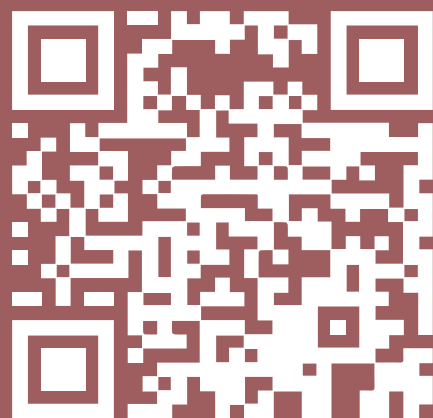


Left Out and Locked Down



Scotland In Lockdown:
Stories from Survivors of Domestic Abuse
and Sexual Violence



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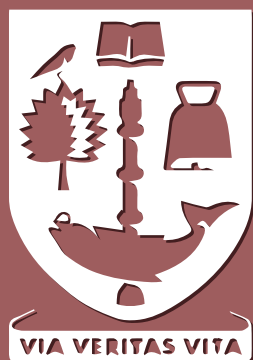
Acknowledgments

The stories in the booklets come from people who shared their experiences as part of the Scotland in Lockdown study, without whom this work would not be possible. The work was completed by a large team of researchers at the University of Glasgow and funded by the Chief Scientist Office (Scotland). You can find out more about this study here: <https://scotlandinlockdown.co.uk/>.

The booklets were produced by Dr Caitlin Gormley, Dr Phillippa Wiseman, and Dr Nughmana Mirza who are all based within the School of Social and Political Sciences at the University of Glasgow. All three were co-investigators on the Scotland in Lockdown study and they wanted to bring these stories together in an accessible and creative way with the help of Research Assistants Molly Gilmour, April Shaw and Nicola Ceesay. This project was funded by the Economic and Social Research Council's Impact Acceleration Accounts.

This series was illustrated, and made possible, by Sophia Neilson, a Scottish-based ethnographic artist and illustrator. You can find more of her work online @soofillustrates or www.soofillustrates.com.

The series was translated into French by Jennifer Rieck and into Urdu and Arabic with the support of Amina: The Muslim Women's Resource Centre.



University
of Glasgow

In March 2020 Scotland went into lockdown in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We were all asked to 'stay at home', 'stay safe' and 'protect the NHS', and were told that we were 'all in it together'. This was not the case for people who were already marginalised and isolated, who faced even more hardship and inequality as a result of the pandemic restrictions.



This collection focuses on four communities who spoke to us for the 'Scotland in Lockdown' study, including:

Disabled people and
people with long
term health
conditions



People with
refugee status or seeking
asylum and experiencing
destitution



People in the criminal
justice system



Survivors of domestic
abuse and
sexual violence



The images that follow represent the stories that they told us about life in lockdown.



COVID-19 restrictions made it harder for survivors to leave abusive situations and access support.

“There was a crisis in the availability of emergency accommodation.”

“A lot of women felt that they couldn’t leave that situation... they didn’t have any options around refuge provision, because of social distancing. It became much more limited. Access to emergency accommodation was a huge thing, so women were not able to think about moving on.”



Survivors and their children felt unsafe, especially when they lived with their abuser:

“When you’re speaking to people and they say, stay safe at home... I felt unsafe at home, which is really horrible.”



“If I was living with him, we would be in a hell.”

