



Women’s Mental Health Service Annual Report 2022 - 23

WomenCentre is a registered charity with a mission to improve the quality of life for women. We deliver a range of services for women and girls across Kirklees and Calderdale.

"WomenCentre has given me a reason to wake up and get dressed on a morning to go to the group"

1. Women’s Mental Health Service Overview

WomenCentre works with women of all ages and backgrounds, using a holistic approach to support each woman with the range of issues she may face. Our core concept is that each woman leads the way out of her presenting troubles with resources,

facilitation and support provided by our staff, volunteers and peers. A significant number of women use our Mental Health and Wellbeing service because it is gender specific.

Many of our groups and services run from both Centres – Huddersfield and Dewsbury. Our Women in Exile Group and Sisters Shout, however have been coproduced by women in Huddersfield and run at this Centre. Some activities such as the weekly quiz and relaxation have evolved in Dewsbury, while the sewing and walking groups have evolved in Huddersfield. We pay for transport for occasional events that bring women from both centres together.

'I feel a real sense of community and friendship'

"I have found the sessions really helpful and have enjoyed spending time with the lovely women who are in a group. I found learning about the poly-vagal particularly useful-I like to understand the 'why!'"





We have a quarterly timetable of groups and courses which we post on our website and send out to women and agencies making enquiries. We have regular events throughout the year around different themes as well as lively coproduction events.

Shared music and dance bring added vitality to gatherings. Each group itself will arrange specific activities, such as Sister Shout having stalls and attending Pride events, others arranging boat trips and picnics which all focus around supporting well-being and mental health.

Summary of Activities 22-23

601 women supported

458 referrals – 107 of who were new

Person-Centred Counselling
122 women (phone, online, in person)

Creative Therapies – Dance & Movement, & Music & Art (Group & 1:1)
70 women (online, phone & in person)

Peer Support Groups (online & in person)

232 women
Women in Exile, Mothers Apart, SisterShout (LGBTQ), Tea & Quiz (Dewsbury), Relaxation, Ukrainian support, Menopause Support, Addictive Behavior support, Drop-in

Activity Groups (online & in person)

122 women
Sewing & Knitting, Walking, Singing, Yoga & Stretching & Personal Safety

Coproduced Courses (online & in person)

135 women
Making Sense, Healthy Relationships, Confidence, Wellbeing & Menopause, ESOL with WEA

1:1 Support – (phone, online & in person)

329 women
casework support, practical support & signposting.

2. Service Delivery – back again after Covid restrictions

Throughout this year we have reinstated most of our groups as face to face groups, enabling women to reconnect with each other in a more holistic way.

At the same time, we have continued with some of the benefits of zoom and hybrid options for several sessions, enabling accessibility to some women. We continue to offer the opportunity of in person or phone contact for our initial meetings with women. awareness of social distancing has led many groups to prefer slightly lower numbers. Our counselling sessions also continue to have the option of phone/zoom and in person

Our Women’s MH Service supports women living in Kirklees, aged 18 years+, who experience mental ill-health to access opportunities that promote, protect and improve mental health, physical and emotional wellbeing, recovery and enable a fulfilling life.

We:

- Provide safe women-only spaces.
- Value women’s expertise.
- Work with women to shape and deliver their support & the service.
- Promote social inclusion and self-determination.
- Support women’s journeys towards employment, volunteering and education.
- Focus on peer support.
- Meet the needs of specific groups of women – e.g. women from minority communities and LGBTQ women.
- Work in partnership with other MH and VCS

providers to enhance our offer and use resources well.

Spring (April-June 2022)

On 11th May, women from our groups across Kirklees joined together to celebrate being together again. It was the first time after Covid that we had such a big event. It was a great opportunity for women to all meet up and to share food and singing, led by the Music Group. This was an opportunity for women to have their say and talk around the theme of loneliness and share different ways of connection. Discussions were full and insightful

Mandala Movement – Safer Parks in the Park (17th June)



On 17th June, we held a Mandala Movement Workshop at Greenhead Park. Everyone had the chance to decorate the mandala by attaching different coloured ribbons to the mandala, creating our own mini

mandalas, and decorating sticks and pine cones.

