

THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS OF



The Women & Families
RESOURCE CENTRE
INSPIRE. EMPOWER. MOTIVATE. ACHIEVE

FOR THE YEAR ENDED

31st MARCH 2021

The **Women** & **Families** RESOURCE CENTRE

CHARITY INFORMATION

OUR TRUSTEES

MRS JUDITH NGUEBI NTAMARK

MRS CHRISTINE GWENDA

MRS RACHEL ELANGWE

MRS VICTORINE MUGOYA

MRS ARRAH LAWRENCE

MRS TAZI ANYINGANG

CHARITY NUMBER

1131817

CHARITY OFFICE & SHOP ADDRESS

The **Women** & **Families** RESOURCE CENTRE

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Welcome to The Women & Families Resource Centre Annual Report 2020-2021!



This has been a year like no other. The aftershocks of Covid-19 are still reverberating locally, nationally and internationally. There have certainly been many negative consequences for people in Wolverhampton - particularly in relation to poverty, mental health, domestic abuse and violence against women.

In common with many other charities, this has been an unusual and, in many respects, a quite challenging year. We had to postpone and then hold a virtual AGM last year to comply with Covid-restrictions - nonetheless I am pleased to

report that our befriending service has clearly demonstrated its value during and after the pandemic - reaching people with almost no other sources of support, and helping them to deal with poverty, isolation, domestic violence, mental health issues, loss and bereavement as well as practical day-day issues, alongside its core purpose of providing companionship.

Many struggled to meet basic needs such as feeding, clothing or even keeping themselves or their families warm. These huge financial burdens put a strain on their mental health and wellbeing causing a significant rise in the number of calls and referrals from vulnerable families and other organisations seeking our assistance. This year has shown us how needed our services are and how, as an organization, we can come together to offer compassionate care and support to our clients and our community. We saw a huge increase in the number of enquiries and families needing our help and support.

Our Trustees have worked exceptionally hard this year to support change to the internal culture of the organisation, to make sure our policies and procedures are up to date and that we invest in staff & volunteers wellbeing. During lockdown we also continued to review our policies to ensure the safe and effective delivery of services, introducing new

policies when required. This included introducing a Working from Home Policy and revising our IT and Cybersecurity Policy to ensure it was fit for purpose in these unforeseen circumstances.

The Board has continued to engage closely with the management team to ensure that the effectiveness of WFRC was never compromised during this trying period. As a Board we are unified in our efforts to continue raising the profile of WFRC and highlight the importance of the organisation in its efforts to support the women, children & families in Wolverhampton.

We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to all our staff and volunteers who have continued to work in an exceptional way during the pandemic. Your determination, passion and dedication to support the vulnerable women and children that have been impacted by these difficult circumstances has been invaluable.

We also wanted to take the opportunity and send our thanks to all our funders, and all the individuals and organisations who continue to support us through their donations, especially during these challenging times. We are forever grateful for the financial support and the loyalty we have received over the course of this year.

As a Board we will continue to support the incredible work that the WFRC team is providing and strengthen its presence as a vital service provider in the city of Wolverhampton and surrounding areas.

We hope you enjoy reading about what The Women & Families Resource Centre has been doing during this challenging year. Thank you for your continuing support us - we couldn't do without your support. On behalf of my fellow Trustees, I wish - and look forward to your continued involvement and commitment to WFRC during 2021/2022.

With Special Thanks!

Mrs Judith N Ntamark, Chair, WFRC Board of Trustees

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

This year has certainly been one of the most challenging and interesting that I've experienced in my career. It has been a year of change, community, and support, but also a year of tragedy, violence, mental health issues and financial hardship. I have tremendous reverence and admiration for our staff & volunteers who have weathered this storm.

The pandemic crisis brought challenges, but also opportunities on how to address such challenges. We saw WFRC rise to the occasion and respond quickly and effectively to the new way of operating during the national lockdowns imposed due to the pandemic by establishing digital accessibility. The resilience and commitment of our teams has been an inspiration.

Our immediate response to the COVID 19 pandemic was providing emergency support to women, children and families with issues such as social isolation, emergency food parcels provision, baby food and clothing items, children's craft boxes, women's chat and mental well-being groups, telephone befriending and family support advice as well as free counselling services.

Despite the complications brought on by the pandemic, we were successful in fully transitioning to video and telephone support and therapy, as well as getting to grips with a massive change in how we deliver our services, responding to the impact of the pandemic on all of our mental health, developing new partnerships and collaborations.

