



36th Annual Report

2024

Derry Well Women

Strategic Aims

- To provide women with a women-centred health service which will improve the health and wellbeing of women, families and community and recognises the changing needs of women's health
- To promote social inclusion, to address health inequalities and improve health by meeting the specific health needs of women generally and specifically marginalised groups of women including women victims of the conflict
- To continue to build and maintain a strategic complex of collaborative partnerships.
- To capture and share the learning from the work of Derry Well Women with women's health projects at home and abroad especially in post-conflict societies.
- To further refine the conceptual framework and embed the theory and practice of co-producing in the work of Derry Well Women



Committee and Staff presenting Derry Well Women's 35th Annual Report to its AGM on 22nd June 2023 held in St Columb's Park House.

Front Row; Left to Right Susan Gibson Manager Phil Mahon Vice Chairperson.

Second Row Left to Right Philomena Melaugh, Karen Meehan, Carrie Jain, Fiona Walker.

Back Row Left to Right; Mary Diamond Secretary, Patricia Villa, Ann Mc Donald, Oonagh Butler, Tara Boyle ,Yvonne O Doherty, Patricia Mc Adams, Jennifer Turner, Deirdre O Neill.



Chairpersons Report 2023 2024

I am pleased to present the Annual Report on the work of Derry Well Women for the year ending in March 24. The work undertaken throughout the year reflects our commitment to the co-production and co design of programmes to ensure they meet the expressed needs of women using our services.

In my report last year, I noted the need for a Women's Health strategy for NI. Significant progress has been made, due in no small part to the sterling efforts of Dr Sandra Mc Neill and Karen Meehan, in networking across the UK and engaging with the Dept of Health and QUB with their findings. Minister Robin Swann announced last month that the Dept is supporting an initiative to

undertake a large-scale public listening exercise on women's health in NI and that Derry Well Women will be working in partnership with QUB to develop a Women's Health Strategy for NI which adopts a life course approach to women's health. Derry Well Women continues to deliver on its mission of providing a range of quality services which meet women's needs. Patricia Villa Programmes Liaison Officer ensures that enrolment days run smoothly. The diverse range of programmes continue to attract a high level of registrants for antenatal and postnatal and baby care, mental health and wellness support, gender specific initiatives, cancer support and chronic illness management. Susan's report to the WHSCT gives detailed information on all these services.

A system of Corporate Governance underpins how services are directed and controlled. We ensure strong and transparent governance arrangements are in place to maintain safe and effective services are delivered in a working environment which also supports and protects staff and comply with all applicable legal and regulatory requirements. We conducted a review of our Risk Register and Business Continuity Plan in March this year which was signed off by Committee alongside a complete list of updated policies and procedures. Evidence that this system is effective is reflected in successful contract reviews and continued funding from WHSCT, VSS Pathways and Children in Need to continue our work. We are very grateful to our funders for their support of DWWs work.

In 23/24 under the exceptional fundraising expertise of our Centre Manager Susan the Board primarily focused on applications to grant making trusts and attracting charitable giving. Significant funding received from several benefactors has ensured minimal impact on financial stability and strengthened the organisation's ability and capacity to deliver on its stated aims for the next three years. Finance Administrator Fiona Walker supports Susan in maintaining rigorous financial protocols.

The Cancer Connected Communities Project has delivered a range of interventions tailored to meet the needs of people living with cancer. Partnership working means feedback is shared and responded to. The culmination of this innovative project takes

place in June with a Commitment to Change conference which will be attended by the Health Minister and the CEO of the WHSC Trust.

Creche provision under the leadership of Yvonne O Doherty and our newest recruit Una McDaid continues to uphold the highest standard of care resulting in extremely positive Inspection results. A concentrated effort to improve attendance at the long running breast feeding support group has shown encouraging results.

The provision of Counselling services remains a high priority ably managed by Ann Mc Donald. A post covid return from telephone and zoom to face to face counselling is evident. Our team of 12 counsellors always operate within well-defined professional and procedural standards.

Whilst Susan Gibson has day-to-day responsibility for the strategic and daily running of the Centre, Board members responsible for overseeing policy implementation and informing strategic direction often also play an active role in various aspects of work. I thank them for their dedication and total support for the organisation. All of us depend on Susan's Personal Assistant Oonagh Butler to regularly remind us of duties and deadlines, keeping wheels turning smoothly.

It was with mixed emotions that Committee received Susan's letter of intended retirement in June 24. She has guided DWW for the last 36 years from the fledging ideas of a small group of women, through troubled years, to the thriving regionally and internationally recognised and financially sound organisation it is today. Work on the recruitment process has been carried out and the advertisement has already been placed in the appropriate media. We wish Susan a well-deserved relaxing and productive retirement as we anticipate a new chapter for Derry Well Women.

Secretary's Report 2023 - 2024
Mary Diamond
Secretary



I am delighted to present this year's Company Secretary's Report.

The Derry Well Women Board has met ten times this year and held its AGM on 22nd June 2023.

Following Dr Pauline Mc Clenaghan stepping down as Chairperson the position was taken up by Phil Mahon who has fulfilled her role with diligence dedication and genuine interest.

We were delighted to welcome two new members to the Board this year, Marie Clare Logue and Sandra Mc Neill, who bring unique skills and experience in employment law and obstetrics respectively.

Board Members are elected to serve for a period of up to three years after which they must be re-

elected at the next Annual General Meeting.

Tara Boyle and Sinead Callan are required to step down by rotation, but I am delighted to say they are both putting themselves forward for re-election.

Derry Well Women's charity work inevitably focuses on women's health, health promotion, and health education in addition to addressing health inequalities.

The Board aims is to ensure that Derry Well Women has the highest level of good governance and that all staff receive appropriate leadership, support and supervision to most effectively carry out its mission. It also ensures that our service users are listened to and have opportunities to actively participate in shaping the services we provide.

To enable us to do this work effectively it is important that the Board has a range of skills and experiences which currently includes healthcare, childcare, health visiting, nursing, mental health, counselling, accountancy, the law, education, policy development, child development and community development.

We also continue to undertake training aimed at raising and expanding the committee's skill base.

The specific responsibilities of the board are to.

- Formulate policies and maintain an overview of organizational direction.
- Set strategic aims and objectives.
- Provide leadership monitoring and support to facilitate the implementation of aims and objectives together with corporate policies.
- Provide a line of accountability for staff, casual staff and volunteers.
- Ensure good governance and quality assurance.

In supporting staff this year Committee carried regular staff line management; assisted in the recruitment of new staff members; attended training on recruitment; carried out salary reviews and monitored financial activity;

attended contract reviews; actively engaged in chairing and facilitating key events; headed up significant pieces of work including laying the framework for and working with the Dept of Health on the development of a Northern Ireland Women's Health Strategy.

