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Issue 3

Happy Birthday Wise Women!

Wise Women is celebrating its 30th Anniversary this year. Established in 1994, Wise Women continues to “... Address women’s fears of crime and violence by taking positive action through self-defence and personal safety courses”.

Our AGM this year welcomes back one of the founders, Jan Macleod of the Women’s Support Manager, Frances Monaghan, the former Manager for almost 30 years.

The theme of our anniversary year is connecting women. We will be highlighting some of our work, including with young women, as ways of connecting communities of women, launching a writing project, see page 2 and we have had the great honour of a song being penned for us by Esther Sparks, “Her Voice” which captures the theme beautifully.

The AGM will be the launch of our consultation for our 2025—2028 Strategic Plan for continuing to increase women’s safety together with our partners and the women of Glasgow.

Between 2012 and 2022 reported rape increased by 96% in Scotland. It may be that women are reporting rape more regularly, but we also know that many women do not report their experiences of violence and abuse. So there is still a lot of work to do.

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Special points of interest

- Wise Women’s Safer Steps project.
- One woman’s experience of Wise Women.
- Who is the Standing Group on VAW.
- Our vision.

Whose Streets, Everyone's Streets

Wise Women's Safer Steps project aims to support Glasgow and its partners to increase women's safety in the city.

Worldwide women and girls experience all forms of sexual violence. In public spaces; from verbal abuse and unwanted touching to rape and femicide. From our streets, in and around schools, public transport, workplaces, parks, public toilets and other spaces both urban and rural, to being on and offline. The global pandemic and ensuing government Lockdowns greatly increased the violence and abuse women and girls experienced.

Glasgow is now undergoing major structural change to mitigate against the challenges of climate change and to comply with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). Gender Equality and the empowerment of all women and girls is Goal 5. According to the UN the world is not on track to achieve gender equality by 2030, the previous commitment.



Wise Women is facing this challenge by developing our Safer Steps programme. We have worked with a number of organisations from across all sectors, including Councillors, Maryhill Housing Association, Sustrans and Balfour Beatty. We are listening to women and are striving to ensure their voices are at the centre of the decision-making process. Ultimately increasing women's safety together for future generations of women and girls.

If you would like to take part in the Safer Steps project, or you are a partner agency who would like to consult with women on their experience of the area in which they work or on a redesign of an area, please contact Kara on 0141 370 0739 or email kara@wisewomen.org.uk. More information can also be found at our website at www.wisewomen.org.uk/safer-steps.



Working to Improve Safety and Self Esteem since 1994

Survivors United

Have your say



Wise Women are relaunching Survivors United and we need you!!

Open to any woman who has experienced male violence against women the event will be a celebration of women's strength and will launch a working group that will produce information and recommendations to Glasgow City Council and partners.

The launch will be held

Saturday, 26th October 2024

Time TBC

Radisson Blu Hotel, 301 Argyle Street, Glasgow, G2 8DL

Lunch will be provided and expenses to the cost of an all-day bus ticket.

**For more information or to register please contact Wise Women on
0141 370 0739 or email: info@wisewomen.org.uk**

Wise Women Want Change

It can be a real challenge to describe what Wise Women strives to achieve. We have our vision statement, we know what we do, we even have stats and evaluation feedback from women who take part in our services, but somehow it does not capture the scale of change that women tell us they experience.

Wise Women is not just a groupwork project. Over the past 30 years it has provided a safe space for women to understand the impact of violence and abuse in their lives, supporting them to have confidence to be able to reject problematic behaviour and communication from those around them and to walk away where that is abusive and violent.

Identify – Avoid – Escape

In this article the Wise Women speaks to Annemarie, who has been involved in Wise Women for approximately 8 years. Annemarie has been involved in Wise Women in a variety of ways and her description of her involvement is a great example of how the organisation is a resource for women to regain their confidence, get access to new experiences and to achieve the change they want to see in their lives.

When did you first hear about Wise Women?


I can't remember the exact year. It was probably about 8 years ago. I had actually been up at Maryhill's Women Centre. Somebody had pointed me up their direction, but they didn't have anything I was looking for and I found one of Wise Women's leaflets and I said, "that's just across the road from me. How long has this been here!". So on my way back I came in and it was Frances that came down the stairs. I said I'm looking to do self-defence classes, because my confidence at that point was at rock bottom. So I started to talk to Frances and the floodgates opened She said c'mon, up the stairs and talk to me and she took me in.

I started to tell her all that was wrong, all the problems I was having and she went, "I think what you are needing is the Confidence Building courses I think that would help you better than going to the self-defence classes." She says there is a group starting up in a couple of weeks' time, put your name down for it and come down and I went down and it was the best thing I ever done.

I went down there and I was walking in thinking, "what's going to happen in here". First week was the usual. Nobody wanted to talk, nobody wanted to speak. And then as time went on I found that I was starting to talk to women that I didn't know, that I hadn't met and that was one of the things that had went when my confidence had went, I had this fear of talking to strangers.

So I got over that and I started to do home baking. I like baking, so I started to take baking down to the class and that again kind of broke the ice cause women were saying "How did you make this cake, what's in it", so that kind of broke the ice and got me talking to strangers as well.