Thanks to the amazing support, hard work, and patience of our dedicated staff and volunteers, we provided our volunteer befrienders with training around specific issues such as bereavement, mental health first aid and understanding depression to extend their skills in coping with the complex issues faced by our service users. Our staff certainly rose to the occasion, set up home offices, and continued our important work remotely. The staff team met regularly using zoom and this has been really important to enable all the changes to be shaped. Supervisions took place using zoom. We also held volunteer meet up groups to offer peer emotional, practical and social support for volunteer befrienders.

Covid-19 challenged us to seek alternative funding sources, and the community at large, including our partners, have been incredibly generous this year in supporting the Centre. We set up and opened our first ever charity shop which is now helping us to raise much needed funds to support the spiralling demands and challenges.

Through all these challenges of the past year with the ongoing pandemic, the Centre staff were able to pivot and come up with creative ways to meet the needs of our clients and continue to deliver services. We set up and launched a baby bank to support new

mothers and families who are struggling to meet the financial and practical burden of looking after a new baby. We also set up a food pantry to support families living in poverty.

We have currently restarted our provision of face- to-face befriending support and envisage that telephone befriending will remain part of our service, as it allows us to recruit more volunteers to support more women. I look forward to the year ahead, looking at digital delivery with further database development and continuing to ease the isolation increased by the pandemic.

Thank you!

I would like to thank everyone who has supported WFRC in anyway during this year. We as an organisation have remained as a source of strength and support for our community.

To our Staff & Volunteers- We want to thank all our staff & volunteers for working tirelessly and giving so much of your time and skills in so many ways. Saying thank you does not seem enough. The effort that you all put into providing services has been immense, filled with enthusiasm and compassion to ensure our community can thrive despite these difficult times. Additionally, you have supported each other immensely through difficult circumstances. I am so proud of our Team and together we are all looking forward to seeing what 2021/22 brings.

To our ever-supportive Board of Directors— Judith, Christine, Rachel, Victorine, Anyi & Arrah

—I am so grateful for your commitment to serving the community in this capacity. I learn so much from you all and I'm looking forward to working together for years to come! Our Centre is in great hands!

To our community— Thank you for all your support throughout this pandemic. I look forward to meeting new supporters and working together to address the issues and concerns faced by the women & families we work with.

And finally, we want to thank each of you for supporting The Women & Families Resource Centre in a variety of ways. We look forward to working with you in 2022.

Dr Karyne Tazi
Executive Director

TRUSTEES REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2021

The Trustees present their report and the accounts for the year ended **31st March 2021**. The Trustees confirm that we have paid due regard to the Charity Commission guidance on public benefit reporting in deciding what activities the charity should undertake.

ABOUT US

The Women & Families Resource Centre (WFRC) is registered with the Charities Commission in 2009 under the **Charity Registration Number: 1131817**

We are an organisation that is passionate about transforming the lives of disadvantaged and socially excluded women from deprived communities, as some of our trustees and members have faced similar issues. WFRC was established in 2009 when a group of local women became concerned that vulnerable and disadvantaged families' needs were not being met within their community. A small group formed a management committee and then registered as a charity that now works with some of the most disadvantaged women and children of Wolverhampton's deprived communities. This was done in response to a gap in reach and support provided by statutory services and identified through consultations.

Our main aim is to facilitate the integration of women into the community whilst empowering them to identify their own needs, create their own solutions and make their own choices so that they have lasting improvements to the quality of their life. We adopt a holistic (One Stop Shop) approach for the delivery of a range of services that we provide. Our services are free to any woman or child, regardless of race, culture or religion who is facing similar barriers or problems.

We help reduce isolation, relieve distress and poverty, promote the confidence, skills of women and help facilitate social integration particularly asylum/refugee seekers and newly arrived communities. Since the start of our work, more than ten years ago, WFRC has filled a huge gap in the services available and has made a big difference on the lives of thousands of women and families. We achieve our aims and objectives through the provision of multiple projects in Wolverhampton, including befriending, domestic violence support, advocacy support, advancing training & education, volunteering opportunities and provide other services.

Our centre is surrounded by four very deprived areas- Park Village, Heath Town, Low hill and Bushbury. Many of the women & families referred to us face poverty and multiple problems such as domestic violence, rape, sexual abuse, female genital mutilation, honour-based violence, mental health problems, immigration issues, unemployment, debts and homelessness.

No two women or families are ever the same. The only thing they have in common are usually feelings of despair, hopelessness, fear, distress or some even feel suicidal. These periods of crisis and challenges are very crucial and delicate as they could either strengthen their resilience or break them down completely. It even becomes more complex in families with children and young people as many women will try to deal with it by themselves as they fear losing their children if they approach statutory services.