This year we attended the retirement of one of our long-standing staff members Patricia Mc Adams, our Creche Assistant and welcomed two new staff members Una Mc Daid and Roisin Mc Laughlin.

In maintaining financial stability in 2023/2024 the Board primarily focused on the applications to grant making trusts and attracting charitable giving.

The Board would like to thank Susan Gibson, our manager, for her immense contribution to the success of these applications. This has ensured there has been minimal impact on the financial stability of the organization and strengthens our ability and capacity to deliver on our stated aims for the next three years.

To ensure good governance, the Committee updated the Risk Register and developed five new policies: Serious Adverse Incident Reporting; Protect Life; Age Discrimination Policy; Disability Discrimination Policy and Fair Employment Policy. This year the committee also reviewed and updated the Complaints Policy and all financial policies.

- Financial Systems Policy
- Financial Statement
- Register of Interests
- Cash Handling
- Asset Management
- Travel Policy
- Retention of Documents Policy
- Reserves Policy
- Purchasing Procedures
- Procurement Policy
- Petty Cash Policy
- Gifts and Hospitality Policy
- Fraud Policy

I would like to thank all my fellow Board members for their dedication, commitment and friendship.

On behalf of the Board, I would also like to thank Susan Gibson and all our staff, counsellors and facilitators who work so hard and diligently delivering psychological, social, physical and emotional support to the many women and children who use our services.

Thank you.

Mary Diamond
Company Secretary



Treasurers Report 2023 2024
Sinead Callan

Welcome to our New Board Members

Marie Claire Logue.



Marie-Claire is a solicitor, specialising in Employment Law, representing clients at the Employment Tribunal in both NI and GB with claims ranging from discrimination, unfair dismissal, unauthorised deduction of wages etc., and providing employment corporate support, advice on internal policies and procedures.

Marie-Claire has also edited the book “Being Irish, 101 Personal Reflections on Irish identity today”, which was a snapshot of modern Irish identity including contributions from Annie MacManus, Dr Teresa Lambe, Dr Norah Patten, Sonia O’Sullivan, and Lisa McGee. Prior to qualifying as a solicitor, Marie-Claire worked in London and Sydney and now lives in Derry with her husband and three young children.

Dr Sandra Mc Neill



DR Sandra McNeill
Mb, ChB, BAO 1989 Queens University Belfast
MRCOG 1995 London
MSc 2012 QUB

Special interest in Medical Education, Urogynecology and Menopause

Consultant in O&G WHSCT 2005 – 2023
Training Programme Director / Deputy Head of School O&G
NIMDTA 2007-2019
Sub-Dean Undergraduate Education (QUB & UU) 2017 – present

Sandra is married with three adult daughters. Originally from Belfast Sandra now lives in Derry.

Managers' Report 2023 to 2024



Service Delivery 2023/2024

In 2023/2024 we delivered services both in house and outreach to 2378 women and children.

These women were expectant mums, young mothers, young women, older women, carers, women living with domestic abuse, Post Natal Depression, trauma, depression, anxiety, loss and bereavement, relationship issues and anxiety and depression in the aftermath of the Coronavirus pandemic. These were women living with long covid, living with chronic illness, living with a cancer diagnosis. Many were in poverty and facing a year of further hardships.

All were committed to their own health and well-being as well as that of their children and family and viewed Derry

Well Women as a lifeline which promoted their health and well – being, put them and their children first and supported them to cope, to hope to thrive.

This is borne out in the testimonials quoted throughout and at the end of this report.

We used a holistic approach to address all dimensions of women and children's well-being and considered all determinants on women's health medicine management, diet, physical activity, risk avoidance, preventative measures, lifestyle and activity management, social participation and wellness as well as considering external factors including housing money management housing etc.

8.1 Supporting Women and Children

Derry Well Women Creche provides a safe, welcoming, inclusive, diverse environment focusing on children's mental health ensuring their physical, social, emotional, cognitive and motor development through planned activities and free play in a fun environment with stimulating resources and areas helping the children with social interaction, a sense of belonging and self-esteem, supporting mums enabling strong mother/child relationships.

9 Creche Activities

We supported children's development through planned sessions of group activities, free play and themed activities such as sensory play. We purchased indoor and outdoor resources including sensory resources, sensory tent, sensory lighting, construction area items, large hard plastic house, ball run, dance scarves, sensory buddy, sensory chewable, bubble machine. Also purchased was a range of new baby resources including soft black and white floor tiles, two baby bouncers, Baby gym and Tummy time mat.

Activities such as messy play enabled free expression, for example, floor painting, themed tuff trays, water play. Sand play is always available along with painting easel. It has been observed that children seem to have developed a range of sensory issues post covid.

10 Improving the Environment.

The setting has been changed to a brighter, stimulating welcoming environment, with resources and visual displays throughout the setting.

With funding secured from Screwfix, Ulster Gardens, Souter, the Childcare Partnership and the Beatrice Laing Foundation we were able to reroof the creche and repaint all the creche areas.

Respite

A much valued and sought after service for impoverished, vulnerable children and mothers. We have developed a waiting list, and each child gets a six-week session, if staff feel a child could benefit from further sessions, the child will be placed back on the waiting list.

Due to demand and waiting list we extended our respite in early June to

6 children x 2 morning sessions per week

6 children x 2 afternoon sessions per week

With child intake rotating every 6 weeks, due to the high demand, mum can re-refer if she feels she and her child need more support. Sessions are delivered within the crèche, which is a safe, inclusive, welcoming, nurturing environment.

Our creche has been supported with 'Books Trust' this year where they provided Treasure book packs for all the children attending the service, they also provide a lot of free downloadable resources online.

A healthy snack is provided with fruit and water, or milk and sugar free yoghurt and all allergies are recorded and displayed. Snack time is made fun with Rhyme and props interacting with the story wall.

Sessions are planned to help with children's social/emotional, physical, cognitive and motor development with a range of activities and stimulating resources encouraging peer interaction, a sense of belonging and pride, freedom to express themselves, self-esteem, speech and language/communication and empathy towards others. All activities are inclusive and planned around the children's likes.

Activities include story & rhyme, music & movement, messy play, sensory play, arts and crafts, problem solving and free play. The world around us and nature.

The room is planned in areas such as home corner, construction area, shop area, soft play/sensory, tabletop play, art and messy play area, small world area and role play/dress up and calming and story area. Tuff trays are used for sensory play and themes are changed regular, e.g. sand, fake grass, gulp, jelly, child friendly foam, animals and tractors, cars and trucks, buckets and spades. Children enjoyed outdoor play with our recently purchased outdoor playhouse, ball run, and different sized balls stimulating hand/eye coordination, sensory garden, slide, trikes, slide, see-saw and pushchairs. Children gained stronger social connections, communication, confidence, life skills, and resilience and family relations.