The group managed to do some movement mindfulness and created a circle around the mandala and our creations to do some mindfulness and breathing exercises

Refugee Week Women’s Event: celebrated healing through connection 24th June



For the first time in 3 years, the Women in Exile team had an event to celebrate refugee week. Nearly 40 women and children of diverse nationalities and languages enjoyed kora music, singing, dancing and

delicious food. We celebrated by writing a song about the event and Kora playing with Holly Marland. To finish off the event, a lovely coffee ceremony from Ethiopia was enjoyed!

Summer (July-September)

Summer was time for change, we recruited a new staff member for Dewsbury and this paved the way for a new opportunity for a women’s Mental health lead.

It was the first time in 3 years that we were able to take women in Dewsbury on their much-awaited Barge trip.

I really enjoyed the Canal trip, as an Asian woman in my 50’s this is the first time I have been on such a trip. I was able to steer the helm and gained knowledge on the purpose on the depth on the canal and even the starting prices of river boats. Great group, great weather and a fantastic day out!

Partnership working

After Covid it was time to build up on our networks and rebuild partnership working. We worked together with s2r to provide a 6-week stretching class in Dewsbury which was very successful and much needed.

“I come to do the stretching class, it has helped me with my Arthritis and I feel a lot better for doing it afterwards”

As the Crow Flies - Allotment Event in Dewsbury

We accessed CLEAR’S allotment in Dewsbury where 8 women walked up from our Dewsbury WomenCentre to join Emily and Anna on the allotment on a beautiful, sunny morning in the centre of the town. The effect of the surroundings – green and vibrant plants, growing fruit – was immediately calming. The women settled and were guided into creative and imaginative processes, using props, song and movement. There was a sense of travelling together using the imagery of a journey; we used our senses to inspire creative movement sequences, moving



together in a circle. The theme that arose out of our group movement and the

environment we were in was one of moving away from negative energy and inviting in positive energy. We engaged the energetic body, with subtle movement and sounding that calmed our autonomic nervous systems. We also delighted in the fresh fruit, herbs and vegetables growing around us - and received a lovely gift from a neighbouring allotment owner, who brought a tray of freshly picked apples and plums.

“By the end of the journey, I’m leaving the negative force behind and going with the positive force”

Counselling service

Post pandemic our counselling service continued to grow and the ask was for continued hybrid services, which included face to face, over the phone and zoom. We recruiting 5 new counsellors in this quarter totaling 12 low cost counsellors.

Autumn (October-December)

This quarter focused on the injustice towards women especially in Iran. Our Winter Solstice event included a special song for women’s freedom which was sung by our women in exile group. Coproduction theme that run through the event was how WomenCentre had supported women this year and what were the hopes for everyone for the new year?

‘Thank you very much to WomenCentre for 2022. I attend Music and Dance therapy groups’



Lantern Parade

This year we again participated in a **Working Together Better Lantern Parade organised by Clear** in Crow Nest Park, Dewsbury held in October. Several women we support made lanterns and paraded with them. WomenCentre organized a Dhol player who played drums and added vibrancy to the event.

Give a few words

This quarter both the drop-in in Dewsbury and Huddersfield started to write letters and send creative work to give a few words. This has been rewarding for the women as it gives a sense of gratefulness and a feeling that they are helping and supporting others too.

Thank you note from Give a few words

“We just wished to send a note to say a very big “Thank You” to yourselves and all at the WomenCentre for your fantastic contributions to our Letters for Christmas Campaign 2022. We were blown away by the amazing response that we received and the overwhelming kindness and creativity that went into every single card and letter”



Volunteering

Post pandemic volunteers started coming back into the center supporting in roles that they were in previously. Especially supporting groups and helping in the office. Here is one of our volunteer success stories.

I started volunteering at WomenCentre in 2018. I would like to say thank you to..... for being an amazing mentor. From the moment we met, she took the time to understand what I wanted to gain from my volunteering position. She constantly ensured I could reach my goals and opened up opportunities for me that I didn't think were possible. Her support, encouragement and guidance helped me build on my skills, experience and confidence which led to my goal. I am now a Business support officer in the council. Thank you, I am so grateful to the WomenCentre team

Additional/Specialist Support

WomenCentre continues to support staff to look after their wellbeing whilst at work. Offering counselling, training, making sure staff take regular breaks and eat lunch away from their desks. Staff also continue to have access to a 24-hour confidential helpline through our Mindful Employer Plus service. Post pandemic we continue a balance of home working and office working. We took an offer up from the council for some wellbeing training this quarter which included **Conflict Management, Secondary Trauma, Work life Balance**