We are:

A Place that serves the needs of marginalised, disadvantaged and vulnerable women by providing free services within a culturally sensitive, non- judgemental and confidential framework. We facilitate the integration of women into the community whilst empowering them to reach and achieve their full potential.



OUR VISION

A diverse, tolerant and inclusive society where each woman, child and family is empowered to fulfil their full potential regardless of their background, to reach their goals and dreams as equal and contributing members of their community.

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to develop and maintain policies, programs, projects and activities that educate, inspire, empower and celebrate women, children and families. We aim to actively encourage women to be self-reliant, through empowering them to identify their own needs, make their own choices and create their own solutions.

OUR VALUES ARE:

Kindness & Compassion

We are a source of love and strength to any woman or family regardless of race, culture and religion, who are facing difficulties, crisis or challenges.



Solutions Focus

We help women discover their inner strengths and confidence, whilst empowering them to identify their own needs, create their own solutions and make their own choices that have lasting improvements to the quality of their life.



Bravery & Leadership

We inspire, encourage and motivate women to find their inner courage to overcome barriers and reach their potential.

Quality & Excellence

We will understand the needs of our service users adopting a holistic (one stop shop) approach for the delivery of the range of services that we provide. We are passionate about and families thus we endeavour to source and provide only the best possible solutions for them.



Collaboration



Our team all share the same values, work ethic, and commitment to our clients. They are supportive of each other and work collaboratively with external agencies and organisations to achieve a shared goal of transforming lives.

OUR AIMS & OBJECTIVES

- ✓ To relieve hardship, poverty and ill health amongst women in need by providing charitable support in particular through the provision of practical & emotional support, education, advice and guidance, information services, advocacy, mentoring and counselling services.
- ✓ To preserve and enhance a good quality of life and wellbeing for women and families. We combat social isolation and increase social welfare, inclusion and cohesion. We support to victims of abuse to escape, cope with trauma and rebuild their lives.
- ✓ To provide a strong platform which enables women to discuss concerns, share advice and find solutions about relevant issues in their community.
- ✓ To provide preventative health education with objects to preserving good physical, mental and psychological health.
- ✓ To promote emotional resilience, positive mental health and social inclusion in children and families.

WHAT WE DO

- ✓ We provide packages of individualised, tailored support that help women to address a range of emotional and practical issues that arise from crisis or challenges such as mental ill health, domestic violence, social isolation & other forms of disadvantage.
- ✓ We provide free and impartial confidential advice, befriending & counselling support services for vulnerable & disadvantaged women.

- ✓ We improve women's resilience, self-esteem and develop their personal confidence and life skills to make positive choices, find their own solutions and be active citizens.
- ✓ We assist women in accessing available community services.
- ✓ We facilitate Events, Training, Seminars, Workshops, Conferences for information, education & awareness raising services on issues affecting women.
- ✓ We support children's empowerment & resilience through fun & educational activities.
- ✓ We provide informal support as well as social, cultural and recreational activities to overcome social isolation.

TARGET GROUPS

The services offered by The **Women** & **Families** Resource Centre are available to all women regardless of background, age, race and social status, with a specific focus on the following groups:

- ✓ Women and families living in Poverty
- ✓ Women experiencing or vulnerable to Mental health problems
- ✓ Women experiencing or vulnerable to Domestic Violence, Rape and Sexual Abuse
- ✓ Asylum Seekers, Refugees & Newly arrived Migrant Communities
- ✓ Disadvantaged & Vulnerable Children and Young People

Our Impact Report 2020/2021 in Numbers

9561

hours of
Outreach &
Community
Support

6828

hours of 1:1
Befriending
Support

2085

hours of
telephone
Helpline
Support

749 hours of
1:1 Counselling
Support
delivered to
163 women

2960kg

of Food
distributed to
women &
families in
need.

877

hours of Group
& Workshop
Support

421

Women
Attended
Groups

Over **456**

hours of Crisis
Intervention

483

Children &
Young People
Supported

62

Volunteers

3.0 Pauline's Story

"I got more than I ever could've anticipated or imagined. They gave me hope straight away. Although I got food, which I was happy for, more than that I got someone who listened to me and was non-judgmental to help me,"
(Pauline, Service User)

Pauline was referred to the scheme by the mental health team which was providing support to her alongside her GP. Pauline was unable to leave the house on her own due to anxiety issues and was experiencing difficult relationships with her partner who was

occasionally violent towards her and her three children. Pauline used prescription drugs and alcohol to cope with her overwhelming anxiety.

