



June 2025

Issue 5

# Overcoming difficult times

International Women's Day, 8th March, is a day to celebrate women's achievements and strengths.

This year the Glasgow Women's Voluntary Sector Network celebrated international Women's Day by holding one of their Hear Women's Voices! events, with the theme of 'Striving Forward – Recovering from difficult times.' An opportunity for women to share their experiences and how they overcame the difficulties they experienced.

This issue of the newsletter follows on from this theme. Contained are stories and information on women's resilience and who can support them to recover from their experiences.

The next Hear Women's Voices! Event will be held during 16 days of action. Why not sign up on our website [www.wisewomen.org.uk](http://www.wisewomen.org.uk) to be kept informed.

## Inside this issue

Striving forward.....	2
Reclaim your rights .....	3
Wise Woman of the month.....	4
The Darkest of Nights.	6
Supporting women's activism ... ..	7
Support for women ...	8

## Special points of interest

- Keep informed about Non fatal strangulation
- Woman's contribution
- Violence against women services

*"A strong woman is one who feels deeply and loves fiercely. Her tears flow as abundantly as her laughter. A strong woman is both soft and powerful, she is both practical and spiritual. A strong woman in her essence is a gift to the world."*

Native American Saying

## Striving forward after difficult times—Deborah Pollacchi

Women who strive forward after difficult times have incredible strength, resilience, and determination. Their journey often involves overcoming personal or societal challenges, be it loss, adversity, mental health or other barriers, and they emerge stronger with a renewed sense of purpose.

In many cases, women channel their experiences into something positive, whether it's through education, advancing in their careers, or leading others in their communities. Their stories inspire others, showing that even in the darkest moments, there is always a way to move forward.

**"There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you. We all face times when the pain of life seems too heavy to carry, when the weight of our experiences feels unbearable. But those very experiences, when shared with others or embraced fully, become the foundation upon which we rebuild ourselves. With hope in our hearts, we can turn even the darkest chapters of our lives into stories of strength and redemption."** – *Maya Angelou*

Ultimately, moving forward after adversity is about recognizing the inner strength that women often cultivate through hardship. With resilience, self-compassion, and the support of others, women can emerge even stronger from difficult times.

**"You may not control all the events that happen to you, but you can decide not to be reduced by them."**

**Maya Angelou**



## Reclaim your Rights; A Human Rights Framework for Women

Wise Women were delighted to support the Glasgow Women's Voluntary Sector Network (GWVSN) to launch their Reclaim your Rights; Human Rights Framework for Women in March.

A long time in the making, GWVSN participated in training, attended Human rights events and oversaw the development of the Framework.

It is hoped that the Framework supports women to identify where their Human Rights are being violated, who is responsible for change and in what timeframe this should be achieved.

GWVSN is now piloting the Framework alongside Wise Women's Safer Steps project. The women will be visiting Stockingfield Bridge to assess what changes have been made since Safer Steps conducted a safety tour there 2 years ago. GWVSN, alongside women from the original tour, will identify any safety issues that have not been addressed and decide if these constitute a human rights violation.

We are hoping that when we visit the bridge all the recommendations from the original tour have been resolved. Where this is not the case the Framework will provide the women with a structure to contact the appropriate officers to discuss what can be done and identify a timeframe when they expect this to be resolved.

The Framework will then be uploaded to Wise Women's website, [www.wisewomen.org.uk](http://www.wisewomen.org.uk), until the women decide they have achieved the change they require.

### Some of the recommendations on original tour

- More lighting at viewing points and under the tunnel.
- Toilet facilities should include baby changing facilities.
- Separate bins for litter and dog waste should be available on bridge. These should be covered to prevent birds accessing food and overspill. Bins would also be required to be fire proof. Signs reminding bridge users to "bin their litter" etc should be installed.
- Picnic benches at some seating areas, with canopies / shelters would encourage longer term use of bridge by group of people.
- A defibrillator to be available on the structure.
- Improved safety railings at canal edge on bridge.
- Safety points, similar to those at train stations, should be installed.
- Community Wardens / Staff to patrol and / or maintain the bridge.
- Maintenance / removal of foliage and trees to ensure sight paths from housing to bridge.
- Increased lighting on canal in general.
- Improved maintenance of walkways leading to bridge.
- A Voluntary Sector Community Café available at the bridge.

## Wise Woman of the month

Wise Women is introducing our woman of the month award, a monthly recognition of a woman who has made a significant impacts on the safety of women, in Scotland, the UK or internationally. Each month staff will choose a woman, which will be published on our web-site.

