

20223

Impact Report

2024



CarmDAS

GWASANAETHAU CAM-DRIN DOMESTIG
mae pob cam yn gynydd
CARMARTHEN DOMESTIC ABUSE SERVICES
every step is progress

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Acknowledgements

Foreword:



Colleen Bennett
CEO CarmDAS

“The team have worked exceptionally hard this year to develop and grow our services, in response to the increasing number of children and families needing our support. It is with sincere gratitude to all those involved that we present our 2023-2024 Annual Report which provides an overview of the progress made in preventing and addressing the impact of domestic abuse and sexual violence”.

Our Vision: We believe that everyone has a right to live free from abuse.

Our Mission: Domestic abuse touches all of our lives and is a result of gender inequality. We exist to support people to be free of abuse and choose their journey.

Our Approach: Needs led, strengths based and trauma informed.

Welcome to our 2023 Impact Report and thank you for taking the time to find out about our specialist work.

Domestic abuse continues to be a pervasive issue, impacting countless lives and communities across Carmarthenshire. This year has been a testament to the resilience and strength of those we support, as well as the dedication of our trustees, staff and volunteers who work to create a safe and empowering environment for individuals and families affected by domestic abuse and sexual violence.

We have also been working hard to improve the public response to domestic abuse by raising awareness in our schools and communities and collaborating with partners across Mid and West Wales. We pride ourselves in delivering a high-quality service, accredited by The Welsh Women’s Aid National Quality Service Standards (NQSS).

This report provides an overview of our activities over the past year, highlighting the progress we have made. We extend our heartfelt thanks to our stakeholders, partners and supporters for their unwavering support and trust in our charity.

As we look ahead to the future, we remain committed to ending domestic abuse and supporting survivors on their journey to recovery and independence.



Improving Lives

Trauma Informed and ACE Aware (TrACE)

Our approach to support is trauma informed and ACE aware. Staff at CarmDAS are kind and compassionate and promote strength and resilience using a non-judgemental approach. We take the time to get to know people and what matters to them so we can help them to improve their physical and mental health and wellbeing. Our practitioners work closely with parents and carers to help them understand how domestic abuse can harm their children and to understand protective factors that can help reduce the impact of adverse childhood experiences (ACES).

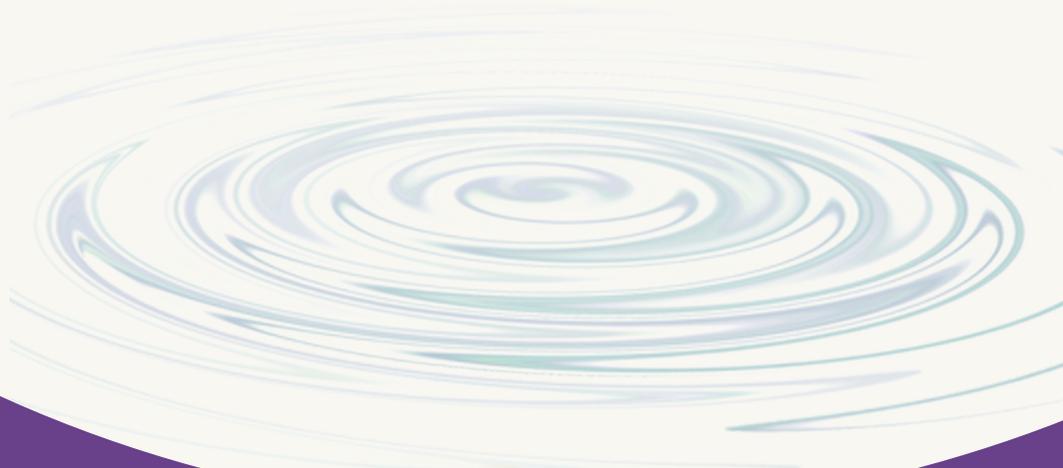
Strengths Based Support

We help people to focus on what is working well and what needs to change. Starting small can allow individuals and families to make changes that do not feel too overwhelming, helping people to achieve their goals. These are some of the small changes people have told us about in 2023, that have helped them to improve their lives.

