



## 37TH ANNUAL REPORT 2025





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## Our Strategic Aims



### To provide women

with a women-centred health service, which will improve the health and wellbeing of women, families and communities and recognise the changing health priorities for women across the life course.



### 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 living with the impact of conflict.



### To further refine the conceptual framework

and embed the theory and practice of co-producing in the work of Derry Well Women.



### To continue to build

and maintain a strategic complex of collaborative partnerships in particular to develop local, national and inter-national links to support the development of a strategic approach to women's health in Northern Ireland.



### To capture & 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 take a leadership role in the development of a programme of women's health research.



# Engaging and championing on behalf of women



## An Award-winning project

Our Cancer Connected Communities West (CCCW) project was recognised at a national level and won an award at the Patient Experience Network National Awards (PENNA) in October 2024, in the category of: 'Engaging and Championing the Public'.

**Pictured** – Susan Gibson (DWW manager), Jennifer Turner (CCCW project), Khairil Hodgson, Freelance Developer, Picker Institute (PENNA representative)

# Chairpersons Report

## Chairperson's Report to the 37th Annual Meeting of Derry Well Women held on Thursday 5th June 2025 at 7pm.

Over the last 37 years the objectives of Derry Well Women, to promote the physical and mental health of women in Derry and the surrounding area, irrespective of class, race or religion have remained true to our core aims. The aim of empowering women to help us shape responses to meet their needs and to work in partnership with them and other agencies to deliver responsive services is evident in the overwhelming response of women of all ages, queuing up to access programmes on enrolment days.

I ended my report last year with the announcement of our Co-Founder and Manager Susan Gibson's retirement. I am happy to report that we were fortunate in recruiting Rhonda Murphy who ably stepped into the role. She has successfully completed her probationary period and has fitted in so well it feels as if she has always been with us. Rhonda will deliver an account of her stewardship over the past 9 months.

The Cancer Connected Communities West Project achieved success in the Patient Experience Network National Awards, in the engaging and championing the public category. Rhonda will outline the Western Trusts commitment to bring about real change based on the project's findings.

The innovative work on the Women's Health Strategy has gone from strength to strength thanks to the efforts of Dr Sandra McNeill and Karen Meehan. Karen has also been supporting the University of Ulster Research on Menopause in diabetes alongside Dr. Viv Coates. Menopause support has been enhanced by receipt of funding from the Burdett Trust to develop an integrated Menopause Hub.

Demand for our counselling services remains very high. On receiving confirmation of our longstanding

Counselling Co-Ordinator Ann McDonald's intention to retire we successfully recruited Tracy Harrison to a part-time position. Ann and Tracy are currently job sharing allowing Tracy to benefit from Ann's expertise and guidance as she takes up her post.

In line with the development of Trauma Informed Practice within the Health and Social Care Setting, Derry Well Women has taken steps to become a Trauma Informed Organisation. Staff Training has begun and work on adapting our physical environment to comply with Trauma Informed Standards is underway.

We welcomed Una McDaid as Creche Assistant and together with Yvonne O'Doherty they ensure the highest standards of care in the Creche.

Marie Claire Logue took up the position as Committee Secretary and her legal advice has proved invaluable throughout the year.

Committee members make an enormous contribution to the success of every aspect of Derry Well Women's business and I am grateful to each and every one of them.



**Phil Mahon**  
Chairperson.





We are indebted to all our funders who support us in continuing to provide the services women ask for and benefit from.

My thanks too, to the people who work tirelessly in the background, Oonagh Butler supports Rhonda and keeps committee operating smoothly. Fiona Walker in co-operation with our Treasurer, Sinead Callan ensures a rigorous approach to financial management and Patricia Villa co-ordinates and administers the practical running of a busy programme schedule so efficiently that it appears effortless.

We were honoured by a visit from Health Minister Mike Nesbitt and pleased to receive his acknowledgement of our achievements. MP Claire Hanna also paid a visit accompanied by MLA Sinead McLaughlin whilst Pdraig Delargy MLA also engaged with us in a number of

meeting around women's health issues in his role as a member of the All Party Mental Health Group.

Governance assumes a high priority at all times. The review and updating of policies continued throughout the year to ensure that accountability and responsiveness is maintained.

As both demand and our services expand the limitations of suitable space in our premises continues to provide a challenge, alongside the ever-present funding demands set against the uncertain funding climate.

I have no doubt that the energy and passion of all the wonderful women associated with Derry Well Women will continue to face and meet these challenges head on and that Derry Well Women will continue to be a source of help and support for women in the Northwest.



# Secretary's Report

**I am delighted to present this year's Company Secretary's Report for Derry Well Women, marking another busy and exciting year for the organisation. This report outlines our legal obligations, board meetings, and corporate governance activities that have impacted our operations throughout 2024/2025.**

## Board Meetings and Governance

The Derry Well Women Board has met 10 times during this reporting period and held its Annual General Meeting (AGM) on 6th June 2024. The AGM provided an opportunity for members to reflect on the year's progress and discuss our ongoing strategic objectives.

Following the retirement of Susan Gibson as General Manager in June 2024, we were delighted to welcome Rhonda Murphy to the role. Rhonda has taken up her new position with great enthusiasm, care, and commitment, and the Board is confident in her leadership. We will continue to provide the necessary support to Rhonda as she continues into her role.

## Board Member Elections

As per our governance practices, Board members are elected to serve for a period of up to three years, after which they must be re-elected at the next AGM. Mary Diamond, Grainne McLaughlin and Nuala Doherty are required to step down by rotation but have expressed their intention to put themselves forward for re-election. We are pleased to have their continued dedication and contribution to the organisation. Our work focuses on women's health, health promotion and education, and in addressing health inequalities. We are always keen to ensure our Board has a wide range of skills, expertise and life experience to ensure the organisation can effectively carry out its mission. To that end, the Board has a range of skills and experiences including healthcare, childcare, health visiting, nursing, mental health, counselling, accountancy, law, education, policy development, child development and community development. We also continue to undertake training aimed at developing the committee's skill base.

## Compliance and Policy Development

Derry Well Women remains fully compliant with all necessary filings and legal requirements. In 2024/2025, we have developed and updated several policies to ensure we remain at the forefront of legal requirements and best practices. These include:

- Domestic Abuse Policy
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy
- Maternity Policy
- Sickness Absence Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Supervision and Appraisal Policy
- Induction Policy.

These policies help guide our operations and ensure we provide a safe and supportive environment for both our staff and service users.

## Operational and Strategic Highlights

The year also saw several operational and strategic highlights. In November 2024, we were honoured to welcome Health Minister Nesbitt to Derry Well Women to discuss the Women's Health Strategy and Listening Exercise. This visit was a valuable opportunity to engage with key stakeholders on the future of women's health in Northern Ireland.