When thinking of how to start our woman of the month awards we were struck by the amazing Gisele Pelicot, who refused to be shamed or silenced by men who chose to abuse her, facilitated by her husband who drugged and also raped her. Gisele has inspired women internationally. Her assertion that “Shame must change sides”, reflects the aim of Wise Women’s work. No woman should feel shame due to the actions of perpetrators, but too often others hold women complicit. Gisele’s bravery challenged this and the image of her walking into court with head held high, is what we want for all survivors of male violence.

Therefore, this month Gisele Pelicot is our woman of month. A woman who inspires strength and recovery, who inspires our staff to strive for change and who confronted the very systems that are meant to protect.

Gisele we stand beside you in solidarity.



**If you have experienced rape and / or sexual assault you can contact**

**National Rape Crisis Helpline**

**Tel: 08088 01 03 02**

**Text: 07537 410 027**

**Email: [support@rapecrisisScotland.org.uk](mailto:support@rapecrisisScotland.org.uk)**

**Glasgow and Clyde Rape Crisis**

**Tel: 08088 00 00 14**

**“It’s not for us to have shame—it’s for them. Its true that I hear lots of women, and men, who say you’re very brave. I say it’s not bravery. It’s will and determination to change society.”**

**Gisele Peicot**



### Definition

Strangulation is defined as asphyxia by closure of the blood vessels and/or air passages of the neck as a result of external pressure on the neck. There are three main categories: hanging, ligature strangulation and manual strangulation.

**Non-fatal strangulation (NFS)** is where the patient has not died.

NFS is not always linked to domestic abuse cases, it can be caused by any person and may not be someone personally connected to the victim.

### Safeguarding: 7 Minute Briefing

#### Non-Fatal Strangulation



### Statistics

It is estimated that more than 20,000 victims in the UK experience strangulation each year

1 in 11 adult sexual assault victims were strangled during the assault.

25% of domestic homicides reviewed by the DHR process were caused by strangulation.

1 in 4 women accessing community and refuge services reported having experienced strangulation or suffocation.

Children were present in more than a third of non-fatal strangulation offences, according to analysis of a sample of cases by the Crown Prosecution Service

### NHS Guidelines

- These guidelines are new and were only published in Feb 2024.
- The guidance is aimed at clinicians in acute and emergency care services.
- It has been developed to guide the investigation and management, including appropriate imaging requests, of adult and adolescent patients who have experienced non-fatal strangulation within the last 4 weeks, or are presenting beyond 4 weeks but are symptomatic.
- DBTH position: These NHS guidelines have been shared with key Trust departments and further work is in progress, engaging Emergency Department and relevant Clinical Specialities departments to demonstrate how we are assured as a Trust that this national guidance is being followed.



Scan the QR Code to  
see the NHS Guidelines



### NFS is a HIGH risk factor of domestic abuse

**ALL NON-FATAL  
STRANGULATION CASES  
MUST BE THIRD PARTY  
REPORTED TO THE POLICE.  
IT IS A CRIME!**

### Referrals

If you receive a disclosure of non-fatal strangulation caused by a person 'personally connected' to the patient, then please consult the DBTH DA Reporting Flowchart →



As well as safeguarding referrals for the patient, consider the safety and welfare of any children under 18 years / any unborn who are linked to the patient or perpetrator & refer to Social Care and hospital safeguarding teams.

### Signs & Symptoms

Professionals need to be aware that only 50% of people who are strangled will have any visible injury to the neck or head. However, some symptoms may include:

- Redness, finger marks, bruising, swelling or ligature marks to the neck
- Raspy or hoarse voice
- Trouble swallowing
- Petachiae to eyeball and eyelid
- Loss of memory, consciousness or sensation
- Incontinence



Scan to see the  
full list of signs &  
symptoms

### Strangulation Timeline



## The darkness of nights—Lisa Heenan

I'm not a big baby or scared of the bogey man. It only you knew what horrors were waiting for me. Darkness, darkness all around. I can hardly see what's on the ground.

In a sheer and utter panic, with my heart pounding and my hands shaking, I scramble to find a light (any). The lamp, my phone, anything. I'm not fussy—even the glimmer from a lighter will do. Just enough for me to see where I am—I need my hands to stop shaking for a moment, so I can turn on a light.

Now to slow my heart rate down. My body all tense, I continue to shake. Half an hour later I have finally calmed down. After reminding myself a thousand times I'm actually safe. Still screaming inside, my brain is hurting—after being flooded with every sordid detail. Including the time he assaulted me in my sleep, when I was 8.

You stopped me from staying at yours because I might end up disturbing you—with night terrors—my screaming wakes everyone up. Like it's somehow my fault. So I end up going without, feeling like I'm left, being punished for waking you up.

How dare I disturb your precious sleep!! - Is the message I get from you. If only I felt safe enough to sleep at night—I wouldn't end up waking up in a cold sweat, with heart palpitations and a sore throat. If only you knew how terrified I was. The dread I felt getting told that I was staying at his. The little house of horrors, my own personal hell.

