



Volunteer Annual Report



Following the generous legacy donation from Doreen Pickles in 2021 and the Board decision to invest this legacy into WomenCentre's volunteering offer, we have made fantastic progress in developing this important strand of our work.

The legacy enabled WomenCentre to invest in additional capacity by appointing a dedicated Volunteer Co-ordinator in Kirklees and Calderdale and a Volunteer and Well Being Manager in Calderdale.

Whilst appointments were only made in 2023 (Huddersfield 1.1.23; Halifax 27.3.23 and Volunteer and Well Being Manager 8.3.23) the volunteering teams are now established across both service locations, but more importantly they are connected with each other.

Reviewing Our Volunteering Processes

A Volunteer Task and Finish Group was set up, led by a member of the SMT, to bring the team together, refresh our volunteer practices and Policy and bring our volunteer processes into line with each other.

Kirklees has for many years had a volunteer Counselling offer. This volunteer offer is quite different to our general volunteer offer – with a different recruitment route and turnover. We have well established strong links with the Huddersfield University and placement hours with WomenCentre are popular with students completing studies. As part of their placement agreement, they are required to commit 3 hours of volunteer counselling a week during their placement - giving us a high quality source of volunteer counselling for our service users. Often on completion of their qualification the students continue to volunteer with us.

The volunteer counselling continues to be led by the Counselling Co-ordinator in Kirklees, but through the Task and Finish Group work we are bringing the processes for recruiting, supporting and retaining our volunteer counsellors into line with our other volunteering.

The Task and Finish Group have successfully reviewed all the documentation relating to Volunteering including the Volunteer Agreement and Volunteer Policy. All documentation now has the WomenCentre branding and can be attributed to WomenCentre.

The Website has been refreshed and now includes the Volunteer Application Form, Role Descriptions for our volunteering roles and more information about why Volunteers are so important to WomenCentre.

Recording Volunteer Information

We have introduced a universal system for recording information about our volunteers, which is easy to access and secure. This enables us to more easily see the volunteer hours which have been donated to the organisation including the Board Trustee hours. This in turn enables us to better show the impact of the volunteering and its fiscal value to WomenCentre.

Thanking Our Volunteers



We held a “thank you” event for Volunteers during Volunteering Week, at a garden centre, with a lovely afternoon tea and all our volunteers received a volunteering badge to recognise and celebrate their contribution to WomenCentre.

During the Covid (2020) pandemic 3 of our volunteers stood down in Kirklees, and we have been keen ever since to recruit new volunteers to bridge this loss. Through advertising and promotion, we successfully recruited another 5 new volunteers in 2023, who join the existing 3 who remained with us throughout Covid.

Kirklees Roles

Roles in Kirklees opportunities include supporting: sewing and knitting group, Women in Exile group, walking group, Sistersout and drop-ins in both Huddersfield and Dewsbury.

Calderdale Roles

In Calderdale we have had three very long-standing experienced volunteers but have now successfully recruited two new volunteers for roles supporting groups, creche and the basement management and another five volunteers due to commence their induction to support the Calderdale Staying Safe team.



Numbers Of Volunteers

In total we now have 13 general service volunteers with 5 more joining the Calderdale team, pending their induction and – a huge achievement in just eight months.

In January 2023 we had 11 counsellors volunteering for WomenCentre in Kirklees. Recruitment usually takes place in September as courses end in June and start in September/October, and there is movement in the volunteer cohort, which we plan for. We are very fortunate that many of our placement volunteers decide to continue volunteering for us after they complete their training. Feedback from counsellors in training is that they value the experience they have gained, the support they have received and the positive environment at WomenCentre.

There is usually annual movement of our volunteer Counsellors as they qualify and move on, but we do have some who have been volunteering for us for between 5 and 10 years.

We also have 10 WomenCentre Trustees, who are all volunteers. They give their time to attend Board meetings, Sub Group meetings, represent WomenCentre at external events and support our funding raising work. We have 2 two new applications pending to join the Board.

Recruiting Volunteers

We are attracting new volunteers through our social media activity, through attending community events, such as market stall events to promote our volunteering and through our general face to face fundraising activities where we talk about volunteering. Trustees, who are all volunteers are also instrumental in attracting new Trustees, so all in all a very universal approach.

Future Plans

It is our ambition that volunteering will become a stronger core component of WomenCentre, enabling us to offer a wider range of support to women, both as service users but also as volunteers. We know that volunteers themselves gain from their involvement with WomenCentre and from the information we already have we know that many volunteers go on to secure paid employment as a result of the skills and experience they have gained in their volunteering role with us. In looking at specific Key Indicators around our volunteering we need to capture this outcome, whilst recognising that employment is not the motivation for all of our volunteers.

In summary, the legacy money has provided us with a gateway to embed volunteering at WomenCentre and has already successfully enabled us to enhance and expand our original volunteering offer and in turn our general support to women who access our services.

Steph Mallas
Deputy CEO
September 2023

Post Script Note: One of our valued volunteers has been shortlisted as a finalist for the Calderdale Community Spirit Awards in the Volunteer of the Year category.