

PENDLE WOMEN'S FORUM ANNUAL REPORT

2023 — 2024

CHARITY NO: 1125504

MISSION STATEMENT

Pendle Women's Forum aims to provide confidential advice and information to women from all communities, who either live or work in Pendle. The Forum aims to empower women from socially disadvantaged backgrounds to build their capacity in order for them to become confident individuals. To improve the advancement of education and training and the preservation and protection of good health. Pendle Women's Forum seeks to build a community where mothers and children create a better future for themselves by working and living together.

PWF BACKGROUND, OBJECTIVES AND SERVICES PROVIDED

Pendle Women's Forum (PWF) was founded in 1998 by a group of dedicated and concerned individuals who came together in a bid to set up an organisation to tackle the increasing problems faced by women in our community. This included social exclusion, women's rights, social deprivation, high rates of unemployment, education, training and a lack of opportunity.

PWF functions have increasingly developed as the circumstances of the community have changed. The organisation is now heavily involved in the social, economic and cultural regeneration of the area. Dr. Raisa I. Malik, Chairperson of PWF, was one of the founder members and she has continued to play a pivotal role in the success and development of the charity over the last 25 years.

PWF achieved a registered charity status with the Charity Commission in August 2008.

OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of PWF are:

- To promote any charitable purpose for the benefit of women and young girls, particularly but not exclusively, from the ethnic minority communities in Pendle.
- The advancement of education and training.
- The preservation and protection of good health and wellbeing.
- The promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups and religions.

- The provision of facilities for culture, social and recreational activities in the interest of social welfare, with the object of improving the conditions of life.

SERVICES PROVIDED

Over the years, the organisation has developed its services to cater for the wide range of issues affecting the women in the local community. The services include:

- Information, Advice and Guidance
- Advocacy
- Training for employability
- Sports and leisure activities
- Education
- Outreach work
- Practical support
- Social inclusion
- Creating volunteering opportunities
- Mental health and wellbeing support
- Empowerment
- Financial advice including budgeting, debt management and support

EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

Dr Raisa Ikram Malik —Chairperson

Mrs Sheila Wicks —Treasurer

Mrs Shazia Koser —Secretary

Mrs Kathleen Shore

Mrs Sultana Shafi

Mrs Nazema Saghir

Mrs Bibi -ul-Haq

Chairperson's Overview – Year 2023-2024

I am pleased to present this past 12 months report of our work from April 2023 to March 2024. Despite the discouraging environment in the voluntary sector and obtaining grants, I am very grateful to our funders, that we have been successful in carrying out our work and achieving good outcomes from many of our projects. For example:

1. The Digital Skills Project, funded by Good Things Foundation (Apr 23 – March 24). With this funding we ran a successful project in digital skills, providing classes for women especially those suffering from digital poverty. It was a very popular project and we were given extensions twice. The results were so encouraging that we have applied for another phase.
2. Women Learn Together Project, funded by UK Government skills for life Multiply, WEA, LCC (Apr 23 – Feb 24). This project delivered basic maths classes to allow women to be able to access free basic numeracy skills and build confidence to empower themselves to take control of their everyday finances, household budgets, and become financially resilient.
3. Wellness from Within Project, funded by Comic Relief (Sept 23 – Mar 24) This was a short-term project to improve the mental health of marginalised women in Pendle. Traditionally there is a lot of stigma around mental health issues in BAME communities. This project held a variety of health and wellbeing sessions and workshops to tackle mental health, in order to reach out to isolated women, create a sense of belonging and community, remove the stigma to mental health and help them access services.
4. Pendle Womens Together, funded by Awards for All (Sept 23 – Mar 24). The project was a success and helped disadvantaged women with mental health conditions such as anxiety and depression. The impact of this project led to a significant reduction in social isolation and fostered increased social cohesion. Through arts, crafts and creative wellbeing activities, women found avenues for personal growth, community connection, and mutual support.
5. Supporting marginalised groups and tackling inequality project, funded by Postcode Lottery. The funding helped us to carry out the refurbishment work of a small room, kitchen and toilet. We needed to create this space to help extend our services to help marginalised women who were suffering multiple barriers. We envisaged to create a warm hub internet café space to accommodate more classes, access to food banks, free hot drinks and internet. The warm hub would also serve as a peer support network, where women suffering similar problems had a safe space to connect and access services. We managed to part refurbish this project plan, with the rest of the refurbishment work later funded by the Community Organisations Cost of Living project.