Summer Scheme

Three x one-week sessions in July/August for 0–4-year-olds, this keeps contact with the families and support socially for the children as programmes during the summer are very limited for this age group within the area. Sessions were planned indoor and outdoor. Outings to local parks and nature trails, family

outings were planned, and risk assessed. Indoor sessions included messy play, arts, free play. Story days took place where a mum was invited into tell a story from a book or about her culture. We also included sensory days, role play, group activities, problem solving, and treasure hunts with magnifying glasses searching for bugs and hidden treasure. Sand/water play was included in everyday sensory. Mums, children and staff enjoyed a teddy bears picnics for one of our family outings to coincide with the Crafty Teddies workshop where the mums and children made their own special bear. Special days were celebrated and visually displayed. All activities were planned to be inclusive and centred on children's developmental needs and speech and communication. Family outings enabled families from impoverished circumstances to have a fun family outing during the summer holidays.

Summer Scheme and Outings

Easter Party 29-04-23 Inhouse with easter bonnet making for children and siblings, an easter egg hunt, sensory play session, and healthy treats. In attendance was 21 children and 13 mums.

Summer Trip 15-06-23 Jungle King. All children, siblings and mums received lunch and a summer gift. In attendance was 23 children and 14 mums.

15 Summer Scheme sessions 3 x 1 week sessions July 2 hour sessions, 6 children per session. In attendance was 18 children over the 4 weeks.

In total 64 children attended the creche this year participated and benefitted from the services and programmes we offered this year.

Stay and Play Programme

We delivered three x 4 week Stay and Play Programmes to 124 Mums and their children.

These four-week programmes gave parents the opportunity to explore messy/sensory play with their child and gain ideas of what can be done at home to further develop play skills and begin to interact with other children.

The programme made parents aware of how to develop their child's speech through concepts such as: 'commentating' when their child is playing, rather than asking lots of questions. Parents and children explored music and rhymes, through song and instruments.

Parents and children had fun exploring physical play through using a variety of items available in the home, therefore, extending play to items which are low cost or free.

Creche Inspection

May 2023

Extract from Creche and Childcare Inspection carried out by the Western Health and Social Care Trust.

“The Centre is reputable within the local community, and it is evident the organisation affords a high level of care to children. Within the setting, safeguarding is afforded the highest care and attention, and procedures continue to promote the welfare and safety of the children in its care. The organisation has a well-informed staff team who continue to provide a good quality childcare experience for children and families in the local community”.

Mother and Baby Swim Programme

We ran 17 X 6 Week Mother and Baby Swim programmes for 259 mums and their babies.

The programme aimed to remove any fears parent or child may have in water and create an atmosphere of safety and fun.

The programme was delivered by a qualified and Access NI checked instructor and we hired our local Templemore Sports Complex and Foyle Arena. All participating babies had received their baby vaccinations.

The programmes enabled parents to support their baby in water confidence and build on skills for gradual child led submersion.

Breastfeeding Support Group

We delivered 31 sessions to 45 breastfeeding mums

The delivery of breastfeeding support has been under constant review this year with a concerted effort to promote breastfeeding and the work of the group in Derry Well Women.

With support from the health visitor and WHSCT we have jointly run breastfeeding workshops for parents as well as the support group.

In recent months our work to create a breastfeeding social hub facilitated by a health visitor and parent support worker provides invaluable practical support and peer support to mums.

The objectives of the breastfeeding support group are:

Promoting Successful Breastfeeding: Encourage and support mothers in establishing and maintaining successful breastfeeding relationships with their infants.

Providing Education and Information: Offer evidence-based information and education on breastfeeding techniques, benefits, challenges, and solutions to empower mothers to make informed decisions.

Creating a Supportive Community: Foster a supportive environment where mothers can connect with each other, share experiences, and offer emotional support, reducing feelings of isolation and enhancing confidence.

Addressing Concerns and Challenges: Address common breastfeeding concerns and challenges such as latch difficulties, milk supply issues, and nipple pain, providing practical guidance and reassurance.

Promoting Maternal Well-being: Prioritize maternal well-being by addressing physical and emotional concerns related to breastfeeding, promoting self-care practices, and offering resources for additional support if needed.

Supporting Transition Periods: Provide support during transitional periods such as returning to work or introducing solid foods, offering guidance and strategies to navigate these changes while continuing to breastfeed.

Facilitating Peer Support: Encourage peer-to-peer support among group members, fostering a sense of camaraderie and shared understanding, and promoting mutual encouragement and empowerment.

Offering Professional Guidance: Provide access to qualified lactation consultants, healthcare professionals, or trained volunteers who can offer expert guidance, answer questions, and address specific breastfeeding challenges.

Advocating for Breastfeeding Rights: Advocate for policies and practices that support breastfeeding mothers in the community, including workplace accommodations, public breastfeeding acceptance, and access to breastfeeding-friendly spaces.

Baby Massage and Baby Reflexology

We ran 6 programmes x 4 weeks x 1 hour Baby Massage Programmes for 114 mothers with their babies and 6 programmes x 1 hour Baby Reflexology for 146 mothers with their babies. These programmes helped increase long term bonding between mother and child as well as helping with baby's digestive issues such as colic, reflux and constipation.

Ante Natal Classes

We ran 12 x 3 weeks antenatal classes.

The programmes aimed to support first time parents through pregnancy, and prepare them for labour, birth and the early days of baby's life. It was an opportunity

for pregnant mothers and their partners to gain knowledge of health in pregnancy and parent education. This was a particularly well taken up service as access to prenatal support was seriously diminished over this period due to coronavirus.

Two hundred and seventy-five parents were supported to:

Think about who is there for support; complete a birth plan; become aware of various birth positions; recognise the stages and signs of labour; have knowledge of pain relief options available; prepare for getting to know your baby; discuss feeding options and become aware of responsive feeding; discuss benefits and concerns regarding breastfeeding.

Post Natal Depression Programme (Minding Mammy).

We delivered 3 x 8-week programmes

Twenty-two mums have been attending this group facilitated by a health visitor and CBT practitioner. In addition to weekly support and promotion of self-care through CBT we introduced complementary therapies for each mum

**Table to demonstrate levels of activity associated with
Supporting Women and Children 2023/2024**

Intervention	Number of sessions per year		Average Attendance per session	Numbers of women/children
Breast Feeding Support Group	31 x Weekly sessions	31	4	45
Baby Massage	6 x 4-week Programmes	24	10	114
Attachment Programmes	6 x 4-week Programmes	24	11	146
Minding Mammy Group	3 x 8-week sessions	24	7	22
Family Time	2 Family Events	2	30	63
Ante Natal Classes	12 x 3 weeks programmes	36	26	275
Hypnobirthing	1 x 4-week programme	4	24	24
Crèche	Daily Sessions	286	6	64
Stay and play	3 x 4-week programmes	12	18	124
Mother and Baby Swim	17 x 6-week programmes	102	15	259

10 Interventions	Total	545		1136
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8.2 Gender Specific Interventions

There is much evidence to indicate the determining influence of women on family and community health status. We maintain and develop gender specific work which recognizes the role of women in terms of community well-being. We particularly focus on issues peculiar to women including PMS, endometriosis, peri natal support (both ante- and post-natal), miscarriage, menopause and sexual health.

