



# ANNUAL REPORT 2024 - 25

WOMEN'S RIGHTS ARE HUMAN RIGHTS  
AND NOT A PRIVILEGE FOR THE FEW.

WELLPARK CENTRE,  
120 SYDNEY STREET, GLASGOW,  
G31 1JF

TEL: 0141 370 0739  
WEB: [WWW.WISEWOMEN.ORG.UK](http://WWW.WISEWOMEN.ORG.UK)



# A WORD FROM THE CHAIR

Welcome to the 2025 Wise Women annual report.

It is my pleasure to give you an overview of our work over an exciting last 12 months and the continued challenges that lie ahead for the project.

Over the past year we have delivered 28 personal safety and confidence building courses and workshops carried out by a team of fantastic and committed workers and sessional tutors.

The challenges of post covid continue but has allowed us the opportunity to grow in other areas, such as the Lilius Centre, a community prison and our work with the Recovery Cafes.

The National Lottery fund has been essential in allowing us to build our innovative trauma informed volunteer service however this is sadly coming to an end in 2026. If we succeed in securing funding for this project, We will develop this over the next 3 years with the aim of providing certificates to survivors of violence against women in other volunteer projects within other partner agencies, who share similar aims to Wise Women.

Wise Women have always recognised the need for partnership working, we continue to work very closely with the Glasgow Violence Against Women Partnership and continue to encourage engagement and support to the Standing Group on Violence Against Women.



With the support of the Health and Social Care Partnership, as part of the Glasgow Equality Forum, we continue to support the Glasgow Women's Voluntary Sector Network. As well as delivering events for women, excitedly, they have developed a Human Rights Framework for women. The women involved have worked hard to increase their knowledge on women's human rights to develop a framework that centers on women's rights within their communities. Future funding dependent, the network hope this framework can be used by other women's groups to highlight their experienced human rights violations and put forward any changes they would like to see.

One of the ways we continue to support our partners is through the Safer Steps project. Safer Steps supports women to identify safety risks and areas of concern and help to discover solutions. In partnership with the Mungo Foundation, women walked the Carlton Bridge into the city centre, with particular focus on the four corners at Glasgow Central Station.

Despite the enthusiasm and engagement of women, the partners continue to struggle to respond to their concerns. Therefore we are currently focusing on working with women to identify their demands for change and influence partners to allow them full engagement within their Feminist City. The final report will be released at our annual celebration in March 2026.

Along with the Glasgow Violence Against Women Partnership and North Ayrshire Women's Aid, we had the privilege of welcoming the remarkable Jane Monkton Smith, author of "In Control: Dangerous relationships and how they end in murder". Jane delivered her Homicide Timeline which offers a framework to identify the escalation in Domestic Violence and stalking and to identify action that should be taken to protect women.

Wise Women recognises this event as a significant moment.

Very importantly we are coming to the end of 2 vital sources of funding. As well as the Lottery Fund, we have applied to the Glasgow Community Grants Fund, with an objective along with our partners to continue to increase women's safety in their city, communities and homes.

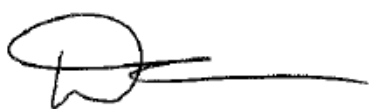
This is a significant time for the violence against women sector, despite continued support from Glasgow City Council, who are severely affected by cuts across all sectors.

The violence against women sector provides specialist support to women and we hope with the continued support from partner agencies, women can recover and thrive.

I would like to thank everyone who has taken the time and effort to read our annual report and attend our AGM Human Rights or privilege.

Finally, on behalf of the Wise Women Board of Directors, a very special thank you to our CEO, staff, sessional workers, tutors and volunteers.

Their commitment, drive, empathy and constant desire to support women in our communities knows no bounds and the Wise Women board are a bunch of very proud sisters.



Diane Travers  
Chair

## OUR STATISTICS FOR 2024/25

17 Courses

8 workshops

3 Open Space Events

5 Workers events

A total of 659 participants!



# WOMEN'S RIGHTS ARE HUMAN RIGHTS

Public safety for women in Glasgow and across Scotland is not a private problem – it is a public failure and a human-rights violation. Too often, safety is framed as a set of individual choices: don't go out late, don't wear this, don't accept that. That narrative shifts responsibility away from the men who perpetrate the violence and abuse and the institutions that should protect us. Wise Women insists: women's freedom to move, live and work without fear is non-negotiable.