I would end up feeling sick and anxious throughout. Worried about any opportunity during the day for him to sneak an attack. As night time approached I knew for a fact that's when he struck.

Left feeling dirty and filled with shame—along came the scare tactics—he makes sure that I kept my mouth shut.

15 years later—after my second admission to the psychiatric ward—I finally opened up.

Little by little, bit by bit, the darkness that had surrounded me for years, sucking up most of my joy and happiness—nearly costing me my life, was slowly beginning to fade.

A new feeling started to fill me, it felt really strange. It was the feeling of hope, love and possibilities that shone through.

So you can laugh all you want and make fun of me for using a night light, because no matter what you think or say—you will never take away the little light I have ingrained inside me.



## Supporting women's activism

Wise Women are delighted to introduce the newest member of our team, Gillian Sutherland.

Gillian is our new Women's Training Worker. She will be supporting women who are contributing to our work to increase women's safety in Glasgow.

The women, Women's Safety Advocates, will be able to contribute to our work in the way they wish. This might be helping out with organising events, contributing to consultations or joining one of the groups we support, Safer Steps, Survivors United and Glasgow Women's Voluntary Sector Network.

Gillian is developing a certification process that will acknowledge women's participation as a Women's Safety Advocate.

Support will begin with an assessment on application to become a Women's Safety Advocate to make sure that women get the experience they want. Women will then be supported throughout their time at Wise Women to identify what they want to do after her time with us.

Everyone at Wise Women is very excited for this project and are delighted that women who contribute so much to our services will be acknowledged.

**If you would like more information about becoming a Women's Safety Advocate, please contact Gillian on 0141 370 0379 or email [gillian@wisewomen.org.uk](mailto:gillian@wisewomen.org.uk).**

**If you would like information on some of the projects we have that you could consider visit our website [www.wisewomen.org.uk](http://www.wisewomen.org.uk)**



## **Support services for women in Glasgow**

### **Glasgow Women's Aid—0141 553 2022**

Supports women, children and young people experiencing domestic abuse.

### **Glasgow and Clyde Rape Crisis—0808 8000014**

Support women and girls in the Glasgow and Clyde area who have experienced rape or sexual violence. Whether this has happened recently or at any time in the past.

### **Hemat Gryffe Women's Aid—0141 353 0859**

Supports women, children and young people from BAME communities who have experienced domestic abuse, forced marriage or honour-based abuse.

### **SAY Women—0141 552 5803**

Offers safe semi-supported accommodation and emotional support for young women aged 16 to 25 who are survivors of sexual abuse, rape or sexual assault and who are homeless, or threatened with homelessness.

### **The Daisy Project—0141 634 4053**

Providing an integrated domestic abuse advocacy and support service.

### **Women's Support Project— 0141 418 0748**

Works to end violence against women. Based in Glasgow, we work across Scotland to raise awareness of the root causes, extent, and impact services for those affected.

### **The Archway—0800 148 88 88**

If you've been raped or sexually assaulted in the last 7 days, you can phone the sexual assault self-referral phone service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week .

### **Glasgow Association for Mental Health**

promote the mental health and wellbeing of people and their communities .

## **National support services for women**

### **Scottish Domestic Abuse and Forced Marriage Helpline—0800– 027 1234**

Supports anyone experiencing domestic abuse or forced marriage, as well as their family members, friends, colleagues and professional who support them.

### **National Rape and Sexual Assault Helpline—0808 801 0302**

Offers confidential short-term, crisis and initial support.

### **National Stalking Helpline—Suzy Lamplugh Trust—0808 802 0300**

Our mission is to reduce the risk and prevalence of abuse, aggression, and violence—with a specific focus on stalking and harassment—through education, campaigning and support.

### **Scottish Women's Rights Centre—0808 801 0789**

If you have been affected by violence and abuse in Scotland, we can offer you free and confidential legal advice and advocacy support.



## Keep in touch

**Wise Women, 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)**

## Keep in touch on Social Media

Twitter: @WiseWomenTweet  
Facebook: @Wise.Women.Glasgow  
Instagram: @wisewomenglasgow

**Contact us to join our mailing list and  
receive information direct to your  
inbox or mail box!**

## A word of thanks

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our wonderful funders, including;

- Glasgow City Council
- Glasgow Violence Against Women Partnership
- National Lottery
- Robertson Trust
- Glasgow HSCP

A special thanks goes to the young women of John Paul Academy who were successful in securing us funding through the Youth and Philanthropy Initiative Scotland

## Our Vision

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“Wise Women is a feminist organisation that continues to fight the oppression all women and girls experience in everyday life. We challenge society’s attitudes towards women by encouraging and supporting women to express themselves, recognise common experiences and take action for change.”