6. Community Organisation Cost of Living, funded by The National Lottery fund. With this grant we were not only able to deliver the existing services, but we were also able to expand them. With the funding we were able to refurbish a room and turn it into a warm hub cafe, which provided an additional warm space, as a hub, where vulnerable ladies were able to have a free hot drink in a warm safe environment, use the internet and access the much-needed services that PWF provides like food parcels, advice and guidance, job clubs, ESOL classes and workshops around health and wellbeing.

7. Lloyds Bank Foundation (Sept 23 – on going). We were successful in receiving funding from the Lloyds Bank Foundation Racial Equity Programme. This funding will help us to continue and expand Pendle Women's Forum services to the community.

Pendle Women's Forum works with its partners Lancashire Adult Learning to facilitate the delivery of ESOL classes. When people learn language, they can widen their horizons and work in different directions, and our aim remains to inform, educate and train women, to empower them, make them more self-confident and employable, so as to be able to contribute to their local economy.

Finally, I would like to express my thanks and appreciation to all the members of our executive committee especially the treasurer and secretary for their commitment and contribution. And my special thanks and gratitude to all the staff members and the manager for their hard work, evidenced in the results of their projects, impact made on service users and positive feedback from funders.

Raisa Malik

Chair

Treasurer's Report year ending 31st March 2024

The past year has seen a marked increase in the amount of funding our organisation has attracted when compared to the 2023-year end and I would like to thank our Staff for their hard work in obtaining and using the funding on various activities.

On looking over the year end accounts, I have noted a reduction in some of our spending categories such as staffing costs, sessional workers, cleaning, management consultants, petty cash, plus legal and professional expenses. On the other hand, there have been increased costs for some items, one of the main ones being rent paid and maintenance and repairs, due to our taking on number 19 Market Square. This property has been refurbished to a high standard and now includes a coffee machine!

Other increases have been on gas and electricity partly due to taking on no 19, telephone and internet charges, stationery and equipment, publicity and advertising.

At the year's end we still had a useful sum left in our unrestricted funds, although this is down on 2023 due to our having to use our reserves during a period when we had been attracting fewer offers from funders.

Sheila Wicks

Treasurer

Secretary Report – 2023/24

Pendle Women's Forum have had a remarkable year this year, due to the hard work of the existing staff members specifically management. We have had 4 executive committee meetings over the year to discuss ideas and strategies. The projects we successfully bided for include the digital skills project, health and wellbeing projects and the community organisations cost of living project. With this funding we were able to renovate our building to accommodate more services that we offer. The renovation included a warm café hub, refurbishment of the kitchen and toilet upstairs, carpeting, plastering, lighting, windows and series of other refurbishments. Our highlight of the warm cafe hub was the awesome coffee machine.

After a successful year I would like to praise and thank all the funders that made it possible to deliver remarkable services that we do. Outlined are the project activities and achievements for the year.

Shazia Koser

Digital Skills – April 2023 – March 2024

Funded by Good Things Foundation

Pendle Women's Forum were able to facilitate and deliver digital skills classes and embed the Learn My Way programme to help women access digital literacy and access to the internet. We set up three, two-hour session weekly ranging from pre-entry to entry 3 level. The Learn My Way programme was designed to help people develop essential digital skills, offering a range of courses that teach users how to navigate the internet, use email, stay safe online, and access public services such as healthcare and benefits.