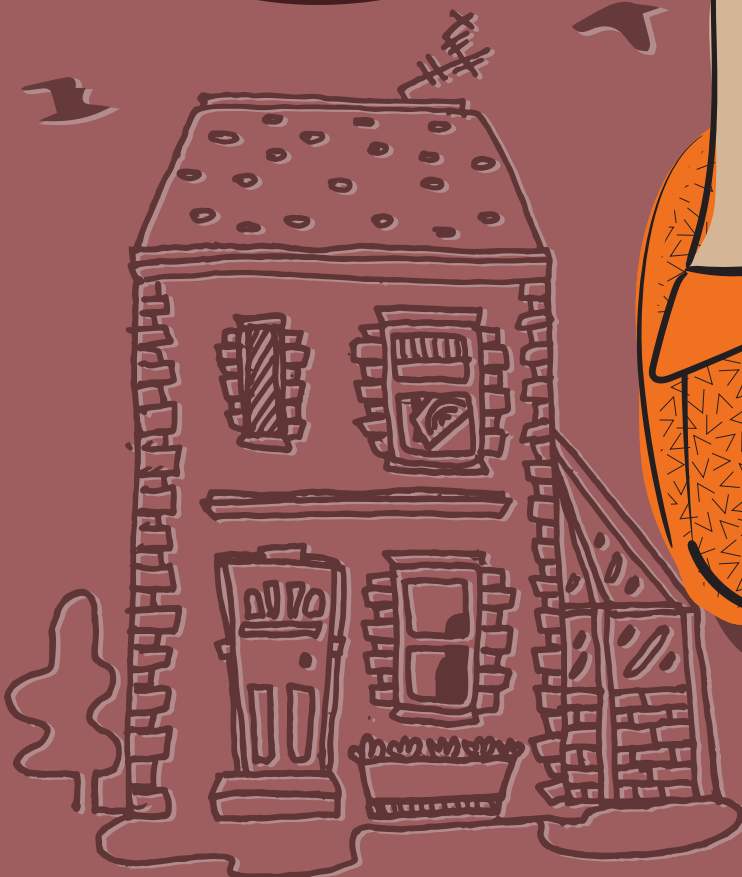


Survivors who were not living with abusive partners reflected on feelings of increased safety created by lockdown rules.

“With COVID-19, it’s brought kind of a peace in a way, because it’s going to be harder for him to come and try and find me, when there’s all these restrictions on travel.”



“It’s really been a blessing in that way. My fear of that is less.”



Digital technology was used to contact children.
This led to new forms of abuse.



Survivors felt terrified.

