



The Haven Wolverhampton **IMPACT REPORT**

2022/2023

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

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The Haven's Mission

Our mission is to provide support to women and children who are vulnerable to domestic violence, abuse and homelessness.

We achieve this by providing safe, emergency accommodation and community-based support services. We provide a 24-hour telephone helpline, a web-based live chat and one-to-one support in a safe environment.

The Haven's Vision

Our vision is for all women and children to live in a society free from oppression, homelessness, violence and abuse, and to promote and uphold human rights.



Welcome

It is with heartfelt pride that I introduce our latest impact report. During this, our 50th year, we recognise the impact The Haven Wolverhampton has had on our local communities for five decades.



As Chair of the Board, I am humbled by the unwavering dedication of our staff, volunteers, trustees and supporters. This milestone year serves as a poignant reminder of the transformative change we have affected in countless lives. Yet it also brings into sharp focus how vital our services continue to be, at a time when domestic abuse remains an insidious and pervasive ill in our society, compounded by the current cost of living crisis.

Within these pages, you will find stories of resilience, healing, and empowerment. We invite you to delve into the successes and the challenges that have shaped our path.

We have the utmost gratitude for our passionate and dedicated supporters and implore them to continue to stand with us in our commitment to building a safer, more compassionate society. Together, let us continue our journey, making every day count, advocating for a world free from violence and fear.

Navdeep Hear

Chair of the Board of Trustees

In our 50th year, we continue our ever-evolving journey. Our commitment to investing in staff wellbeing and safety continues to be a priority.



This year we reflected on COVID's impact but faced additional challenges with the increasing cost of living, and new opportunities through technology – helping us to better design services and reach more families in need.

In the challenging economic climate, many women feel they have no option but to stay in abusive relationships. We support women so that they feel they can afford to leave, and we're enabling this with additional assistance with employment, debt support, life skills and grants.

As we reflect on our legacy from across the last five decades, we are thankful to our dedicated staff team and volunteers for their hard work and the impact they make.

We also owe tremendous gratitude to our supporters and partners who are committed to our shared vision of a world free from abuse. We look forward to continuing with your support as we move forward through our 50th year, and beyond.

Popinder Kaur

Chief Executive

An introduction to our 50th year

From an idea to a legacy

This year, The Haven marks its 50th anniversary with pride and gratitude. For five decades, we have dedicated ourselves to supporting vulnerable women and children and fostering change in Wolverhampton and beyond.

From humble beginnings with a simple idea, we've built a legacy that is a force for positive change, driven by dedicated staff teams, volunteers, donors, partners and advocates. We have provided comprehensive support services, while empowering survivors and breaking barriers.

The Haven was founded in 1973 by the late Colin Brown and Honor Pringle, after Colin Brown who then worked for the Wolverhampton Probation and Parole Services, delivered a talk to the Citizen's Advice Bureau. In this talk, he highlighted that Wolverhampton provided accommodation for homeless men, but not for vulnerable and homeless women. Hence the female sign with the open door came to be our first logo. At the end of the talk, the group donated £5 and encouraged him to do something about it!

At the time, the Women's Liberation Movement was making waves across the country, demanding a range of rights for women including free contraception. This was also the decade in which The Equal Pay Act was introduced, aiming to provide the right to equal pay for



equal work. We have come a long way since then, however we still have much further to go in this fight. Through resilience and courage, survivors have inspired us to push harder and advocate louder. Together, we've created *a safe haven* and changed perceptions of domestic abuse. As we prepare to celebrate this milestone, we are proud to honour the impact we have made through the lives we have changed. However, we acknowledge that our journey is far from over.

The shadows of domestic abuse still loom over far too many women, children and families. Our commitment to combating this issue remains resolute, and we stand firm in our pursuit of a world where everyone can thrive in safety and love, without abuse or violence.

Looking back on our history

Take a look down memory lane to revisit some of the defining moments that have shaped our legacy:

- **1988** – The Haven establishes stores of essential household items for ex-residents setting up new homes.
- **1989** – Wolverhampton Domestic Violence Initiative (WDVI) is set up and based at The Haven. The initiative helps the City of Wolverhampton Council develop its first corporate policy on domestic violence.
- **1990** – The Haven appoints its first five 'out of hours' workers, providing support to residents overnight and at the weekends.
- **1995** – The Body Shop's *One in Five* campaign partners with The Haven to launch a petition demanding more support for women's refuges nationwide.
- **1998** – The Haven is involved in a national pilot to decriminalise prostitution in under 18s and to treat young teenage sex workers as victims of child abuse.
- **2003** – Our co-founder, the late Mrs Honor Pringle, wins the Lifetime Excellence Award at the first Black Country Inspirational Women Awards.
- **2011** – The Haven launches a project to support young people who have taken on a caring

responsibility because of domestic violence.

- **2018** – The Haven receives the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service.
- **2020** – The Haven launches the MENgage & EmpowHER programme delivered in schools and youth settings, to critically explore gender-based divisions and inequalities in society.

We are thrilled about our ongoing pro-bono partnership with Costello Medical to create a digital visualisation of this remarkable journey. The countdown to the grand unveiling is on, and we can't wait to share it with you!

To stay in the loop and catch all the excitement surrounding our 50th anniversary activities, make sure to follow the hashtag #HavenAt50 on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn.



SPOTLIGHT ON

Working together

Our collaborative approach

The collaborative efforts of multiple agencies and partners working together to support domestic abuse victims has a transformative impact on the lives of those affected. Through strategic partnerships, coordination, and pooled resources, we have tried to create a comprehensive and holistic support network that addresses the diverse needs of those we support.

