

Fund report

The Women's Fund for Scotland



Headlines

- Towards the end of 2021, The Women's Fund for Scotland launched another round of grant-making. The number of high-quality applications submitted meant that it was one of the largest application rounds in the Fund's history.
- The Women's Fund for Scotland provided grant monies to organisations based in 15 local authorities. This is almost half of all local authorities in Scotland.
- Despite the difficulties of the Covid-19 pandemic grantees from 2019/2020 have celebrated completing their projects. Several of these grants will be captured in this report.

Overview

This report aims to provide an update on several projects that have benefited from grants awarded by the Women's Fund for Scotland. The report will also provide statistics and data that have been gathered from the grants that were made throughout 2020/2021.

A number of organisations from across Scotland will be highlighted and each update will include testimonials, images and success stories from 2020/2021. Foundation Scotland hopes that this report will highlight the exceptional difference that monies are having in empowering communities, families, and young people across the country.

Please note, the impact stories featured in the report are grants that were made before 2021/22 and whose activities have now come to an end. A number of these projects were significantly delayed in completing project activities due to the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown restrictions; however, this report should highlight their success in the face of lockdown restrictions.

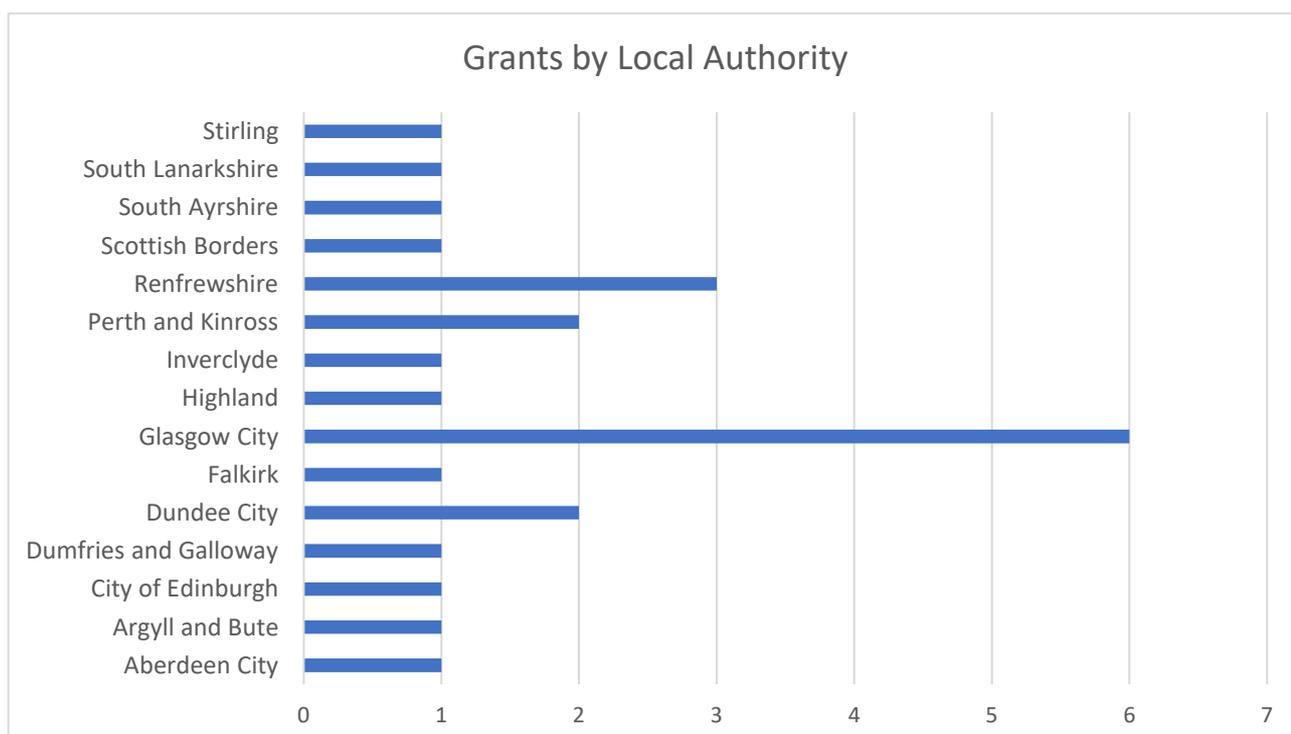
Grant-making

In the first quarter of 2022, The Women's Fund for Scotland made a total of 24 grants to charities and community groups across Scotland. These awards marked the conclusion of a highly competitive funding round that demonstrated the ongoing need for women's only projects across Scotland. This grant making round was marked by the following headlines:

- 44 out of 67 applications came from first-time applicants to the Women's Fund for Scotland. This is a promising trend and could ensure that grant monies will reach new stakeholders engaged in women-centric activities.
- 21 out of 67 applications came from women's only organisations. These organisations are managed exclusively by women. This amounts to 32% of all eligible applications.
- 15 of these applications were positively assessed and are up for consideration by panel members.
- 5 applicant organisations have an annual income of over £500,000.00.
- 30 applicant organisations have an annual income of below £100,000.00.
- The average grant request was £4,567.17

Geographic Distribution

In the first quarter of 2022, The Women's Fund for Scotland distributed grants across 15 local authorities. The breakdown of this, is as follows



Impact Story: Young Mum's Group

[Young Mums Shetland](#) was established in 2010. They provide a weekly support group for young mums aged 16-25 years living in and around Lerwick in Shetland, who attend with their babies and young children. They have a coffee and chat and take part in activities such as cooking sessions, play, and training. Young Mums meet at Sandveien Neighbourhood Centre in Lerwick on a Thursday from 12.30-2.30 pm, with occasional outings and training at other times. The group has 25 members on its Facebook page, but weekly attendance tends to be around 12, with a core group of 8 young women attending most weeks.



