

CHORLEY WOMEN'S CENTRE

ANNUAL REPORT 2021 -2022



"Helping women to help themselves"

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Chairperson's Report – April 2021 – May 2022

The Women's Centre is an independent, mainly voluntary organisation. We employ 3 counsellors and a centre manager, as well as trained volunteers and the centre is managed by a committee. The aim of the Women's Centre is to help women to help themselves in areas affecting their physical health, mental health and their well-being.

The last 12 months have again been a somewhat challenging time for us due to the situation with Covid 19 and subsequent lifting of the restrictions. However, we have continued to offer a high level of support to our service users. The centre has been open fully again for some months now and we are working our way back to normal face to face appointments, although continuing to utilise zoom appointments for any client who is finding it difficult to attend in person. Our Centre Manager, Jackie Moss, has worked hard to coordinate a mixture of both appointments in person and via phone calls or zoom links. A huge thank you to all our volunteers and committee members for their support and ideas over the last year.

There are a wide range of services that can be accessed through the Women's Centre which include a free counselling service offered by our fully qualified Counsellor at the Centre, Paula, the demand for which increases year by year. During the lifting of the covid 19 restrictions, our related 'drop in' service of listening and support has been utilised well by clients and our volunteers offer extra support whilst the client is awaiting counselling. These services have proved particularly valuable to women experiencing stress and anxiety in their lives. Our continued partnership with Release, which offers specialised counselling and support for women who have been raped and sexually abused has proved to be a very positive and invaluable service that can be accessed through the women's Centre. The women who have used these services have provided tremendous positive feedback. And thanks goes to our Release counsellor, Emma Fisher, who at the moment is also temporarily acting as Circle's counselling coordinator until Lydia returns.

In addition, I would like to thank Circle's own volunteers for their continuing hard work and dedication in helping and supporting women who are experiencing or have experienced domestic abuse to make informed decisions about their future.

A huge and thank you to Jackie Moss, our centre manager, who has worked tirelessly and with great enthusiasm and dedication throughout the last year in getting the centre opened again on Tuesdays and Fridays safely. She has not only been managing some work from home and from the Women's Centre but has continued to support service users via telephone and zoom app. She has also continued to support our volunteers. Many thanks are also due to all our volunteers for ensuring a warm welcome to all which puts women visiting the Centre at their ease. Their dedication and generosity in giving their free time to the Centre knows no bounds! It is good to have you.

Thanks also to the members of the management committee who, like our volunteers, have given their time freely and generously throughout the past year. Special thanks to our treasurer, Anne Stafford, for her considerable input and dedication to the centre and for securing the funding we so desperately need. Extra funding was given by the Ministry of Justice to help Circle and Release meet the higher need for counselling by women suffering with domestic and sexual abuse during the lockdown. This helped

with covering the cost of extra counsellors in this area. Also Jigsaw Housing have helped with providing safe environments for women fleeing domestic abuse. Thank you to all.

Don't forget to check out our Facebook page for information of forthcoming events and what we do. We also have a web page, which can easily be accessed.

As a registered charity, the Women's Centre does rely on donations and I would therefore like to thank everyone for their generous donations. We have received quite a number of donations over the past year and we send you our sincere gratitude and thanks.

I would like to express our sincere thanks and appreciation once again to Chorley Borough Council and the Chorley and South Ribble Clinical Commissioning Group for their continuing support and funding for our Centre Manager and counsellor posts, and for enabling us to also secure funding for Circle, especially in this financially difficult climate. The extra funding that has been made available to us to help women coping with domestic abuse has been invaluable to the centre and the ladies who have been able to access the service. Without your continuing support and funding we would not be able to provide such a comprehensive and valuable service to the women of Chorley.

I have thoroughly enjoyed another year as Chairperson and feel very privileged to be part of such a dedicated and selfless team. Each one of us brings different skills to the centre and together we make an incredible team.

Sue Collins, Chair
July 2022

Centre Manager report

This report covers April 2021 until April 2022

Coronavirus

This year has been a very trying one in many respects. Following the government advice, the centre remained closed due to the Coronavirus pandemic. All groups and courses continued to be suspended, and services were moved to online and telephone support.