A rights-based approach means the state and public services are accountable. Safety must be guaranteed through housing policy that prevents homelessness and unsafe tenancies; through transport that runs reliably and safely at night; through well-funded, trauma-informed support services; and through local planning that designs public spaces with women's bodies and experiences at the centre. If public bodies fail, they are failing human-rights obligations.

We must be radical about prevention. Prevention is not a leaflet or a one-off workshop, although women should have access to these – it is structural change. Tackle poverty, precarious work, inadequate childcare and the gendered labour that traps women in dangerous situations. Women also require resource community-led organisations providing feminist informed support, that recognises the challenges they experience, including poverty, limited educational and employment opportunities, general misogyny and provides the support that need to take control of their lives and and escape violence and abuse.

Police responses matter, but policing alone will not achieve safety for women. Policing has improved, however women still tell us that they do not trust the police to keep them safe. This is partly due to the evidence required by courts being difficult to achieve and low level sentencing. We need a more responsive criminal justice system that recognises the power dynamics between women and the men who abuse them.

Public space must be reclaimed. Cities should audit lighting, sight-lines, transport stops and late-night economy practices, with women's safety audits backed by binding commitments and budgets. Employers and venues must be required to adopt safety plans – guaranteed safe transport home, trained staff, and clear reporting routes. Night-time economies that thrive on uneven power-dynamics must be regulated with women's safety as a metric of success.

## Key statistics

- For cases of rape and attempted rape in Scotland: the conviction rate where a single charge was on the indictment (2018-19 to 2022-23) ranged between 22% and 27%, with a five-year average of 24%. [Scottish Government+2copfs.gov.uk](#)
- In 2021-22, the overall conviction rate for rape and attempted rape was 48%, compared to 88% for all crimes and offences. [Scottish Government+2Rape Crisis Scotland](#)
- For offences under the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018: in one reported year there was a conviction rate of 84% (206 convictions from 246 people brought to court) under the new Act. [The Scotsman](#)
- In 2023/24 63,687 incidents of domestic abuse reported. Only 5%, 1,552, were reported under the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018.



Survivor-centred services are essential. Those who have experienced violence should be believed, supported and given choices about justice and recovery. That means long-term funding for specialist refuges, accessible counselling, legal aid and advocacy. It means centring intersectionality. Women who experience multiple discrimination, need access to services that address that discrimination and break down barriers to women accessing their human rights. Access to resources is a key area. If a woman has access to resources, money, housing, a support network, she may require services in an emergency, however this will be shorter term than for a woman in poverty and experiencing multiple discrimination.

Legal standards must be enforced. Scotland's legal framework offers protections – but protection on paper is not protection in life. Local authorities and health boards must publish transparent safety impact assessments and be subject to enforceable human-rights review. Use human-rights complaints and hold institutions to account when they do not fulfil their obligations as human rights duty bearers.

Wise Women stands with frontline workers and women demanding systemic change. We ask policymakers to shift budget lines from surveillance to services, to co-design safety with the women most affected, and to measure success by lived outcomes: fewer women having to move home, fewer sexual assaults, more women with freedom of movement in the city.

This is not idealism – it is practical, urgent politics. Safety as a right reshapes priorities: it moves us from victim-blaming and band-aids to prevention, accountability and care. Glasgow and Scotland can lead the way. Let us build a future where every woman can occupy public space fully and freely.

## **Know Your Rights – and Use Them**

### **1. Women's Human Rights Are Protected in Law**

Under the Human Rights Act (1998) and the European Convention on Human Rights, the Scottish and UK governments must protect life, prevent degrading treatment, and ensure equality before the law.

The Equality Act (2010) prohibits discrimination based on sex, race, disability and more – all of which intersect in women's experiences of safety.

The Scottish Government's Equally Safe Strategy commits to ending violence against women and girls – but communities must hold institutions accountable for delivery.

### **2. Everyday Action for Collective Safety**

Join or start a Wise Women's Safer Steps project in your community.

Press your local council to publish results from its community safety plans.

Demand proper lighting, accessible transport, and safety routes in planning decisions.  
Support local women's organisations – collective action is how change becomes permanent.

### **3. If You've Been Harassed or Attacked**

You have the right to be believed and to receive trauma-informed support.

Contact a local support service like Wise Women, Rape Crisis Scotland, or Scottish Women's Aid.

If you choose to report, ask for a specialist officer or advocate to support you.



