



# ANNUAL REPORT 2023/2024



**1 referral every 15 minutes**



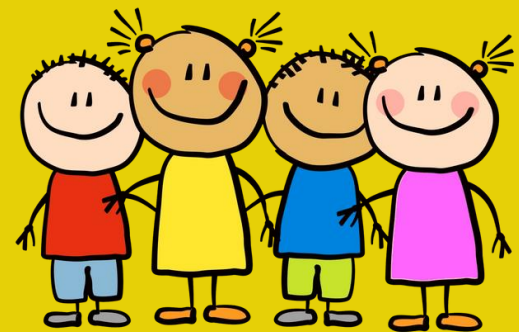
**212 families supported in  
refuge**



**84 new clients in counselling  
service**



**Over 350 children supported**



**Stable Funding**



**6 Trustees**



# Message from the Chair of Trustees

*23/24 has been an incredibly busy year for DASU North Wales, with several new funding stream and projects, and several tenders. We continue to go from strength to strength and support ever increasing numbers of survivors of Domestic Abuse and their families.*

*During 23/24 we received 6494 referrals into our service and 212 families were accepted into our refuge service. However, we were unable to accept a further 284 families into refuge, as we did not have capacity. This demonstrates the size of the problem, and the need for more refuges and services for victims fleeing Domestic Abuse.*

*To meet some of this need we applied for capital funding to purchase a house in Flintshire, which will be a beautiful 2-bedroom family home, for a survivor and their children. In addition, with further capital funding we purchased one of our rented refuge properties and this continues to offer a safe space for a survivor and their family in Denbighshire.*

*Our short stay refuge space continued to be used so we secured additional capital funding and did further work on the property to make a second short stay unit. This now provides high quality refuge spaces for 2 survivors and up to 6 children. It enables these survivors who wish to access refuge at weekends or out of hours when a long-term space is not available immediately to stay with us securely, bringing children, pets and dependents for up to 72 hours until they can be accepted into a more permanent space.*

*We identified an increase in survivors needing support in the Denbighshire area, so via a joint funding bid with RASASC NW we secured funding to purchase an office building in Rhyl, so that survivors from both organisations can receive support and counselling in a safe and comfortable environment.*

*DASU are an organisation that prides itself on delivering high quality services and support, we have had all our services accredited by SafeLives Leading Lights. Achieving this has been no small task, with assessors scrutinizing our work, interviewing Staff and Trustees, and reviewing all policies and processes.*

*We are so delighted that we have received the accreditation, and even more proud to report we are the only Domestic Abuse provider in Wales to have all our services accredited. Currently, we are working towards the Welsh Women's Aid National Quality Service Standards and hope to achieve this in the coming weeks. This accreditation will also give DASU IAQF status, this Welsh Government framework will enable DASU to continue to receive Welsh Government funding and be recognised as a provider of quality information and advice in Wales.*

# Message from the Chair of Trustees

*Achieving these accreditations provides our funders, and more importantly our clients with the reassurance that we offer high quality, well managed services, that are delivered by well trained staff.*

*Support from Our Children and Young people's services continued to be in great demand and with the capital funding we have a dedicated CYP suite in our Colwyn Bay office and will have dedicated CYP areas in our new offices in Rhyl.*

*With Children and Young people being victims, it is important to ensure that they can receive support in safe and welcoming environments which are designed by them for them. Co-production is at the heart of all DASU's services and support and this can be clearly seen in this wonderful suite, and will be at the heart of designing the new counselling rooms in the Rhyl office.*

*Due to the increase in referrals, we accessed additional funding through the OPCC to employ more IDVA's, this team continues to support the most high-risk victims of Domestic Abuse, attending MARAC's, court hearings and providing target hardening to enable survivors to remain safe in their own home.*

*We were commissioned by the MOJ to deliver the Court Pathfinder pilot with our partners Gorwel. This project which operates in the family courts aims to improve the court process for those who have been impacted by Domestic Abuse and put the children's voice at the centre of any proceedings. Working with CAFCASS, where there are concerns about Domestic Abuse within a family, they are referred to DASU and we then conduct in depth assessments with the victims and offer support for them and their children.*

*A detailed report is provided to the court so that the judge can have a full picture of the family circumstances before any decisions are made in relation to the children within the family. This pilot breaks down barriers for victims and provides the most vulnerable with a voice in proceedings. We have already received excellent feedback from clients and judges, who report that the process is "less brutal", means that less fact-finding hearings are needed and importantly that families are not repeatedly coming back to court. We are hopeful that the pilot will become a permanent part of the support offered to victims of Domestic Abuse when the pilot ends.*