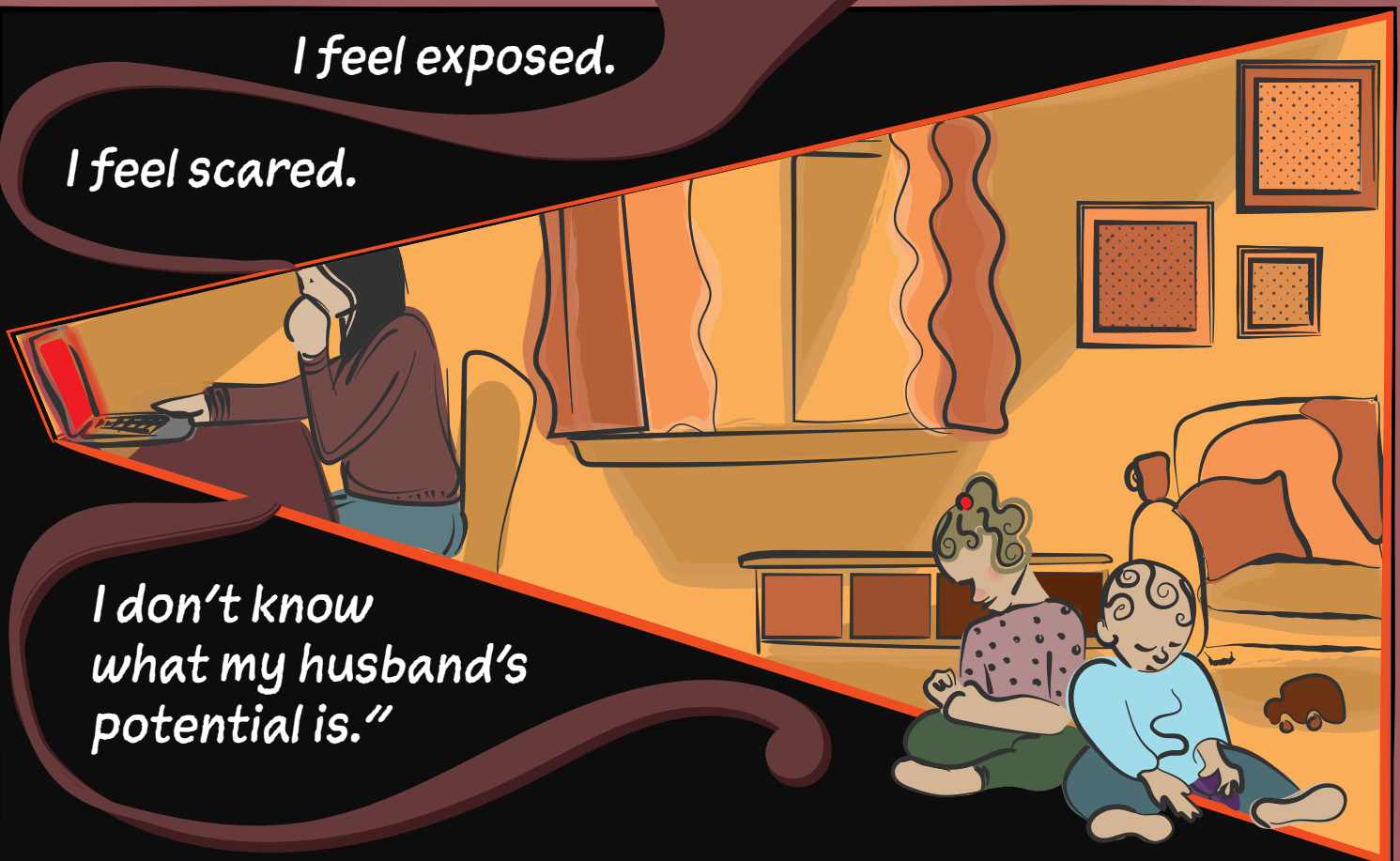


"It feels like living in the Big Brother house...So whenever there's a Zoom call, I think, oh God, I feel completely exposed... He is physically seeing where we live...He's seen every room where we are. He's seen the view out the window..."

I feel exposed.

I feel scared.

I don't know what my husband's potential is."



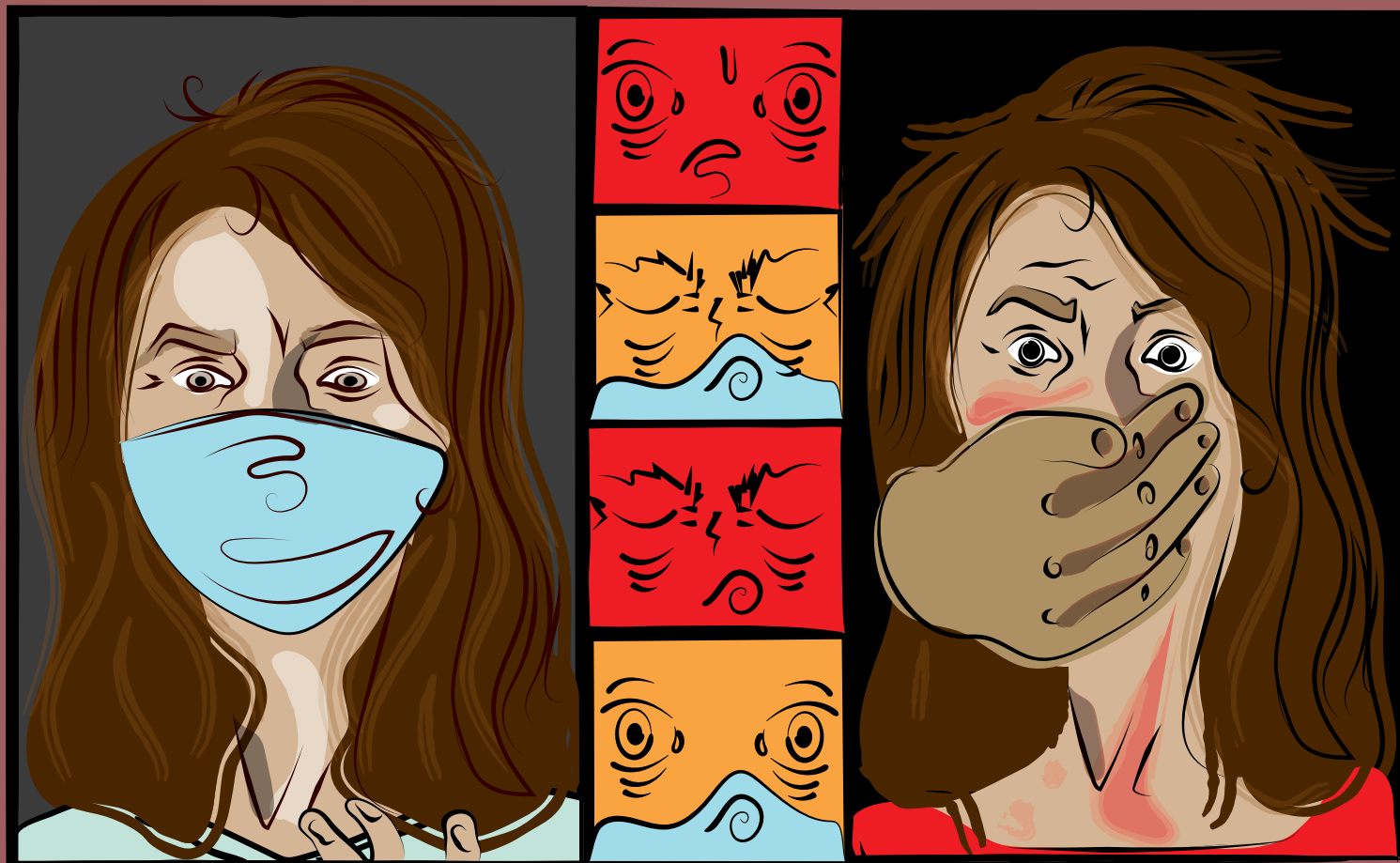
The pandemic created extra financial pressures. This forced some women into online sex work to earn an income.