---

# SAFER STEPS

## ADVANCING WOMEN'S SAFETY AND EQUALITY IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE

Since the 2008 global financial crisis, austerity measures introduced by successive UK governments have had a profound and unequal impact on women. Cuts to social security and public services have deepened gender inequality, leaving women disproportionately affected by poverty, homelessness, ill health, and insecurity.<sup>1</sup>

A clear example is the two-child limit on child benefit, which restricts Universal Credit support to two children per household. Families with three or more children are denied means-tested support worth approximately £3,514 per year.<sup>2</sup> This policy directly undermines women's economic stability, intensifying child poverty and increasing women's unpaid care responsibilities.

These financial pressures intersect with broader systemic inequalities. Reductions in funding for vital public services have forced many women into insecure, low-paid, or unpaid care roles, eroding both their financial independence and their personal safety. The cumulative effect of such policies represents a sustained breach of women's human rights. This places women at increased risk of gender-based violence and limits their ability to participate fully in social and economic life.

Importantly, these impacts are not experienced equally. Disabled women, Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) women, LGBTQ+ women, younger and older women, migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women, low-income women, women with minority faiths, unpaid carers, and women living in rural communities all experience gender inequality in distinctive, intersecting ways. Yet these experiences remain insufficiently considered in UK and Scottish policymaking.

### Violence Against Women: A Persistent and Global Crisis

Across the world, women and girls continue to live with the constant threat of sexual violence; from verbal harassment and unwanted touching to rape and femicide. These violations occur in streets, workplaces, schools, public transport, online spaces, and even within the home.

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated this crisis. Government lockdowns confined many women and girls to unsafe environments, resulting in what the UN has identified as a “shadow pandemic” of violence and abuse.

Here in Glasgow and Greater Glasgow, women's safety must be recognised not as a “women's issue” alone, but as a community issue, a justice issue, and fundamentally a human rights issue. Every woman has the right to walk through her city, use public transport, and live her life free from harassment, intimidation, and violence.



## Wise Women's Response: Building Safer Steps

Wise Women continues to deliver its long-established programmes in confidence building and personal safety education, which have supported thousands of women across Glasgow. Building on this foundation, we have launched Safer Steps; a programme that expands our focus to address women's safety in the public sphere.

Safer Steps works collaboratively with women to identify the barriers that compromise safety in everyday environments. Through participatory research, partnership building, and policy engagement, the programme seeks to challenge the systems, cultures, and power imbalances that enable violence against women to persist.

Our recent collaboration with the Mungo Foundation has further strengthened this work, bringing lived experience and community expertise to the forefront of local decision-making.

### A Feminist Vision for a Safer Glasgow

Glasgow has been a Feminist City since 2022, a commitment that recognises the need to transform, not women's behaviour, but the structures that perpetuate inequality. As the city undergoes major structural and environmental transformation to meet the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Safer Steps initiative directly contributes to Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

Despite international commitments, the UN warns that the world remains off track to achieve gender equality by 2030. This reality reinforces the urgency of Wise Women's work ensuring that gender equality is embedded in the social, environmental, and economic future of Glasgow.

Through Safer Steps, we are aiming to ensure that women's voices are not just heard but central to planning and policy decisions that affect their lives. Our goal is to build safer communities, amplify women's leadership, and

create lasting change for future generations of women and girls.

"Violence against women in all its forms is a human rights violation. It's not something that any culture, religion or tradition propagates."

Michelle Bachelet, Former President of Chile

### References

British Medical Journal (2017). Effects of health and social care spending constraints on mortality in England: a time trend analysis. Approximately 120,000 excess deaths occurred between 2010–2017.

Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG). The Two-Child Limit: Our Position. Retrieved from [cpag.org.uk/policy-and-research/our-position/two-child-limit-our-position](https://cpag.org.uk/policy-and-research/our-position/two-child-limit-our-position)

Kara Evans



### Statistics on women's safety

- In 2023-24, the police recorded 63,867 incidents of domestic abuse in Scotland, up 3% from the previous year.
- In 2022-23, there were 14,602 sexual crimes recorded by Police Scotland. Scottish Government
- Of those, at least 37% related to a victim under age 18. [Scottish Government+1](#)
- Online sexual crimes ("cyber-sexual crimes") have grown: in 2022-23 these were 3,830.





# 41%

of women reported avoiding  
area in glasgow after dark.

# 32%

of women reported feeling  
unsafe in glasgow at anytime.

Reclaiming the Right, Wise Women, 2021/22



---

# BEYOND VOLUNTEERING;

At Wise Women, volunteering isn't just about lending a hand – it's about lifting each other up, learning together, and occasionally laughing through the chaos. The “Beyond Volunteering” framework is our way of saying: women deserve more than a clipboard and a polite thank-you. They deserve safety, support, and the chance to grow in ways that feel empowering – not exhausting.