Rhonda and the team have been working diligently to ensure our building remains a safe and welcoming space for our users, implementing the Trauma Informed Practice toolkit as part of our commitment to provide an inclusive and friendly space.

We are also pleased to welcome Tracy Harrison as our new DWW Counselling Co-ordinator. Tracy's expertise and enthusiasm will greatly benefit our counselling services, and we are grateful to Ann for remaining in a job-share capacity to support and mentor Tracy during this transition.

Derry Well Women continues to lead the way in promoting women's health, with our Long Covid Restorative Yoga sessions featured in an Irish Times article by service user Nell Regan. Nell shared her personal journey with Long Covid, highlighting the positive impact of our restorative yoga sessions.



### Personal and Community Milestones

In 2024, we were thrilled to celebrate a new addition to the Derry Well Women family. Lochlan O'Neill, son of Deirdre O'Neill, our Cancer Community Services Project Manager, was born, marking a joyful milestone for the team.

We are sad to say goodbye to the wonderful Oonagh Butler, Executive Assistant, who will retire in June 2025. We wish her all the best for a peaceful and fulfilling retirement.

We also had the opportunity to connect with our wider community at our Christmas get-together on Friday 13th December. This event brought together staff, committee members, counsellors, and facilitators to celebrate the year's achievements. Additionally, a Restorative Yoga session was organized for 30th April 2024, providing another opportunity for staff and stakeholders to engage in a mindful and healing practice together.

### Violence Against Women

2024 has been a year of challenges, particularly with the shocking rise in violence against women. Derry Well Women was proud to attend a Special Meeting of Derry City and Strabane District Council in November 2024, where we joined other stakeholders in discussing and challenging the recent attacks on women in the city. We continue to stand firm in our commitment to ending violence against women and supporting those affected.

### Charity Law and Good Governance

As a charity, Derry Well Women remains committed to meeting its obligations under charity law and maintaining the highest standards of governance. The Board continues to work tirelessly to ensure the success and sustainability of the charity, and as Company Secretary, I will remain focused on ensuring compliance with all legal and regulatory requirements.

In conclusion, 2024/2025 has been another year of growth and progress for Derry Well Women. We remain committed to our charitable objectives and to providing essential services to women in our community. The Board and I look forward to the continued success of the organisation in the year ahead, and I would like to thank Rhonda and the entire staff and community for their commitment, care and friendship.

Marie-Claire Logue

**Marie-Claire Logue**  
Company Secretary



# Treasurer's Report

**Once again, I am pleased to present the financial position of Derry Well Women for 2024/25. It has been another busy and financially challenging year in which we have managed to deliver our planned programmes and activities whilst remaining in budget.**

Our contract with the Western Health and Social Care Trust was uplifted slightly to £145.2k to cover our core running costs. A further £108.1k was received in year from the National Lottery Community Fund in relation to the Cancer Connected Communities Project. We also maintained our funding from the Victim and Survivors Service (£116k) to support counselling and social support programmes. Our creche has been supported by Pathways (£16.5k) and Children in Need (£13k) towards salary costs. Derry Well Women also continued its contract with the WHSCT Talking Therapies in 2024/25 (£11.2k) to deliver additional counselling services. We were also successful in applications to grant making Trusts including Garfield Weston, Esme Mitchell, SJP Foundation, Halifax Foundation, Ulster Bank Community Charity, Souter Trust, Danske Bank the Honorable Irish Society, Inner City Trust, Enkalon and the Trusthouse Foundation, and together with other donations, helped to uplift our unrestricted funding and are greatly appreciated. The above contracts, funding and other contributions brought our total income for 2024/25 to £499.2k.

Total expenditure in 2024/25 was £504.2k, a decrease of £44.9k from last year. This mainly reflects the decreased level of activity in the Cancer Connected Community programme costs and fewer repairs and maintenance. Unavoidable inflationary rises were felt in nearly all areas of the organisation particularly affecting our utilities and

other running costs. In addition to programme costs, the main areas of expenditure were salaries and related costs (£238.7k), rent (£12.7), research costs (£9.9k), consultancy (£6.3k) essential maintenance and repairs (£7.1k) and running costs and overheads. Based on this, Derry Well Women recorded a deficit of £4.97k for the year reflecting a fair outcome given the current climate.

We will continue with our fundraising activities, review and rationalise our programmes services where appropriate and look towards effective partnership working to ensure there is minimal impact on the financial stability of the organisation and its ability to deliver its core services. The dedicated Board and staff under the new leadership of Rhonda coupled with our range of policies, and procedures, and good governance arrangements, will help to ensure we are in a reasonable position going forward.

A portrait of Sinead Callan, the Treasurer of Derry Well Women. She is a woman with short blonde hair, wearing black-rimmed glasses and a teal zip-up jacket. She is smiling at the camera. A blue lanyard with a badge is visible around her neck. The background is plain white.

*Sinead Callan*

**Sinead Callan**  
Treasurer Derry Well Women



# Managers Comments

## A year of change, achievement and challenge

**It is my privilege to introduce myself as new Manager of Derry Well Women and present our delivery overview for business year of 2024-2025.**

The last year has been one of change, achievement and challenge for Derry Well Women. The management transition with the retirement of Susan Gibson after over 30 years of inspirational leadership and tireless dedication has been without doubt the most significant milestone for us during this year.

My priority has been to ensure a smooth transition, maintain momentum and build on past success to create an even brighter future for all at Derry Well Women.

I would like to extend a huge thanks to all the amazing team, committee and women who use our services, who

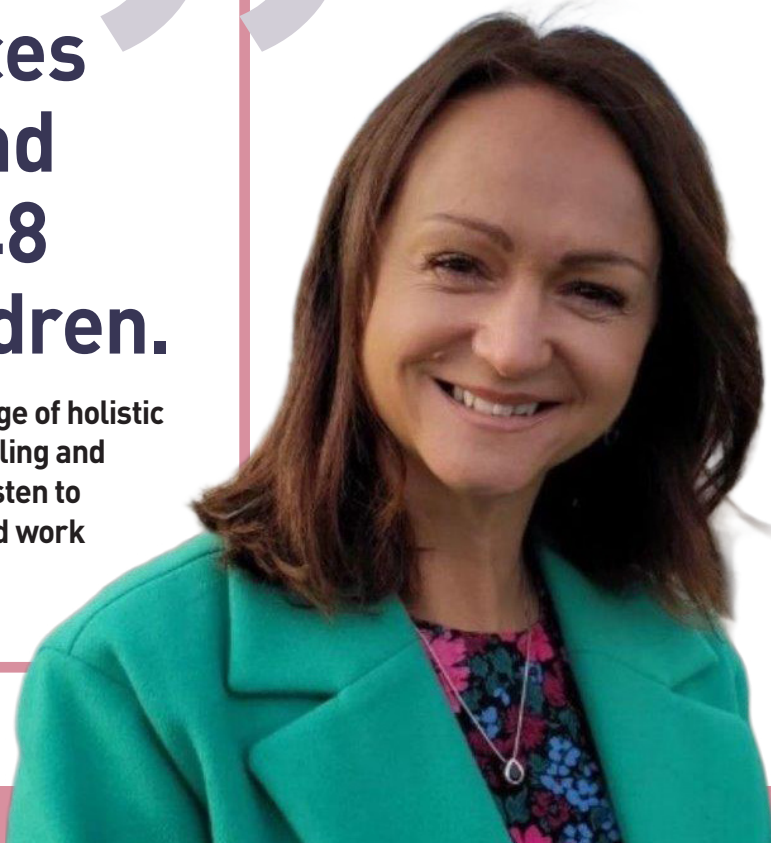
have supported my transition with warmth, commitment and enthusiasm. We know our greatest achievements will continue to come not from individual efforts but from our ability to work together to continually strive for better.