The digital skills classes have proven to be a boon for women, offering them greater access to learning and development opportunities. Many women were suffering from digital poverty and did not have access to devices or the internet. With the help of Good Things Foundation, the funding allowed us to bridge this gap. The Learn My Way programme tackled each element of digital skills, and allowed the women to learn at their own pace. With the help of bilingual tutors, this learning was made even more easy and accessible, which led to an increase in the uptake of classes.

The digital skills classes also incorporated help with digital skills that are used for everyday life, such as finding routes through the navigation apps, online banking, online shopping, booking appointments, finding jobs, accessing services online, understanding apps on their phones etc... Women reported significant improvements in their understanding and confidence.

The digital skills classes have been essential in fostering a sense of empowerment, offering women the tools they need to thrive in an increasingly digital society.

Learner Comments

"The classes helped me use the navigation app to plan my route. I am now confident to travel on my own to different places."

"The Learn My Way programme has helped me to understand how to use the email"

"I feel confident to use the laptop and navigate and download apps on my phone."

Women Learn Together – April 2023 – February 2024

Funded by UK Government skills for life Multiply, WEA, LCC

Many of the women we support suffer from multiple barriers including poverty, social/racial inequity, gender discrimination, lack of financial resilience. We set out to deliver the Multiply project that would allow women to be able to access free basic numeracy skills and build confidence to empower themselves to take control of their everyday finances and make informed decisions like managing their household budgets.

We delivered this course through 12-weeks of tutored classroom learning and practical sessions. As well as basic maths classes, we also provided help in understanding and managing finances, budgeting and debt. Each individual had a tailored learning plan and targets. This helped us monitor progress of each individual.

Learning was made fun, and women acquired numeracy skills through activities that they would encounter in their everyday lives, such as cooking, shopping etc... Women were able to understand read and write numbers, they were able to solve basic maths problems, covering topics such as addition, multiplication, and division, measuring length, width, and height, measuring weight using the scales, using a calculator, reading and telling the time in English. Learning also embedded trips to the supermarkets to practice how to look for and calculate price differences, and pay through self-checkouts.

We had 50 women registered on this course, with over 40 women reported an increase in confidence with numbers and moved on to further training after this course. Over 25 women were able to help their children with homework, and 4 women entered employment.

Learner comments

“After attending the classes, I am confident to help my children in Primary school with their homework.”

“I found the trip to the supermarket particularly useful. At first, I was nervous to use the checkouts, but with practice, I am now confident, and now use it almost every time I go shopping.”

“I really enjoyed the numeracy classes; I wish they could continue for longer”

Wellness from Within – September 2023 – March 2024

Funded by Comic Relief

This was a short-term project to improve the mental health of marginalised women in Pendle. Traditionally there is a lot of stigma around mental health issues in BAME communities. This project held a variety of health and wellbeing sessions and workshops to tackle mental health, in order to reach out to isolated women, create a sense of belonging and community, remove the stigma to mental health and help them access services. These sessions and activities really helped women to engage and feel happier.

A qualified NLP Practitioner/Professional Life Coach (***Serenity with Sophie***) had been sought in order to deliver 2 group sessions a week for 6 weeks of mental health awareness. Engaging the clients in conversations around this topic, circumstances that result in their poor mental health, stories that they wanted to share; at the same time gaining knowledge, methodologies to remedy this and where to seek help.

A qualified psychotherapist/counsellor (***Inner Reflection Therapies***) started group sessions on the **6th February 2024** for 6 weeks delivering Mental Health Awareness sessions. We further decided to support 3 ladies with **one-to-one sessions** via Inner Reflection Therapies who were in great need of specialist support. The counsellor was able to converse with the clients in their mother-tongue language (Urdu/Punjabi) as they had little or no English.

Lancashire Mind delivered 1 group session a week on mental health awareness for 6 weeks. The staff were bilingual in Urdu/Punjabi and able to converse with clients in their mother-tongue language; opening conversations around mental health. Topics also covered mindfulness, difficulties in life, importance of hobbies, developing connections and the benefit of supporting communities.