These online spaces were unsafe, unregulated, and unpredictable.

“Things like making sure you don’t do webcam when you’ve got your window behind you so they can see the shop across the road and that kind of thing...it’s dead easy for a punter to say, ‘oh, I know where that is’, and then turn up to the flat”.

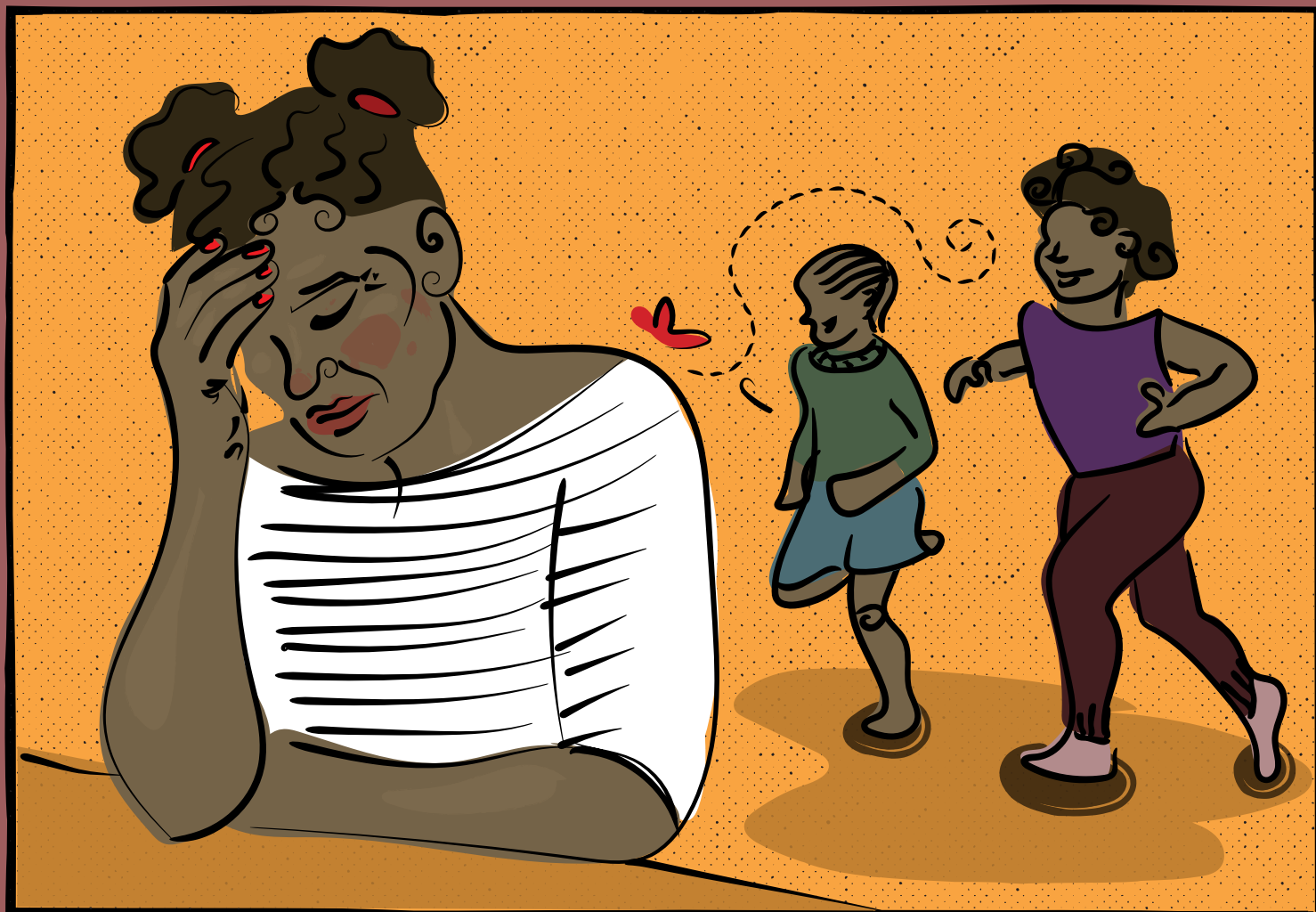
A frontline healthcare worker described being retraumatized by wearing a mask:



“Going for mask fitting in itself brought back many, many, many horrendous miseries and things because the masks ...remind me... I’ve been strangled and suffocated when I was in a relationship.”