So I did the full course and loved it. It was great. It ended up I never did the self-defence classes. Frances told me about the Open Spaces and I went along to the Open Spaces. Again when I went along there it was like "oh these strange women how am I going to talk to the", but I thought well I have done it at the confidence building classes, I'll be alright. But then there were some people coming in that needed help out of taxis. I would help them out or if there was a lift they needed to go in. Then helped getting teas and coffees. So it kind of helped me. So I



went from having no confidence what so ever to so many years later ending up on the Board of Directors.

Did you find the initial contact an emotional experience.

Very. It was very emotional, cause the things that had happened to me, I was bullied at my work and I had to leave work through ill health, cause I had a bit of a breakdown. The thing was I had the unions on my side and the HR were on the side of the bully. But once the meetings were over, I had no support. If you have a problem with alcohol you have the AA, If you have a problem with drugs you can go to a support group, sexual abuse you've got Rape Crisis. But when you are getting bullied at your work and your coming home, there is nothing. There is no support, there is no anything. Talking to Frances that day, for once somebody had actually listened to me.

And all when I was going through the bullying at my work there was nobody to talk to. There was just these meetings once a month, and as I say the unions backed me up to the hilt, HR backed the bully up to the hilt and it was a stalemate. I had to go back to my work. I went back and the bullying started right away and then when I was looking at my pay check I thought these are just numbers, my mental health is more important. I went in the next day and handed in my notice.

I didn't know what I was going to do, I just left and it was the best thing I ever did. If I had known about Wise Women my outcome would have been entirely different because I would have had somebody in my corner. Somebody that could have been there. I am not saying the Union didn't. She did, but she could only support me so much. It's very different, they are not there to support you. It's a legal thing. Where as Frances was looking at me as a person. What I was going through as a person.

What's been your favourite part of your involvement in Wise Women.

I think the Open Spaces. You are meeting people from different backgrounds, different financial backgrounds and different ethnicities and you are hearing about their customs and it makes you think, "ah that's why they do that, that's why that happens".

Then getting involved and helping people with teas and coffees and helping people in and out their taxis and getting them up. That was good.

What do you hope for Wise Women for the future.

I hope it grows, gets bigger. More known, because as I say I never knew anything about it but it was just by sheer luck. If I hadn't gone up to have a look at Maryhill Women's Centre, I to this day still would never have known about Wise Women. So I hope more word gets out there and more women get involved.

If we got told tomorrow we had 2 extra members of staff to do something different what would that be.

I like walking, I'm a walker and I know about Safer Steps. I would like to see that develop more. I know you are looking around areas to see what the negatives are. If once a month there was a guided walk to take them somewhere, and it's casual and you are just going out for a walk then go for a coffee and a chat after that. To develop it that way, as well as looking at well this needs to get changed in that route and this needs to get changed, once it is all been done then a relaxed one would be good.

Standing up to male violence against women.

Glasgow has a long history of supporting women and children who experience violence. Unlike other cities Glasgow has supported the developed a number of smaller organisations over the years. This feminist approach has allowed specialisms to grow and the ability to focus on areas of interest. This in turn has supported Glasgow's understanding of violence against women and seen the development of statutory services such as; Routes Out of Prostitution, Trafficking Awareness Raising Alliance (TARA) and Base 75.

1973 - Glasgow Women's Aid

1976 - Glasgow Rape Crisis

1981 - Hemat Gryffe

1982 - Drumchapel Women's Aid

1983 - Women's Support Project

1991 - SAY Women

1994 - Wise Women

1995 - Glasgow East Women's Aid

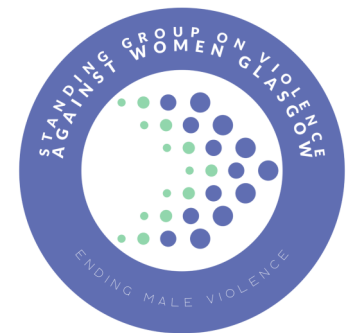
2000 - Daisy Project

The remaining services, unfortunately we have lost Glasgow East Women's Aid and Drumchapel Women's Aid continues to be supported through Glasgow Women's Aid, continue to meet as the Standing Group on Violence Against Women, (SGVAW).

SGVAW meets regularly to exchange ideas, respond to consultations and discuss the continuing development of services in light of new information and evidence. We have 4 seats on the Glasgow Violence Against Women Partnership, which develops Glasgow's strategic approach to responding to violence and abuse.

Although Glasgow has supported the violence against women sector through the years, male violence against women is so prevalent we still have a long way to go. In 2022 the SGVAW, with support from the Partnership, commissioned an Audit of Specialist Violence Against Women Services and the Benefit they make to Glasgow. The findings were stark. It estimated that male violence against women costs Glasgow £1,189,203,000, yet the city was only able to invest £2,273,855.24 in services. This goes some way to explain why although individual women and children receive support and services, the numbers of women experiencing violence and abuse continues to be high. Until we get a robust criminal justice response to perpetrators, more investment in cultural change and increased services, preventative work continues to be illusive.

For more information contact Wise Women on 0141 370 0739 or visit our website www.wisewomen.org.uk/SGVAW.



Keep in touch

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**Email: info@wisewomen.org.uk
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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
- 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

“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.”