What staff said

"It was good to be able to have space time to reflect on self and on own practice and to do this in a safe space"

"Thought provoking on self-development and really good to explore conflict, and managing emotions "

Winter (January-March 2022)

This quarter focused on celebrating women on International women's day. From discussions around self-care, unity, what it means to be a woman, female role-models, discussions around how WomenCentre supports women and what changes women might want to see at the centre. Above all we celebrated in true WomenCentre style with our Open Mic event. 40+Songs focused on women connecting with each other over shared themes and the many layers that make a WOMAN!



'It has been my privilege to meet talented courageous women linked to our love for creating music'



Additional support

Along with running our regular structured groups, supporting women with their mental health and wellbeing and our drop-in's. We also supported women with signposting to other services, food-parcel requests, supporting women to sign up to courses. It shows how staff go over and beyond their own roles to support the women they work with.

Additional support in drop-in's given this quarter

Women in Exile- Supporting women Migrants

- Food banks referrals- 13
- Hair course- 4 referred x2 attending
- Signposting- x4
- Clothing exchange- x10
- Gone into volunteering charity shop x1

Monday drop-in- Providing a safe, confidential space for women

- Food parcels- x5
- Clothes exchange- x4
- Sign posting/support-x8

Working Together Better (WTB) Partnership Development

The Partnership comprises of seven voluntary sector organisations: Carers Count, CLEAR, hoot, Richmond Fellowship, S2R, Touchstone and WomenCentre; commissioned by Kirklees Council and CCG.

We are Working Together Better to:

- Improve community mental health services for people & with people

- Ensure services are accessible to all
- Increase positive outcomes
- Enable independence and resilience
- Increase prevention & early intervention

As a collective we meet monthly to progress these aims. Some areas of work we have focused on this year are:

- We worked with the council to develop the 'Open up' web page on the Live Well Kirklees website, you can see it here: <https://www.livewellkirklees.co.uk/open-up/>
We have published quarterly your voice in Kirklees newsletter, you can see an example here: <https://avoicinkirklees.wixsite.com/yourvoicinkirklees>
- We developed a Working Together Better presentation detailing the work we do together and as individual services. We used this to promote at several statutory and 3rd sector services in Kirklees. Overall reaching more than 80 refers.
- We delivered a number of events in the community together such as Lantern Parade for World Mental Health Day, Pride, and Shine - an event celebrating creativity in mental health. All with a view to raising awareness and reducing stigma around mental health.
- We offered the BIH app free of charge to our clients across the partnership.
- We developed a strategic steering group. Together we created a strategic plan for the group in which objectives for the coming year have been identified, this will include new posts to support the work involved.