Menopause Clinic and Support Group.

The menopause clinic continued at a reduced level due to clinician unavailability for several months.

To ensure that women were supported we introduced a facilitated monthly support group. We also provided workplace talks to Children in Crossfire and E and I Engineering

105 women were supported this year.

Pregnancy Loss and Bereavement Counselling.

In 2023/2024 18 women were supported by our pregnancy loss and bereavement service.

All women are referred through the Childbirth and Pregnancy Loss Specialised Midwife with leaflets also available for women to access prior to discharge from hospital following a pregnancy or childbirth loss.

Women self- referred to Derry Well Women to seek counselling for a specific pregnancy or childbirth loss. The benefits that this service has provided these women have been simply invaluable in aiding their healing and recovery process. The support that women have received from Derry Well Women has enabled several of them to contemplate and even enter into any future pregnancies in a more positive state of mind thus reducing maternal anxiety which has been shown to positively impact birth outcomes.

**Table to demonstrate levels of activity associated with
Gender Specific Interventions. 2023/2024**

Intervention	Number of sessions per year		Average Attendance per session	Numbers of women
Menopause Clinic	16 hours x Telephone and face to face Clinic	16	1	15
Menopause Talks and Support Group	15 Talks	15	12	90

Pregnancy Loss and Bereavement Counselling	46 Counselling Hours	46	1	18
3 Interventions	Total	77		123

9. Chronic Illness Management

Within this category we addressed Chronic Diseases (Cancer, Respiratory, Cardiovascular, Diabetes), Mental Health (treatment and prevention of Stress/Depression/Anxiety) and Accidents and Pain Management.

The provision made by Derry Well Women in respect of these issues is complementary to a range of other statutory and voluntary sector services available to women for prevention, detection and treatment of illnesses categorized under these three broad headings. Our specific interventions across each of the three causes of Mortality/Morbidity fall into five broad strands.

9.1 Cancer Services:

1. Our services provided women with the ability to maximise their wellbeing and to make the best possible choices for their own health and the health of their families during a time of uncertainty reduced access to health services and isolation and loneliness. Peer support is at the heart of all our programmes.

This year Derry Well Women delivered cancer counselling to 25 women new to this service. We delivered 2 Well Programmes to 29 women. We delivered 128 complementary therapy sessions to 54 women. 54 women are registered on our cancer support group with an average of 14 attending fortnightly.

Mental Health & Wellbeing Programme

We also delivered a Mental Health and Wellbeing Programme for 10 women.

This was an 8-week course delivered to women living with and/or having had a cancer diagnosis.

The purpose of the programme was to help improve mental health and well-being.

Some of the topics covered included:

- Emotional Awareness – learning to identify and manage our emotions more effectively
- Living with change and Uncertainty
- Identifying Support
- Prioritizing our lives
- Relationships
- Mindfulness
- Aromatherapy
- Enrichment session

- Creative Expression: journaling, art, movement to music.

Tables to demonstrate levels of activity associated with Cancer Services 2023/2024

Intervention	Number of sessions per year		Average Attendance per session	Numbers of new women
Cancer Support Group	20 x 2-hour sessions	20	14	22
Complementary Therapy Treatments	128 x 1-hour treatments	128	1	54
Mental Health and Well Being	9 weeks x 2 hours	9	8	8
Cancer Counselling	129 x counselling sessions	129	1	25
One Day Cancer Programme	One day Workshops	1	10	10
The Well Programme for Women Living with Cancer	2 x 10-week programmes	20	11	29
6 Interventions	Total	307		148

Cancer Connected Communities West

April 2023 – March 2024

Programme Delivery – Derry Well Women

As of March 2024, through the CCCW project Derry Well Women has delivered a range of interventions tailored to meet the needs of people living with cancer. The support provided to date includes 73 counselling sessions, 98 complementary therapy sessions, 11 cancer information talks, 12 therapeutic programmes, 2 carer support days and an ongoing cancer support group. In response to information received from the gathering session workshops regarding cancer prevention and nutritional information, Derry Well Women developed a series of 1:1 clinics and talks with a Specialist Cancer Dietician, which are being very well received.

Gathering Sessions

In April 2023, CCCW hosted the second Gathering Session which was specifically focused on the Cancer Workforce. There were over 60 attendees which included Department of Health representatives, Macmillan, GPs, District Nurses, Community and Voluntary representatives, as well as staff from the NW Cancer Centre such as

Oncologists, Clinical Nurse Specialists, Social Workers, the Booking and Administration team, Dieticians, and many others. Themes for improvement that were identified through the workshops included, communication, palliative care, use of technology and data, improving staff health wellbeing, primary care, and many others.

In June 2024, the third Gathering Session was held in the Waterfoot Hotel Derry. There were over 50 attendees, and the focus was on issues specific to those caring for someone diagnosed with cancer and the impact on families. The most common areas that came up at this workshop were in relation to supporting and acknowledging the role of a carer, the emotional and mental health of carers, communication (both in relation to communicating with the carer and supporting families to communicate their cancer diagnosis to younger family members), and the financial impact of a cancer diagnosis.

In October 2024, the fourth and final Gathering Session was focused on rurality. Some of the themes suggested for improvement were access to transport, mental health and wellbeing, palliative support, access to pharmacy specifically in relation to out of hours palliative drugs.

The Gathering Session process was very successful and through evaluation forms we captured that over 99% of attendees said they enjoyed the process and wanted to attend future workshops and events. Our partners at the NW Cancer Centre attended each workshop and we had meetings after each Gathering Session to share the feedback and stories. In response to this, our WHSCT partners immediately started to act on any 'quick wins' they could immediately resolve, as well as investigating bigger issues that were identified.

Negotiating Change

After a process of reviewing all the data, case studies, and feedback from the four Gathering Session workshops, the themes to be taken forward to the Negotiating Change process are as follows:

- Access to Primary Care
- Cancer prevention and early detection
- Carers
- Communication amongst staff, departments, and other trust areas
- Communication with patients
- Gender specific issues (i.e. women's health, menopause, BRCA gene, male breast cancer)
- Issues specific to rural patients
- Hospital Facilities (dietary requirements, waiting areas, etc.)
- Mental health and emotional wellbeing
- Palliative
- Pharmacy
- Supporting the Cancer Workforce

- Transport

The three Negotiating Change workshops have been scheduled between March – May 2024 and have been structured in line with the following themes of the Cancer Strategy:

1. Preventing Cancer
2. Diagnosing and Treating Cancer
3. Supporting People to Live Well and Die Well

The first Negotiating Change workshop was held on 8th March 2024 at the Silver Birch Hotel Omagh. The theme of the workshop 'Preventing Cancer'. Attendees included representatives from Department of Health, Public Health Agency, Western Health & Social Care Trust, Macmillan, as well as the CCCW partners, cancer patients and their carers or family members.