This was to ensure the safety of staff and clients alike, until the risk decreased significantly. This did have an impact on the amount of ladies we were able to support during our lockdown period, however, we were actively providing support when required.

From August 13th 2021, we were able to fully reopen the Centre, with necessary precautions in place. We were thrilled to be able to reopen fully and start seeing familiar and new faces access the services we were providing.

The Centre continues to be open 2 days a week, Tuesday 10-3, Friday 10-3. Services such as Relaxation and Reiki are once again on offer. Our one-to-one service, drop-in and craft afternoons have also resumed. We are no longer open on a Saturday between 10-1 due to a change in circumstances.

Staff Changes

I would like to Welcome back into the Centre services Emma Fisher. Emma was the Circle co-ordinator before Lydia took over and she has re-joined as the Counselling Co-ordinator. Emma now takes referrals for all three of our counselling services and delegates them out to the relevant team/counsellor and has made the referral process much easier. Welcome back Emma and thank you for your continued support and hard work.

Special mention to Lydia our circle co-ordinator, to Paula and the rest of the counselling team – you are amazing and the work you have been doing this past year has been amazing.

One of our long-standing Volunteers Caz unfortunately left us in October 2021. Caz had been a volunteer for 10 years and had extensive knowledge about the centre. She had to leave us due to a change in personal circumstances. We were sorry to see her go, and her presence has been missed by staff and client alike.

We have 5 volunteers who have been absolutely incredible throughout the pandemic. Although there has been testing times throughout, they have all continued to give their time freely so we can continue to provide support to the women of Chorley, South Ribble and surrounding areas. It is not an over-statement to say that the centre would not be able to operate without them. Without their support over the past twelve months the centre would not have been able to reopen as it has. So, a massive thank you to each and every one of them.

I would like to welcome to the team Kelly who joined us in July 2021 and also Debbie who joined us in March 2022. Kelly has been an amazing addition to the team and has been a great help when it has come to fundraising ideas and much more.

Debbie is also becoming another valuable asset to my amazing team of volunteers.

Despite our closure due to the pandemic, the centre has continued to support women (and indirectly their families) from Chorley and surrounding areas, including some of the most vulnerable. From 1/4/2021- 30/4/2022 we have supported 157 women through various means. This overall figure is inclusive of returning and new clients. 85% have been new clients to the centre. Approximately 15% of clients have returned to the centre to access further services.

The Centre continued and still continues to operate 2 days a week, Tuesday 10-3, and Friday 10-3, offering the following services:

- Drop-in and one-to-one support.

The volunteers are all trained in supportive listening skills and are encouraged to utilise these when women drop in needing a listening supportive ear. Since the End of April 2021, we have seen 53 women for one-to-one sessions. During one-to-ones, the women receive not only emotional support but also, general and health related information, signposting to an appropriate statutory, local, and voluntary service, if required. We also provide referrals into these services.

- Legal advice

At the centre, we are in contact with two local solicitors who specialise in family law. This information is available upon request, by those in need. Ladies who contact them gain a 30-

minute free consultation and can also gain access to useful knowledge from an experienced professional. We have provided these details for 7 ladies accessing the centre.

- Weekly relaxation sessions.

The women utilising this service all say they find it immensely beneficial. This service has now restarted, on Tuesday mornings at 11am. We are pleased to say that this service along with Reiki has been very popular. Since we restarted 20 ladies have accessed Relaxation and 8 for Reiki. A big thank you to Jackie who runs both the relaxation and Reiki sessions.

We continue to offer free General Counselling to women. This has been taking place via telephone and zoom due to the pandemic. Now we have reopened we have also been able to return to Face-to-Face sessions, which allows more flexibility for our clients and staff alike. We continue to have a steady stream of women who are referred into the centre to access this service.

Release counselling also continues to see clients who have experienced rape/sexual abuse. This service has also been offered via telephone and zoom sessions throughout the pandemic. Now we have reopened we have also been able to return to Face-to-Face sessions, which allows more flexibility for our clients and staff alike.

Massive thanks, and appreciation go out to Lydia, Emma, Paula, and the rest of the counselling team respectively for their continued hard work and dedication to the centre.