- Warm home packages to reduce energy bills
 - Support to set up online banking
- Support to attend mental health assessment

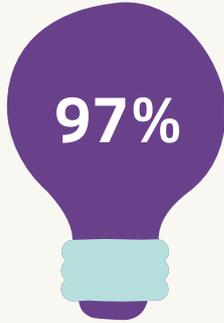
Early Prevention & Intervention

This year we have continued to make prevention and early intervention a priority. We raise awareness across our community with the aim of preventing gender-based violence. We work closely with individuals and families to educate them about safe, equal and healthy relationships at the soonest possible time, improving outcomes for children.



Our Impact 2023-2024

CarmDAS supported a total of **783** individuals
453 Adults and **330** Children



97%
of children and young people
felt the support had been
helpful and improved their
self-worth



94%

of adults felt less isolated



85%

of adults have greater
confidence

83%



of adults reported
improved emotional
wellbeing

80%

of adults felt
safer



86% of adults
reported a better
understanding of healthy
relationships and domestic
abuse



94%
of children

Table of CarmDAS Services



Crisis Support, Outreach, Prevention and Training	Recovery and Rebuild	Children and Young People Support
Refuge	Own My Life- Recovery Programme	DASH- Domestic Abuse Stops Here for children, young people and families
Floating Support	The Voice- Recovery Programme	STAR
Sexual Violence	Road to Recovery- Post Separation Programme	Group Work and Activities
IDVA	Wellbeing Support	Bespoke 1:1 Support
Outreach	Peer Support	Play Therapy
Transform Learning Disability Support	Drawing and Talking Therapy	Drawing and Talking Therapy
Safer Streets		Break For Change
White Ribbon		Ask me CYP
Campaigns and Training		Decider Skills
Homeless Prevention		Healing Together

Respect Young People's Programme

Highlights of the Year

Carmarthenshire Sir Gar Domestic Abuse Service

CarmDAS working in partnership with Threshold DAS and Calan DVS has seen the successful re-commissioning of the VAWDASV provision for Carmarthenshire. The funding is provided from the Housing Support Grant and Families First Children and Communities Grant. The Sir Gar Domestic Abuse Service will provide trauma informed, holistic, whole family support across Carmarthenshire. The service will provide crisis intervention, emergency accommodation, community based floating support as well as family-based children and young people's support.

New Accommodation



23-24 has seen the purchase of two additional properties to support families in Carmarthen to live independently and move forward with their lives. The purchase of these properties has been supported by the Welsh Government Capital Grant and VAWDASV Mid and West Wales Dispersed Grants provided by Carmarthenshire County Council. A one-off capital grant has been received from the Clothworkers Foundation to support project refurbishment costs in addition to Screfix Foundation. The additional accommodation will prove invaluable to provide much needed safe and secure tenure for our families.

Post Separation

Ending a relationship doesn't always mean that there will be an end to the abuse. In some cases, it simply changes the type of abuse that a survivor will experience. Children are commonly involved in post separation abuse.

Last year we successfully piloted a new initiative called the Road to Recovery – Knowledge Is Power, allowing us to better understand the needs of families experiencing post separation abuse. This year parents have told us they would like to be able to access the course both face to face and online leading to additional resources being developed. Parents tell us they need this information to help them understand and navigate post separation abuse and family court.



Highlights of the Year

Sexual Abuse Support

Sexual violence is a pervasive and devastating aspect of domestic abuse that often remains hidden due to shame, fear and stigma attached to it. CarmDAS Sexual Violence Service in 2023-24 has provided support to 97 survivors of both historic and current sexual violence.

By addressing survivors unique needs through trauma informed care, safety planning, legal advocacy, education and collaboration, we have been able to empower survivors to move forward with their lives.

A multi-agency and coordinated approach to supporting survivors of sexual violence has enhanced our ability to provide comprehensive and effective support.

“Without the support from CarmDAS I would’ve struggled mentally and emotionally. I received support to report to the police. Having somewhere safe to go and to be listened to has made such a difference to me and I’m now able to move on with my life”.