**Rhonda Murphy**  
Manager Derry Well Women

**In 2024- 2025 we delivered services both in house and outreach to 3,648 women and children.**

**We supported these women through a range of holistic supports, programmes, activities, counselling and group support ensuring we continued to listen to the changing needs of our local women and work collaboratively to give all women the best experience and outcome possible.**



# Managers Report

## Service Delivery 2024/2025

**In 2024- 2025 we delivered services both in house and outreach to 3,648 women and children.**

We supported these women through a range of holistic supports, programmes, activities, counselling and group support ensuring we continued to listen to the changing needs of our local women and work collaboratively to give all women the best experience and outcome possible.

Our creche facilities provided our children with a safe, inclusive and fun environment where they were able learn and develop through a wide range of play

opportunities to promote all aspects of their age and stage of development

The following pages provide a summary on each broad category of our work to demonstrate a snapshot of our impact:

**How much did we do? How well did we do it? Is anyone better off?**

## Supporting Women and Children

**We have supported 1923 women and children this year through a range of supports and activities to include our Breastfeeding support group, Mum and baby programmes, respite and programme creche and a range of family time and stay and play sessions.**

### Breastfeeding Support

To note this year we have had a particular growth in our breastfeeding support group with 115 breastfeeding and ante-natal mums attending our group this year with particular events around Breastfeeding Awareness Day, Maternal Mental Health and Christmas and special occasions throughout the year.





## Baby Massage, Reflexology and Baby Swim

We saw an increase in demand in our mother and baby programmes. We had particular demand for our baby massage, baby reflexology and mum and baby swim:

- 252 mums along with their babies attended our baby massage/baby reflexology sessions
- 261 mums and babies attended our Mother and Baby Swim sessions



### What our mums said:

*"Helping my baby without the use of medication is brilliant, Marie is great and explains everything in detail to us all."*

*"My baby sleeping pattern has improved so much since starting baby reflexology"*

*"The baby massage and reflexology classes are so relaxing, it's also a great way to chat to other mums about concerns I have that they might be going through as well. We question one another each week"*

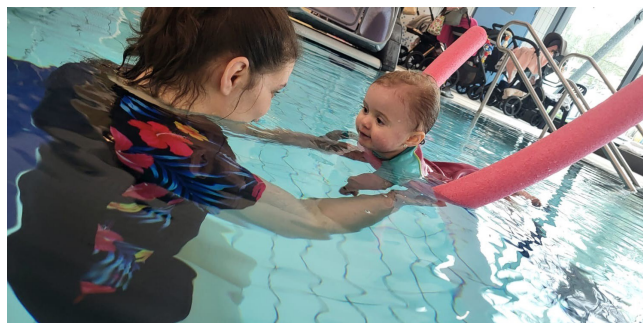
*"Derry Well Women is an amazing place for mother and baby and the fact that the classes are free makes it open to every new mother whatever their background is, Thankyou"*



### How mums felt they benefitted:

*"I felt so welcomed, I was worried about being made to put my baby under water but everything was at our and baby's pace and if we didn't want to do anything it was made clear to only do what was comfortable for us"*

*"We learnt songs and rhymes; my child's speech and language has developed"*



*"The bonding was lovely, time for just me and my baby in a calm quiet yet stimulating environment"*

*"The social aspect was massive for me, I got to meet a great group of mums"*

*"I am very young and was anxious about going into a group a lot of groups I feel are older mums, but they made me feel so welcomed and unjudged"*

*"My baby reaches out more for toys, she moves her legs more, it is helping her with crawling"*

All these programmes provide precious bonding time with mum and baby promoting early attachment and promoting all aspects of child development.





## Antenatal Support

Our ante-natal classes continued to be extremely popular this year with 195 parents to be attending our programmes this year. Our ante-natal 4 week programme which runs in the evening was able to support first time parents through pregnancy and prepare them for labour, birth and the early days of their baby's life. The parents particularly benefit also from time to speak to the midwife on a one to one basis and peer support with other mums to be.



## Minding Mammy and Young Mums

Our 'Minding Mammy' programme and Young Mums programme supported 40 new mums this year facilitated by a CBT Therapist, a Psychotherapist and a Health Visitor. These programmes continue to be hugely beneficial to mums to offer support on stress, anxiety, relaxation methods, the causes of low mood and types and strategies on how to deal with them.

### What the mums who attended told us:

*"This programme has helped my mental health and well-being greatly during the practical support sessions and socially with other mums who had experienced similar feelings."*

*Sinead and Carol really were helpful and patient. Thank you so much!"*

*"Sinead and Carol have helped me find me again. thank you so much for listening and for all your amazing support and advice"*

*"This programme has given me more confidence to speak in a group and knowing I'm not on my own while feeling anxious. Learning and practicing self-care work wonders in day-to-day life"*

*"This programme is time for me, not my children. Just to feel like me again and not to be consumed by motherhood. I loved the self-care week"*

## Stay and Play

Our mums and children enjoyed our Stay and Play sessions throughout the year with 48 mums attending along with their children. These sessions gave mums and children a chance to explore a range of new play opportunities including lots of messy play, sensory play and song and story time. This is also a great opportunity for mums to get together and connect and benefit from peer support

### What our mums told us:

*"My children love coming here each week to play and socialise with everyone else. It has made my youngest child able to talk and say more words"*

*"There are lots of different play activities each week which cover different areas of development; physical, cognitive, fine motor etc. It was very good for the kids socially as well".*

*"My daughter looks forward to coming every week and is a lot more social and beginning to learn to share".*





## Creche

We have noticed an increase in demand for our creche this year, both from mums who require creche so that they can attend a programme or counselling, or for respite creche to give mum's a break and provide support for their child.

We provided creche sessions to 131 children this year

Our creche is able to provide a safe, inclusive and fun environment for babies and children up to 4 years of age

Our primary aim is to ensure we provide the highest quality play, care and learning opportunities that will promote the physical, intellectual, social and emotional development of all children in our care.