Just before the lockdown, The DWP had sanctioned her for two months for non-attendance of her work coach meeting, which had occurred due to her declining memory. Her anxiety and depression also meant that she found extreme difficulties in leaving her home or even attending appointments in general. Pauline felt that her memory loss was due to the antidepressants that she was taking for depression and anxiety; She was under great pressure and was feeling very alone and unsure of what to do, which was creating excess stress on parenting/providing for her children and dealing with the behaviours she was exhibiting.

"I had a lot of debt that had accumulated over the years - council tax, housing - all that kind of stuff and not paying my rent. Pauline feels that to make the pandemic worse it was an extremely cold winter which meant that their heater had to be on all through therefore, skyrocketing her bills."

Service User

The sanction on her income support impacted on her economically as she was unemployed and had no other source of income. She tried to book an appointment to see a work coach, however, she couldn't get to speak to anyone as the job centre had closed. She therefore was struggling financially and emotionally through the lockdown with little or no food or essentials to live on. Her estranged husband had no involvement and would not even pick up her calls.

Pauline's befriender, Lindsay started by providing weekly food parcels, toiletries and a craft activity box with useful items for Pauline and children.

“After speaking to my befriender that first day, I remember feeling that it was possible for me to get out of this rut, that it was possible for me to move forward.”

Her befriender:

- Contacted DWP and advised of the situation and sought clarification for what NH needed to do to reopen her Universal credit support.
- Contacted the GP for a reassessment of medication and confirmation letter of her current health.

- Encouraged NH to budget and plan all activities using diaries, calendars and phone reminders.
- Contacted via telephone & email various agencies/support organisations who could help.
- Referred her to the WFRC food pantry for a period of a month and provided clothing.
- Encouraged her to attend chat group to support her with isolation issues.
- Gave her advise sheets and support around parenting, setting boundaries and engaging her children during the lockdown.

After being connected with local agencies who helped to support her and children, she started volunteering at the WFRC Food pantry & baby bank.

“Initially I thought I was just going to be helping other people and make myself useful instead of sitting home and drowning myself in my pool of troubles. Instead, I got so much out of it. It was a place where I could learn and grow in a professional but loving environment. Having those people who believed in me made a massive difference and helped me to be able to move forward,” Pauline says

“I had hoped in my heart that one day I’d be in a permanent job, that I’d pay my own bills and just feel like a solid member of society. I hoped but I just didn’t know how.”

As a result of having a befriender, Pauline no longer requires support from the mental health team and her visits to her GP have reduced. Her children’s behaviour has also improved as a result of Pauline becoming more confident and assertive. In addition, Pauline has more control over her anxiety and no longer relies on prescription drugs or alcohol to support her.

WFRC ANNUAL SERVICES UPDATE [2020 – 2021]

This has been a year like no other. The impact of the COVID -19 pandemic did not only polarise the difficulties experienced by disadvantaged women and families; it significantly increased the number of families in desperate need for support within Wolverhampton. Covid-19 has given us all an insight into how hard, how isolating, and how frightening lockdown can be. It was an extremely worrying time for everyone, particularly, the elderly, those experiencing domestic violence, those with physical and mental health issues and people who live alone and facing social isolation or economic disadvantages. For our families, the pandemic amplified daily challenges and widened inequalities.



Our befriending service has clearly demonstrated its value during and after the pandemic - reaching people with almost no other sources of support, and helping them to deal with poverty, isolation, domestic violence, mental health issues, loss and bereavement as well as practical day-day issues, alongside its core purpose of providing companionship. We are committed to demonstrating the value and effectiveness of all our work through skilled and objective performance measurement, evaluation and research. We hope that this report will demonstrate the vital role that befriending plays in the lives of vulnerable, marginalised and disadvantaged families.

Following the lockdown in March 2020, we saw a huge increase in the number of enquiries made to the sisters with heart befriending service. For many families that we work with, lockdown is not an entirely new concept. They are all too familiar with being isolated, struggling financially and facing the challenges that come with living a restricted life. These challenges were amplified, causing many women and families to experience extreme poverty and isolation. Many struggled to meet basic needs such as feeding, clothing or even keeping themselves or their families warm.



Whilst we were all in this together, sadly, it was the most vulnerable in our communities who were hit hardest by this crisis. For people reliant on services that keep them safe from harm, mentally healthy and with access to food, warmth and shelter; the physical and social isolation that was necessary to help prevent the spread of coronavirus, puts them even more at risk. This included vulnerable women, children, and families who were homeless or living in poverty, women and families at risk of domestic abuse, and those struggling with mental health concerns. We also know that people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities who make up 74% of our service users were disproportionately being impacted by this crisis. Most of our service users already

suffered from various mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, panic and obsessive-compulsive disorder and were already isolated before the Covid-19 pandemic.