Youth Forum

“Educate young people on the issues of consent”

“I want to see an open minded society that feels more friendly”



Our Youth Forum is run by young people for young people (14-18). In 2023 we carried out a youth survey to better understand the needs and wishes of young people who want to access the forum. CarmDAS Youth Forum offers invaluable support and empowerment to young individuals who are often overlooked in discussions about domestic abuse. By providing a safe space for youths to connect with each other, express their experiences and concerns, the forum helps to foster a sense of community and validation among peers. It also serves as an educational platform, raising awareness about the signs of abuse and promoting healthy relationships.

Additionally, their insights and perspectives can inform and improve service provision, ensuring that the support offered is relevant and effective for younger demographics. Topics the group have covered include healthy relationships, neurodiversity, community safety, fundraising plans and activities.

Community and Collaboration

Partner Agencies

This year we have collaborated with a wide range of agencies across our region, supporting people to have control and choice over their lives and the outcomes they want to achieve to stay independent. By working closely with others, we can prevent further harm and establish safety for adults and children.

Community Fund Raising

When it comes to fundraising, our community have had plenty ideas in 2023. In March 2023 we organised a community fun day bringing people together for a day of stalls, performances, raffles and games. The day was hugely successful and was attended and enjoyed by many stakeholders and supporters, helping to raise funds to stop domestic abuse. We would like to say a huge thank you to members of the public and local businesses.

IDVA

In 2023, we continued partnering with Calan DVS, Montgomeryshire Family Crisis Centre, Threshold DAS and West Wales Domestic Abuse Service to deliver the Mid and West Wales IDVA Service. IDVA's work with people who are at high risk of harm from intimate partners, ex partners or family members developing safety plans and co-ordinating services.

Co-located within CarmDAS, this service ensures consistent support, allowing professionals from CarmDAS to step cases up when there is a high risk of harm identified. When progress has been made and there is no longer a role for the IDVA service, cases can also be stepped down to a lead professional within CarmDAS.

White Ribbon

This year to support the campaign CarmDAS created a short awareness raising film for social media where local men from Carmarthen used the platform to speak out against violence towards women and girls. The film encouraged men and boys to take an active role in stopping violence before it starts. This can be done by recognising and calling out attitudes and behaviours that are harmful and constitute as violence and could lead to more extreme cases of violence.

#ChangeThe Story



Children & Young People

Family Support

Our CYP team provides a safe and welcoming environment for children, young people, parents and carers impacted by domestic abuse and sexual violence. This year we have increased our focus on co-ordinating support for the whole family. Practitioners work particularly closely with the non-abusive parent to help them understand how domestic abuse affects their children and to give the whole family age appropriate tools, strategies and resources to enable them to feel safe.

- 1 Responding to the entire family's needs
- 2 Personalised 1-1 support for parents, children and youths
- 3 Engaging in group sessions & peer support
- 4 Reducing risks & adverse childhood experiences (ACE'S)
- 5 Improving outcomes for children
- 6 Helping whole families to have safer relationships



“It feels like we have reconnected and have a new respect for each other”.



“The sessions helped build my daughter's self-esteem and confidence. Before this time previously she didn't have friends, she interacts with other children now and she's more keen to learn, I can't praise the CYP team enough”.



“We listen to each other more than before”.



Children & Young People

Protective Factors for Children & Young People

Protective factors lessen the chances of children being exposed to abuse, neglect and trauma. This year the CYP team have supported children, young people and their families to understand and build upon their own strengths and resources and those within their homes, schools and communities. We have helped children, young people and their families to talk openly about their experiences so they can build their confidence and self-esteem and develop healthy coping mechanisms and know where to go to for support.

Feedback

"I learned about what an abusive relationship looks like and where that may come from in society and that abuse can be lots of different things. I now know what to look for in a healthy relationship" (female 15 years).

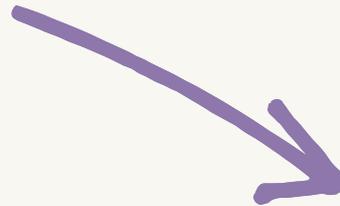
"I feel better than I used to. I don't think about dad so much. I have better boundaries now and feel more confident. I'm starting to know what I like to do and who I am" (female, 16 years).

"The support taught me how to deal with my emotions first, I have resources that help now" (male, 20 years).

"You can tell people about your feelings. If you are sad, tell someone" (male 8 years).