We are committed to working in partnership with parents to provide quality play and care of each child.

Whilst we continue to ensure we incorporate all aspects of play we have a particular focus this year on outdoor play, messy play and sensory play; and a focus on promoting language and communication development through daily song and rhyme time sessions.

We have promoted 'outdoor learning' and ensured children can be outside in our outdoor area on a daily basis

Thanks to funding secured from SJP Foundation, Inner City Trust and The Honourable Irish Society we were able to install a much-needed new floor to our creche and outdoor sensory play equipment. This brighter indoor space and additional larger outside play equipment has been greatly appreciated by children and parents and this is clearly demonstrated in our wonderful, enclosed pictures.

### What some of our mums told us:

*"My child's development has come on so much since coming to creche, especially his language"*

*"This creche was so important to me as I was carrying out a course to support my mental health"*

*"My child loves going and becomes very excited the night before his day at creche and his speech has greatly improved"*

*"As I now have 2 hours for time for myself it makes my life and my family life so much easier"*

*"My child has become more sociable and communicates easier"*

*"I am overjoyed that (A) settled and began to enjoy his time in creche, I am pleased he is noticing and gradually interacting with his peers as he has no siblings at home, it is just myself and (A). I am so grateful for the helpfulness of Derry Well Women, they have made things a lot easier"*





## Gender Specific and Chronic Conditions



We have supported women with gender specific conditions such as Endometriosis, and Menopause, and provided specific counselling support to women who have suffered traumatic childbirth and pregnancy and baby loss.

We have also ensured our continuing support this year to women coping with Chronic Diseases such as Cancer, Diabetes and Cardiovascular Disease and Long Covid

This year we have supported 73 perimenopausal and menopausal women through one to one or group support.

We have provided one to one support to 13 women who have reached out to us for counselling for specific pregnancy or baby loss. The benefits that this service has provided to these women has been invaluable in aiding their healing and recovery process.

Our Endometriosis Support Group has grown from strength to strength and this monthly group benefits from an experienced counsellor as facilitator and themed talks as requested by the group members. Group members attended Stormont and put forward a motion to Derry City and Strabane Council as part of Endometriosis Awareness month to campaign around the need for better support and treatments for women suffering from Endometriosis.



Our Long Covid Yoga online programme has increased in attendance and continues to be in great demand with 176 women able to link in and benefit throughout this year



Our Cancer Services have provided women with education, information and support whilst ensuring this is provided with warmth, nurture and care. We have ensured women remain at the centre of their choices around optimum and holistic health and social care ensuring peer support is pivotal in all our supports offered.



Our Cancer Support Group has been an invaluable support with 31 women benefiting from the peer support, education and information sharing throughout this year. In addition our WELL programme has supported 34 women and we have provided complementary therapies to 45 women and 11 women have benefitted from one to one Cancer Counselling.





## Practical Supports Later in Life

Our Young At Heart Group met weekly with a mixture of external speakers attending to promote information and advice on a range of relevant topics requested by the group alongside a range of activities and events that promoted inclusion, connection, wellbeing and lots of fun and laughter.

This year 89 women attended our Young at Heart Group and we know for many of the women who attend this group has made a huge difference in combating

loneliness, improving their confidence and promoting their mental and emotional wellbeing.

We facilitated 10 podiatry clinics this year with 140 women benefitting from this service.

*"Thank you so much for the Young at Heart Group – it is my lifeline. Since my husband died I was lost and never left the house. Now I look forward to this group each week and it has improved my confidence so much"*



## Mental Health & Wellbeing and Social Support

Holistic wellbeing is at the heart of all we do and ensuring we are meeting the needs of women's mental and emotional wellbeing is key to this

We were aware this year of the growing need for particular wellbeing programmes as a result of our waiting list and the feedback we received from women who had attended. Programmes such as restorative yoga, mindfulness and sound meditation were being particularly raised as beneficial to many women affected by trauma.

We were able to offer a range of supports and programmes to ensure all aspects of mental health and wellbeing were covered to include our Coping with Depression and Anxiety programme, Journey to Inner Peace and Self Esteem programme as well as Sing Tonicity, CBT support programmes and Transform.

Following feedback from women who had attended some of these programmes it became evident that Sleep Management for women was a growing concern.



As a result we offered 'Sweet Dreams' which was an 8 week programme facilitated by a CBT therapist, 24 women benefitted from the information, guidance and strategies offered each week. Some of our highest attended programmes included:

- 60 women attended our Transform and Self Esteem programmes
- 114 women attended our Sound Meditation programmes
- 116 women attended our Sing Tonicity programme

We were also keen this year to encourage more young women to attend our programmes and be able to support their mental health. We were able to facilitate two programmes designed for younger women focusing on what their specific mental health and wellbeing issues were for their age and stage in life.

- 32 young women were supported this year with these two specific programmes

Overall we supported 576 women this year with mental health and emotional wellbeing programmes

### What women told us about these programmes:

#### Sound Meditation – (June 2024)

*"I had never tried sound meditation and didn't know what to expect but I am delighted that I joined the class and have enjoyed the many benefits. I have felt the mental, emotional*

*and physical benefits of the class. I can honestly say that sound meditation has been an extremely positive experience for me. It helped improve mood, sleep, pain, energy levels and helped my relationships and confidence as having time to stop, and think has been so healing. Thank you so much to Joan and Elaine who are wonderful facilitators and have given me the fabulous benefits through these sessions"*



#### Bright Minds Bold Heart (Younger Women's Programme) – (December 2024)

*"Thanks to this course I have come off my medication. I feel reassured that*

*I dealt with past situations/conflict (i.e. domestic abuse) in the best possible way, I'm confident to know how to handle future situations that may arise"*



*"I am so grateful to have been part of this group. The sessions were informative with practical take aways"*

*"I found Karen easy to connect with, she created a lovely environment for people to share their experiences with no judgement"*

#### Sing Tonicity (March 2025)

*"A year from my surgery, my physical strength is improving steadily and mental health starting to improve with help of family and friends and Sing Tonicity. The hugs, care and good feeling I get has helped immensely during a tough year. The impact of this course on my attitudes and outlook has been very significant. It has brought me joy, confidence and much happiness. It is a very positive atmosphere and Siobhan is amazing!"*

#### Journey to Inner Peace (online programme) – (March 2025)

*"This 8-week course helped me to assess my negative thinking patterns, which were contributing to a cyclical pattern of Anxiety and Depression. The online course was facilitated in such a Professional and gentle manner, and I was able to really examine how my lack of Self-Esteem/Self Regard is integral to my personal thinking patterns.. Each participant was encouraged to be respectful and empathic to each other. I looked forward to every single session on a Monday evening. The sessions helped with isolation, and I managed to relate well to the other participants"*