LAL (Lancashire Adult Learning) delivered 2 group sessions for 15 weeks of Health Literacy (which has been designed for our ESOL clients), incorporating mental health wellbeing in addition to women's health in general. These sessions have been ideal for clients who wanted to improve their English Language whilst focussing solely on their health and wellbeing. LAL predominately take people who are at E2 level and above but accommodated some of our pre-entry level learners who were very passionate about developing themselves at a faster pace. A number of these clients further progressed onto doing a 9-week First Aid Certificate incorporating both Adult and Children's First Aid.

Additionally, Arts and Crafts sessions were set up, where a local Artist was employed to deliver 10 weekly sessions. Clients welcomed the opportunity to come out of their houses and spend some time away from daily chores, routine and stress. For many

this was their first time enrolling onto such a programme and the feedback was positive as they discovered the therapeutic benefits of attending such sessions whilst learning the art of mixing colours and painting in water colour.

The grant enabled us to buy-in much needed bilingual counselling services to help us to reach out to women who would not have been able to access mainstream or other local mental health provision, due to having little or no English. For those undergoing serious mental health trauma we were able to provide one-to-one counselling sessions. We have witnessed a marked difference to their lives as they were given focussed help in order to deal with the deep-rooted cause of their mental health deterioration.

Reducing the stigma associated with mental health has been a vital first step, as it has allowed our clients to openly talk about their symptoms and try to understand what they are feeling and why. For many it was the first time they have been able to share their stories and take advantage of staff and peer support. Many have made good friends and been able to share time doing mindful activities including arts & crafts and exercise. By exploring these avenues, the ladies have learnt how self-care and self-development is very important for their mental and physical health. It has been very noticeable, the increased confidence and empowerment the ladies have gained through this Project and many who are able to stand up for their self-respect, dignity and rights.

Below is some of the feedback from the clients:

"I was full of fear about community reactions towards mental health, not something I could express until now, feel better sharing troubles with others"

"it's made me get out of the house, take time out for myself"

"I feel empowered, have no fear"

"I could not find services to accommodate me before, in terms of my mental health and struggles in life"

"I am now aware of services I can access"

"Not feeling guilty about putting myself first"

Pendle Women Together – September 2023 – March 2024

Funded by The National Lottery Fund - Awards for All

Pendle Women's Forum ran a six-month project creating a women's community hub that ran weekly chai and chat sessions and capacity building activities. We also provide informational sessions on women's health; budgeting; healthy meals; keeping healthy; building confidence.

This initiative led to a significant reduction in social isolation and fostered increased social cohesion among participants. Through these diverse activities, women found avenues for personal growth, community connection, and mutual support. The welcoming environment of the hub encouraged meaningful interactions, empowering women to share experiences, learn new skills, and build lasting relationships.

We ran creative sessions for women to learn new skills and build self-confidence. We also provided volunteering opportunities and work experience to improve employability and teach skills such as food safety and first aid. The benefits we have seen from our evaluation and monitoring have been positive. Women reported reduced social isolation; Increased social cohesion across different communities; an opportunity for women and girls to discuss the issues which matter to them in a safe space; increased support networks and improved employability skills.

We also ran 4 inter-faith workshops. Women from a variety of backgrounds came together to discuss and address the issues facing women. We also had an undertaking from local councillors to meet with women to understand their issues.

We offered female-only Aqua rhythmic sessions at Pendle Wavelengths once a week for 10 weeks. Women with various mental and physical issues were given a chance to improve their well-being. Exercising in water offered them a myriad of benefits for both mental and physical health.

Overall, the project was a success and helped disadvantaged women including women from marginalised communities; those who face racial and religious discrimination; BAME; older women; victims of VAWG and survivors of DV; women with mental health conditions such as anxiety and depression; women who cannot access other groups and services due to language barriers and cultural sensitivities.