Issues women are presenting with include;

Stress, depression, and anxiety

Complex mental health problems e.g. bi-polar, personality disorder, suicidal thoughts

High level depression

Relationship breakdown

Emotional crisis and Self-esteem related issues

Self-Injury/suicidal ideation

Isolation and loneliness

Bereavement, redundancy, and loss

Domestic abuse

Poverty, homelessness, and food parcels

Transgender support
Drugs and Alcohol related issues
Rape and sexual abuse (often historic)
Loss of confidence

Apart from our part time manager we rely on volunteers to provide a supportive welcoming and friendly setting. The volunteer's gain quality training and life and work skills which promote their own self development and confidence, and we are extremely grateful for the hard work and dedication that every single volunteer brings to the centre. It is fair to say that without them the centre would not be able to continue providing help and support to those in need and continue the legacy and ethos of the Women's centre in a positive way.

Volunteer training is currently scheduled for May 2022 with subjects to include:

- *Equality and Diversity
- *Introduction to Safeguarding
- *Mental Health awareness

Lancashire Adult Learning have kindly offered their services to conduct this training and they have also advised they are willing to run courses for us once we are able to do so.

All volunteers have received updated confidentiality agreements, contracts and we are looking at holding regular catchup meetings to identify any training needs/issues.

We have had an increase in contact via email and Facebook Messenger following the closure of the centre. Facebook has been our main source of communication with our client's, and I have been supporting ladies via Facebook/email and telephone during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The website for the centre is now complete and is completely operational. We have a contact us form set up which, once submitted sends an email to the centre. This is working really well and a massive thank you to Mel Wilcox at GFX for designing it for us.

We have also had new leaflets for the centre and the counselling services designed and printed – again massive thank you to Mel who also designed these for us too.

We have not been able to gain feedback from service users recently due to the closure of the centre, however feedback that was received both verbally and on our feedback forms, is that clients find the centre extremely helpful and supportive. One service user said:

'In the 6 months I have been accessing the women's centre, I have always been welcomed as soon as I walked through the door. The support has been 110% and I have recommended the centre to other women. Without the centre I don't think I would be where I am emotionally & mentally. They have helped save me.'

Everyone asked said they would recommend the centre to others and that their experience of the centre was exceptional.

Since we reopened, we have been able to continue providing services/venue to Lancashire Women's Centre, who offer the Vision/LWSAR Program, on a Wednesday between 10 – 4pm. This is a 10-week group program. The women are referred into the program either by court as a Specified Activity Requirement or voluntarily by their Offender Managers at Probation. The program aims to address issues surrounding offending behaviour, help the service users understand the impact of their offending on their victims and the community and enable them to effectively manage problems in the future that could potentially lead to offending. We also assess the women's needs and identify whether they need additional support and referring to other parts of the Women's Centre such as Counselling, Courses, other projects such as Achieve – where we help get the women back into Employment, Training or Volunteering.

We are also continuing to provide management and rooms following the pandemic, for the Circle domestic violence counselling service, which is going from strength to strength under the co-ordination of Lydia.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for the continued help and support I have received throughout the past year. It has certainly not been the easiest of years again due to the pandemic, however the support shown and received by all has been very welcoming and appreciated. I look forward to the future with the Centre post pandemic and moving it forward in a positive way.

AGM REPORT

Chorley Women's Centre Counselling Services

April 2021 – April 2022

Circle Counselling for domestic abuse

Circle has continued to offer an important and specialist service to those locally affected by domestic abuse. We have a steady stream of referrals from the local refuge, IDVA's (Independent Domestic Violence Advisors) and directly through the Women's Centre. We are growing as a service and now on average support 20 clients per month. We are offering around 18 sessions per week via telephone, online and face to face. To meet this need we have affiliated with organisations running the Psychotherapy training to offer placements. We have welcomed a new Student Counsellor from UCLAN and will hopefully have one from Preston's College soon. We have also had a new qualified Psychotherapist join our team who is offering evening sessions.

In April 2022 we were successful in our application for funding from Jigsaw Housing. We received just over £12,000 which is to be used to pay our Counsellors a sessional rate. This is a huge step forward for us as a service and really honours the hard work our Counsellors put in especially through out the pandemic.

From 1st April 2021 to 31st April 2022 Circle have offered 487 sessions of which 364 sessions were attended. Supporting approximately 80 clients.