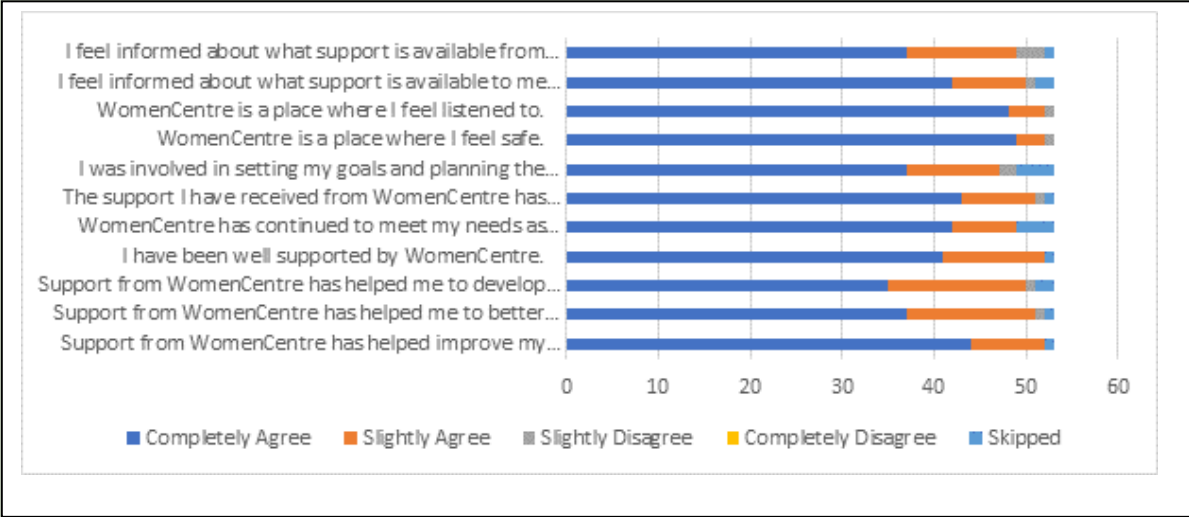
3. Outcomes & Impact

This year **59 women** fed back that they had fully or partially **met their goals** with support from the service.

53 women who accessed groups, courses, 1:1 support and creative therapies (excluding Counselling – see below) answered our annual survey in May 2023. They fed back on **the positive outcomes and impact of the service** (see chart below).

We also gathered information about women’s journeys and progress using the Outcome Recovery Star (Triangle Consulting Ltd).

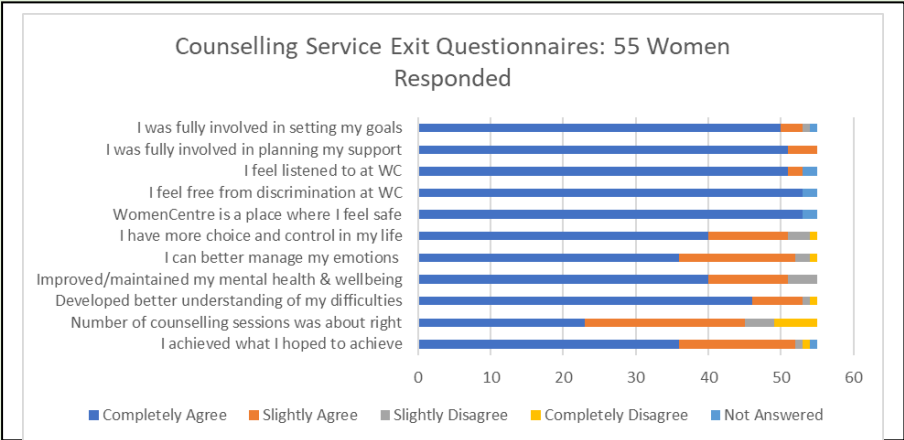
All women said the service helped them improve their mental health and wellbeing, manage their emotions, helped them feel less isolated, that they were well supported and that they felt safe in our service.



Over the year 55 women completed a Counselling Exit Survey with very positive results (please see the chart below).

Over the year 24 women completed at least two outcome stars reporting

a 10.2% average improvement across all 10 Domains of the Recovery Star



Examples of Counselling Feedback

- *finding resources for me to inform myself and listening to my needs. I have felt supported and understood and that in itself is the beginning of healing.
I have felt supported in counselling professionally and with compassion. Thank you.*
- *“The therapy I have received has given me an insight into my own self care needs. I feel that I can recognise when I am on a downwards slope and bring myself back to cope with my stress. My relationships with both family and friends have improved”*

4. Annual Statistics

Women Supported

Over the year we supported:

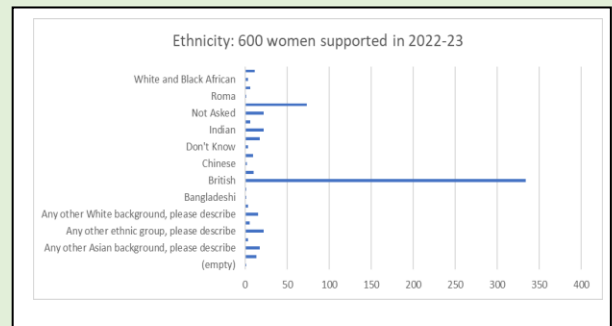
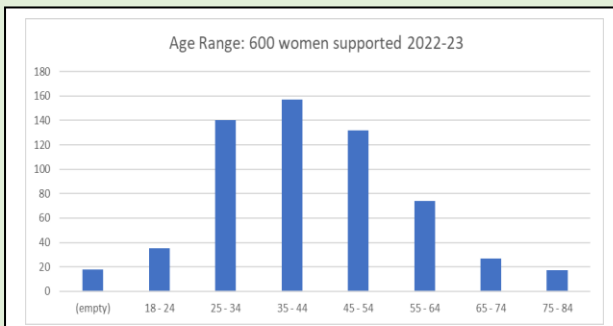
- **601 individual women** – 122 of whom accessed our Counselling Service
- **458 referrals:** of whom 202 were new and 131 had accessed the service at some point before.