Emotionally it has been a time of great uncertainty for so many of our families, everyday has been a struggle with too many people dying, too many people having covid or having near death misses, anxiety piling up, bills piling up, overload of information from all social media channels. There was a lot of scare mongering especially on social media platforms such as Facebook or WhatsApp. Therefore, fear and anxiety are at an all high.

The rules of social distancing, isolation, quarantining and staying at home worsened these issues. Isolation and social distancing presume that home is a relatively safe place to be. The appalling reality is that this is not the case for hundreds of women who are or are at risk of experiencing domestic violence. Abusive partners are likely to be more abusive amidst the financial uncertainty and domestic pressure caused by the crisis. The emotional support provided by befrienders therefore, helped prevent serious health & social impacts.

“Without the Women’s Centre and without the unfailing support of my dear befriender, I would not have had the strength to get where I am.” (Service User)

Bereavement was also a common issue, especially among the black and ethnic minority community who make up a large proportion of our service users. Many reported increased levels of poor mental health, especially depression and anxiety. Some service users also faced significant trauma after bereavement due to the circumstances of death for their loved ones with some not being able to see, communicate with or be with their loved ones before their death due to restrictions. Women experiencing domestic violence also found a lot of difficulties in reaching out to seek for help or to leave home during the lockdown due to many barriers such as lack of refuge spaces.



The overriding concern for most women was the huge financial burdens caused by the pandemic. Many women experienced extreme poverty and were struggling to feed their families. As a result of panic buying in those first weeks, many clients on lower income were left struggling to find essential items for

themselves. The sudden closure of schools and free school meals meant that many food

banks were oversubscribed, leaving some women & families to wait days to get food. The lack of food & essential items conversely put a lot more pressure on our volunteers, who had to take on more cases than usual. We set up an emergency food distribution centre in response to the unmet needs of our community identified through one to one calls. Weekly emergency food parcels were delivered providing essential food items, toiletries, and fresh food such as bread, milk, and eggs, thanks to ongoing relationships with Fare share, Tesco's, Greggs, local Churches, faith groups, charities, businesses, and individuals.

Thanks to the funding received from our generous funders, we were able to offer crucial and timely support most women and families who needed our help and support at such unprecedented times. Volunteer befrienders offered regular weekly support, friendship and practical help to families living under stress, helping families at an early stage to prevent family crisis and breakdown. As soon as the government put in the restrictions and face Befrienders had to take out some time to start restructuring the work to be discussed at the online groups and have all switched to telephone befriending sessions. Our befriending coordinator communicated regularly with all clients and checked that they were happy and equipped to have virtual support sessions especially those who were already isolated. Volunteer befrienders were also able to double up on the amount of time they spent in befriending as they had to do telephone sessions and also support clients who were shielding, self-isolating or stuck at home due to social distancing by helping them to go out and get their shopping needs such as food items, toiletries and baby food. Befrienders also helped to pick up clients' prescriptions and medications from the pharmacies.

"My befriender has helped me with so many things - PIP application, housing, getting clothes. She even managed to make me see that I can fight to get my children back. This is the first time in my life that I have felt listened to."

"She is so patient with me as I get very muddled these days, but she doesn't judge me, she just lets me be me."

(Service User)

Despite the complications brought on by the pandemic, we were successful in fully transitioning to video and telephone support and therapy, thanks to the amazing support, hard work, and patience of our dedicated staff and volunteers. We provided our volunteer befrienders with training around specific issues such as bereavement, mental health first aid and understanding depression to extend their skills in coping with the complex issues faced by our service users. We also held volunteer meet up groups to offer peer

emotional, practical and social support for volunteer befrienders.

Maintaining and increasing support without a break in service was a real success given



that the whole team suddenly had to work from home, which we had never done before. The length and emotional intensity of the calls to our helpline greatly increased too. Our volunteer befrienders continued to support families at what was a time of great mental, financial and emotional stress for them. However, due to very high demands on the service, we experienced long waiting lists and waiting periods for women to be matched with their befrienders. A protocol was established of maintaining contact with clients on the waiting list. This helped to establish a rapport prior to service delivery.

Thanks to the Covid Winter Fund from Wolverhampton City Council, we were

able to provide material items such as food, toiletries, Washing powder, heating bills, electric blankets, microwaves, kettles, diapers, baby milk & food. It was so humbling to see how much receiving this support meant for many of our families. One example that stood out was a mum who had weaned her 6-month-old twins and was forced to return to breastfeeding as she felt that baby formula at £10 a container was too expensive for her to afford. We've seen families where babies are being given cow's milk (which is actually dangerous for them and could cause illnesses) because parents could not afford baby formula or giving babies a mixture of cow's milk with formula. This should not be happening in the UK in the 21st century.