General Counselling for all mental health struggles

The General Counselling service has continued to be funded by NHS England Clinical Commissioning Group. The General service has always been our biggest receiving on average 10 referrals per month. These come through the Women's Centre website and drop in mostly. We are seeing an increase in direct referrals and people being sign posted to us from Mindsmatter NHS Mental Health Service. In April 2021 we trialled merging the services and this has proved to be a positive step. It has enabled us to get a much more balanced and coherent provision in all three services. The team of now 9 Counsellors and one Student Psychotherapist work across all of the services offering a variety of online, telephone and face to face sessions.

This merge has enabled us to cut the waiting time by more than half and offers more flexibility to those clients who work or who cannot leave the house due to mental health or disability.

From 1st April 2021 to 31st April 2022 General have offered 495 sessions of which 393 sessions were attended. Supporting approximately 48 clients.

Release Counselling for rape, sexual assault and sexual abuse.

Release shares its funding from NHS England Clinical Commissioning Group with the General service. This funding has enabled these much needed free and specialist services to continue year on year

albeit in a small capacity. This year however Release has had the biggest change due to the funding it received from the Ministry of Justice. We were awarded £17,500 as Uplift funds to help with the potential increase in reports of sexual violence and abuse following the pandemic. I was appointed Co-ordinator at the end of April 2021 and with my previous experience as Circle Co-ordinator was able to expand the service relatively quickly. This included the merge of the services as mentioned above and a push to raise the profile of not just Release but all the services at the Chorley Women's Centre. Working with the Centre Management team and Committee we have managed to update the website and create new leaflets. We have rebuilt links throughout our local community through GP e-bulletin and Refernet. We have also joined DABS (Directory And Book Services) - Support for Those Concerned with Abuse & Sexual Violence and the Counselling Directory which is a nationwide online directory.

We did a really good job at spending the funding by providing the Counsellors with Continued Professional Development through Trauma Informed and Strength Based Practice training and a workshop on Personality Disorders.

We ended the funding term with an underspend of £3,500 which they have let us keep. I have applied to the Police Crime Commission and the Ministry of Justice for the funding to continue. I expect to hear from them by the end of June 2022.

From 1st April 2021 to 31st April 2022 Release have offered 451 sessions of which 340 sessions were attended. Supporting approximately 34 clients.

The figures for all services are really impressive and could only happen with our dedicated team of Counsellors.

All together from April 2021 to April 2022 we have;

Offered 1,433 sessions

Attended 1,097 sessions

Seeing approx. 50 clients per month and 162 individuals.

The approximate wait for a client is 12 weeks.

Feed back from our surveys:

'I was impressed with the services. The Ladies I dealt with over the phone we're always on time with arranged appointments and it really helped letting off how I was feeling when I was struggling. Very friendly and professional and I felt I could be completely open and honest.'

'I feel like am beginning to find myself again, and that was through the help of my Counsellor and the support she gave me through each session. I was struggling very much with losing who I was whilst being in such a volatile relationship, but slowly am building myself back up again.'

'Having someone to talk too so openly knowing they are supporting you through a challenging time means more than people will ever know. I would like to take this moment to thank each and every one of you for the support and strength you show not just to me but to every single person who needs your services. You all very special people and I will always remember the help and advice you have given me to move forward in my life.'

'My wellbeing has been improved massively by focusing on myself and having rest days when my PTSD is bad. My self-care improved a lot as well.'

'I would recommend circle Counselling to anyone who needs help as they helped me out when I was at my lowest point in life and wouldn't be here today if it wasn't for them and counsellor.'

'Over the years I've tried counselling unsuccessfully however I've now become to realise when the counsellor has the correct skills it can be beneficial. Throughout the grieving process I actually wish I'd done referral sooner however at the start my opinion on counselling was negative but now my opinion has changed.'

'Currently I'm pregnant with my rainbow baby so my mental health could change so the counsellor has discharged me as I'm in a good place. However, she has put me back on the waiting list so that they can check in with me in few months. Which I thought is a brilliant idea as pregnancy can affect mental health.'

'Probably one of the best counsellors I've had before.'

'I will always be grateful to X for how she has helped me evaluate my own situations and for boosting me with motivation and self belief each week.'