## Cancer Connected Communities West



Cancer Connected Communities West hosted the Commitment to Change Conference on the 20th of June 2024 at the Ebrington Hotel Derry. Attendees included the NI Health Minister Mike Nesbitt and Dr Tom Frawley, Chair of the Western Health & Social Care Trust. Other attendees included service users, their family members and carers, who engaged with the project. Several took this unique opportunity to ask questions directly to key decision makers including the Western Health & Social Care Trust, the Department of Health and the Department for Infrastructure. Commitments to change were publicly announced relating to several themes including:

- Connecting Rural Communities
- Improving the health & Wellbeing of the cancer workforce
- Modernising pathways for patients treated at the NWCC
- Improving Holistic Needs Assessments for WHSCT cancer patients
- Implementing changes to improve communication

Speaking at the conference, the NI Health Minister Mike Nesbitt, said

*"The voice of those with lived experience of cancer has been central to the development of our Cancer Strategy. I want to acknowledge the contribution of everyone involved in the Cancer Connected Communities West project. This project*



*sets a benchmark for the co-production of cancer services, and I am delighted that the lessons that have been learned over the past three years are already helping to shape how we implement the actions within the Cancer Strategy."*

The Cancer Connected Communities West (CCCW) project developed over a 3-year period from September 2021 –2024 with the support of funding the National Lottery Community Fund. Led by Derry Well Women, with Action Cancer, Advice NW, Cancer Focus, Care for Cancer and SWELL, Enniskillen, the project far exceeded its aims and objectives to connect people affected by cancer in the Western Trust to each other, to sources of support within their communities and to the people who can affect change to cancer services.

Working through a 4-tier model of engagement developed by DWW and based on the principles of inclusion and co-production this project positively impacted 2,748 participants who had or were still experiencing cancer – either as individuals, or within their families or as carers.

Throughout the 3-year lifespan of the project, the CCCW partnership delivered a range of 16 interventions tailored to meet the needs of people affected by cancer.

The support provided included 124 therapeutic programmes, 1,020 counselling sessions, 1,300 complementary therapy sessions, 3 carer days and





2 cancer support groups. There were 89 specifically tailored benefit support sessions, 30 benefit advice clinics; 133 follow up case management appointments and 7 welfare/benefit talks. The rural transport service provided 211 drives to hospital appointments, there were 8 Nutrition consultations, 15 cancer information talks and 1 research survey on the experiences of the cancer journey.

Four Gathering Sessions were held, and three Negotiating Change workshops were facilitated, culminating in the final Commitment to Change Conference where all strands of the project came together.

The external project evaluator, Fiona Boyle, of Fiona Boyle Associates concluded that the CCCW project surpassed its aims to connect people affected by cancer to each other, to support within the community and to people who can make changes within cancer services.

It demonstrated that people affected by cancer benefited from an extensive and varied range of individual and group support programmes across the partnership.

People felt supported within their own community and signposted to relevant support services. Support included their physical activity/health, mental health, financial and benefit information/advice, emotional support and counselling.

Participants felt listened to at partner level, Gathering Sessions and Negotiating Change workshops. This was enhanced by the Effective Listening training.

The model of engagement and co-production approach were described as crucial in giving participants a voice to set priorities for improved cancer services and

opportunities to directly articulate these to service planners to influence strategic change.

*I am so very grateful to Cancer Connected Communities West for the opportunity to use the difficult and distressing experience of having cancer to be part of a collective voice that will make meaningful and lasting improvements to Cancer Services in the West. I can think of no more inspiring and empowering gift to Service Users." - Service user comment*

#### **An Award-winning project:**

The CCCW project was recognised at a national level and won an award at the Patient Experience Network National Awards (PENNA) in October 2024, in the category of: 'Engaging and Championing the Public'.

#### **Opportunities going forward:**

Whilst the initial 3-year phase of the project has completed, the WHSCT has maintained an interest and impetus to ensure that changes are made to services and support for those experiencing cancer across the west of the province.

CCCW were delighted to secure funding from the WHSCT for the period December 24' – June 25', with a view to extending this to a 12-month contract. This support has enabled CCCW to continue as an active partnership providing essential services to people affected by cancer across the Western Trust area and to monitor the implementation of change requests.

*Dr Tom Frawley advised "The Western Trust recognises the huge potential of the model of engagement that has underpinned every aspect of this project and is committed to continuing to work with partners to support the sustainability of this model."*



## Additional activities and events in 2024-25

During the year we hosted one off workshops and events depending on what feedback we received from women using our services to include Employability Event in partnership with Jobs and Benefits office, Resilience Workshop, Young Women's Health Fair and Young at Heart Mental Health workshop



We were delighted to host 24 nursing students from Sandiago who were keen to learn more about what we do to promote women's health and wellbeing in our local community. This visit was very well received and extremely beneficial to these second year nursing students:

*"To see the breadth of the reach of your services in your community is amazing. The women who seek your services are so lucky to have such committed and passionate people to help them. You are doing such great work"*

"Generational trauma and gender-specific health disparities shape patient needs as they are unique to a patient's identity, and are a result of lived experiences. I



appreciated the Derry Well Women centre doing research on how to best provide care to patients with cancer by surveying those with a diagnosis and their experiences. These experiences provide a story and lens into the actions and behaviour that can make powerful health policy change"



# Counselling Report 2024 to 2025

**This year we provided 1408 session of counselling to 266 women. The service was primarily provided face-to-face, 97% in-house, as women chose to re-integrate with others and take the opportunity to build confidence, heal from trauma and socialise and find hope in a safe and welcoming environment, through trauma counselling, cancer counselling, child & Pregnancy Loss, Domestic Abuse, loneliness and isolation.**

54% of clients who took part in a BACP survey, Perceptions of Counselling, 2025, stated that loneliness was impacting their mental health.

Derry Well Women's provision of Social Inclusion Programmes offers women, who self-refer, the choice of group work while waiting on counselling or post counselling, to relieve their symptoms of loneliness and improve their physical, psychological, emotional, mental health and wellbeing. This holistic approach provides hope and encouragement to all women.



**Ann McDonald**  
Counselling and Trauma  
Co-ordinator



## **New Role for a familiar face**

I am delighted to be back working at Derry Well Women in a new and exciting capacity. I have previously been associated with the Centre counselling women alongside designing and facilitating my own courses for 16 years. After a brief hiatus I have returned and taken up the role of Counselling and Trauma Co-ordinator in partnership with Ann McDonald.

I have gained lots of experience in counselling and supporting clients with a wide range of issues having worked with Derry Well Women, various other community organisations and in private practice. I am particularly passionate about collaborating with women who live with chronic health conditions including cancer, endometriosis, fibromyalgia, and auto immune diseases. I am also a teacher of Counselling and have taught and mentored many students. I am truly thrilled to be back at the place I call 'Home' and look forward to the challenges and changes ahead with great enthusiasm.