This year we have worked collaboratively and in partnership with Wolverhampton Voluntary Community Action, West Midlands Domestic Abuse Consortium members and other providers nationally through Routes to Support and Women's Aid Federation of England (WAFE) membership, to name a few. The result has been improved access to vital services including safe accommodation, counselling, legal assistance, and financial aid, enabling survivors to break free from abusive situations and rebuild their lives with dignity and safety.

By sharing knowledge and expertise, we have enhanced our efficiency and we are identifying at-risk individuals and intervening early, thereby preventing the escalation of abuse. Furthermore, we have been able to support swift and adequate support for those contacting us at the point of crisis.

This collaborative approach has not only empowered countless survivors but also strengthened the

community's response to domestic violence, fostering a culture of empathy and support. The impact of agencies working together reaches beyond individual cases and helps to create a safer and more compassionate society for everyone.



Working together often means working in collaboration with:

- Community groups
- Voluntary and private sector organisations
- Local authority
- Police and criminal justice services
- Social services
- Foodbanks
- Education & schools
- Public health services
- Housing
- Emergency services

What women say about us...

"I now see a future for us and staying here has helped me sleep better as I feel safe. We now have a quality of life we didn't have before." - *Sally*

"I am so grateful for the wonderful places you take me and my daughter. We had a fantastic day out at Chester Zoo - we did so much laughing together. I will never forget this day. Thank you so much." - *Zainab*

"The Haven is a lovely place to stay. My daughter and I have had a great experience. We have had great days out, girly nights in, kids activities always going on. The staff are such amazing people who go above and beyond for you and help you with whatever it is you need help with. Brilliant garden out back. Going to miss them all." - *Ellen*

"I'm ready now, I want to move to a place of my own and my son to come back to me. I needed this and now I can do things better now I know I've got the support." - *Sara*

"Accessing The Haven's substance misuse service has had a major positive impact on my life because my Case Worker is supportive, listens to me when I need her and has been there 100 percent when I needed her. She has always gone above and beyond for me and my little girl." - *Maryam*

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"My counsellor at The Haven is well and truly amazing. She's been there for me at my worst, she knows everything about me and my situation. Still today she's there for me to rant, cry, moan, shout at. To give me the strength I need to keep going. She's so supportive and caring, I don't know what I'd have done without her help through this terrible part of my life." - *Fatima*

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SPOTLIGHT ON

Alcohol & substance use

Understanding the impact on victims of abuse

This year, we continued to identify the need for specialist support for women with complex co-occurring needs and we supported 52 women within our substance use service, two of whom were pregnant when they sought our support. These women were all turning to alcohol and substances as a way to cope with the trauma of abuse. However, the road to recovery isn't always easy, and many of these women faced barriers when attempting to access support while struggling with substance use.

The statistics speak volumes: 39% of the women we supported were also grappling with homelessness, while 60% were diagnosed with mental health challenges. Tragically, one woman attempted suicide before accessing the service. These numbers illustrate the urgent correlation between poor mental health and substance use and this is something that we are committed to addressing head-on.

Alcohol and substance use creates a vicious cycle of harm for victims, exacerbating the frequency and severity of violence, creating a hazardous environment, especially where children are present.

Shame, guilt, and dependency can become insurmountable barriers, hindering victims' ability to recognise the abuse and seek help. By recognising the complex challenges they face, we can better tailor our

support to empower these women on their journey to healing and independence.

We provide comprehensive support under one roof, addressing domestic abuse, substance use, and mental health recovery simultaneously. Our holistic approach has yielded inspiring results; every single woman who sought to break free from substance dependence has been able to do so with our help.

Working in close partnership with Recovery Near You, we've crafted tailored interventions to safeguard victims and lead them towards recovery from both abuse and addiction. By providing a safe space where they can focus on their physical and emotional wellbeing, we empower these women to take back control of their lives and rebuild them from the ground up.



CASE STUDY

"I had to break free..." ~ Claire's story

I self-referred to The Haven, seeking refuge from the physical abuse, control and manipulation inflicted by my ex-partner. With my young daughter, Mia, by my side, I knew I had to break free from this cycle of violence.

Recognising the urgency of my situation, The Haven assessed me as high-risk. I breathed a huge sigh of relief when we moved into the refuge, seeking safety and a chance at a new life. However, the shadows of my past haunted me, as I had previously turned to substances to cope with the pain.

In the early weeks, I struggled to find my footing, leaving refuge at night with Mia and returning intoxicated. Concerns about Mia's safety were raised. The refuge staff, Children's Social Care team, and Mia's school worked together to keep Mia safe and Child Protection Services were involved.

Although my engagement with the substance use team was initially sporadic, the threat of losing Mia made me realise that I needed to confront and overcome my struggles. Determined to transform my life, I agreed to undergo weekly drug testing, hoping it would act as a deterrent. The first few weeks were challenging, as I tested positive for cocaine and cannabis use.

However, with the support of the team, I found the strength to persevere. Gradually, I began making significant progress, abstaining from drugs for seven weeks and consistently engaging with the substance use team.

"I am no longer confined by the chains of abuse and addiction; instead, I am full of hope and promise." ~ Claire

We explored healthy relationships, coping mechanisms, and the impact of parental substance use on children.

As I began to feel better, I enrolled in college where I attend classes 2-3 days a week. Additionally, I sought help from Recovery Near You and my GP, taking active steps towards my recovery journey.

I have now secured a property for myself and Mia, a place we can call our own. Throughout this process, I worked closely with The Haven and diligently adhered to the plan provided by Social Services. With their help, we were able to de-escalate the case from Child Protection to a Child in Need.