At the workshop, five areas for change were presented and discussed in relation to cancer prevention:

1. Health Awareness and Information
2. Screening
3. Gender specific issues
4. Role of Community Voluntary Sector
5. Improving Access / Overcoming Barriers

Together the attendees agreed on which questions they want to be considered for the Commitment to Change Conference. The CCCW team are in the process of reviewing these questions and engaging with the decision makers in each area to ensure each question will be addressed effectively at the conference.

The next Negotiating Change workshop will be held on 11th April and will focus on 'Diagnosing and Treating Cancer'. The workshop will focus on themes such as Integrated Care, supporting the cancer workforce and improving communication between professionals, departments and trusts as well as communication with patients.

The final Negotiating Change workshop will be held on the 2nd May and will focus on 'Supporting People to Live Well and Die Well'. There will be a wide range of themes discussed at this workshop including mental health, rurality, palliative care, finance, carers etc.

Commitment to Change Conference

The Commitment to Change Conference is scheduled for 20th June 2024 in the Ebrington Hotel Derry. The current Health Minister, Robin Swann, has confirmed his attendance as well as Neil Guckian, Chief Executive of the Western Health & Social Care Trust. Other attendees will include representatives from Department of Education, Department for Infrastructure, Macmillan, Public Health Agency as well as the CCCW partnership and other community and voluntary groups. The cancer patients, carers and family members who have engaged with the project will also all

be invited to attend and, in some cases, ask their questions directly to the relevant decision maker.

10. Managing Long Term Conditions

Women Experiencing Long Covid

We delivered 40 sessions of gentle restorative yoga for 111 women living with Long Covid a reduction on last year.

These were women who continued to feel the debilitating effects of Covid for between twelve weeks and over a year beyond the initial illness.

The programmes were facilitated by a health care professional who herself is living with Long Covid.

Restorative Yoga aimed to provide:

- a supported, calm place for participants to relax and rest.
- Gentle breath awareness to support diaphragmatic breathing.
- Gentle seated or lying stretches specific for muscles which may be affected by Covid;
- Deep relaxation and rest in restorative yoga to reduce stress, improve fatigue levels, reduce pain and improve sleep quality;
- The following tables outline the percentage improvement across 25 participants in levels of fatigue, pain, breathlessness, sleep and anxiety levels.
- Results for fatigue, pain, breathlessness and sleep relate to all 25 assessments.
- Results for levels of reduction in anxiety related to only those 10

Endometriosis Support

The Endometriosis Support Group held 10 two-hour sessions on the last Tuesday of the month. They had 16 women registered onto the group.

This support group enabled endometriosis patients to share their experiences and help others with the condition. The group covered the following issues:

- Pain management
- Self-Care
- Nutrition
- Complementary therapies
- Emotional Support

**Table to demonstrate levels of activity associated with
Managing Long Term Conditions 2023/2024**

Intervention	Number of sessions per year		Average Attendance per session	Numbers of new women
Intro to Yoga x 4	4 x 1 hour	10	10	10
Gentle Yoga for Long Covid	40 x 1 hour sessions	40	20	111
Endometriosis Support Group	10 x 2-hour sessions	10	7	16
3 Interventions	Total	<u>60</u>		<u>137</u>

11. Mental Health and Well Being Services

Derry Well Women provides a range of transformative Mental Wellbeing Programmes and Counselling Services ensuring choice, graduated access from gentle to more challenging interventions with each intervention being strength, not deficit, based and focused on the person not the presenting problem. Derry Well Women's progress has been marked by efforts to define a "Woman Centred Approach" as an entity. All mental health improvement and well - being programmes returned in house this year.

Counselling Service

We continue to offer counselling through telephone Zoom and face to face. 98% of women are now choosing a face-to-face service which is improving their social contact post covid.

This year 141 women have received 1001 sessions of generic counselling.

The issues presented included trauma relationships, isolation and loneliness, domestic Abuse, bereavement and loss, homelessness, re-location, employment issues, anxiety and depression.

We are now operating with a team of twelve counsellors of which ten are accredited and we are currently seeking tenders to expand the team.

Psychological Hub Referrals 2023/2024

In April 2023 Derry Well Women was contracted by WHSCT to deliver counselling for women referred with mild to moderate depression from the Psychological Hub.

In 2023/2024 Derry Well Women received forty-five referrals the majority of whom requested face to face counselling. We provided 228 sessions of counselling to 44 clients living with mild to moderate depression and anxiety.

Emotional Detox

Emotional Detox helps women understand the concept of an emotional detox and its benefits. It teaches how to take care of negative feelings and provides a road map for living a happy, fulfilled life. Women learn simple, powerful techniques for letting go of negative emotions and find out how to rid of fear and stay calm and confident.

Aims of the programme:

To introduce a way of bringing peace into our lives through non-violent communication.

To enable participants to discover the language of peaceful living.

To help women understand the concept of speaking peace as taught by Rosenberg.

13 women completed one x 8-week programmes.

Benefits of the Programme:

This programme was successful in that it encouraged individuals to look within for answers and listen to their body dialogue, recognize their unhealthy coping mechanisms, and replace them with more healthy ones. They learnt or developed skills in medication, mindfulness, body dialogue, connecting to the self and becoming more self-aware.

Coping with Anxiety and Depression.

We delivered two x 6week courses to 24 women. This course is designed to support women who may be experiencing depression or underlying anxiety. Its aim is to teach coping skills which women affected by depression/anxiety can employ to help deal with the symptoms that affect them personally. Information regarding complementary therapies, diet and sleep is also given.

The facilitator also discusses the use of prescribed drugs.

Self Esteem

We delivered three x eight-week Self - Esteem programmes for 29 women.

The programme addressed self- efficacy, addictive relationships, self -care positive/negative self-talk and equipped participants with the necessary tools and skills to maintain and build good self- esteem.

Table to demonstrate levels of Activity Associated with
Mental Health
2023/2024

Intervention	Number of sessions per year		Average Attendance per session	Numbers of women
Coping with Anxiety and Depression	2 x 6-week programme	12	10	24
Emotional Detox	1 x 8-week sessions	8	11	13
Self Esteem	3 x 8-week programmes	24	6	29
Yoga	14 classes	14	16	53
1 to 1 Counselling	1001counselling hours	1001	1	141
1 to 1 listening ear	17 hours help line	17	1	17
Assessment Interviews	101x 1-hour assessments	101	1	101
7 Interventions	Total	1177		378

12. Accident Prevention Young at Heart Group.

The Young at Heart Group which has an enrolment of 79 women meets weekly.