*During the year Flintshire and Wrexham County Councils tendered for their DA services. We were delighted to win the tenders to continue the delivery of our services in Flintshire and for the delivery of our Refuge services in Wrexham. This year we are expecting the IDVA and Denbighshire Domestic Abuse Services to be tendered. We will work hard to prepare for these and gather evidence from our clients and stakeholders to prepare the best possible bids.*



## Message from the Chair of Trustees

*DASU would like to acknowledge and thank all our commissioners and funders. Without your support the life changing services we offer would simply not be available, together we really can make a difference.*

*Finally, on behalf of myself and the board I would like to recognise and thank all our staff and volunteers for their hard work and dedication. Each year we report the increase in numbers of survivors accessing our services, and alongside the domestic abuse they report they also present with many complex needs. Our staff and volunteers have become experts in identifying ways of supporting the most vulnerable in society, using their skills and experience our staff and volunteers break down barriers, develop trust and provide life changing and lifesaving support.*



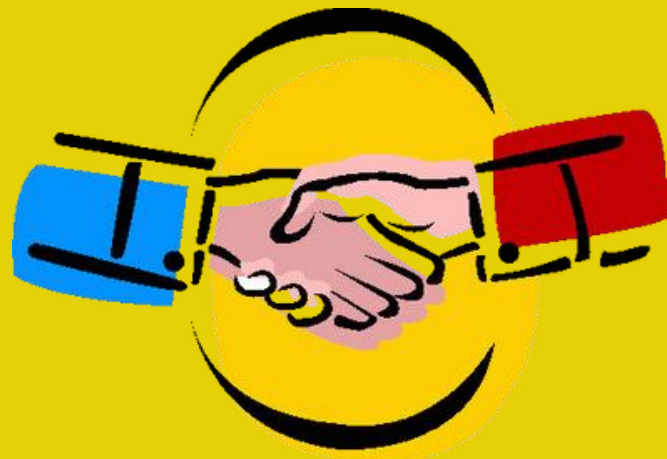
Thank You

# PARTNER FEEDBACK

Partnership working is important to us. As a small, local charity, we're **thrilled to support DASU in this way** and it's a pleasure to work alongside and support their teams. DASU are **supporting another local charity to continue helping people in our communities with their mental health and wellbeing.**

There is a large number of patients under the mental health services that are victims and survivors of domestic abuse, and being able to have an agency like DASU on hand for advice and support is essential. Every person who I have had contact with at DASU has been helpful, knowledgeable and informative. They are approachable and so eager to help.

DASU provide an exceptional service that I've experienced both professionally and personally from DASU over the past 4 years of working with them. The assistance and support that my clients and I have received has been life changing. In a personal capacity DASU have been my rock. They got me from a place where I was vulnerable, unsafe and felt like I had no where to turn, to a place where I could re start my life again, build inner strength and safety and overcome the worst period of my life. Every team member that I've worked with have been supportive, I always felt like I could contact them, and they responded to my needs in such a prompt, caring and compassionate way.



# Structure, Governance & Management

## Governing Document

*The charity is governed by a Memorandum of Association and Articles of Association and constitutes a Company Limited by Guarantee, as defined by the Companies Act 2006.*

## Board of Trustees

*The trustees, who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2023.*

*The trustees have adopted the provisions of Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2015).*

## Objectives and Aims

*The Domestic Abuse Safety Unit (DASU) provides professional coordinated interventions to people experiencing domestic abuse across Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham to maximise their safety, and the safety of their families.*

*The charity supports anyone who has been subjected to mental, physical or sexual abuse by their partners or persons with whom they have had a relationship. The aim is to assist them in making the transition to a safe and secure life.*

*Our services and support are therefore delivered in a way that specifically meet the needs of the client and acknowledges individuals experiencing multiple inequalities.*

*The trustees have paid due regard to guidance issued by the Charity Commission in deciding what activities the charity should undertake.*

# SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITIES

**DASU provides a range of support services including, advocacy, information, group-work, training, refuge accommodation when necessary, and liaising with other agencies including social services, police, health and substance misuse services on behalf of clients.**

**Maintaining the safety and well-being of service users is achieved by risk assessment, safety planning and working with others to achieve positive outcomes. DASU participates in the monthly Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC), which is a key mechanism for multi-agency collaboration.**

**DASU helps survivors of domestic abuse in a wide variety of tangible ways such as helping clients to claim welfare benefits, accessing legal representation and attending court, safety planning, risk assessment and assisting clients to secure accommodation in private or social housing. Many of our clients have children, and we can assist them by finding places in playgroups, schools and colleges for the children when entering refuge with their parent, or when re-settling in permanent housing. This is an important element of the overall service provision, as is registration with GPs and dentists and accessing other health services, so basic needs and continued health and well-being is promoted.**

**In addition to this wide-ranging practical support, DASU works with survivors to increase their confidence, self-esteem and the strength to emerge from social exclusion and stigmatisation and enable them to take control of their lives. This takes the form of individual counselling, group work and training, and has led to a number of clients finding the confidence to take up paid and volunteering work.**





# RAISING AWARENESS

An important area of work is awareness-raising within the community and related agencies. This includes workshop sessions in schools and colleges, talks to women's and church groups, and training for midwives and health visitors as part of the Integrated Care Pathway.