Mia is doing a lot better, thanks to the support from The Haven's Children and Young People service. She now thrives, attending school regularly, and has settled into a structured routine that includes an appropriate bedtime.

I am thankful that with the help of The Haven, I am no longer confined by the chains of abuse and addiction; instead, I am full of hope and promise. The possibilities are endless.

Helpline: 08000 194 400

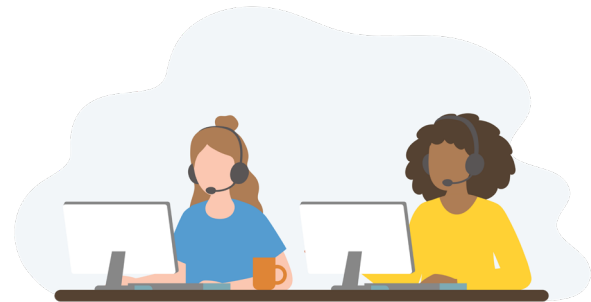


This year, we achieved a significant milestone, securing our first Helpline Standard Certification—a prestigious national recognition for best practices in helpline services. This certification underscores the quality of care and expertise we bring to each call, demonstrating our commitment to providing the highest standard of support to survivors.

With compassion and competence, our highly skilled and multilingual helpline team continues to offer practical and emotional support and advice to those reaching out in their darkest hours. Their dedication has allowed us to assist a staggering 12,563 callers this year, each call representing a someone in need of care, understanding, and support.

We understand that accessibility is paramount in times of crisis, which is why we continued to promote our messaging channels alongside our helpline. Our Live Chat service engaged with 385 individuals seeking immediate assistance, while we received 56 messages via our WhatsApp service, ensuring that support is just a text message away for those who may prefer it.

Serving as Wolverhampton's Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for refuge referrals and high-risk multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC) referrals, our helpline has become a lifeline for countless vulnerable individuals seeking safety and support.



Our commitment to excellence has been the cornerstone of this service since it was launched in 2009. As we look towards the future, we eagerly anticipate welcoming new helpline staff ready to extend our reach and continue the positive impact our helpline has on those in need.

Community services

Flexibility has continued to be a key theme for our community services. Delivering support to women and their children who live in their own homes, with loved ones, or with the perpetrator, we have prioritised meeting their safety, practical and emotional needs in an agile way.

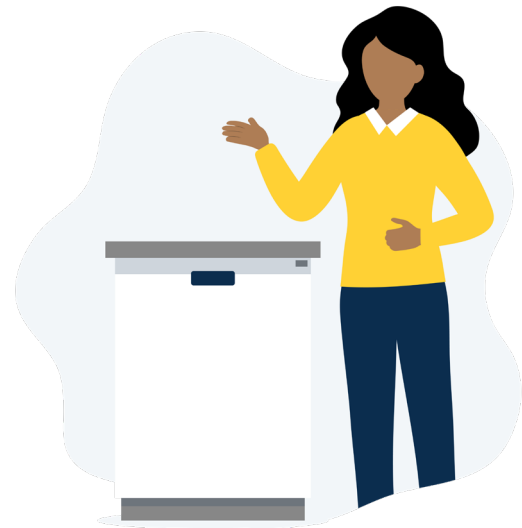
We have been able to secure additional funding to provide welfare grants directly to women and families for items such as white goods, furniture and bedding, along with essentials such as food and fuel. Never has this support been needed more than during a cost of living crisis that is so adversely affecting many women whose situations are often compounded by financial abuse.

Our Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) service supported almost 70 people per month, on average, in Wolverhampton this year. This support is foundational in ensuring safety remains the utmost priority for those who are at highest risk of harm or homicide because of domestic abuse. Furthermore, our sexual violence and exploitation specialists were able to support almost 150 people, making a huge impact in efforts to safeguard vulnerable women and children in Wolverhampton.

Overall, our community team supported more than 1,700 women during the last year, supporting them to overcome barriers and begin to build a future free from domestic abuse.

"I didn't have anything at all. I was very excited to receive this support from The Haven as I was not in a financial position to purchase everything I need for my new home. I am grateful for this support." - *Salma*

"Thanks to The Haven I feel so much safer in my own home. I really thought moving into refuge was the only option for me and my children. Happy that I can keep them safe in familiar surroundings." - *Mira*



Accommodation

Providing a safe space for women and children fleeing abuse is a fundamental part of our services and can enable women to take their first step away from domestic abuse. This year, we continued to prioritise safety while offering different types of accommodation to cater to the diverse needs of the women and children we support. Our new apartments designed with independent living in mind were completed and had the first residents move in during the summer of 2022. These are self-contained apartments that can accommodate families with varying needs, including older boys and families with challenges that make communal living difficult.

One heartwarming success story exemplifies the positive impact of our new apartments. We were able to reunite a mother with her 17-year-old son in the comfort of our self-contained spaces. The mother expressed her happiness, stating, "I was elated when I was offered a space in the new apartments so that I can reunite with my son." 87% of women said they felt safer because of our safe accommodation and 80% said they felt their risk had reduced.

Creating warm, welcoming, and inviting spaces has continued to be a core objective for us. The feedback from many women marks their move into our accommodation as a pivotal point in their journey and the introduction to a warm and homely environment during this critical time makes all the difference. This is never more evident than on the first night in an unfamiliar setting. We have



diligently attended to every detail, from the decoration to the crockery and even the lightbulbs. Our dedication to maintaining a homely atmosphere has been made possible, in part, by the incredible support of our generous donors. Thanks to their contributions, we have been able to provide fresh bedding to all our residents, including a special set for children, fostering a sense of ownership as they settle into their temporary home.