'X has helped me to recognise who I am, my strengths and that I don't need to apologise for being me, self acceptance has really helped me to become stronger.'

'She never judged anyone, she just helped me explore situations and made me feel confident in my own decisions again. She remembered things from session today session. She listened very well.'

'I have extreme and significant difficulties. X is so reassuring.'

'I cannot put into words how positive I feel'

Thank you

Emma Fisher

Counselling Services Co-ordinator

Chorley Women's Centre

Women's Centre Treasurer's Annual Report 2021-2022						
Opening balances as at May 1st 2021						
	£s					
Current Acc	581.17					
Deposit Acc	31772.4	*				
Circle Acc	6310.38					
Liaison Acc	8225.56	**				
Counsellor A	3935.92					
Petty cash	149.41					
Total			50974.84			
Total Income 2021-22						
			58192.8			
Total Expend 2021-22						
			67002.35			
Surplus/deficit						
			-8809.55			
Total			42165.29			
Closing Balances as at April 30th 2022						
Current Acc	572.5					
Deposit Acc	16593.59					
Circle Acc	13049.71					
Liaison Acc	8440.56	****				
Counsellors A	3508.93					
Petty Cash	0	***				
Total	42165.29					
Unrestricted Funds						
	Income	Expenditure	Balance	Total Inc	Total Exp	
Current Deposit and Petty Cash						
Chorley Council	5834					
Dons	4767.87					
Interest	3.93					
Total	10605.8			10605.8		
Expenditure						
Utilities		1553.86				
Rates		225.28				
Office		1265.98				
Vol Exp		957.19				
Repairs and renewals		1044.35				
Misc		700.03				
Groceries		89.59				
Liability Ins		1606.41				
Total		7442.69				7442.69
Balance			3122.14			

Restricted Funds		Income	Expenditure	Balance	Total inc	Total exp
Circle income						
Chorley Council		11666				
Jigsaw		12134				
Total		23800			23800	
Expenditure						
Coordinator			8050.55			
Expenses			1542.52			
Counselling			8467.6			
Total			18060.67			18060.67
Balance				5739.33		
Liaison Centre Manager						
CCG		9828.52			9828.52	
Expenditure						
Salary ,tax			9588.52			
Misc			25			
Total			9613.52			9613.52
Balance				215		
Counsellors						
CCG		13958.48				
*						
Total		13958.48			13958.48	
Expenditure						
Release			17154.99			
Counselling			14676.58			
BT			53.9			
Total			31885.47			31885.47
Balance *				-17926.99		
GRAND TOTAL INCOME					58192.8	
GRAND TOTAL EXPENDITURE						67002.35
GRAND BALANCE				-8809.55		
*Included last years £17,500 MoJ grant for Release						
**Included this years 1st Quarter CCG £5946.75						
*** All banked						
**** Includes next years CCG 1st Quarter £5946.75						

Signed
Lynda Gallagher Pimm
Vice Treasurer

L. Gallagher - Pimm

Anne Stafford
Treasurer

Anne Stafford

Pat Whittington
Independent Examiner

P. Whittington

Date

27-6-2022

Comments

If we take into account £17500 MOJ money that was in last year's accounts we actually have an excess of £8690.45
The Jigsaw money of £12134 is in this year's accounts

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Vice Treasurer

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Anne Stafford
Treasurer

Anne Stafford

Pat Whittington
Independent Examiner

P. Whittington

Date

27-6-2022

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CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

**Independent examiner's report
on the accounts**

Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

**Report to the trustees/
members of**

Charity Name

WOMEN'S CENTRE

**On accounts for the year
ended**

30/04/2022

**Charity no
(if any)**

700446

Set out on pages

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

**Responsibilities and basis
of report**

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended DD / MM / YYYY.

30/04/2022

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

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

**Independent examiner's
statement**

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention (other than that disclosed below *) in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- ~~accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or~~
- ~~the accounts do not accord with the accounting records~~

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

* Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.

Signed:

P.M. Whittington

Name:

P.M. WHITTINGTON

Date:

27/06/2022

22/06/2023

**Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body (if
any):**

Address:

101 PRINCESS WAY
EUXTON
PR7 6PX

Section B

Disclosure

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

P10.

Give here brief details of
any items that the
examiner wishes to
disclose.

NONE
for investigation