Referrals Sources

We receive referrals from GPs, Mental Health Services in North and South Kirklees, Housing Providers and Social Care and Liaison and Diversion Service; but most referrals come from women who have used our services, word of mouth and other voluntary sector providers including our Working Together Better partners.

Many Counselling referrals for women (50 women) with complex needs came either directly or indirectly from IAPT. We had to close the waiting list twice for 3-4 months due to the high number of women waiting. Many women have experienced childhood and adult traumas, e.g. abuse.

Additional Needs-330 women have a disability (55.5%). In addition to mental health support many women have other needs, including: 105 women (17.5%) have a physical disability
Age- We support women from 18 to in their 80's, but the majority (79%) of women we support are aged between 25-54years 42 (7%) women have a learning disability
 128 women (24%) have needed some form of casework support e.g. around mental health, children's safeguarding, domestic abuse, housing, food banks, debt, immigration & courts
Ethnicity-We support women from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds – 59% were White (British, Irish or other), 19% were Asian or Asian British and 6% are Black or Black British.



5. Developments, Visions & Targets 2022-23

Vision & Targets for 2022-23

We will continue to:

- Use coproduction approaches and peer champions in the ongoing development of all aspects of our service.
- Develop the role of volunteering through the support of our volunteer coordinator
- Continue to develop a culture of wellbeing for everyone within the service, including staff and volunteers.
- Work with our Working Together Better partners, strategically and operationally in our shared vision of deliver accessible and integrated mental health services.

Social and Added Value

In 2022-23 we secured additional funding for our activities in Kirklees, including:

- ✓ Three Liaison and Diversion Workers to divert women from the criminal justice system.
- ✓ Freedom Programme funded by Liaison and Diversion for survivors of domestic abuse
- ✓ A Sexual Exploitation Worker (regional Partnership Project) funded by the National Lottery.
- ✓ A Project 1125 Worker, National Lottery funded, working with girls & young women (11-25).
- ✓ Common Threads Collective - women experts by experience delivering training through Barnados to social workers and pre adoptive parents and Letterbox Project, giving voice to mothers apart from their children .
- ✓ Creative Minds match funding for our Pausing Together Project led by our Creative Therapists.
- ✓ Kirklees Council Place Based funding for a Central Huddersfield Menopause Project.
- ✓ Connecting Opportunities working with new migrants funded by ESIF and the National Lottery.
- ✓ Kirklees Council funding for pilot project of holistic support for minoritised and marginalised women affected by domestic abuse.
- ✓ Volunteer coordinator employed through WomenCentre legacy funding.

6. Finance 2022-2023

Core funding for our Women's Mental Health and Wellbeing Service was provided by Kirklees Council and NHS Kirklees Integrated Care Partnership. The table below provides a summary of income and expenditure for our WMH Service for 2022-23.

Note - includes extra £10,335 (50% of which was paid to Richmond Fellowship and shown as consultancy cost).

| Summary of Income and Expenditure for WMH Service 2022-23 | £ |
|---|-------------------|
| Income | |
| Income from Grants | 227,440.56 |
| Total Income | 227,440.56 |
| Expenditure | |
| Direct pay costs | 176,803.73 |
| Contribution to central services, senior management pay costs | 21,165.78 |
| Staff travel and training | 1,630.23 |
| Recruitment and Consultancy costs | 5,667.503 |
| General direct project costs | 3,238.66 |
| Room and venue hire for Dewsbury | 366.00 |
| Volunteer expenses | 238.93 |
| Contribution to premises and organisation costs | 23,627.21 |
| Total Expenditure | 233,096.40 |
| Net surplus /(deficit) in year to 31/3/22 | -5,655.84 |
| Brought Forward Surplus at 31/03/21 | 29,530.58 |
| Sub Total of Surplus at 31/03/22 | 23,874.74 |
| Less Low-Cost Counselling Deficit at 31/03/22 | -6,938.43 |
| Grand Total Carried forward at 31/03/22 | 16,936.31 |