Young Mum's operates out of Lerwick

Young Mum's Group was awarded a grant of £4,788.00 by The Women's Fund for Scotland. The grant was awarded to cover the cost of fitness

classes for young mothers in a community setting. The project enabled the Young Mums Group to meet in the community hall on a weekly basis. It also provided reimbursement of transport costs to group members to ensure that they could afford to attend and funded transport for two outings to the local sports centre (gym induction, swimming, and fitness classes) during which participants could take part in taster sessions. The Young Mum's Group hoped that the project would provide an exciting opportunity for local mothers to regain their fitness, build confidence and socialize with others.

Did you know?

In line with SIMD rankings, Shetland is frequently ranked in the top 5% of areas for deprivation when it comes to access to local services (healthcare, education, recreational facilities).

Project activities commenced in January 2020 and ended in December 2021. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown restrictions, activities were heavily and unexpectedly delayed. Nonetheless, 19 local families were able to take part. By attending project activities, these families noted a positive effect on their overall mental health and wellbeing. All families that engaged in the group have gone on to become full-time members at the local leisure centre and this has enabled them to participate in the wider

community and make more connections with other families.

At an organisational level, the project enabled the group to link up with other services within the community. Young Mum's Group established a good relationship with the local leisure centre where they have allowed the group to set up an account specifically for participants. This allows them to access a variety of opportunities within the centre without being identified to other users. This has removed the stigma for low-income families and allows their confidence to grow when accessing the centre and helping them to feel less isolated within their community. In a similar fashion, Young Mum's Group also formed links with a local childcare facility, Peerie Foxes. This proved beneficial to families and enabled mothers to have greater flexibility when it came to socializing in a group setting. Over the course of the project, Young Mum's Group invited a number of local support services to deliver a series of information sessions. These sessions covered employability support, cooking, parenting courses and paediatric first aid. The presence of these services helped to break down the barriers for families that needed advice and guidance but didn't know how or when to ask for it.

At present, Young Mum's Group are still active in the local community and have received support from the Parent Employment Support Fund. This has allowed the group to keep the activities running, enabled mothers to access funds and

employment support and offer important social opportunities for women with young children.