Respect Young People's Programme

Staff training in 2023 has included the Respect Young People's Programme (RYPP). This is an evidenced based intervention aimed at supporting young people (8-18) who are abusive towards their parent or carer. The aim of the programme is to address the young person's behaviour, helping them to create safer and more positive relationships, with whole families taking a role in ending the abuse. We are now receiving referrals for this programme and are actively engaging families in support.



CYP ASK ME

We have facilitated "ASK ME" workshops in schools, developed by Welsh Women's Aid, with the aim of promoting healthy relationships and preventing abuse. The sessions encourage healthy debate amongst young people.



Youth Homelessness

We have helped young people to feel safe in their own homes or find a stable place to live. This year we have supported young people with issues such as debt, rent arrears, benefit claims, target hardening, social isolation and to improve their access to work, training and education.



Co-Production – consultations, feedback & questionnaires

We look for ways of working that involve the people who use our services. By including the perspectives of the people we support, we can design and deliver services that are most wanted and needed by our community.

Peer Support

CarmDAS Peer Support group (S.O.D.A) Survivors of Domestic Abuse has grown in numbers and enthusiasm throughout this year and the group now has over 30 members who meet up regularly.

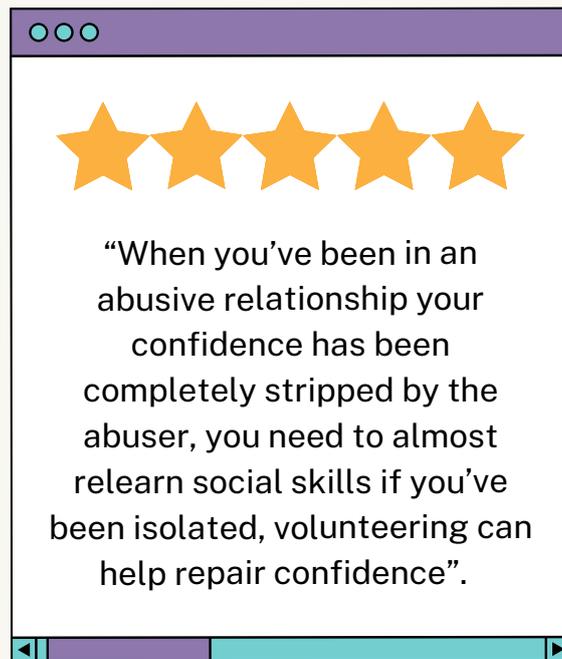
This is a group of women who support and empower each other and champion the work we do. They provide CarmDAS with valuable feedback by participating in consultations, focus groups and questionnaires and this year made a significant contribution to our community fundraising event by donating handmade arts, crafts and gifts and giving their time to support our event. This group of women also enjoy social outings and the great outdoors and have participated in a variety of trips and activities together.

“I think S.O.D.A group is important because it is a good support network, it’s a safe space and I have now made new friends. I like all the activities we do, having conversations about different topics. It is non-judgemental, you can talk about anything”.



Volunteers

This year we asked our community about their views on volunteering for CarmDAS, this is what they told us....



Systemic Change

Influencing change

Systemic change means working with every aspect of society to address the root causes of domestic abuse and sexual violence and to better understand the challenges faced by survivors.

In 2023 we have worked with schools, communities and local businesses to tackle myths and stereotypes, helping to break down barriers that prevent survivors getting the help and support they need. By delivering the Safer Streets programme to community groups we raise awareness about the foundations of violence.

As part of this work, we have also tackled wider problems related to domestic abuse such as poverty and homelessness, working in partnership with many other services to share insights and solutions.



Next Steps...

To achieve our long term sustainable funding objectives

To deliver wider community benefits such as training and recruitment opportunities

To expand our engagement with survivors and volunteers, developing initiatives that are co produced

To continue to develop and deliver high quality services in response to the whole family

To continue to provide a quality assured service

To work with partners and stakeholders to tackle the root cause of domestic abuse

To have an increased focus on preventing and responding to homelessness

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Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all our funders for their continued support, including the many individuals, trusts and foundations who have generously donated to or financially supported our charity. Together we are making a tangible difference in the lives of those affected by domestic abuse and sexual violence.