"My daughter has a severe nut allergy. I was always worried about cooking in the communal kitchen in refuge. We would stay outdoors a lot of the time and mostly came back just to sleep. This new apartment has created a safe space for us in multiple ways – away from abuse but also, we now have our very own self-contained kitchen and I do not have to worry about food contamination." - Tina

CASE STUDY

"Abused while pregnant..." ~ Tania's story

I was referred to The Haven after enduring physical abuse at the hands of the man I once believed loved me. When the Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) reached out to me, I was initially hesitant to admit the truth. I convinced myself that love could conquer all. I kept hoping things would change for the sake of the precious life growing inside me and my 10-year-old son.

I was physically and emotionally abused while pregnant. However, it took several incidents and his arrest for me to realise that reconciliation was not an option. While in labour, I made the decision to accept refuge accommodation. Thanks to the unfaltering support of the IDVA and my keyworker, I found sanctuary at The Haven, clutching my two-week-old baby in my arms.

Despite the emotional challenges, refuge became my light at the end of the tunnel. I received the support I needed to seek legal protection through a Non-Molestation order and Prohibited Steps Order, safeguarding my babies and myself from my ex-partner's threats.

Guided by my keyworker, I embraced motherhood again. They also helped me understand how deeply my 10-year-old son had been affected by the abuse he witnessed. The Haven helped me to rebuild my relationship with him and now our bond is stronger than ever.

Thanks to the uplifting activities and outings organised by the caring refuge staff, I have also been able to form bonds with other residents.

"I found sanctuary at The Haven, clutching my two-week-old baby in my arms... Guided by my keyworker, I embraced motherhood again." - Tania

With each passing day, my confidence has grown as my keyworker is helping me prepare for the eventual transition to my own home. I've engaged in counselling and wellbeing programs, and can look forward to a brighter future.

Through it all, I reconnected with my mother, who now stands by my side as a pillar of support. As I bid on properties and hope for my new beginning, I know I have a network of people ready to help me navigate this path to independence.

The Haven's continued support and the dedication of my keyworker have equipped me with the tools to face whatever challenges lie ahead. When I secure my new tenancy, they'll be there to guide me through the process, ensuring a smooth transition.

I am overwhelmed with gratitude. The work that The Haven do to empower survivors like me to break free from the chains of abuse is truly remarkable. I am thankful that they believed in me when I couldn't believe in myself.



Sexual violence & abuse

Our compassionate Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVA) and Children's Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ChISVA) stand ready to support women and children who have endured sexual abuse, violence, and exploitation.

This year they continued their proactive approach to support, working closely with women and children to carefully assess the risks they face and develop personalised safety plans to meet their specific needs. Our commitment extends to assisting service users in accessing crucial health services, such as GP registration, sexual health testing, and pregnancy tests, while supporting them to navigate the complexities of the criminal justice system.

We firmly believe in empowering survivors, which is why we guide service users through the process of writing their victim impact statements and provide clarity by demystifying the court procedures through pre-trial visits. Attending court dates with them, we liaise with the court to ensure special measures are in place if required, including screens to protect witnesses from facing their perpetrators directly.

One recent example of our impact to people's lives includes our ChISVA who supported and empowered a survivor through the criminal justice system. The offender was found guilty of three counts of rape and creating indecent images of a child. He received a 10-year prison



sentence and was registered as a sex offender. The survivor and her mother said they are very grateful of The Haven's support. We aim to continue positively impacting survivors with their healing journey and through the criminal justice system.

"The Haven have helped me realise that I was not to blame. It took me a long time to accept this but now I see, I can move forward with my life and my children." - Emma



65 women assessed as high-risk supported by our ISVA

68 children referred to our CHISVA for support in the last year

Counselling & wellbeing

A key focal point for us last year continued to be meeting the wellbeing needs of survivors of domestic abuse. At The Haven, we are committed to meeting the diverse needs of our service users, with our therapeutic counselling and wellbeing service standing at the forefront of this. With over 50 experienced counsellors, we provide a lifeline for individuals seeking healing from traumatic experiences, acknowledging the profound impact of domestic abuse on mental health.

In our pursuit of excellence, we continuously seek innovative ways to enhance our services. Our Virtual Reality (VR) Therapy and Gaming service has continued to strike a chord with the children and young people we support, providing a unique and engaging approach to healing and growth.

Recognising the importance of empowering women towards independence, we've introduced a groundbreaking initiative focused on support such as financial literacy and employment, among other things. By equipping women with vital life skills, we aim to break the chains of financial abuse, often perpetuated in controlling relationships. We are constantly refining this service, ensuring it addresses critical aspects such as nutrition and exercise, nurturing the overall holistic wellbeing of survivors.

This year we have furthered our commitment to supporting survivors irrespective of when their abuse

occurred, by supporting those who are currently, have recently or historically experienced abuse.

Along with our counselling and broader wellbeing and therapeutic interventions, we have delivered more of our in-house programmes, developed with women, for women. This includes the continued delivery of our 'Dolphin Programme' and 'Free to Transform Programme' that focuses on empowerment, recovery from trauma, developing healthy relationships and other areas of personal growth.