**Tracy Harrison**  
Counselling and Trauma  
Co-ordinator





# Women's Health Listening Exercise

**In November 2024, in Stormont, the Health Minister Mike Nesbitt hosted the Launch of a Listening Exercise on Women's Health in NI being led by Derry Well Women and Queens University Belfast (QUB). The launch, hosted by Marie Louise Connolly, was attended by over 100 representatives from Women's organisations, Unions and statutory and community sector providers of women's health care.**



This launch followed an announcement earlier in the year that the Department of Health would commit some funding to support Derry Well Women and Queen University Belfast to conduct a public Listening Exercise for women in Northern Ireland on their health experiences and priorities for shaping the Women's Health Strategy for Northern Ireland.

The Listening Exercise is taking place over three phases.

## Phase 1.

An online survey opened in November 2024 and closed in April 2025. Hard copies of the survey were distributed and taken to groups of women who did not wish to complete the survey on-line. Over 2000 women completed questionnaires have been returned.

## Phase 2.

Over the coming months we will carry out focus groups across every council area in Northern Ireland. These groups are being convened to ensure that we hear from women who live with exclusion and are most disadvantaged by health inequalities. Our work will ensure that their voices are captured in the Listening Exercise. We are being supported in this work by our Stakeholder representatives and Community Groups across NI. We anticipate this work being completed in September 2025.



## Phase 3.

This phase will take place later in the year and will involve taking feedback from individuals and organisations involved in the provision of health and social care for women.

Following the Listening Exercise, we will hold a regional workshop to feedback to women what we have heard and to ensure that our final report and its recommendations to the Department of Health are shaped by women.

Since the announcement of a funding allocation for the work in March 2024, we have enjoyed an excellent working relationship with our colleagues from the School of Nursing and Midwifery at QUB. Led by Dr Jenny Mc Neill the team includes: Dr Fiona Lynn; Dr Lisa Maguire, Hannah McCauley and research fellow Corinne Colella

Our partnership will strengthen over the coming year as we work to develop and implement a Menopause Hub. We were delighted that a partnership proposal for the work, submitted by QUB, was selected for funding by the Burdett Trust. We will begin the project in September 2025.

We have maintained close links with Ryan Wilson and colleagues in the Directorate of Secondary Care at the Department of Health particularly so during their development of a Womens Health Action Plan in recent months.

To support and steer our work we have convened a large stakeholder group - Women's Platform; Women's Resource and Development Agency; Women's Aid Federation NI; Foyle Women's Information Network; Training for women network; NI rural women's network; Women's Tec; Cedar Foundation; Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission; Women's support network; Women's Spaces; Women's Regional Consortium; Women in Business; Menopause NI; Autism NI; Autism initiatives NI; Action mental Health; Aware NI; MMHA; Cancer research NI

The Stakeholder Group has both influenced the design of the research and also advised us as we work to ensure

that we reach a broad cross section of women from across the region.

We are delighted to be working with Women's Resource & Development Agency and the 'Nothing About Us Without Us' initiative (both members of the Stakeholder Group) to ensure that our work complements theirs as together we press for change and improvements in women's health planning and provision across Northern Ireland.



**Women's health in Northern Ireland  
- Have your say!**

 **We want to hear your views on women's health services in NI**

 **Are you a woman aged 16 or over?**

 **Please fill in our anonymous survey**

For more information, please contact:  
[womenshealthni@qub.ac.uk](mailto:womenshealthni@qub.ac.uk)  
 @ListentowomenNI  
 Women's Health NI Listening Exercise

 **Derry Well Women**  
*At the forefront of women's health*

 **QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST**  
 SCHOOL OF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY

 **DoH**  
[www.health-ni.gov.uk](http://www.health-ni.gov.uk)

30.9.24 Vn 1.0





# We are on a Journey



## In 2024 we started a journey to implement Trauma Informed Approaches at Derry Well Women

Trauma Informed approaches recognise that many of the women who use our services will have been impacted by potentially traumatic experiences in childhood or at some time across their life course.



In order to create a safe environment for both physical and emotional safety we are intentionally and comprehensively working towards trauma informed principles and practices into the structure, service delivery and culture at Derry Well Women.

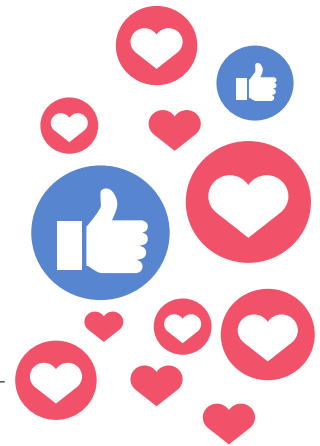
Small changes can make a big difference and we have already noticed the difference these changes are making

**‘It’s the little things that are vital.... Little things make big things happen’**

We look forward to bringing you on this journey with us - to learn, develop and improve our everyday behaviours and interactions to provide the best we can for all women and children who we support



# More Than Just Likes: Real Support Through Social Media



**At Derry Well Women, our social media platforms ‘Facebook and Instagram’ play a vital role in how we connect with women from diverse backgrounds across the city and beyond. These digital platforms are essential tools that help us raise awareness about our services and reach those who could benefit most from our support.**

Over the past 12 months, our Facebook page has achieved significant reach and engagement:

- Over 1 million views across posts
- A 136.8% increase in engagement
- Around 3,000 views per story-based post
- Direct messages from women seeking support and advice

Whether promoting mental health and well-being, supporting young mothers, or assisting women living with cancer, social media allows Derry Well Women to share our story, foster connections, and open the door to care and compassion.

It enables us to reach women who might not otherwise hear about our centre—particularly those in rural areas who often turn to online platforms for local support.