Derry Well Women designed specific activities to reduce loneliness, social isolation and promote health and well- being for older women by reducing isolation, increasing social connection, uplifting mood and improving emotional health and well- being.

The activities delivered were co-designed with the participants and were based on the issues which were raised and included the following:

Podiatry Foot Clinic

162 women attended the monthly podiatry clinic.

12.1 Table to demonstrate levels of Activity Associated with Accident Prevention. 2023/2024

Intervention	Number of sessions per year		Average Attendance per session	Numbers of women
Practical Supports in Later Life Keeping Young at Heart	3 x 10-week Programmes	30	30	79

Podiatry Foot Care Advice	162	162	1	162
2 Interventions	Total	192		241

13. Local Expressed Need.

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy for Everyday Use

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) is an eight-week course which is aimed at women from all backgrounds and all levels of education. The course is a psycho educational based course which means that it is not a therapy group as such. The main aim of the course is to provide participants with the skills to deal with their emotional and psychological problems through developing an awareness of how their cognitions affect their emotions and behaviour. Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) has been reported to be an effective treatment for anxiety disorders and depression in older adults, typically leading to reductions in worry, anxiety, and depressive symptoms (Gould et al., 2012).

24 Women attended CBT therapy this year.

1. SingTonicity

‘Sing Tonicity’ is an 8-week programme using an innovative approach which was developed in Sweden. It acknowledges that the voice is a part of the human physicality and it becomes small, lacking in confidence and even silent when we are traumatised or hurt or prevented from speaking out. It is a non-threatening, powerful way of helping people connect with their feelings, find expression and develop their confidence. 97 women attended this year.

2. Mindfulness

‘Mindfulness’ is a 8 week programme which aims to benefit each woman’s emotional and physical health. Mindfulness is the practice of becoming more aware of the present moment rather than dwelling on the past or focusing on the future. This helps with stress management and to prevent rumination and negative thoughts. Mindful-based therapies have been reported to be effective treatments, even as an alternative to behavioural therapies (Ziegerska et al., 2009) and have been found effective to remove stress (Witkiewitz, Greenfield & Bowen, 2013).

31 women attended this programme which was delivered via Zoom.

Journey to Inner Peace

Journey to Inner Peace is a programme that introduces an alternative way of managing unhelpful patterns of behaviour and negative thinking.

It will help turn around the alarming statistics of anger, violence and quiet desperation in our community / society and in their place, to plant the seeds of positive expectations, self – responsibility, higher self-esteem and to seed hope. 27 women attended over 2 x 8-week programmes.

**Table to demonstrate levels of Activity Associated with
Local Expressed Need. 2023/2024**

Intervention	Number of sessions per year		Average Attendance per session	Numbers of women
CBT for Everyday Use	3x 8week sessions	24	15	47
Practitioners Training	2 sessions	2	13	13
Mindfulness	1 x 8 weeks	8	31	31
Journey to Inner Peace	2 x 8 weeks	16	14	27
SingTonicity	3 x 8weeks	24	30	97
5	Total	74		215

14. Summary of Service Provision 2023/2024

Total Number of Programmes Interventions 36.	Total Number of Women and children
Total Number of Sessions 2432	
	2378

In 2023/2024, therefore, we delivered **36 interventions** within the following range of activities to **2378** women and children through **2432** sessions of delivery.

- Women and Children Programmes.
- Childcare Services and Programmes including Crèche facilities.
- Emotional Health and Mental Well Being Programmes
- Cancer Programmes including the Well Programme, Complementary Therapies Support Group and counselling.
- Chronic Illness Management Programmes including Pain Management of Endometriosis.
- Gender Specific Programmes (Menopause Clinic, Post Natal Depression; Ante-natal & Sexual Health Education for schools)
- Counselling Services (Generic, Trauma, Cancer, Listening Ear, Pregnancy and Bereavement Loss)

- Practical Supports in Later Life a Health Improvement Programme for women 65-90 years
- Three Support Groups (Breastfeeding, Cancer, Endometriosis)
- Clinical and Screening Services
- Health and Well Being and Social Support Programmes for women directly affected by The Troubles including Counselling, Complementary Therapies, Social Support Programmes and Listening Ear
- Programmes for the frail elderly.
- Programmes for women living with long covid

Testimonials

MINDFULNESS PROGRAMME

"This mindfulness course has been transformative for me. I have been taught how to use mindfulness to deal with bereavement, loss, anxiety and health issues.

As a result of this course, I have developed a new and positive techniques for living in the present and appreciating the good things in life – the things that really matter.

The delivery of the course and the support materials have been excellent. Karen is an excellent tutor; she has made my life so much more meaningful. I owe her a lot of gratitude.

Thankyou"

"The course has been of immense help to me, drawing attention to my negativity patterns and anxiety.

The wide varied course has made me aware of the ways in which I can improve my life.

As a result of this course I am now addressing issues that I would not have been able to do before. The handouts have been extremely helpful as I can read and re-read them and refresh the course. Karen has been helpful in so many ways and the course has been so varied and the group chats so supportive and enlightening".

"I found this course very useful to not only myself but also I brought the teachings home to my family. It was incredibly interesting every week. One of the aspects which stood out was the principle that thoughts are just that and how we should look at them".

"I loved this course. It has helped me a great deal. I think differently now about thoughts, this has helped me to stop overthinking and I was able to go to a party that I would not normally go to before this course because of the overthinking. The handouts are great because I can look over what we did and keep me on the right track.

This course has changed me for the better. "

"Karen told us that if we can adapt the concepts, she will teach us, it can change our lives. This course has changed how I think about everything that is happening/has happened in my life. I am growing into a stronger person, and I feel I will be able to face huge challenges that I will face in the future all due to what I have learnt here. I am sleeping better, I know how to turn my thoughts off, I approach everything in a more positive way and that gives me peace.

The handouts are invaluable as they can be used time and time again to reinforce all the skills we have learnt especially in times of stress.

I am grateful for Karen, Derry Well Women and the chance to participate in this course.

Thank you."

"The mindfulness course has been fantastic. Acceptance, gratitude and cognitive diffusion have been vital in helping me have a better quality of mind. Learning that my thoughts and feelings are simply that has allowed me to gain distance on them and this has transformed my quality of life. Karen was fun to learn from and the handouts have been really helpful and I'm glad I can have them in the future. I wish everyone had the opportunity to take this course as it has the potential to be lifechanging."

"This course has been amazing and delivered in the most professional way. It has helped me greatly with my mental health. I firmly believe it should be taught in schools. Handouts were given with each class and they were both informative and clear. The attendance was testimony to the quality from the course as everyone attended every week. "

CBT

"In receiving clear information and understanding on the CBT model".