"Thank you, The Women's Fund for Scotland! Sometimes motherhood can be quite a lonely time and by accessing the group it allows them to meet others who are going through the same thing."

Testimonial: Young Mother

"Myself and my son Eli began attending the Young Mums Group because Eli has social anxiety and never spoke or let anyone else near him without him being scared and freezing up due to being born and raised in lockdown. He hasn't been able to come out of his shell but since starting at the group Eli has very slowly started making progress and has started to be more interactive with others, more trusting, learning to play and being more confident in himself. I also suffer from anxiety and mental health issues. The group has made me feel more welcome and accepted me, which in turn has helped me to be able to make relationships with the other mothers, be more confident in myself and as a mother. I feel that I can ask for help and advice whenever I need it and to feel that I have been heard and understood."

Impact Story: Grampian Women's Aid

[Grampian Women's Aid](#) was established in 1977. They provide crisis intervention, information, advice, refuge accommodation and outreach support to women, children and young people living in the Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire areas. They also deliver training to other organisations. They have a full-time office based in Aberdeen which is open Monday to Friday 9am-5 pm and manage a range of accommodation options including a communal refuge, a block of 6 flats and stand-alone scatter flats. Between 2019/2020, the organisation provided refuge and support to over 500 women and 400 children.



***Grampian Women's Aid operates out of
Aberdeen***

Grampian Women's Aid received an award of £10,000.00 from The Women's Fund for Scotland in 2020. Grant monies were allocated to support the staffing costs of the organisation and fund a new part-time post to deliver a new group support programme. This programme aimed to introduce a new range of group work to support to their service users. The project was prompted by feedback from existing service users who requested for opportunities to meet up with other women in similar circumstances. The programme also enabled the organisation to support women who were already on their waiting list for individual support. As well as regular support groups, coffee mornings, trips and social activities, the project aimed to deliver 12 domestic violence sessions which explored the actions of abusive men and the responses of victims and survivors.

Did you know?

There were 119 incidents of domestic abuse recorded by the police in Scotland per 10,000 population in 2020-21. At a local authority level, Dundee City (177), West Dunbartonshire (168) and Clackmannanshire (158) recorded the highest incident rates per 10,000 population.

Grampian Women's Aid commenced project activities in the Spring of 2020. The organisation launched the project under the name 'Own My Life (OML)'. This became an educational 12-week course that included group discussion sessions

and creative activities involving art and writing. The programme also explored how popular culture reinforces or perpetuates, sexism, rape culture, violence, misogyny, disrespect in relationships and abusive behaviour.

An important aspect of the project was its focus on user-led activities. Originally, the charity planned on delivering the group sessions face-to-face post-pandemic, however, due to comments at a focus group, staff moved to a blended approach. One woman said she would not have achieved 100% attendance if the session was face to face because: 'It's an emotional draining course. If I had to meet new people, get to a new setting and to get my children there for a 12-week period. I don't think I would have been able to give to the course what I have. It would have taken up a whole day.'

In-person sessions were also an important part of the OML programme. In 2020, the organisation delivered a programme in Banff with 7 women attending 12 sessions. For this group of women, the delivery of activities in a rural area was integral to participation and a number of important friendships were forged. According to one woman, 'I wanted to wait until the face-to-face session was happening ... it feels like we've got to know each other really well and I don't know if this would have happened online'.

At an organisational level, The Women's Fund for Scotland grant boosted the capacity of the charity and helped staff to appreciate that a women's

journey does not end once the practical support is in place e.g., housing, benefits, legal etc. Staff have a greater understanding of domestic abuse and trauma, and this has led to staff teamwork improvement.

"Being part of the women's journey in groups has been humbling for me as a worker. The women are truly insightful and courageous. The group had a real sense of women supporting women as they took ownership of their lives."

Grampian Women's Aid have used project outcomes and feedback to influence stakeholders in the region and promote the importance of group work with stakeholders and partners. In the last 12 months, the organisation has been active in the Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen Violence Against Women (VAW) Partnership and they have played a critical role in driving the development of a regional 'Good Practice Guidance on Domestic Abuse and Child Protection'. These partnerships have shown a great interest in the OML project and group work format, and it is positive to see that activities will have a tangible legacy when shaping future policy and training in Scotland.