The importance of this work is primarily in raising awareness, but it also establishes valuable links with pupils, teachers and practitioners in related agencies. A monthly coffee morning helps to increase social networks and decrease isolation.

This monthly meeting is an opportunity for women to raise concerns, discuss options and offer mutual support. In addition, we are offering short training opportunities, providing clients with life skills which they have identified as needing. Such activities have included cooking, basic car mechanic courses, arts and craft activities and future plans include Internet safety, and employability skills.

DASU has strong links with:

- Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham County Councils, and in particular the Supporting People Teams, Social Services and Housing Departments,
- The Domestic Abuse Co-coordinators
- Neighbourhood Wardens,
- Clwyd Alyn Housing Association,
- Grwp Cynefin,
- Wales and West Housing,
- Women's Aid
- North Wales Police.

DASU is a member of Local Voluntary Councils, Welsh Women's Aid, Cymorth Cymru, Respect and Child Poverty Action Group.





## DOMESTIC ABUSE SAFETY UNIT NORTH WALES LTD

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES  
INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

		Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total	Unrestricted funds restated	Restricted funds restated	Total
	Notes	2024 £	2024 £	2024 £	2023 £	2023 £	2023 £
<b>Income from:</b>							
Donations and legacies	3	23,644		23,644	33,314		33,314
Charitable activities	4	2,056,494	2,127,815	4,184,309	1,986,841	1,942,851	3,929,692
Other trading activities	5	7,424		7,424	851		851
Investments	6	12,635		12,635	595		595
<b>Total income</b>		<b>2,100,197</b>	<b>2,127,815</b>	<b>4,228,012</b>	<b>2,021,601</b>	<b>1,942,851</b>	<b>3,964,452</b>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>							
Charitable activities	7	2,112,836	1,826,100	3,938,936	2,041,881	1,923,911	3,965,792
<b>Net (outgoing)/incoming resources before transfers</b>		<b>(12,639)</b>	<b>301,715</b>	<b>289,076</b>	<b>(20,280)</b>	<b>18,940</b>	<b>(1,340)</b>
Gross transfers between funds		812	(812)		18,940	(18,940)	
<b>Net (expenditure)/income for the year/</b>							
<b>Net movement in funds</b>		<b>(11,827)</b>	<b>300,903</b>	<b>289,076</b>	<b>(1,340)</b>		<b>(1,340)</b>
Fund balances at 1 April 2023		804,365	707,500	1,511,865	797,043		1,513,205
<b>Fund balances at 31 March 2024</b>		<b>792,538</b>	<b>1,008,403</b>	<b>1,800,941</b>	<b>804,365</b>	<b>707,500</b>	<b>1,511,865</b>

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

The statement of financial activities also complies with the requirements for an income and expenditure account under the Companies Act 2006.

**Funding was stable in 23/24, with core and additional grants secured to provide vital front-line services and supporting structures.**

**Summary of Accounts for the Year Ended 31 March 2024**



# FUNDERS 23/24



**Thank you to all our funders, which included:**  
**Conwy County Borough Council, Denbighshire County Council**  
**Flintshire County Council, Wrexham County Borough Council**  
**Community Fund, Gwynt y Mor, Freemasons, Nationwide**  
**The Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner - North Wales**  
**Children In Need, Moondance Foundation, Charles Hayward**  
**Steve Morgan Foundation, NatWest Circle Fund, Welsh Government**  
**MoJ, The Waterloo Foundation, Welsh Womens Aid**