"I have greater awareness of how my negative thinking can affect my health".

"I am more aware of my own needs now".

"When issues arise, I have learned to focus on one thing at a time".

"I learned about self-awareness, self-love, and to recognise my own feelings and examine and question my own thoughts about myself and where they have come from and are they true or not".

"I learned about boundaries and how to be assertive".

"I have learned I don't have to deal with everything, everything is not my fault that I need to solve".

"I am more aware when people treat me badly, I'm not going to be a victim".

"I'm coping with my depression".

"Doing the negative journaling really helps and these thoughts don't linger on my mind".

Self Esteem

"I have learnt a lot from this course. I really look forward to Tuesday night."

"I was diagnosed with bi-polar disorder at the age of twelve and have been hospitalized many times throughout the years, this course has helped me a lot. If there was a course on Decluttering as a follow up I would definitely sign up for it."

"I thought that self-esteem would make me more assertive, and it has. I have ended a long-term relationship that was going nowhere and I am more aware of the need to have healthy boundaries in order to self-care."

"Every week I fill bin bags and create more space in my life to allow others in, we cover things that I have been thinking about and situations I have found myself in

and learn that I am not alone. Someone else shared photos of the clutter she had accumulated in her home and had now started to deal with. We discussed how best to navigate this problem with the right tools and techniques learned throughout the course."

"I suddenly realize that I am not alone and that the other women in the group are experiencing the same things. I found good support from others in the group opening and sharing their feelings and I also know that spending quality time by myself is important to self-care. I learned a lot about colour therapy and how colours can affect our mood! I also got a great insight into my life by completing the timeline"

"I have stopped an ex-boyfriend from sending me abusive texts. I will no longer engage with him and have blocked him in social media. I have identified that this was an addictive relationship and I no longer want to be part of it."

Sing Tonicity

"I feel I have come a long way and feel a lot happier and content in myself. I have lots of good friends."

"Sing Tonicity has been a very important part of my self-care, health and wellbeing. The entire concept of the class, the songs, the subject matter, the friendships made and the laughter. It is all invaluable. Thank you so much to Siobhan and Derry Well Women."

"Sing Tonicity has undoubtedly improved my overall attitude and I highly recommend it to everyone."

"At a positive and great place both mentally and physically, thanks to Derry Well Women, I have a good outlook in life!"

"I am managing my life better now thank god for Well Women."

"This course and its facilitator are inspirational. I will just be trying to implement the suggestions into my daily life".

"Positive outlook most of the time. Negative spells are fewer. Less anxious and more in control of myself."

"Tuesdays Sing Tonicity is a joy and lifts my mood every week."

"Sing Tonicity makes such a difference to your attitude if you are feeling low going in but come out feeling good".

"Self-care has been poor as I am recovering from cancer and I have a lot of side effects from treatments. I am delighted to return to Derry Well Women and Sing Tonicity".

MINDING MAMMY –

"I'm working on putting myself first, as I have learned it is the most important to look after myself and to be able to look after my children as best I can."

"I definitely believe this programme brought a positive spin to a difficult time in my life. I would recommend this programme and I feel like I have learned so much about life, myself and others."

"Thank you so much for this opportunity, it has been amazing and vital for my mental health and being more resilient and calmer for my sake and my family."

"I have loved the course and feel I can now take these skills through life. Thank you, Derry Well Women, Carol and Sinead, you have made a huge difference to me."

Derry Well Women Cancer Programmes Supported by DHSS&PS Cancer Support Fund.



Derry Well Women successfully delivered a range of cancer programmes funded by the Department of Health through the Community Foundation NI – January 2023-April 2024.

The project completed in April 2024 and ran for 16 months during which time we engaged with 346 women through the delivery of 518 hours of Programmes, workshops and Therapies. We delivered 94 hours of Complementary Therapies, 6 Coffee Mornings, 4 One Day Cancer Programmes, 2 Thrive Programmes, 3 Well Programmes, one Mental Health and Wellbeing Programme and 50 hours of counselling.

These interventions were delivered to women aged between 20-89 years, 70% of whom were from urban areas, 30% rural communities and 5% from ethnic minorities. The presenting cancers included: - breast, bowel, Anal, Uterine, Mucinous carcinoma, Hodgkins Lymphoma, lung, ovarian and brain, In the provision of these programmes, we partnered with MacMillan, Care for Cancer Omagh, Swell Enniskillen, Action Cancer, Advice Northwest and Cancer Focus.

In response to requests from clients for specific nutritional advice for women with cancer, we delivered a 2-hour workshop on Food Myths, Eating well during and after treatment, how to support those with a poor appetite, Managing common side effects (focusing on nutritional tips), Pancreatic Cancer and Nutritional Management, Nutrition in Breast cancer (usually tailored to those post treatment including information on menopause). This was delivered by a Specialist Cancer Nutritionist.

Through this range of interventions women were able to access support and resources at a variety of levels:-

At a personal level women were able to access individual therapies such as counselling, individual complementary therapies, stress management skills, Mental Health and Wellbeing Programmes, Nutritional information specific to cancer and attend Financial Advice clinics in Derry Well Women provided by Advice Northwest. These clinics provide 1 to 1 support relating to: Benefits/Grants, Employment, Housing, Debt, Access to Health and Pensions.

At a social level women met with others in similar circumstances to themselves who provided peer support, friendship, social connection and what many described as a lifeline out of isolation.

At a family level the programmes provided a safe supportive space where those living with cancer could discuss their fears and concerns away from family. The programmes also prepared them to have difficult discussions with family members

and to be able to ask for their support without causing additional worry. This was particularly important for those women who were at palliative stage in their diagnosis, who were supported to have end of life conversations and to make practical arrangements.

At a community level -connections were made between community organisations delivering different types of services. This enabled women particularly rurally isolated women to become aware of and access services closer to home. Inter community partnerships and referrals were developed to support individual and groups of women.

All participants had the opportunity of contributing to the Cancer Connected Communities Project where they shared their cancer experiences within the current healthcare provision, looking at how access to services and support could be improved. At the core of programme delivery, facilitators promoted ways to improve good mental health and wellbeing. This was achieved by exploring the importance of self-awareness and its importance in building/strengthening self confidence and self-esteem. Groups were empowered to make informed decisions, to form meaningful connections, be being kind to themselves, focus on positives and learn to assert themselves.

Assessment of the take-up and participation in programmes, together with the qualitative data gathered suggest that because of their involvement, participants have inputted to the development of services, care pathways and improvements for the prevention of and care for cancer and have increased their own (and family) mental health and wellbeing and made suggestions about gaps in provision at a community level.

This project was successful based on participant attendance and feedback, group discussions, individual conversations, and facilitator observations.