"I would like to thank my counsellor for all the support she has shown me. She has been a massive part of my journey. Believing in me, she has helped me believe in myself again. I have grown and taken so much from our sessions. I have learnt so much about myself. I have a future. I have a life. I am strong. I am positive. She has given me such amazing advice, ideas and strategies to work with to get through the things I have struggled with and found so hard to accept. I know that all the help and strength I have taken from our sessions has made me grow to become strong enough to move on and be happy and to realise that it is okay to have a bad day without being hard on myself keep them safe in familiar surroundings." - *Katy*

The Haven Wolverhampton

2022/2023 year in review

12,563

total calls
to our helpline



More than

4,000

women, children & young
people supported in total

45

women supported
with no recourse
to public funds



97%

of children and young people
feel more in control of their lives

65

women supported
by our sexual violence
advisors



More than

1,800

people attended our training
nationally

£12,411

total raised through
regular givers



81% of

students we engaged with felt
they could assert their rights
after MENgage/EmpowHER

1,750

women & CYP
supported in
the community



52



women supported through our substance use service

132

of our staff and volunteers trained in domestic abuse

We supported

68



children who were subjected to sexual violence or exploitation

80%

of women we supported made significant progress in rebuilding confidence and self-esteem

More than

50



counsellors supported women in multiple languages

97%

of children & young people we supported showed an increase in their wellbeing

500



young people engaged in conversations about gender norms and stereotypes

87%

of women we supported felt safer because of our support

542



women, children & young people safely accommodated in refuge

No recourse to public funds

Throughout the last year, our ongoing commitment to supporting women with no recourse to public funds has been steadfast. As traditional funding models continue to exclude these migrant survivors, we remained devoted to providing a dedicated space in our safe accommodations.

This year, we were able to provide safe accommodation to 19 women, and safety, practical and emotional support to a further 26 women in the local community.

Domestic abuse has a profound and often exacerbated impact on migrant women. These vulnerable individuals face unique challenges, as they might be socially isolated, lack a support network, and encounter language barriers that hinder access to essential services.



	Number of women
Supported in refuge	19
Supported in the community	26
Total supported	45

Migrant women subjected to domestic abuse often fear seeking help due to concerns about their immigration status. Furthermore, the trauma and fear resulting from domestic abuse can significantly impede their ability to thrive in a new country.

Addressing the specific needs and vulnerabilities of migrant women, including providing culturally sensitive support and protection, is crucial to ensure their safety and wellbeing while fostering a more inclusive and compassionate society.

The women we supported were in extremely vulnerable situations. One of them shared with us on numerous occasions that had she not been referred to The Haven, she would have taken steps to end her life.

CASE STUDY

"Afraid of going to court..." - *Najma's story*

I still remember the night I called the police, afraid for my life. As a migrant woman I was isolated; he would use this to taunt me, as he told me I had no life without him.

The police referred me to The Haven who offered me safety in refuge. When I moved in, I felt overwhelmed and uncertainty clouded my mind. My keyworker told me about all the support available. She tried to assure me that being in refuge would give me the time and space to consider my options. But I wasn't so sure.

Fears of deportation and homelessness gnawed away, as I knew my spousal visa made me ineligible for benefits and housing. I thought he was right – I had no life without him. And so, I went back to him.

A turning point came when an agency worker contacted The Haven about a concerning message I sent. That message prompted a welfare check by the police, revealing more abuse and sexual violence. In that moment, I knew I had to leave.

Back in refuge, the journey to reclaim my life began. I received legal support and the prospect of a destitution domestic violence (DDV) concession application for financial assistance gave me hope. Throughout the application process, The Haven supported me with weekly welfare payments and essential items, sparing me further hardship.

I was afraid of going to court because I thought I didn't

have enough evidence. But my keyworker never lost faith, helping me gather and present evidence needed for my DDV concession application, which was successful.

With my new status, I was able to apply for Universal Credit, gaining financial independence. I took control of my life for the first time since being in the UK, paying for essentials myself.

Activities and counselling sessions helped me find my voice and I formed friendships with other women who shared similar journeys. Together, we uplifted one another, celebrating each other's progress and dreams.

When my immigration status was granted, I felt a sense of stability I hadn't felt in years. With support from The Haven, I applied for housing but the thought of living alone scared me. My keyworker reassured me that I could seek her support whenever I needed it. Her belief in me gave me the courage to embrace my independence. As I prepare to move into my first home in the UK, I am thankful to The Haven for helping me reclaim my life.

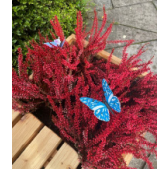
"I didn't have enough evidence. But my keyworker never lost faith, helping me gather and present evidence needed for my DDV concession application, which was successful." - *Najma*

Children & young people (CYP)

This year we have made strides in improving our children and young people service in various ways including recognising the importance of having a consistent presence in refuge. There is now a member of the team on-site at each of our accommodations for at least two days a week, depending on the number of children residing there. This has been well received, with children popping in for a quick chat, as and when they feel they need it, without having to book a formal session beforehand.

We have continued the work we began last year to create outdoor spaces for children and their mums in some of our accommodations. Previously plain, grassy areas have been transformed into beautiful, serene gardens with planters, flowers, decorations and colourful benches. We didn't create these spaces on our own. Imagine little hands wielding paintbrushes, adding their creative touch to the benches, making them unique masterpieces! The pride and joy in their eyes seeing their artwork come to life was heartwarming. One mum, sat on one of the benches enjoying the atmosphere with her son, said, "This is a lovely calm space where I can bond with my son or come if I need a minute to myself."

We have improved our early years (0-5 years) provision with a tailored approach, perfect for those not yet attending school or nursery. In partnership with Wolves Play Cafe, we've organised ongoing themed play cafés



for this age group. We have maintained our Virtual Reality (VR) Therapy and Gaming service which now includes one-to-one sessions. These changes reflect our commitment to provide a comprehensive and effective service to vulnerable children and young people who come to us in need of support.