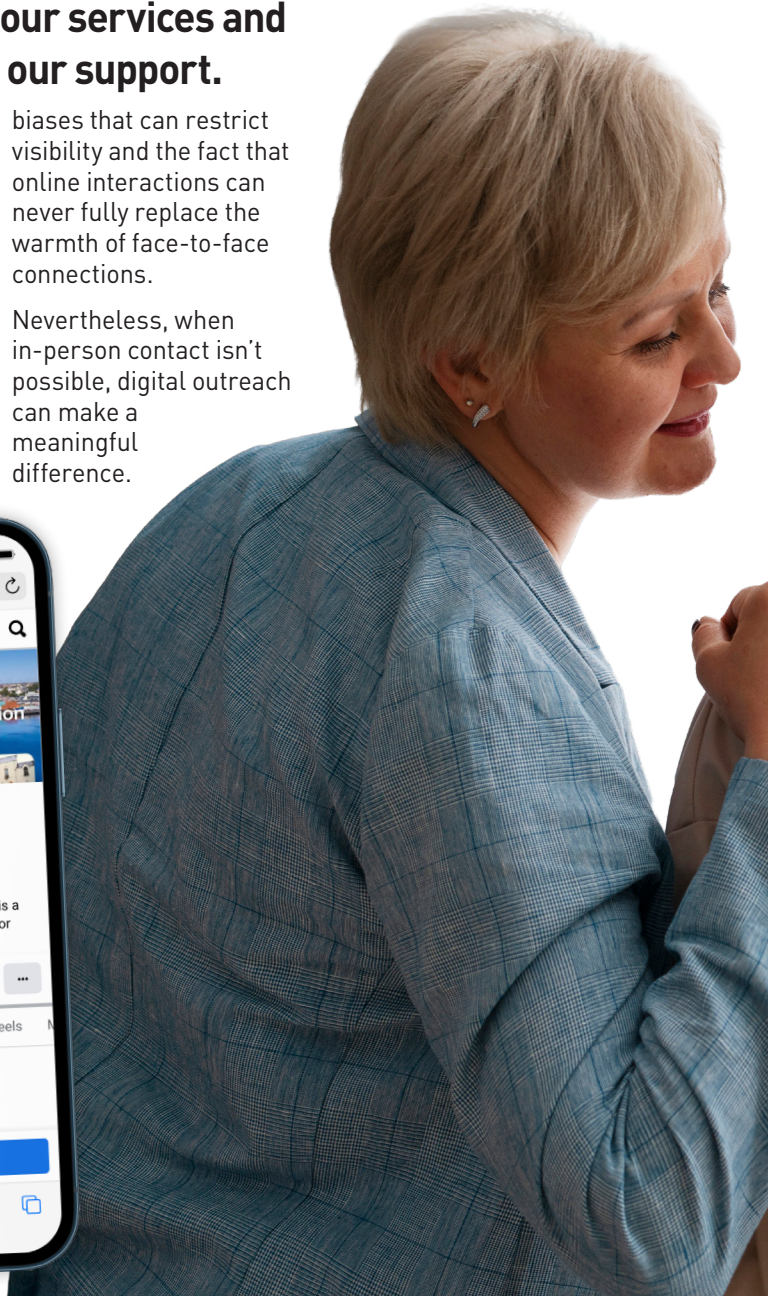
Social media helps us:

- Build awareness of our services
- Encourage connection and community
- Provide vital support when in-person visits aren't feasible

While social media offers incredible opportunities for engagement, we are mindful of its limitations, such as algorithm

biases that can restrict visibility and the fact that online interactions can never fully replace the warmth of face-to-face connections.

Nevertheless, when in-person contact isn't possible, digital outreach can make a meaningful difference.





“Small connections can lead to lasting support — and reaching out, even online, can change a life.”

We are committed to harnessing every available tool to reach women with care, compassion, and understanding. No woman should feel she has to face her journey alone.

### Testimonials and Impact

“Using your social media pages has been instrumental in helping women like me discover your

services. I first found the sound meditation through your posts, which has been incredibly helpful for managing my ADHD and calming my mind. The ‘Journey of Hope’ course was wonderful, allowing me to meet other women, share meaningful discussions, and make new friends. Your social media content is vital—it makes your services accessible,

approachable, and gave me the confidence to seek support.”

*“Your Facebook posts are very helpful; I often find out about new programs this way. It’s surprising how many people still don’t know about the Well Women Centre. I found you through social media myself, and attending your programs has significantly improved my well-being and mental health.”*

Thank you for your ongoing support and dedication to making a difference in women’s lives through the power of connection—both online and in person.

“Just knowing that the Derry Well Women services is just a click of a button away on social media has really made it so easy for me to find so much support and reassurance. I have been able to find out and sign up to a lot of the programmes on offer. It really has been so accessible and easy for me to reach them. Thank you all so very much for your continued and very much valued services. The social media platform is amazing and so lovely to use and access.

“The Well Women Centre has been a lifeline for me which I found on social media.

It has provided me with amazing uplifting experiences when I needed it most.

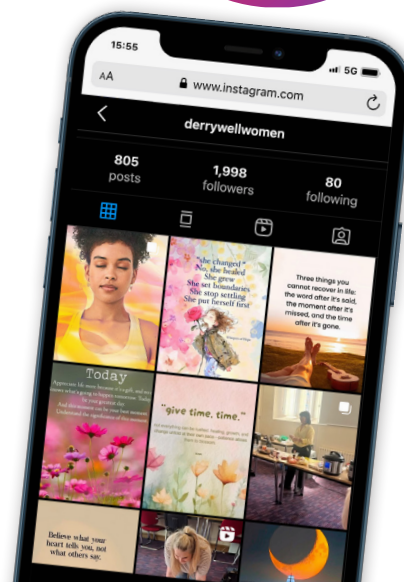
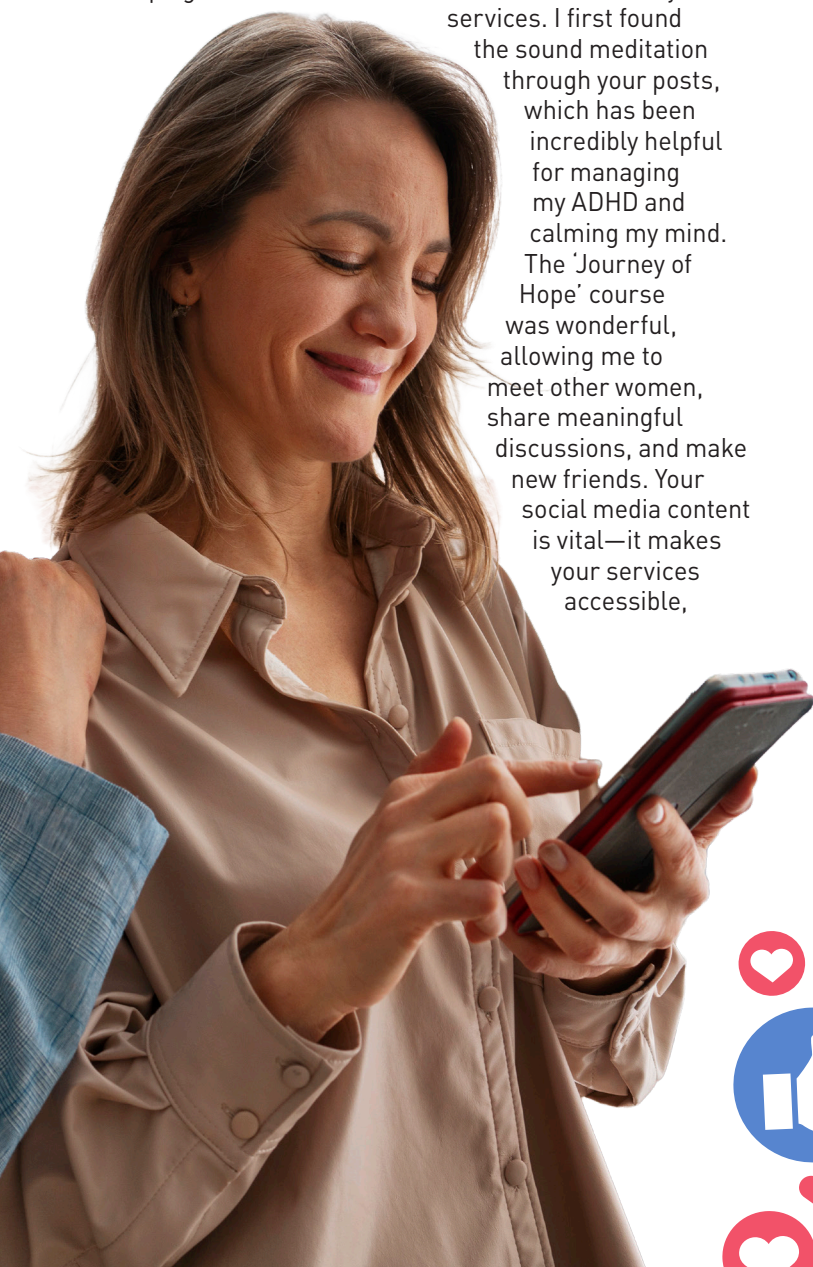
The friends I have made there have been invaluable and with such support I have felt great joy.