Women reported.

1. **Increased Positivity** – Women reported that they had gained hope, achieved a new prospective on life, regained what they felt they had lost either physically, emotionally or psychologically and had gained an appreciation of living for the day.
2. **Health Related Changes** – most of the women reported that they had adopted new health related behaviours in relation to diet, exercise, relaxation, sleep management and reducing harmful behaviours. Many found both positive physical and emotional changes because of this.
3. **Appreciation of Wraparound Support.** All the women reported an appreciation of support especially peer support. They appreciated the notion of a common goal and the sharing aspects of the programmes. They appreciated the identification of support within their communities when access to primary care is proving so difficult.

4. **At Policy level** Several of the women engaged in Derry Well Women's Cancer Connected Communities Project which enabled them to use their patient journey and experience to influence health care, policy and provision in the Western Trust area.

Participant Feedback

"I enjoyed the experiences of the group and their positive attitude. Sharing experiences, through their cancer journeys, learning and laughter is what helps bring joy, made us feel comfortable in the classes and connect with others who have also been through cancer."

"I know I can't change how I feel instantly but I also know by using the techniques I have been taught, I can change."

"Every topic covered taught me something new and encouraged me to challenge my thinking and look at alternative perspectives".

"After a cancer diagnosis it can feel very lonely, getting out for treatment and courses helps maintain social interaction".

"I am a changed woman!"

"As a carer I most enjoyed allowing myself time and knowing that today was about me and feeling OK about that".

Tribute to Carmel Mulrine



We knew Carmel Mulrine over the past 35 years as a colleague a founding member of Derry Well Women but most of all as a friend. We have known her as a committed community development worker in the City of Derry, where she was centrally involved in a variety of community projects related to health and wellbeing, education and social justice.

She was a profoundly compassionate woman who cared deeply for people and expressed that at both personal and professional levels. Over the past twelve years Carmel worked with our Young at Heart group where she led the development of several significant programmes, which addressed the physical, emotional, social and spiritual needs of elderly women in our community. She was on the steering group of our frailty programme, which specifically

looked at the needs of carers and of older carers. During this time Carmel developed a specific interest in aging, loss, serious illness and end of life. She was central to our Namaste Programme which provided support to carers of those living with end-stage dementia. Carmel's spirituality was something that she expressed through her care for others, for the environment, for her community. Carmel has been fundamental to the development of Derry Well Women from her role as a founding member, to her membership on Committee, to her skilled facilitation and to her continued contribution to the ethos of the organisation.

Through all her life Carmel was committed to the health and wellbeing of others and this was borne out in the many professional roles she carried out including managing the FPA, Health Promotion, Derry Healthy Cities and many local community organisations. Carmel had a strong commitment to the needs of older women within our community and dedicated much of her recent years to identifying and addressing needs and escalating those to our Council, Politicians, and our Older People's Commissioner.

Carmel has given a lifelong commitment to the service of others in every capacity that I have known her to work. Her care to others was fundamental to her being. I have never known anyone quite like her to exhibit a profound interest in the welfare of others. Not only to be interested in it, but to act on it, in practical, supportive, and spiritual ways. How Carmel could maintain and sustain a group through adversity was no more obvious than during the two years of the pandemic, when she supported a group of up to forty women by telephone, skype and garden gate calls. In so many ways Carmel epitomised positivity. She was empathetic, compassionate, had a great sense of humour and a huge understanding of human nature. She was a

naturally inquisitive and vibrant personality. From her many years in community work, working often with vulnerable marginalised and excluded people, Carmel developed a vast understanding of the needs of people who are living in particularly challenging circumstances. She was mature and grounded on good theory and practice as well as being inspirational herself.

We all miss her deeply.



Tribute to Margaret Cunningham

Margaret Cunningham was for over thirty years a much loved and appreciated member of the Derry Well Women community.

Margaret worked in the Creche before joining the Committee of which she became Chairperson in 1999. She was a long-standing member of the Young at Heart group.

Over the years and particularly at her death the one word consistently used about Margaret was “beautiful”.

Margaret was beautiful in so many ways. There was almost a gentle quality to her beauty. A lightness to it. She brightened Well Women in everything she did.

One of the first indications of that lightness was hearing her singing to the children in the Creche. There were many occasions when she sang with us including a memorable evening in An Teach Ban when the whole room fell silent as she sang “South of the Border.”

Over the years her daughter, daughter in law and grand daughter became very much a part of Derry Well Women. Even her husband Michael got roped in to installing a water filter . Her connection to us was in every aspect of her life.

We were never in any doubt that Margaret loved Well Women and we loved her.

Derry Well Women Team 2023/2024

Committee

Phil Mahon (Chair)
Tara Boyle (Vice Chair)
Mary Diamond
(Secretary)
Sinead Callan
(Treasurer)
Sandra Mc Neill
Nuala Doherty
Grainne Mc Laughlin
Sarah Kelly
Karen Meehan
Paula Barr
Marie Clare Logue
Pauline Mc Clenaghan

Staff

Susan Gibson
Ann Mc Donald
Patricia Villa
Patricia McAdams
(Retired December
2023)
Yvonne O Doherty
Fiona Walker
Oonagh Butler
Deirdre O Neill
Jennifer Turner
Roisin Mc Laughlin

Clinical Team

Audrey Parke
Nigel Nutt
Mary Bradley

Generic Counselling Team

Ann McDonald
Majella McWilliams
Moira Smith

Anne Flanagan
Tracy Harrison
Madeline Callaghan
Marie Clare Murphy
Ellen Factor
Sharon Laird
Karen Mc Gillion
Valerie Long
Jeanette Mc Cole
Cora Mc Laughlin
Claire Kent
Erin Mc Laughlin

Cancer Counselling and Cancer Complementary Therapy Team

Mary Diamond
Tracey Harrison
Anne Flanagan
Geraldine Duddy
Patricia Swann
Brigean Byrne
Nolene Mc Cauley

Support Group Facilitators

Mary Diamond
Tracey Harrison
Sinead Mc Daid
Carol Watkins
Deirdre O Hara

Tutors & Facilitators

Siobhan Heaney
Marie Hone
Anne Browne
Marina Sweeney
Patricia Swann
Aileen Mulheron
Karen Baldwin
Deirdre O Hara

Tracey Harrison
Orla O Brien
Dawn Bradley
Philomena Mc Dermott
Sandra Mc Neill
Katherine Kelly

Complementary Therapists

Brigean Byrne
Marie Hone
Ellen Hastings
Rose Mc Cartney
Patricia Swann
Nolene McAuley
Jean Mc Cafferty
Shiela Mc Corkell
Elaine Carlin
Joan Friel
Jennifer Mc Clements
Caroline Harkin.
Crèche Volunteers
Michelle Kennedy
Catherine Doherty
Jennifer Mc Gavigan

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