Another example was a lady whose husband passed away from a covid induced coma where all his organs failed and he suffered three heart attacks within a couple of days. They have three kids 8,5 and 3. Her befriender reported that her house was freezing when she went out to support her. Her three kids 8,5 & 3 years old were all dressed in their bathrobes and jackets as mum was scared of turning the heater on. Her befriender was faced with so many issues to help her deal with as she had only £26 in her account and had a funeral to plan as well as look after herself and children. Mum had no idea on how to apply for universal credit as she spoke very little English, therefore faced

difficulties in obtaining a death certificate for her husband. There was no food at home as she was scared of using that last £26 without having anything for emergency. Her befriender started support by bringing in a food parcel, some washing powder, a replacement kettle and paid her electricity and heating bill for £30. She then proceeded to support mum with various forms of support such as contacting universal credit, planning the funeral and much more.

We routinely consulted this year with our women and children to find out what would make our service the best it could be from their perspective. What came across clearly was the desire to remain connected and meet other people - even if this could only happen in the virtual world. After some exploration and discussion, we switched our women's chat group into a weekly virtual & interactive online group. Befrienders ran this online group using zoom which provided a space for women to discuss and share ideas of how they were coping with the challenges brought on by the pandemic, they talked about and discussed girly/ women issues for education and information purposes and ideas to keep entertained with uplifted spirits during this period. The chat group covered varied topics including promoting positive mental well-being during lockdown, parenting during lockdown, finance, baking and many other topics of interest for women.

The women's chat group provided group support, therapeutic and confidence building activities to support individuals experiencing a range of difficulties including depression, anxiety/panic, work related stress, obsessions and compulsions, post-traumatic stress, anger difficulties, domestic violence, relationship difficulties, loss/bereavement and long term physical health problems which had been augmented due to the pandemic. One unexpected consequence of making this group available online was an increased uptake in our group work programme, because barriers to participation - such as transport and travel - had been removed.

These group sessions supported women to develop successful strategies of how to handle stress, conflict, feelings of depression and any other current mental health issues. Group activities ensured that women's mental health stayed strong during these uncertain times. Sessions were very popular as we had various speakers come to talk about different issues. Many service users who entered the self-care challenge received over a hundred suggestions and ideas for self-care which they could do from the comfort of their own homes. Group activities ensured that women's mental health stays strong during these uncertain times. It has also acted as a medium to constantly engage with service users and ensure that sessions and services are user led.



The pandemic also affected many women's ability to sleep, relax and put time aside to take care of themselves. Through this group we also ran a very successful self-care challenge which encouraged women to make the conscious effort of looking after themselves. We also ran a six weeks walking challenge for women looking to improve their physical health & well-being. The women's Walking group continued whilst following the government's corona virus restrictions and guidelines,

focusing on supporting the physical & mental wellbeing of each participant. This group was led by befrienders who ensured that these activities were risk assessed weekly. They provided masks and hand sanitisers to all participants as well as did temperature checks before every walk. The walking group was temporarily closed during the second lockdown. However, befrienders continued engaging women through the WhatsApp group by setting various tasks throughout the week for women to complete at home. They also encouraged healthy living through this group by posting various healthy eating & living tips.

Counselling on call continued which allowed for anyone to call and speak with a counsellor on the same day without an appointment. This allows for people to have a quick and timely access to psychological help when they need it the most.

COVID-related anxiety, isolation and the fact that many services essentially stopped exacerbated client's mental health difficulties. Befrienders increased support for clients by offering to go on walks, doing Zoom calls, liaising with GP's and the enhanced mental health services. Befrienders were allocated where appropriate to provide additional emotional support. Working from home was also a constant challenge as befrienders themselves stood the risk of becoming isolated themselves. We therefore ensured that

we had fortnightly team meetings to ensure that our team members were well themselves.



Some of the key challenges faced initially were the lack of work equipment and workspaces faced by both our befrienders, counsellors and service users. Many did not have a convenient / quiet place at home to make or take their weekly calls. Many clients were living in overcrowded homes, some lacked a computer or laptop to join in the online groups or they shared their mobile phones with their kids who had to do their schoolwork at home. Also, some befrienders felt uncomfortable using their private mobile phones to call clients for safeguarding purposes.