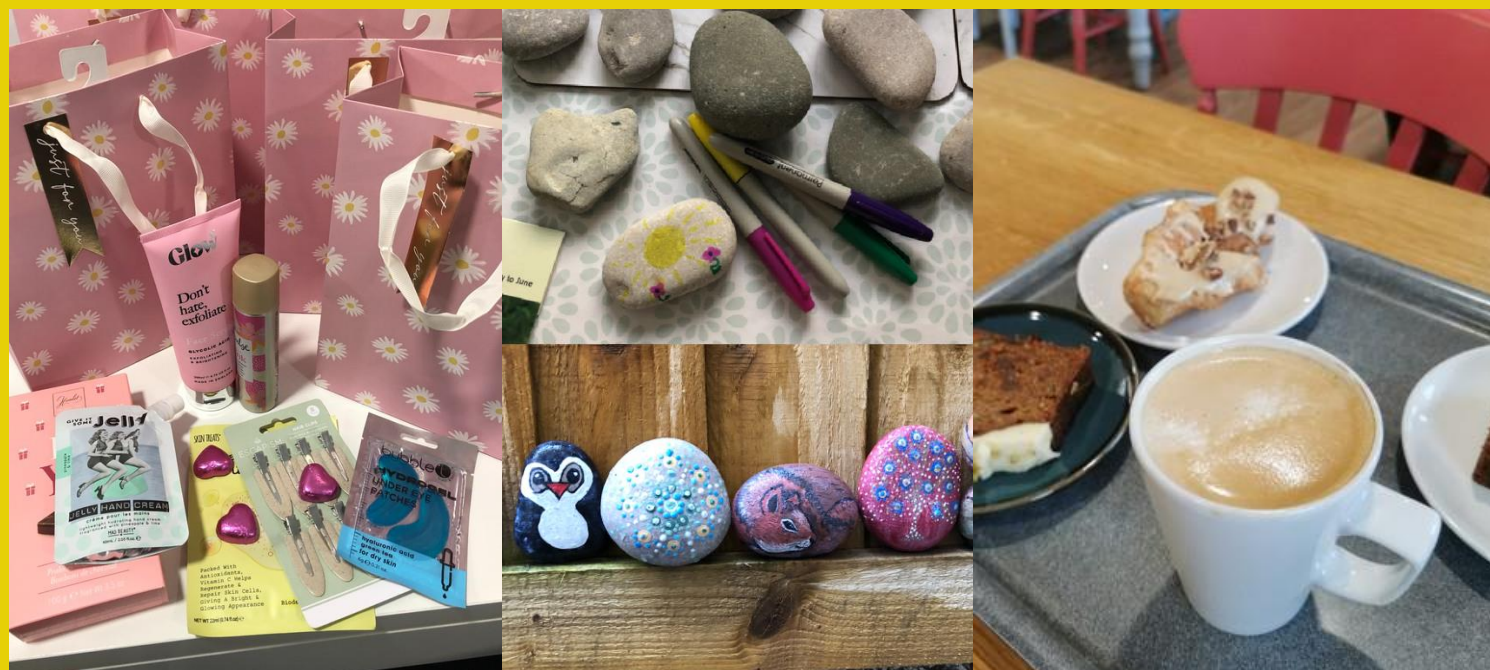
# OPERATIONAL REPORT

## REFUGE

The refuge provision is constantly increasing and has continued to do so this year. We have gained another 3 dispersed units from Wales and West housing association in Flintshire and secured additional Welsh Government Funding to decorate and furnish. In addition, we have refurbished one of our dispersed units to be our first male dispersed unit that can facilitate a male fleeing with children or child contact.

We have continued to refurbish our existing portfolio to ensure service users who are in need of refuge can stay somewhere that is safe, welcoming and to a standard that we would want to live in ourselves. We were lucky enough to secure Welsh Government Funding to add a second Complex Needs unit to our portfolio. This will allow us to provide a wrap around, holistic approach of support for those seeking refuge who have complexities.

In addition to providing safe accommodation, refuge staff continue facilitate client-led activities that are both physically and mentally stimulating. Activities relating to 'beauty' have been known to help with relaxation, confidence boosting and encourages peer support.





# Complex Needs Unit



# REFUGEE CASE STUDY

Linda was referred to communal refuge by the Local Authority. Linda had a property for over 10 years and was forced by her A/P to give up her tenancy to move in with him an hour away from her family and friends. Upon referral, Linda advised the majority of the abuse was emotional and mental, he would put her down and call her ugly, shout at her and then the next day, act as if nothing ever happened. The abuse then became physical and the A/P literally kicked Linda out of bed and assaulted her, Linda couldn't take anymore so fled and went into temporary accommodation. Linda was appreciative of the temporary accommodation but due to being in the middle of nowhere, struggled with being able to get around and was also struggling with no cooking facilities.

Linda was accepted into communal refuge. It became apparent that after a week or so, Linda was struggling to cope in communal refuge. Linda has OCD and was struggling to cope with the day to day cleanliness of the communal area's, in addition, Linda wanted to be in a busier area where there were more opportunities for employment.

