domestic abuse support services compels us to continue to look for opportunities to extend the geographical reach of our adult service provision and develop our work with children and young people, subject to sufficient resources being available.

As I retire from my role at Restore, I thank my colleagues and our trustees who have supported me throughout my time with the Charity.



FEEDBACK FROM CLIENTS AND PROFESSIONALS

"Would you be able to pass on this message to your staff member, who has been amazing in offering support and advice for one of my neighbour's who is a victim of domestic abuse."

"Because of the incredible support you provided our family during our 18 months at the refuge, and given your long-standing relationship with the children, I would be deeply honoured if you would act as the professional referee for their Home Office applications. Thank you so much for your ongoing kindness and support, and for helping us through this final step of our journey."

"Also, some good news I've got myself a job I start on 6th July so next week will be my last week. I just want to thank you for all your support and help. This has helped me so much to get through this horrible part of my life."

"Thank you for everything the other day, it really did make me feel a lot better in terms of just feeling a bit more seen."

"She was very positive about the sessions with you and is clearly finding them supportive. Thanks for your continued involvement, it's clearly having a positive effect for her and the family. It was lovely to meet you too and thank you for being so understanding."



A thank you letter from a child who lived at refuge with their family

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A huge thank you to all of our supporters, big and small, local and further afield, who have donated money, time and many lovely items:

Our Volunteers

AIS UK

Asda

Aquarius Singers

Bridge Church

Bury St Edmunds Lions

Bury St Edmunds Rotary

Bury St Edmunds Town Council & Councillors'

Children In Need

Clare Priory

Culford School

David Lloyd Bury St Edmunds

Donna Higgins & family

Gatehouse

Gee Gee's Ranch

Gordon McMeechan

Green Light Trust

Haverhill Fire Station

Haywards Solicitors

HC3

Ickworth House

Knights Lowe

Lloyds Bank Foundation for England & Wales

Love Grace

Marks and Spencer

Margaret Healey & the Sisters of St Louis

Mothers Union

National Lottery

Newmarket Fire Station

Newmarket Town Council

No.5 Angel Hill Coffee Shop

REACH

Realise Futures

Rickshaw Riders

Round Table

Stuart and Christine Samuels (Father and Mrs Christmas!)

Suffolk Community Foundation

Suffolk County Council Public Health Directorate

Suffolk Police and Crime Commissioner

Tesco

The Buckingham Emergency Food Appeal

BEFA

Theatre Royal

Toolbox

Tys 2024

Unite the Union

Vineyard Church

Waitrose

West Suffolk Council

Women's Institute

Wooster's Bakery

and many many more!!

We would also like to thank our donors who choose to remain anonymous. Without the continued support of our donors, we would not be able to offer the high level of services and support to the people that need them.

DONORS AND SPONSORS



Stay up to date with our news and events at:

www.restore-wa.org.uk

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/restorewa/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/BSEwomensaid>

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

Interested in hearing more about our work? We are happy to provide a speaker for your organisation or group, please email at admin@restore-wa.org.uk.

CURRENT SERVICES

We provide many services which are accessed by women from the local community and from outside Suffolk:

20-bed Refuge	Male Victim Support
Telephone Advice Helpline	Resettlement Support
Outreach Service	Child Centred Groups
Freedom Programme	Adult Counselling Service
VOICE Programme	Young People Service
Survivors of Domestic Abuse (SODA)	Coffee Morning (Bury St Edmunds, Haverhill, Stowmarket and Newmarket)
Who's In Charge Programme	

Advice Helpline: 0330 551 9495

Restore-wa.org.uk

Post: PO Box 715, Bury St Edmunds, IP33 9HQ