Thanks to support from the Heart of England Foundation, Clothworkers and Awards for all, many of these issues were solved which helped us to focus on more pressing issues such as delivering weekly food parcels to families, helping some with shopping or picking up medications, providing craft activity boxes to children and a lot more during these hard times. Our qualified counsellors provided one to one impartial and confidential counselling support during this period, voluntarily. Counsellors provided 1-2-1 counselling services for service users via zoom. Sessions lasted between 60 -90 minutes each and explored various issues that these women were facing.

In October 2020, we realised that talking therapies and befriending support for families were vital but not enough to get these families through such difficult periods. All too many families were being crippled financially by the cost of basic items for their babies such as nappies/baby wipes/baby wash and even soap powder! We saw a growing need for practical/ material help and support for mothers unable to afford the basic essentials and equipment necessary to look after their children. As the numbers of expectant mothers and parents accessing the befriending project increased, we decided alongside our mums to set up a separate baby bank service to help reduce and alleviate poverty, parental stress and anxiety that had been made worse by the Covid-19 pandemic. Also,

we have received a lot of support and donations from other mums within the community who are very keen and eager to support other women who are in a less fortunate position. Through this service we have been able to reengage with new mums and families needing support within the WV10 area. We have also been able to engage with other organisations within the area.



At the Wolverhampton Baby Bank, we believe that every mum or expectant mum should have the vital items needed to give their baby / child the best start to life. Now over 85 families use the bank



monthly. And not just struggling vulnerable families and children but those escaping domestic violence, refugees, families affected by the switch to Universal Credit and even working parents who can't earn enough to cover rent, food and utilities on top of the necessities required to bring up a baby.

Currently we are seeing a huge increase in the number of referrals for women with significant mental health issues. Our befrienders are not trained to provide specialist mental health support. Therefore, we have put in new procedures in place, to screen these referrals out, so that they can be signposted to the community mental health team.

To get a full report of any of the above services provided by The Women & families Resource Centre, please contact us directly.

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES RESPONSIBILITIES

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the annual report and the financial statements with applicable laws and regulations.

The Charity law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable organisation and of the income resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure of the charitable organisation for that period. In preparing these financial statements the Trustees are required to:

- ✓ Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently.
- ✓ Observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP.
- ✓ Make judgements and estimated that are reasonable and prudent.
- ✓ Prepare the financial statements on the on-going concern unless it is appropriate to presume that the charitable organisation will continue in operation.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of charitable organisation and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charitable Act 1993 and the charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008. The Trustees are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable organisation and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

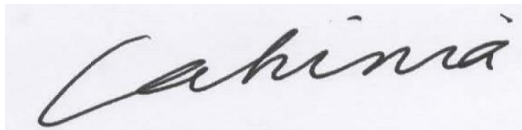
REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Reference and Administrative details are shown on page one of the Financial Statements

TREASURER'S REPORT

We declare that this Financial Account for the period from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021 is prepared on a receipts and payment basis and contains an assets and liabilities statement prepared from the books, vouchers, information we have accumulated over the period. This is in compliance with the Charities Act 2006.

These accounts have been externally examined by



Ernest
Cahinia
MD/CEO
13 September 2021



STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES TO 31.03.2021

INCOME	<u>2021</u>			<u>2020</u>
	Unrestricted	Restricted Funds	Total	
	£	£	£	£
Grants (*2a)	10,000.00	47,258.00	57,258.00	56,938.00
Donations	1074.25	-	1074.25	2258.85
Registration	325.60	-	325.60	860.20
Fundraising Events	0.00	-	0.00	2600.95
Contracts	0.00	12564.00	12564.00	0.00
Total Income	11,399.85	59,822.00	71,221.85	62,658.00
Expenditure				
Wages	1510.00	24559.00	26069.00	23764.00
Rents & Overhead	839.55	1692.00	2531.55	4331.55
Equipment	2786.00	8471.00	11257.00	2846.00
Stationery	939.62	2581.40	3521.02	2503.00
Volunteer expenses	1831.79	5781.00	7612.79	5228.51
Volunteer Training	313.00	2282.00	2595.00	1368.00
PR & Marketing	368.14	1318.00	1686.14	1888.00
Outreach & Befriending*3	1252.00	9613.00	10865.00	7542.00
Workshops & Seminars	124.00	469.00	593.00	2502.00
Events	0.00	0.00	0.00	3201.80
Total	9,964.10	55,766.40	66730.50	55,174.86
Surplus/ deficit for the year	1,435.75	3,055.60	4,491.35	7,483.14

STATEMENT OF ASSETS & LIABILITIES AT 31 MARCH 2021

		<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>
	£	£	£
Fixed Assets			
Tangible Fixed Assets		24,391	16,553
Current Assets			
Cash in Hand & At Bank	11,528		14,261
Current Liabilities	(3,419)		(2,806)
		8,109	11,455
Total Assets		32,500	28,008

Reserves

Balance brought forward	28,008	20,525
Unrestricted (for the year)	1,436	4,416
Restricted (for the year)	3,056	3,067
Total Reserves	32,500	28,008

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

For The Year ended 31st March 2021

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Preparation

The financial statement is prepared on a receipts and payment basis and contains an assets and liabilities statement prepared from the books, vouchers, information we have accumulated over the period. This is in compliance with the Charities Act 2006.