Please enjoy the poem on the following page. Thank you to Emily, a participant of Own My Life course, for penning this brilliant poem to celebrate the strengths of the course and the special contribution of Sandra, the course leader.

Sandra kens, she understands, Fit it's like tae be feart o' a man,
Men, "abusive men"

Her drawings nae up tae much,
Nae up tae muckle
But she's richt keen tae dispel myths o' tough love

Could ye dae wi reassurance?
We hiv hunners o' experience

Div ye even need a lesson plan
Fan we're lifting each other up
Wi oor collective hans

At group yer nae alone
Even if all ye need is a gid auld moan

Here unexplained laughter
Disrupts the patriarchal gender disorder

Twelve weeks flown by
Barely in a blink o' an eye

Dinnae feel ye hae tae pretend
TAH-DAH! Aathins fixed!
It's nae truly the end

Mind we hiv rebuilt 'is solid foundation
Tae precede we' contemplation, caution

Progress is nae linear
But noo we've tools tae decipher
Fit we want fae oorsels

Oonership
Oonership of wir oon lives

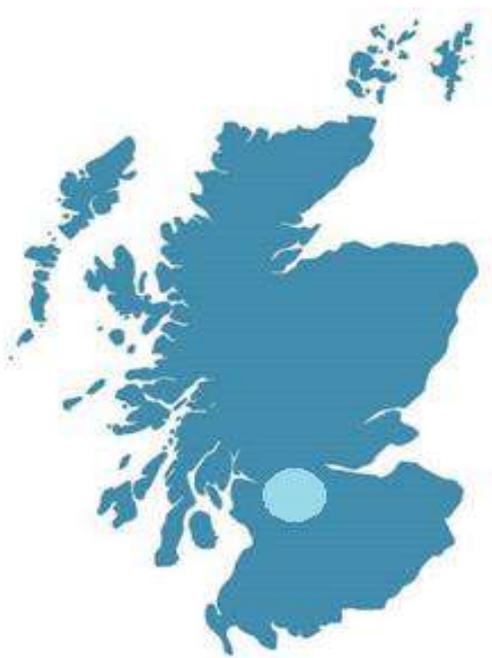
Fit are we thankful fir?
Each ither, Solidarity
Sisters-taegether

Unclench yer fists
Deep exhale-bliss

It's okay tae resist!
Grampian women's aid here in the north east,
Ats far ye'll find fellow feminists, sense o'belongin', hope tae exist.

Impact Story: Glasgow Girls FC SCIO

[Glasgow Girls FC](#) was established 2011 to provide football activities to girls, young and adult women, living in Glasgow, as a healthy, safe and fun means of sport and recreation. The club provides football coaching and 16 community football teams to girls and women of all ages, abilities and levels. The club enables women to improve their football skills and methods whilst participating in community tournaments. The club's facilities are located in Shettleston, Glasgow with each age group training on average 2 evenings per week with a football game at the weekend. The group accommodates all ages and abilities and have training sessions running Monday to Friday 6pm-9.30pm to help meet demand.



Glasgow Girls FC SCIO operates out of Shettleston, Glasgow

The Women's Fund for Scotland awarded the team a grant of £9,408.00 in 2019. Grant monies were used to support the provision of training and qualifications for 12 young women to become volunteer football coaches within the organisation. It was hoped that these young women (16-25) would gain a Scottish Football Federation (SFA) Level 3 certificate. This qualification would then be used to coach younger girls in the club aged between 12-16 years. Glasgow Girls FC anticipated that the project would equip women and girls with new skills, improve their overall health and well-being and build confidence and self-esteem.