Survivors were unable to access NHS services or hospital appointments. Trauma counselling, mental health support, and psychiatric services were cancelled.

“We were going to start having the trauma sessions, just before lockdown. It stopped. It was dreadful for me because I was about to start that part of the therapy.”



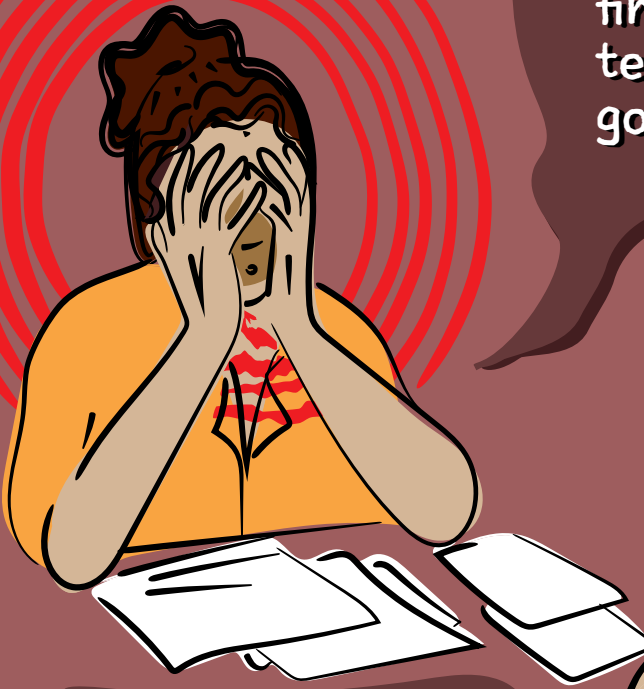
Criminal and family court proceedings stopped. Survivors were trapped in limbo after years of waiting.



"I'm still waiting for sentencing and another court case to start. So that's all been delayed. It's been impossible to get the court information. I've been trying to call the court, the procurator fiscal's office, ASSIST, the police...and none of them are able to tell me the information that I'm looking for."



"When lockdown happened financially, I got really, really terrified, thinking what am I going to do?"



"Can I still feed my kids?"



"I'm kind of living on the breadline."



"I'm on Universal Credit, so every single penny is tied up on debts for him, because he didn't just borrow from companies, he borrowed from family too. It's all borrowed in my name."



Women and children who had escaped abuse were isolated from their communities and support networks. Caring for children in isolation became too much.

"I went for about seven months just looking after my son 24/7. And he's a wonderful, lovely boy, but the...your energy can only stretch so far. So, I think if the lockdown had lasted any longer...I don't quite know how long it might have taken until I cracked."



School closures had a huge impact on children's safety and security.



Lockdown restrictions also prevented children from seeing extended family members, going to clubs and regular activities, and attending healthcare appointments. Losing these protective measures put some children who experience domestic abuse at greater risk of neglect and isolation.



“School is their safe place, with that structure and teachers looking out for them, and that wasn't there.”

Support staff were worried that these children were not getting the care they needed.

Organisations were vital in helping survivors and their families in new ways. The victim safety fund was one example.



“One of my clients got a laptop and a phone, another got a Ring doorbell - one of those camera doorbells - which is very secure. They would get stuff for clients that was helping with their safety. We also started doing more things like writing applications for our clients, which isn't normally done...”

'Thank You to our Partner Organisations

Aid & Abet

Amina The Muslim Women's Resource Centre

Crohn's & Colitis UK

Diabetes Scotland

Empower Women for Change

Faith in Community Scotland

Families Outside

Glasgow Disability Alliance

Govan Community Project

Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland

Maryhill Integration Network

People First (Scotland)

Safe in Scotland

Scotland Versus Arthritis

Scottish Refugee Council

Scottish Women's Rights Centre


SOLD

Scottish Prisoners' Advocacy and Research Collective

The Poverty Alliance

Women's Support Project





Survivors of domestic abuse and sexual violence were greatly impacted by the 'stay at home' order. Women and their children were in extremely dangerous and uncertain circumstances and were locked out of legal systems due to pandemic-related court stoppages. We spoke to 12 survivors, many of whom were still experiencing abuse and negotiating complex child contact arrangements. We also spoke to 18 staff from women's support organisations.