Last year, we highlighted our MENgage/EmpowHER programme and this year, we're thrilled to share the incredible impact we've made. We engaged with nearly 500 young minds from schools across the city, sparking vital conversations about how gender roles can fuel violence against women and girls. We empowered these students to identify the changes they need to make and urged them to stand up for their rights while challenging unacceptable behaviour both in school and within their wider communities.

Some students felt comfortable discussing experiences which were flagged as safeguarding concerns. An impressive 77% of the students recognised changes that they felt they needed to make to improve their behaviours moving forward. Through this programme we are shaping a future generation that is committed to fostering a safer, more equal society for all.

What CYP say about us...

"Thank you so much for this trip. My children really enjoyed their time on the bus. It is something they haven't experienced before so that in itself is a wonderful experience. Let alone going to an attraction like Waterworld which we simply wouldn't be able to travel to alone. What an amazing experience." - *Rochelle, mum*

"Since having my sessions I feel more confident to speak about how I am feeling and know it is okay to feel sad and angry and I am finding different way to be able to cope with this." - *Emman*



"I feel very grateful for the support I received at The Haven. The CYP Workers helped me to feel happy again, and they showed me that there are good people in the world that I can rely on and create new relationships with." - *Amya*

"I like these sessions because I can relax, talk and play. Sessions make me happier. I have learnt about what a good friendship can look like." - *Alim*

"I know how to calm myself down and make myself feel better when I start to get angry." - *Aliyah*

"I really liked that my support worker always supports my decisions. She is a star and she has made life so much better." - *Imran*



"I really enjoyed the zoo trip. It was amazing. I saw lots of different animals eating, sleeping and playing. My favourite part was when the penguins ate all the fish. They wobbled when they walked too. It was so funny!" - *Nivea*

"I have a stronger relationship with my mum and siblings and feel less angry at the world." - *Leon*

CASE STUDY

Gruffalo party



Where: The Kingswood Trust

Who: Families living in refuge (34 people in total)

What: Gruffalo party

Families were treated to a joyous day out, courtesy of The Kingswood Trust. This enchanting Gruffalo party themed experience included a nature trail, cake decorating, animal feeding, and endless playtime on the Trust's playground equipment.

The joyous laughter of children filled the air for over two hours, as their worries and stresses momentarily faded away. Mums couldn't stop talking about the experience - the overwhelmingly positive feedback and comments kept coming. The children shared their excitement too, eager for the chance to do it all over again!

This collaboration between The Kingswood Trust and The Haven Wolverhampton created unforgettable memories, reminding us that a little outdoor enchantment can go a long way toward brightening the darkest days.



"I loved it, can we go back again?" - *Maria*, aged 8

"The boys really enjoyed being able to run around and I'm glad they could burn off some of their energy." - *Sahira*, mum

"Feeding the sheep was the best even though I was a bit scared." - *Dinah*, aged 9

"I liked the Gruffalo cakes." - *Ahmed*, aged 4

CASE STUDY

"He used to shout a lot..." ~ James' story

My mum and I had to leave our old house because her partner was violent and not very nice. He used to shout a lot, and it made me really sad. So, we went to live with family, but their house was so full, and we had barely any space for ourselves. That's when The Haven came to our rescue!

I really wanted my own room and a special place to be happy, but it seemed almost impossible. Then, my super nice support worker started meeting me every week. At first, I felt all mixed up and confused inside, but she was like a friendly fairy who made everything feel better. She asked if I wanted to try Virtual Reality (VR) stuff, and I was like, "Yes, please!"

I've always wanted to go to a cool theme park, but I never got the chance. But guess what? My support worker made it happen with VR magic! I got to ride huge rollercoasters, swim deep under the sea, and even walk on the moon! It was like real-life magic!

With her help, we found a new place to live—a cosy little home with my very own bedroom! I was so happy, and guess what? I got to pick my bedding, and it had characters from my favourite game!

I loved spending time with my support worker. She's like a friend who really listens and helps me feel safe. Now I know I can talk about how I feel, and it's like a magical spell that makes everything feel better.

"Now I know I can talk about how I feel, and it's like a magical spell that makes everything feel better." ~ James

Thanks to The Haven, my mum and I found happiness again. They made everything feel like magic and showed us that dreams really can come true. I'm super excited about our new life, and I know that with The Haven by our side, every day will be full of joy!



	Number of children
Supported in Refuge	236
Supported in the community	761
Total supported	997

Please note that names have been changed to protect the identity of individuals.

The Haven Training



We have continued to deliver induction training and upskill our staff through a variety of domestic abuse awareness related courses. We have also delivered several sessions to employers, who play a vital role in supporting domestic abuse victims, survivors and families.

Through our Purple Pledge campaign that aims to support businesses and organisations with Domestic Abuse Policies and Domestic Abuse Awareness training, as well as introducing Workplace Ambassadors into every organisation in the UK, we have worked with many organisations - West Midlands Combined Authority, Birmingham Football Club, Ryan Bradley Gym, Sandwell Council Early Years Essex Council and the University of Wolverhampton to name a few.

In partnership with The Sandwell Council, we provided multi-agency training to several organisations in the

Sandwell region. The training sessions covered a wide range of topics including Domestic Abuse Awareness, No Recourse to Public Funds, Child to Parent Abuse, Learning from Domestic Homicide Reviews, Domestic Abuse and Adult Safeguarding, Sexual Assault, Abuse and Female Genital Mutilation.

As part of the council's Housing Team training programme and accreditation to the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance, we also delivered Domestic Abuse Awareness training to the Lettings Team, Customer Service Assistants, Income Recovery Officers and Welfare Rights.