The Community Organisation Cost of Living Fund

Funded by The National Lottery Fund

The cost-of-living crisis affected almost everyone. It particularly hit hard on communities and community organisations like Pendle Womens Forum who offer critical services to disadvantaged and vulnerable women in the community. We saw a large increase in demand particularly for debt management and advice on energy costs. We also saw significantly increased demand for clients needing access to food banks and white goods. More women were reporting mental health issues such as anxiety and stress due to worries over money. More women were using our services to access free internet and data and the job clubs, and an increase in demand for English, ICT and numeracy classes. With the help of the COCL funding, we were able to continue delivering these services, in order to meet the increasing demands.

As well as being able to deliver the existing services, we were also able to expand them. With the funding we were able to refurbish a room and turn it into a warm hub cafe, which provided an additional warm space, where vulnerable ladies were able to have a free hot drink in a warm safe environment, use the internet and access the much-needed services that PWF provided like food parcels, advice and guidance, job clubs, ESOL classes and workshops around health and wellbeing. This idea of an extra warm space had been the direct response to the needs of the women in the community who were suffering the cost-of-living crisis. We helped low-income households access benefits, warm energy grants and help resolve housing and debt issues.

The difference was positive and women felt more supported with an increased positive outlook, women reported increased levels of confidence and self-esteem, increasing further engagement in confidence building activities and support services. Women also felt less isolated and lonely developing and improving networks of support.

This funding also helped Pendle Women's Forum pay for overheads and alleviate some of the pressures brought on by the cost-of-living crisis, so that we could continue to run essential and critical services to our community.

Lloyds Bank Foundation – Racial Equity Programme

We were successful in receiving funding from the Lloyds Bank Foundation Racial Equity Programme. This funding will help us to continue and expand Pendle Women's Forum services to the community.

Reflection over the year

During the past year Pendle Women's Forum has continued to offer critical services, helping 135 disadvantaged vulnerable women in the community. The majority of women accessing our services were socially excluded in many aspects of their lives, mainly due to racial equity, poor financial resilience, unemployment, poor health and well-being, digital poverty and language and cultural barriers. We found that the Covid pandemic left communities facing the cost-of-living crisis and long-term health and wellbeing conditions. Women often came in for debt support, benefits, advice on energy saving, food parcels and white goods. Due to language barriers women needed bilingual staff to support them, which was part of our service. We provided women with English language classes, digital skills and numeracy. We offered health and wellbeing, talking therapies workshops to relieve and tackle stress and depression

The impact that our services have had on the women we support has been very positive. Our work has benefited vulnerable women especially from the BAME communities. Women were able to access advice, guidance and information across all areas with bilingual help and advocacy, in order to tackle complex barriers. Women felt they were now able to budget their finances by attending the numeracy classes; women increased their confidence and skills in speaking and understanding English; women felt less isolated and lonely by developing and improving support networks. These successes meant that we were delivering the right services at the right time to the right people. We recruited some volunteers which were a big help in delivering support.

As an organisation, we were able to build on our partnership networks, and what made our provision more effective is that we helped fill the gaps in the local services. There is no other grassroots organisation that provides a holistic one stop service, where we look at the whole life circle of an individual and help tackle the complex needs, providing practical support.

PendleWomen's Forum
Statement of Financial Activities to 31st March 2024
Including Income and Expenditure Account

	Big Lottery Fund £	CVS £	BBO Selnet £	TNL COST OF LIVING FUND £	WEA MULTIPLY £	GOOD THINGS FOUNDATION £	AWARDS FOR ALL £	COMIC RELIEF £	NELSON TOWN COUNCIL	POSTCODE LOTTERY FUND (PCLF)	LLOYDS BANK FOUNDATION	Nelson & Colne College £	ROSA	Unrestricted Funds £	RECEIPT Total £	2022/2023 £
Incoming Resources																
Grants- Big Lottery Fund	-														-	12,591
Grant- BBC Cin		-													-	-
Grant- Selnet BBO			9,510												9,510	21,545
TNL				35,622											35,622	-
Community Foundation Lancs / CCG./CVS					24,961										24,961	4,977
Multiply/ WEA						11,190									11,190	15,640
ESF/WEA															-	-
Award 4 All							10,560								10,560	400
ROSA								4,984							4,984	794
Post Code Lottery									1,000						1,000	-
CRF Fund										14,600					14,600	9,561
Nelson & Colne College											25,000				25,000	10,178
Good Things												5,355			5,355	2,000
Unrestricted Funds													-		-	492
Others														-	-	38
Total Income	-	-	9,510	35,622	24,961	11,190	10,560	4,984	1,000	14,600	25,000	5,355	-	-	142,781	78,215