A unit became available and this was offered to Linda, Linda was ecstatic and so thankful for DASU being able to meet her needs with a self-contained unit. A few weeks after moving to the unit, Linda started applying for jobs. Staff practiced interview skills with Linda and helped to build Linda's confidence. Linda secured a part time job not far from where she was residing.

Staff have worked with Linda to help improve her confidence as this was something she massively struggled with due to the A/P putting her down for so long. Linda now helps to care for her mum and has re-established relationships with her family and friends. Linda was accidentally offered two properties and was supported by staff to navigate how to deal with this. Linda has now been offered a lovely property with a bungalow and is awaiting work to be completed before moving into her forever home. Linda has appreciated all the support she has received from DASU and has stated 'DASU are more like family, they are always there for me when I need them, whether it be something minor or big'.

# SUPPORT IN THE COMMUNITY

## Community Services

**Referrals into our services continued to be high and we developed new ways of ensuring anyone experiencing domestic abuse could receive support. We added the Freedom programme to our group work and increased our volunteers to 15. These volunteers provide emotional support and run peer support groups to ensure everyone receives the support they need. We adapted our services by adding a confidence wardrobe project which enabled individuals to access key skills support to enable them to move on with their lives.**

## IDVA Service

**The IDVA service dealt with Over 1300 high risk cases over the past year, 80% of service users were supported with criminal and civil justice matters and we have seen a massive increase in complex case needs which has resulted in enhanced partnership working.**

## Children and Young People

**As well as our support work, we were able to provide a whole host of summer and seasonal activities for children and young people, helping them feel worthy and engaged.**

# IDVA CASE STUDY

Rebecca had complex needs including substance misuse, mental health and offending behaviour. Rebecca had been referred to DASU a number of times with the same A/P. Rebecca had never really engaged with services including DASU and would not engage with the police or provide a statement regarding the abuse despite there being high levels of domestic abuse including physical abuse, stalking and harassment, coercive control, sexual abuse, threats to kill and non-fatal strangulation.

Throughout a period of time, IDVA's had attempted to engage with Rebecca and in more recent months, there was exceptional multi-agency working. Rebecca's case was heard regularly at MARAC, MAPPA involvement and regular multi-disciplinary meetings which included a vast range of different professionals, including DASU.

With the support of all professionals, IDVA managed to engage with Rebecca who accepted safety and support planning. Rebecca did access refuge for a short period of time however due to her complex needs, Rebecca found it difficult to remain there. Rebecca went through a difficult time and was incarcerated where she was still provided with IDVA support. When Rebecca was released further safety measures were put in place.

Rebecca has continued to engage well with IDVA services alongside other services and is working positively with the police regarding the abuse she has suffered.



# COMMUNITY CASE STUDY

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# CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE



Every Thursday, starting 1<sup>st</sup>  
February 2024

## TEA & TOAST

### Tea & Toast

Bring your little ones  
to play while you  
meet other mums.

Safe space to chat  
and have a drink  
and toast for free.

Every Thursday  
morning 10am-12  
noon.

Pop in or stay for the  
whole session.



# CYP CASE STUDY

Mary was referred to DASU for CYP support via the police. Mary had witnessed domestic abuse towards her mother perpetrated by her father (A/P), as well as being subjected to emotional abuse by her father (A/P). Mary's mum and dad separated and the abuse continued. Mary's father would contact her via social media which impacted her wellbeing and mental health.

Mary was not having any support at the time, but needed support to help with understanding healthy relationships, domestic abuse, feelings & emotions, safety planning, building confidence & self-esteem and develop Mary's coping skills to manage difficult feelings.

Mary had weekly 1-1 support sessions with her CYP worker. Mary had stated that she had lots of things she wanted to say to her A/P but did not know how to express these. Mary's CYP worker suggested that Mary write a letter to her A/P and detail her feelings and how his actions made her feel. The CYP worker offered support, reassurance and kept the letter safe at Mary's request.

The CYP worker offered emotional support to Mary where her A/P made an application for child contact. Mary completed a 'What Matters' conversation and was supported during the process by the CYP Worker and ensured that Mary's thoughts and feelings were heard. Further work was completed with Mary surrounding 'The circle of control', self-esteem and relationship boundaries.

At the end of Mary's support, Mary had a good understanding of healthy relationships, domestic abuse, how to keep herself and also how to set healthy boundaries, particularly with A/P. Mary's self-esteem has improved and she is engaging in activities. Mary is able to manage difficult feelings and is able to confide in her mum or the teachers at school, to do this, Mary developed a toolkit of coping skills such as bubble breathing, resilience box, calming jar and self-care jar.