It cannot be underestimated how important this Service and Support is .

I am forever grateful that I am part of this AMAZING COMMUNITY.

Thank you

*Patricia Villa*  
Patricia Villa



# Statement of Financial Activities

(Incorporating the Income and Expenditure Account)  
For the year ended 31st March 2025

		Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	2025 Total	2024 Total
	Notes	£	£	£	£
<b>Incoming resources</b>					
Incoming resources from generating funds:					
Voluntary income	2	6,945	-	6,945	4,586
Investment income	3	36	-	36	34
Incoming resources from charitable activities	4	2,500	489,763	492,263	532,570
<b>Total incoming resources</b>		<u>9,481</u>	<u>489,763</u>	<u>499,244</u>	<u>537,190</u>
<b>Resources expended</b>					
Costs of generating funds:					
Charitable Activities	5	16,485	484,039	500,524	544,999
Governance costs	5	-	3,694	3,694	4,153
<b>Total resources expended</b>		<u>16,485</u>	<u>487,733</u>	<u>504,218</u>	<u>549,152</u>
<b>Net incoming (outgoing) resources for the year</b>	13	(7,004)	2,030	(4,974)	(11,962)
Transfer of Funds		2,928	(2,928)	-	-
		<u>(4,076)</u>	<u>(898)</u>	<u>(11,962)</u>	<u>(11,962)</u>
Total funds brought forward		<u>160,701</u>	<u>3,045</u>	<u>163,746</u>	<u>175,708</u>
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>		<u>156,625</u>	<u>2,147</u>	<u>158,772</u>	<u>163,746</u>

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses in the year and therefore a separate statement of total recognised gains and losses has not been prepared.

All of the above amounts relate to continuing activities.



# Balance Sheet

as at 31st March 2025

		2025		2024	
	Notes	£	£	£	£
<b>Fixed assets</b>					
Tangible assets	9		139,246		142,140
<b>Current assets</b>					
Debtors	10	13,834		6,783	
Cash at bank and in hand		39,112		121,542	
		<u>52,946</u>		<u>128,325</u>	
<b>Creditors: amounts falling due within one year</b>	11	<u>(33,420)</u>		<u>(106,719)</u>	
<b>Net current assets</b>			<u>19,526</u>		<u>21,606</u>
<b>Net assets</b>			<u>158,772</u>		<u>163,746</u>
<b>Funds</b>	12				
Restricted income funds	12		2,147		3,045
Unrestricted income funds	12		<u>156,625</u>		<u>160,701</u>
<b>Total funds</b>			<u>158,772</u>		<u>163,746</u>

The financial statements are prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 and the Charities SORP 2019 (FRS 102).

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Board and signed on its behalf by

*Philomena Mahon*

Signed 29/5/25

**Philomena Mahon**

Director

**Company Number: NI022926**

*Marie-Claire Logue*

Signed 29/5/25

**Marie Claire Logue**

Director

# Derry Well Women Team

## 2024 - 2025

### Committee

Phil Mahon (Chair)  
Tara Boyle (Vic Chair)  
Marie Claire Logue  
(Secretary)  
Sinead Callan (Treasurer)  
Mary Diamond  
Sandra McNeill  
Karen Meehan  
Paula Barr  
Pauline McClenaghan  
Nuala Doherty  
Grainne McLaughlin

### Staff

Susan Gibson  
(retired Sept 2024)  
Rhonda Murphy  
(commenced Sept 2024)  
Ann McDonald  
Patricia Villa  
Fiona Walker  
Oonagh Butler  
Yvonne O'Doherty  
Una McDaid  
Deirdre O'Neill  
Jennifer Turner  
Roisin McLaughlin

### Generic Counselling Team

Ann McDonald  
Majella McWilliams  
Moira Smith  
Anne Flanagan  
Tracy Harrison  
Madeline Callaghan  
Mary Claire Murphy  
Ellen Factor  
Sharon Laird  
Karen McGillion  
Valerie Long  
Cora McLaughlin  
Erin McLaughlin

### Cancer Counselling and Cancer Complementary Therapy Team

Mary Diamond  
Tracy Harrison  
Anne Flanagan  
Geraldine Duddy  
Patricia Swann  
Bridgeen Byrne  
Nolene McCauley

### Clinic Team

Nigel Nutt  
Anne Flanagan

### Tutors and Facilitators

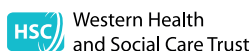
Siobhan Heaney  
Sinead McDaid  
Carol Watkins  
Marie Hone  
Anne Browne  
Marina Sweeney  
Patricia Swann  
Aileen Mulheron  
Karen Baldwin  
Deirdre O'Hara  
Tracy Harrison  
Orla O'Brien  
Dawn Bradley  
Philomena McDermott  
Sandra McNeill  
Joan Friel  
Elaine Carlin  
Brenda Plummer  
Wendy O'Hagan  
Catherine Powers  
Stephanie McGregor

### Complementary Therapists

Bridgeen Byrne  
Marie Hone  
Rose McCartney  
Patricia Swann  
Nolene McAuley  
Jean McCafferty  
Sheila McCorkell  
Elaine Carlin  
Joan Friel  
Jennifer McClements  
Caroline Harkin

### Support Group Facilitators

Mary Diamond  
Tracy Harrison  
Deirdre O'Hara  
Majella McWilliams



Derry Well Women  
17 Queen Street  
Derry BT48 7EQ

T. (0)28 7136 0777  
F. (0)28 7137 0103  
E. [info@derrywellwoman.org](mailto:info@derrywellwoman.org)

Charity No.: NIC 101247  
LLC: NI 22926

[www.derrywellwoman.org](http://www.derrywellwoman.org)