Women and girls of all ages are welcome at the club

Project activities commenced in 2020, however, the team was severely hindered by the Covid-19 pandemic and the temporary shutdown of sporting activities. These events led to the postponement of the majority of the project for a period of 14 months. In this period, they were able to deliver a number of remote group health-

focused workshops which were helpful in maintaining contact with "trainees". This experience was an important learning opportunity and has motivated the club to conduct in-depth research to the use of, and benefits of remote communications and they have recently established an in-house media project to progress the development and implementation of remote communication with clients, and partners, stakeholders, etc.

In 2021, normal project activities resumed and a total of 12 trainees were involved in the delivery of coaching sessions to 223 females. This included coaching sessions in local schools and community programmes. All of the females participating in these football coaching and skills practice sessions reported improved levels of confidence. Reasons reported for improved confidence included improved inclusion and regular interaction with peers, improved team working skills, improved communication skills and improved goal setting skills. A high number of female clients reported that regular participation in organised football matches and gradual improvements in their performance was an important factor in raising their confidence levels.

Approximately 70% of the females who participated in the football coaching and skills practice sessions delivered by trainees had never participated in organised football-focused activities prior to their involvement in the project. 92% of these female clients reported improved physical health as a result of regular participation

in the football programmes with 17% reporting that they had lost weight and felt fitter. All of these females reported improved self-esteem and self-image and parents, relatives, teachers, social workers, and other individuals who had regular contact with our female participants reported that they had observed noticeable improvements in the health and emotional wellbeing of many of the females.

Did you know?

According to a recent Women in Sport survey, 82% of young women active in semi-professional football reported facing obstacles in their football career due to their gender.

It is testament to this project that 5 of the trainee coaches females have gone on to become actively involved in the work of an in-house peer mentoring project and they have worked with and supported 6 of young female club members (3- 16 years) who are experiencing issues and challenges which were having an adverse impact on daily lives. Some of these young females are engaged social care and/or criminal justice system whilst others experience personal issues and challenges linked to the high levels of poverty and disadvantage which exists in our community. Some of these young females struggle with or have completely missed out on mainstream services and support and they all have low self-esteem, poor self-image, low confidence and low motivation. The trainee coaches have dedicated a high number of hours to provide group support to these young females at their weekly football coaching sessions and through 1-2-1 meetings

and remote communication, developing strong trusting relationships with them based on honesty, equality and dignity. Parents, relatives, social workers, teachers, etc inform the club that they have observed significant positive changes in all of the 6 young females in respect of improved attitudes, behaviours, emotional & mental wellbeing, attendance at school,

40 young females engaging on a monthly basis. Glasgow Girls FC are also planning to introduce three additional football teams to their current "football" structure over the coming months. These three football teams will be at the age category 14-16 years, increasing club membership by approximately 60 females.



At an organisational level, support from The Women's Fund for Scotland has brought significant added value to the existing work of the club. Having an additional 12 qualified football coaches has enabled the organisation to expand their children's community football programme to engage with an additional 32 local children in the age range 5-8 years. It is anticipated that this programme will continue to grow over the coming year with a further 40 young children engaging in the programme. The additional football coaches have also enabled the club to extend their schools football coaching programme with an additional

Impact Story: Nature Unlimited

[Nature Unlimited's](#) (NU) aim is to nurture individuals' wellbeing, and resilience and build community through activities that use local woodlands. Since 2015, NU has run sessions for all ages in woodlands across the Scottish Borders, ranging from employability programmes, community projects, mental health sessions and team building. Activities include growing food, outdoor cooking, natural art, green woodworking, and traditional crafts. These activities aim to build confidence and develop skills. Examples include intervention programmes for 100 children/young people who are not thriving in mainstream education and work with NHS Borders providing sessions supporting the wellbeing of 50 adults with severe and enduring mental health conditions.



Nature Unlimited operates out of Selkirk

In 2019, The Women's Fund for Scotland awarded Nature Unlimited a grant of £9,905.00 to support the delivery of the 'Wild About Women's Wellbeing' project. This project targeted women of all ages who have been affected by abuse and/or have poor mental health. Grant monies went towards supporting a series of woodland activities including the creation of a forest garden in a neglected piece of woodland, just outside of Galashiels. Additional activities included woodland management tasks such as coppicing trees, pulling up weeds, growing fruit and veg in raised beds; and cooking healthy meals on fire. Nature Unlimited hoped that the woodland environment would provide a therapeutic environment where women could be encouraged to be self-directed in their team working skills, overall confidence, resilience, and wellbeing.