Big Lottery Fund	CVS	BBO Selnat	TNL-COST OF LIVING FUND	WEA MULTIPLY	GOOD THINGS FOUNDATION	AWARDS FOR ALL	COMIC RELIEF	NELSON TOWN COUNCIL	POSTCODE LOTTERY FUND (PCLF)	LLOYDS BANK FOUNDATION	Nelson & Colne College	ROSA	Unrestricted Funds	PAYMENT Total	2022/2023
£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£				£	£	£	£	

Expenditure

Staffing:																
Project Coordinators	1,168	39	7,074	6,882	19,836	6,107	4,660	4,963	-	-	-	456	0	13	51,198	62,827
Sesional Worker/Tutor	-	-	-	450	-	-	-	1,310	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,760	7,066
Overheads:																
Rent	-	-	-	3,827	639	-	-	-	-	-	-	479	-	-	4,945	2,093
Insurance	-	-	-	350	128	17	44	-	-	-	-	51	-	-	590	501
Maintenance & Repairs	-	-	-	1,935	-	-	60	60	-	14,115	-	-	-	-	16,170	-
Gas & Electricity	-	-	-	3,424	610	123	209	143	-	-	-	2,455	-	-	6,964	4,620
Telephone/Internet	-	-	-	861	406	63	-	83	-	-	-	153	-	-	1,566	1,085
Water	-	-	-	425	109	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	534	-
Activity costs:																
Activities(inclues building capabilities)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	124	-	-	-	284	-	-	408	-
Stationery/Equipment	-	-	-	2,021	687	511	1,095	525	-	-	-	460	-	2,280	7,579	1,130
IT	-	-	-	308	35	6	101	8	-	-	-	17	-	-	475	235
Cleaning	-	-	-	137	29	1,805	77	844	-	-	-	15	-	-	2,906	3,954
Petty Cash	-	-	-	-	-	590	600	200	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,390	1,840
Publicity/Adverts	-	-	-	1,085	-	-	-	320	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,405	700
Project																
Management/Consultants	-	-	-	21	599	-	-	24	-	-	-	575	-	528	1,748	16,847
Legal & Professiona Expenses	-	-	-	772	-	-	77	21	-	330	-	15	-	-	1,215	8,117
Other Fees & Charges	-	176	260	298	1,752	165	801	79	-	-	-	39	-	39	3,609	-
Subscriptions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	15	-	-	15	-
Total Expenditure	1,168	215	7,334	22,796	24,829	9,388	7,723	8,704	-	14,445	-	5,014	0	2,860	104,476	111,015
Net Income	- 1,168	- 215	2,176	12,826	132	1,802	2,837	- 3,720	1,000	155	25,000	341	- 0	- 2,860	38,306	- 32,799
Funds Brought Forward	1,168	692	3,089	2,527	7,514	2,000	811	9,555	-	7,077	-	18,317	-	43,358	96,108	128,908
Funds Carried Forward	-	477	5,265	15,353	7,646	3,802	3,648	5,835	1,000	7,232	25,000	18,658	-	37,320	131,236	96,108



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Report to the trustees/
members of

Charity Name

Pendle Women's Forum

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity for the year ended 31st March 2024.

As the charity's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011.

I report in respect of my examination of the Charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

I have completed my examination and confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Kashif Insari (MAAT)
Adamson Accountants
138 Every Street, Nelson
BB9 7EX
26th September 2024