The Telford & Wrekin Council has a comprehensive and inclusive strategy to support domestic abuse victims and their families. They requested our support in delivering Domestic Abuse Awareness and Workplace Ambassador training to raise awareness to anyone who worked and/or lived in the Telford and Wrekin region. The training program included support for Community Champions who support community groups and charities in the area.

	Number of attendees
Internal staff training	132
External training sessions	1,801
Total trained	1,933

What people say about our training...

“Clare's Law was a big eye opener for me. I didn't even know that this existed. I now have the resources to signpost and the knowledge to report it.”
- **Triage Assistant**

“I have learnt so much. My previous knowledge has been updated. I didn't know about the silent solution; tapping 55 while on 999 calls to indicate you can't speak. Seeing the end slides with all the services that offer guidance in this area, it's good to know that so much support is available if I ever need to help someone.” - **Healthy Child Programme Support Worker**

“Lots of information and guidance in the training. Never really considered child to parent abuse before.” - **Nurse**

“A difficult topic to cover but also very important. It helped me see that a close friend of mine is definitely in an abusive relationship, and made me understand more about why she keeps on going back to him time and time again. It's a very sensitive subject but I now feel I can give people in this situation advice on where to go for help.” - **Marketing Assistant**

“It was really interesting to learn how children can model behaviours of their parents. I will bear this in mind if I see a child in surgery exhibiting dominant or aggressive behaviours - they could be mimicking what happens at home.” - **General Practitioner**

“This Domestic Abuse Awareness training has broadened my knowledge. I am looking forward to completing the ambassador training. I feel as though it will help build my confidence to support someone making a disclosure.” - **Senior Enablement Worker**

“I will print off the posters with help lines and pop them in our toilets so that those who need this information can access it. The training also provided me with a really good understanding of signs to look out for and how to support any learners who may need assistance.” - **Tutor**

Communications & campaigning

This year we continued to leverage our website and social media platforms to engage with our audiences. To mark our 50th anniversary we hosted a jubilee logo reveal and launched our *50 Stories for 50 Years* campaign to share powerful success stories from survivors and other stakeholders, like employees. Their words paint a vivid picture of the impact our services can have on vulnerable women and children, while encouraging those who may be suffering in silence to seek help.

By collaborating with local businesses like *TPSquared* and running engagement initiatives, we expanded our reach effectively raising awareness about domestic abuse beyond our usual demographic. Additionally, amplifying the voices of survivors throughout our fundraising efforts like our Christmas appeal, fostered a sense of community and encouraged meaningful conversations surrounding our mission.

We embraced impactful initiatives aimed at leaving a lasting impression. From our survivor-led *Empurple Week* campaign, to acknowledging the crucial role of our staff and partners, our social media presence exemplified inclusivity as well as appreciation.

Moreover, our strategic use of awareness days, and leaning into wider advocacy efforts like raising awareness of *Kay's Law* and promoting *The Wolverhampton Safety of Women and Girls Survey*

demonstrated our commitment to creating societal change and influencing public discourse on domestic abuse and violence.

We've maintained our connections with the media, gracing the pages of several articles and taking to the airwaves for engaging radio interviews. From discussing our fundraising endeavours to shedding light on our impactful services and awareness-raising initiatives, we've become a familiar voice within the community.

We were invited as experts on two incredibly inspiring podcasts! We had the privilege of a joint appearance with a courageous survivor, who bravely shared her own powerful story on one of them. It was a heartfelt moment where we could not only offer our expertise but also lend moral support when needed.

Our Google star rating has improved with more positive reviews and our newsletters continue to exceed the industry average opening rate with an average of over 30%. Overall, our efforts have elevated the organisation's profile and strengthened our collective resolve to combat domestic abuse and provide a *safe haven* for those who are vulnerable and in need.

2

podcast
features

14,178

followers across all
social media

Communications & campaigning

Our engagement initiatives this year include:

- **50th Anniversary Logo Reveal** – Unveiling our anniversary logo was no ordinary task! We decided to delve into the past five decades, reliving powerful moments in the fight for women's rights. This campaign spanned five days, each representing a different decade, as we revealed snippets of the logo every day. It was also the perfect chance to reintroduce our audience to the story of how we were founded.
- **50 Stories for 50 Years** – We've been collecting touching stories from people positively impacted by our work over the last 50 years. The response has been incredible! From those we've supported to our dedicated staff and allies, these accounts reveal the incredible evolution of The Haven. We can't wait to share these heartfelt narratives with you!
- **16 Days of Activism** – At the heart of our campaign this year, was a rallying call for unity to end violence against women and girls, through the voices of women and children impacted by domestic abuse and violence. Using the hashtag #YouKnowHer, this campaign aimed to shed light on the often-hidden struggles of those around us – our mothers, daughters, sisters, friends, and colleagues – who may have been subjected to abuse. The campaign served as a reminder that with an astounding 25%

of women facing such challenges in their lifetime, it's likely that the stories shared are relatable. At the end of the campaign, we highlighted ten simple ways that people can help including linking the campaign to some of our other initiatives like our early intervention work in schools and our pledge to create safer workplaces.

- **Empurple Week** – This year we gathered with women in refuge to explore the theme of 'embracing equity' - UN Women's theme for International Women's Day. Their responses were awe-inspiring, and we shared them on social media. Witnessing their engagement and support for one another was a privilege. These women, whose potential has been held hostage by abuse, were visibly excited to have their voices amplified through this campaign.