Did you know?

The Scottish Borders has a population of 114,030. Evidence shows that mental illness affects 1 in 4 adults and 1 in 10 children under 15. These figures would suggest that around 19,800 adults and 1898 children and young people living in Scottish Borders will experience mental ill health at some point in their lives.

Project activities commenced in January 2020. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the project temporarily shut down for a number of months but towards the end of 2020 and into 2021, activities were able to recommence. If one examines the

entirety of the project, Nature Unlimited delivered a total of 39 sessions in local woodlands, including 3 taster sessions, one for each programme. Three 12-week programmes were attended by a total of 26 women. Most of the participants came from referrals from other agencies in the local community partnership - Borders Wellbeing College, Health in Mind, Local Area Network for Mental Health. Due to COVID self-referrals were lower than expected because of people not being out and about and seeing our posters and leaflets, e.g., in libraries or GP surgeries etc. The fact that the programme was outdoors was hugely significant, as so many women were isolated, due to their normal activities being curtailed and the opportunity for face-to-face connection offered a lifeline to many participants.

Each session started with a check-in, with an opportunity for everyone to share how they were feeling and to say what they would like to get from the session. This enabled the group to give extra support to those who needed it, that day. At the end of the session, participants had a review - a chance to give feedback, highlight the positives and plan for the next session. Participants felt included and empowered by these processes. The women participated in a range of activities to support their wellbeing: weaving with natural materials, natural art with clay, cooking on the fire, walking in the local countryside, relaxing in hammocks while the leaders used Tibetan singing bowls and other instruments to give them a sound bath, making bows and arrows with hazel, whittling, breathwork, mindfulness, foraging,

green woodworking, learning knots and how to put up a tarpaulin shelter, writing poetry, singing and lots and lots of supportive chatting around the campfire. The need for a women-only group was huge. The charity has originally (pre-pandemic) intended to recruit from the general population via posters and social media, however, they ended up recruiting 90% via mental health support agencies. They now have a large waiting list for a similar programme. Many of the women expressed how being outdoors in nature had a calming influence on them as well as being involved in crafting/natural art, which gave them a focus and took them "out of their heads".



Group members gathered around the campfire

Testimonial: K

After her partner had a serious accident, K had become her carer. "I've never really considered myself to be outdoorsy, but in the past 2 years I've had a lot to deal with and this course was a chance to get out the house. We started off

going walking over some local hills. I don't walk much and definitely not up hills, but the leaders were amazing, filling us all with encouragement and determination. I started to really enjoy my weekly group and the things I was learning. It was a good way for me to de-stress, unwind and have time for myself. I hadn't realised that my mental health had suffered so much. The group helped me talk more about things that I probably wouldn't have spoken about, all the women found this, and all got a lot out of the group. My mental health and attitude has changed so much and I'm able to challenge myself to do things I would never have done. It has certainly changed my life for the better. I am now a volunteer with Nature Unlimited going out every week to help with woodland management. I so look forward to my weekly nature therapy!"



Some woodland crafts created by the group

Impact Story: Multi-Cultural Family Base

[The Multi-Cultural Family Base](#) (MCFB) was established in 1998 in Edinburgh. It aims to enhance the well-being, self-esteem and life opportunities of vulnerable children, young people, and their families in Edinburgh. 80% of the beneficiaries come from the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities in Edinburgh. This past year MCFB worked with over 530 individuals providing an Early Years' Service for Parent/Toddler Groups, access to English classes, family support services for mothers and children affected by domestic abuse, those experiencing Honour Based Violence and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). This work is delivered through one-to-one sessions and group support at people's homes or at accessible public venues on a flexible schedule person-centred timetable.