2. INCOME

Incoming Resources for the charity are:

-  Grants & Donations
-  Contracts
-  Membership Registration
-  Fundraising Events

(a) Grants and donations

Grants have been received from The Imagine Foundation, The Heart of England Community Foundation, The Allen Lane Foundation, The Souter Charitable Trust, Awards for All, The Clothworkers Foundation, The Sheldon Trust, The Prince of Wales Charitable Fund and many more. These have been key sources of funding for the charity. Donations from members, their families, the public and patrons have always been encouraged and sought after as they help involve beneficiaries and the community in furthering the work we do. Restricted and unrestricted funds are always welcomed by the Women & Families Resource Centre.

(b) Contracts

We are very grateful for new local contracts received from the Bushbury Hill Estate Management board.

(c) Member Contribution & Registration

Membership contributions reduced this year as a result of the pandemic.

(d) Fundraising Events

The Women & Families Resource Centre organises many fundraising events throughout the year such as the All Women Achievers Awards, Car Wash & Family fun day, International women's day, The West Midlands Talent Show, Domestic Violence Walks & Workshops, Family fun days, football tournaments and lots of other activities for women, the whole family and community. We stand firmly for community cohesion and use these events to break the barrier within communities. However, all fundraising events were cancelled due to the pandemic.

3. Outreach & Befriending

Our Sisters with Heart Befriending Service is a vital project that provides the opportunity for isolated women to improve their physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing.

The provision of practical resources to the destitute, homeless and others living in extreme poverty. We most importantly support destitute asylum seekers, refugees and newly arrived immigrants. However, we have seen a growing need of support for working families, furloughed workers and so many more. We continue to provide children's and adult clothing, baby packs for destitute mothers, baby equipment to be and essential household items including bedding. We had an oversubscription to our baby bank and food pantry services.

4. Current Assets & Reserves

Fixed tangible Assets

At the beginning of the Year	£16,553
Depreciation Mid Year	£15,803
Provided during the Year	£11,257
On Disposals (Moving out of centre to working from home)	-£2,669
At the End of the Year	£24,391

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The **Women** & **Families** RESOURCE CENTRE would like to take this opportunity to express its sincere thanks to all our past previous & current funders and supporters especially those cited below (who funded us through the period of April 2020 - March 2021) for your continuous support:

The Imagine Foundation	Awards For All
The Allen Lane Foundation	The Persula Foundation
The Trusthouse Charitable Foundation	Baron Davenport's Charity
The Prince of Wales Charitable Fund	The Field Family Charitable Trust
The Harry Payne Foundation	Greggs PLC
The Heart of England Community Foundation	The Rank Foundation
Souter Charitable Trust	The Clothworkers Foundation
The Bewley Charitable Trust	The Sheldon Trust
The Cole Charitable Trust	The Saintbury Trust
Arnold Clark Foundation	The Sheldon Trust
The Woodward Charitable Trust	The Didymus Charity
Charities Aid Foundation	The Dumbreck Charity
The Pat Newman Memorial Trust	Giving World Online
The Thomas Wall Trust	Tesco Bags for Life
The CB & HH Taylor 1984 Trust	Magic Little Grants

Volunteers

Thank you to our volunteers!

The **Women & Families** RESOURCE CENTRE relies heavily on the time and dedication of volunteers to provide front-line support and advice, deliver services to the community and raise awareness of our work. We can never thank or appreciate all the volunteers at the Women & Families Resource centre as much as they deserve.

This year we have continued to offer a range of excellent opportunities for volunteers, giving them the chance to develop new skills, gain experience and help the local community. We are very fortunate to have a committed and wonderful set of volunteers here at WFRC who provide enormous support to the staff and women who attend the centre.

This Document Was Approved By The Trustees On

Friday, 25th September 2021

And Signed On Their Behalf:



.....
JUDITH NGUEBI NTAMARK
CHAIR



.....
ARRAH LAWRENCE
TREASURER