Embracing Equity - *What women are saying...*

"We have a lot of work to do within our education system. Boys should not be given the option to leave their classes for things like *period talks*." - *Ajina*

"We need more women who actually care about women's rights in positions of power. Not women who are just there to tick the unspoken gender quota box." - *Leila*

Fundraising



Our key fundraising highlights:

- Women's Networking Event** – This year, our women's networking events made a comeback. We started with a festive-themed event in December, followed by a heartwarming Galentine's themed event in February. Attendees wrote empowering messages on love hearts for women in refuge, making it a truly remarkable event. These hearts are now proudly displayed on a refuge wall, offering daily messages of hope and support. **Over £1,000 raised.**
- The 104 Challenge** – Our supporters ran, walked, or cycled 104 miles, symbolising the two women per week - 104 per year - killed by current or former partners in the UK. Local businesses and individuals participated. Porsche Wolverhampton added a unique spin, turning their showroom into a running track for a team of their staff to complete 104 laps! **Over £2,000 raised.**
- Night at The Movies** – Our first post-COVID ball at the prestigious Mount Hotel was a glamorous night themed around blockbuster hits. With casino tables, a live singer, retro popcorn machine, raffle, live auction, and themed music, attendees danced the night away. Our most successful event yet! **£7,500 raised.**
- Quiz Nights** – Our quizzically fun mid-week nights became a regular sell-out event. Teams from local businesses used the night for team-building in the hybrid working world, while family and friend groups enjoyed catching up over 10 rounds of questions. These events are now a staple in our events calendar. **Over £2,800 raised.**
- Golf Day** – Our annual Golf Day returned for its fifth year and was a sell-out event. This year we ventured to Penn Golf Club for 18 holes of golf, breakfast on arrival as well as an evening meal and entertainment provided by an ex-Wolves legend. **Over £4,000 raised.**
- Christmas Appeal** – Christmas was as magical as ever! Corporate teams helped to build grottos in refuge, and we received an abundance of gifts, vouchers, and donated trips. Thanks to donors like Porsche Wolverhampton, we provided a full Christmas dinner and gifts for everyone in refuge and festive food parcels for the community. Our successful Christmas Big Give matched funding campaign also raised thousands of pounds to ensure our spaces are warm and welcoming for the festive period and beyond. **Over £24,000 raised.**

The true impact of your donations



Who: Domestic abuse survivor and ex-service user Wendy

What: A marathon around West Park

When: September 2022

Why: Twenty years ago, Wendy and her children left everything they had ever known and moved to Wolverhampton to flee from domestic abuse. To mark this anniversary, Wendy walked a marathon around West Park to raise funds for The Haven.

"The Haven truly put me back on my feet and guided me to my best life, and for a long time, I had been thinking that I needed to do something to give back... I am excited to be able to contribute to ensuring that The Haven can continue to do the amazing work that they do... It was a challenge, but I kept myself motivated by focusing on the end goal. I kept telling myself that if I can raise enough money to help a family in the same position as I was twenty years ago, it will be worth every step!" - Wendy

The Impact: The money raised from incredible fundraising challenges like Wendy's go such a long way towards providing vital wrap-around support services to help vulnerable women and children look to a brighter future free from the fear of abuse. From providing an entire brand-new bed set for a woman or a child, ensuring they have somewhere safe and warm to rest and relax whilst they come to terms with the trauma they have fled from, through to funding memorable experiences and days out that create cherished moments for the brave women and children at The Haven; every penny makes a difference. £30 can cover the cost of a single bed-set meaning that this donation could go towards over 30 bed-sets! We simply wouldn't be able to continue our vital services without people like Wendy.

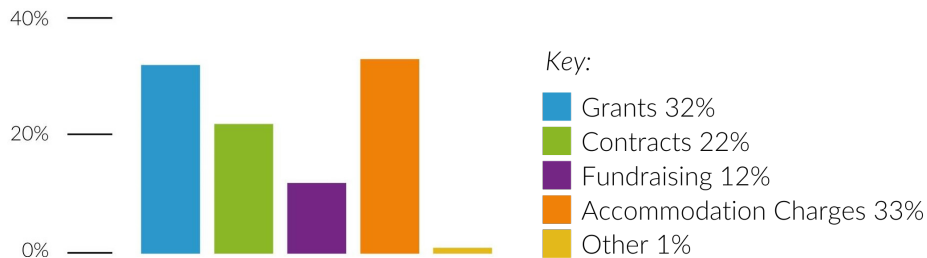


£1,000

raised by Wendy who walked a marathon around West Park

Finances

How The Haven is funded:



94%

of our expenditure was spent on services.

Industry average is 85%.



Unrestricted net current assets' were **£806,579**.

This is just under three months running costs, which should be retained by non-profits in line with good practice for non-profits.

The remaining **£1,971,366** in 'unrestricted funds' were fixed assets – essentially buildings from which The Haven's services are delivered.

Through fundraising activities organised by our team and external supporters, we have raised

£406,326

to support our services this year. The generosity of the those who have supported our efforts is insurmountable and **every penny raised makes a real difference** to women and children's lives.

Thank you!



Acknowledgements

The board, staff and volunteers of The Haven Wolverhampton would like to thank all our partners, funders, supporters and stakeholders. With your assistance, we continue to support women and children affected by domestic abuse and ensure that their voices are heard.

We'd like acknowledge some of our key funders and supporters over the past year:

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National Express Foundation
Norfolk Community Foundation through Bolton Trust
Revenue Fund
OSB Group
Police and Crime Commissioner
Porsche Wolverhampton
Rotary Club Of Wolverhampton
Sainsbury's Helping Everyone Eat Better Community Grant Scheme

Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
Telford & Wrekin Council
Tesco Community Grants
The 29th May 1961 Charity
The Rowlands Trust
The Santander Foundation
The Steel Charitable Trust
Volant Charitable Trust
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