Multi-Cultural Family Base is active in Edinburgh

Multi-Cultural Family Base received a grant of £10,000.00 from The Women's Fund for Scotland, in 2019. Grant monies covered a contribution to the 'Bright Futures' project. The grant helped cover the salary of an FGM counsellor, training and expenses/transport for volunteers and Crèche workers. The FGM worker was to work with 19-25 female individuals and their families on issues of FGM providing therapy, counselling and activities that support their mental and physical health. They also worked to refer and accompany people to medical and social work appointments. The project was to be carried out in partnership with a range of BME groups in Edinburgh that refer women to Multi-Cultural Family Base.

Project activities commenced in the Spring of 2020. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, MCFB knew that the effects of lockdown would be particularly difficult for some women who had experienced more negative state interventions in their countries of origin. Consequently, governmental restrictions and interventions resulted in a degree of re-traumatization. The charity immediately liaised with other organisations, social enterprises, and commercial companies to provide women with cooked meals and food parcels. Additional helped included distributing laptops and mobile phones so that service users could remain connected and helping women access the benefits system in Scotland.

Did you know?

Up to 200 million girls worldwide have been subjected to FGM - more than triple the UK population.

With remote, home-based working in place for project staff for most of 2020/2021, the organisation supported women and girls in group sessions, by phone or via zoom. In this way, they were able to listen, counsel, inform, entertain, and encourage participants on a consistent basis. When it came to 1:1 support, Multi-Cultural Family Base, worked with 51 women over the course of the project. Of these service users, the charity was able to record the following breakdown:

- 68% were affected by FGM
- 84% were affected by domestic abuse
- 58% were receiving threats against their lives for having "Shamed" their family or culture
- 64% were dealing with child protection issues,
- 51% were in a forced marriage or were experiencing pressure to marry
- 94% were socially isolated or excluded from their communities
- 81% needed help to access health and mental health services
- 85% were in conflict with their families
- 76% were in conflict with their communities
- 75% received support to access appropriate housing
- 25% were supported with immigration issues

As the 'Bright Futures' project continued into 2021, Multi-Cultural Family Base understood that the majority of project participants faced a range of complex needs that required additional intervention from other services. In light of this, the charity partnered up with a number of local services to ensure that more tailored support could be offered. 16 adult service users were referred to group therapy sessions. 24 young

women were signposted to other agencies engaging in refugee support in Edinburgh. On a final note, it is a testament to the organisation that 4 project participants were accompanied and supported by staff during several challenging court hearings. In this setting, MCFB was able to offer language and emotional assistance. Since project activities have come to an end, a number of individual success stories have come to light. 2 project participants have now made the important step to enrol in higher education courses. A further 3 women regained enough confidence to return to full-time education after dropping out of college. This is a testament to the commitment of MCFB staff.

"I am very strong now, you gave me a sense of direction and choice in my life, I know what I need to do now and one day I will be independent and free enough to look at this part of my life as something distant and something that cannot harm me anymore. I have hope now and I no longer feel that I live in a fog, I can see clearly, I can breathe, and I know that myself and my children have the whole life ahead of us and we can be happy. That is thanks to the Bright Choices project".

Testimonial: Nadine

Nadine arrived from Uganda fleeing honour-based violence and persecution. Nadine had been "outed" in her local community as she had a relationship with another woman. She had to leave her children as her ex-husband refused to

allow them to leave the county and she was in fear of her life. She was supported to seek asylum on the grounds that to return would endanger her and (possibly) her children's lives. Nadine was able to source all of the legal permissions to have her children reunited with her. The children had lived with Nadine's mother. Her ex-husband made no efforts to support or connect with them but had objected to them being reunited with their mother. His reasons being that she was "unnatural" and her actions [sexuality] were an insult to him and his reputation.

Nadine and the children reunited for the first time in 4 years. Nadine's mental health began to deteriorate, and her social supports were compromised by her lack of community connections. She was supported to move to London where she had friends. She was connected with a support agency that also helped with housing and to access school places and feel connected with a community there.