Firmly rooted in feminist principles, the programme turns traditional power dynamics on their head. We talk about ‘power over’ – the kind that shows up as victim blaming, silencing, and systems that forget women exist – and ‘power to’, which is all about autonomy, safety, and being heard. We're proudly in the ‘power to’ camp, with survivor-led services, proper resources, and absolutely no settling for crumbs.

Volunteering here is a journey, not a sprint. It begins gently, with confidence-building and learning. Women explore feminist ideas, digital safety, and workplace skills, then move on to hands-on workshops and team projects. Eventually, they take the reins – mentoring others, leading initiatives, and deepening their understanding of intersectionality and systemic change.

Volunteers meet with staff to set goals and sign activity plans (yes, there's paperwork – but it's empowering paperwork). There's regular supervision, mentoring, and a strong focus on wellbeing. We celebrate contributions, offer support, and make sure no one's left Googling “how do I do this?” at 2am.

Recognition matters, and we do it properly. Volunteer hours are tracked, certificates are awarded, and our annual celebration will be part party, part empowerment summit. It's chance to honour growth, skills, and the sheer brilliance of women showing up for each other.

When it's time to move on, we won't just wave goodbye. Exit planning includes goal-setting meetings, references, and signposting to services and opportunities. We want every woman to leave feeling ready for what's next – whether that's paid work, advocacy, or simply a well-earned rest.

Access is flexible and inclusive. Women can self-refer or be referred by workers. We begin with conversations about readiness and support needs, and connect women to confidence-building courses, safety workshops, and peer support groups. No one's expected to arrive fully formed – just curious and open to growth.

Each volunteer's journey is guided by a personalised activity plan, co-created to reflect their goals and the support they need. Regular reviews keep things on track and ensure the programme stays responsive, empowering, and refreshingly human.

Wise Women's volunteer programme proves that trauma-informed, feminist practice doesn't have to be dry or daunting. It can be bold, brilliant, and full of heart. By centring safety, autonomy, and recognition, we help women rise, lead, and rewrite the rules. Volunteering here isn't just beyond the ordinary – it's beyond brilliant.

Gillian Sutherland



# Global Snapshot: Women's Safety



**1 in 3 women** worldwide experience physical or sexual violence in their lifetime

(UNO, 2023)

**60 %** of female murders are committed by a partner or family spaces – home is the most dangerous place

(UN Women UK, 2021)



**140 women** are killed every day by intimate partners or relatives

(UN Women, 2023)

**70 %** of women in the UK report being sexually harassed in public spaces

(UN Women UK, 2024)



**95%** of victims of conflict-related sexual violence are woman and girls

(UN Security Council, 2024)

Only **14 %** of women globally live in countries with strong legal protections against violence



**Gender-based violence** costs economies an estimated **2%** of global GDP each year – about \$1,5 trillion (2023)

# GLASGOW WOMEN'S VOLUNTARY SECTOR NETWORK

The Glasgow Women's Voluntary Sector Network (GWVSN) was established in 1996 by Wise Women to ensure that projects working with women in Glasgow had a collective mechanism for responding to, and influencing, Glasgow City Council's Equality Agenda.

The Network aims to bring together women from across the city, providing a forum for sharing information, building mutual support, and strengthening collaboration. We are committed to raising awareness of and advocating for the reduction of social exclusion and discrimination experienced by women in Glasgow.

During the year, we facilitated two Hear Women's Voices events (previously known as Open Space):

- "Striving Forward After Difficult Times" – bringing women together to reflect on challenges, resilience, and progress. The discussions and insights gathered were collated into a report, which has been shared with partners and decision-makers.
- "What Every Woman Wants" – focused on gathering women's perspectives to inform Wise Women's Safer Steps Project.

We are now preparing for our next Hear Women's Voices event, themed "Legacies", which will explore how we can celebrate women's achievements and consider the legacies we are creating and leaving behind.

This year, the Network has also worked tirelessly to complete our Human Rights Framework, which is now available on the Wise Women website. This resource is designed for women to use personally, or as a tool to support the women they work with.

Deborah Pollacchi



**Reclaiming our Rights;  
A Human rights Framework  
for Women**



GWVSN, c/o Wise Women, ~~Woolpack~~ Centre, 120 Sydney Street, Glasgow, G31 1JF. Tel: 0141 370 0739 Email: GWVSN@wisewomen.org.uk Website: <https://wisewomen.org.uk/gwvsn>

**For more information on Glasgow Women's Voluntary Sector Network please contact Deborah on;**

**Tel: 0141 370 0739,  
Email [gwvsn@wisewomen.org.uk](mailto:gwvsn@wisewomen.org.uk)  
Visit our website, where you can  
download the Human rights  
framework,  
[www.wisewomen.org.uk/gwvsn](http://www.wisewomen.org.uk/gwvsn)**



---

# WOMEN'S SAFETY TRAINING

Wise Women aims to raise awareness of women's safety and support organisations to respond more effectively to women's needs, including their own staff.

We design training that will improve staff understanding and therefore effectiveness.

The training also aims to highlight how the needs of the service and service users can sometimes reflect and influence the feelings of staff including being overwhelmed, frustrated and burnout. We increase staff's confidence and knowledge to reduce the impact of burnout and to improve responses to women's needs.

Wise Women will design training to the needs of the partner organisation and their staff, regardless of sector.

We prefer to provide full day sessions, 10am – 3.30pm, as this time out can be beneficial for staff. We are however flexible to the needs of the organisation and their staff.

Up to 20 staff can attend this session and programmes are finalised after discussion with management or Human Resource teams.

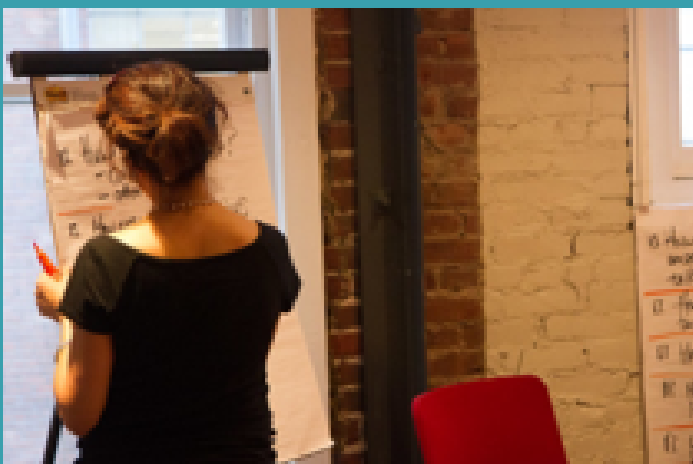
---

*"I have a better understanding of the women I work with and my role in supporting them."*

*"Evidencing skills and qualities was difficult but that was obviously the point. It was so effective. I already have a couple of clients in mind for it. (also my son)."*

*"The discussion in our group about low self-esteem and bullying was brilliant. Helped me put some behaviours into perspective."*

Participants quotes



# FINANCE

## WISE WOMEN

### DETAILED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

	2025 £	2024 £
<b>INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS</b>		
<b>Donations and legacies</b>		
Donations	492	12,015
<b>Charitable activities</b>		
Grants	182,054	180,791
Services provided under contract	<u>13,275</u>	<u>4,185</u>
	<u>195,329</u>	<u>184,976</u>
<b>Total incoming resources</b>	195,821	196,991
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
<b>Charitable activities</b>		
Wages	111,452	109,181
Social security	5,385	4,359
Pensions	2,602	5,223
Rent and rates	10,640	10,622
Insurance	-	2,564
Light and heat	(338)	840
Telephone	2,314	2,716
Postage and stationery	3,407	4,306
Sundries	1,143	1,039
Catering	1,195	2,035
Training and conference	11,672	11,976
Repairs	1,888	1,502
Travel	11,939	12,564
Payroll fees	848	857
Computer & IT Costs	1,094	2,171
Consultancy & project costs	5,285	3,600
Accountancy and legal fees	1,626	1,940
Computer depreciation	1,442	1,345
Payment of Glasgow City Council	<u>-</u>	<u>746</u>
	<u>173,594</u>	<u>179,586</u>
<b>Total resources expended</b>	<u>173,594</u>	<u>179,586</u>
<b>Net income</b>	<u>22,227</u>	<u>17,405</u>



Working to Improve Safety and Self Esteem since 1994



Wellpark Centre,  
120 Sydney Street,  
Glasgow, G31 1JF

Tel: 0141 370 0739

Email: [info@wisewomen.org.uk](mailto:info@wisewomen.org.uk)

Web: [www.wisewomen.org.uk](http://www.wisewomen.org.uk)