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Her Centre



To engage, enable and empower women to move away from abuse, and to move **forward** with their lives

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## Her Centre Annual Report 2022-2023

### SECTION 1: ONGOING SUPPORT TO WOMEN EXPERIENCING ABUSE

Her Centre continues to receive increasing referrals, with an increase of **41%** from 5 years ago. This year we had **1120** referrals which is an increase of **9%** on our referrals for last year. Our engagements including women attending our one stop shop were 860. We are seeing more women with complex challenges that can be a barrier to leaving abuse, such as mental ill health, substance misuse problems, and having unsettled status in the country. For these reasons many women need to try leaving a number of times before all the support they need is in place to succeed.

We can often help women with unsettled status to access the right to remain and benefits, but many don't realise we can offer this. To get this message out we have expanded our outreach to both Eltham and Thamesmead and continue to run our 3 basic English classes and inform the students of our range of services.

### SECTION 2: PERFORMANCE AND OUTCOMES

Below are the outcomes we gathered from our exit survey with women we support.

	April - Sept	Oct - Mar
<b>Using a survey of service users (counselling sessions and IDVA)</b>	%	%
Services users that are confident that they can stay safe.	94	91
Service users that are aware of where to access help and support if needed	98	92
Service users that feel safer	94	91
<b>Using beginning and end risk assessments with service users</b>	%	%
Services users that have had a reduction in risk	91	87
Services users that have increased levels of self-confidence	86	84
Services users that have increased feelings of control	90	86

### **SECTION 3: TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR GPs ON RECOGNISING ABUSE**

Our Health programme has been extended for 2023/24. This is a training and support programme where Her Centre provide Greenwich GP practices with specialist training and then we take referrals from the surgeries to support women into safety. We have amended the training to be done as open training for all GPs run 6 to 8 times a year, rather than running for each surgery, as this will better allow new GP staff to get trained.

### **SECTION 4: SUPPORT FOR WOMEN IN ACCESSING HOUSING**

Our Housing Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA) post is based in the council Housing Options team two days a week supporting women who present as homeless due to abuse. This post has built strong links with housing and given additional support to women to understand where they can stay safe. We have worked to improve the types of temporary housing clients find themselves in, but recognise the lack of housing available, and press to keep families out of hotels with no cooking facilities. Last year we supported **191** women referred through housing or with housing as their primary need.

### **SECTION 5: SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN OF FAMILIES WHERE THERE HAS BEEN ABUSE**

Our Children's IDVA continues to work with children and families affected by abuse, taking referrals from Children's Social Services and once children are engaged referring to counselling provided by Deborah Ubee Trust. This service focuses on the child's experience of living with abuse in the family and works to help children come to terms with the changes in their lives, to understand what a healthy relationship is and to build better relationships with their non-abusive parent.

### **SECTION 6: SUPPORT FOR GIRLS WHO EXPERIENCE ABUSE.**

Our project for teenage girls continues and has helped girls facing a range of challenges including bullying as well as abuse by their peers. We have had high levels of engagement by working with other support providers to best meet girls on their own terms and then provide one to one session on consent, healthy relationships and look at building up their resilience. Girls and young women face huge challenges where boys are not challenged for their abuse. We are fortunate that Greenwich council are funding Little Fish Theatre to run the Embrace Programme to work with boys where some have troubled views of girls

and their relationships to them. Our Safer Streets programme has also funded some of the Little Fish Embrace sessions.

#### **SECTION 7: SEXUAL ABUSE SUPPORT**

Our Sexual Violence advocate supported **43** women who experienced sexual abuse either from within a relationship or from casual acquaintances or strangers and **22** cases of stalking. We secured funding from Safer Streets to compliment the work done with our Henry Smith Sexual Violence Advocacy.

#### **SECTION 8: GROUP AND INDIVIDUAL COUNSELLING**

Our weekly support group continues to run with a counsellor facilitator but as a peer led group, and we refer clients to partners Deborah Ubee Trust for individual long-term counselling. In all **103** women attended group and individual counselling.

#### **SECTION 9: BASIC ENGLISH CLASSES**

Our basic English classes did run both live and online with **129** attending over the year. We also ran our confidence building course for **14** women.

Picture from the thank you lunch thrown by students for their English teachers!



## SECTION 10: BACK TO WORK SUPPORT

Our work placement programme placed 24 women in the two-year extended funding from City Bridge Trust. This work ended in March 23, but we will continue to support women back into work in partnership with Greenwich Local Labour and Business.

## SECTION 11: EVENTS

Her Centre held 4 open events in 2022-23, with a range of themes. The first in April summarised our partnership work Thriving Young People, which included an excerpt from a Little Fish play and Minto questions and answers with the 12 school children in the audience. The event showed the positive work the 4 partners of Little Fish Theatre, Tramshed, Live Well Life coach for young people, and Her Centre were able to develop.

The second Open Forum in the summer was on women with disabilities leaving abuse. We had a range of speakers from Stay Safe East, Sign Health and Stay Safe Vision, and agencies and local women shared information and learning. In October we focused on the Cost-of-Living crisis with speakers from Welfare Rights, CAB Debt Advice and Southeast London Community Energy on how to access additional benefits and support.

Our biggest event of the year was the celebration of our 25th anniversary, held in January at the newly renovated Tramshed Theatre. With over 90 attendees it was a gala event with bubbly, a great performance from Little Fish Theatre, a panel of experts taking questions on domestic abuse, as below, and recognition for some of our key partners and friends. [See picture below.](#)



Our last event of the financial year was our International Women's Day event on equalities for all women. Our speakers included Oksana Kalala, manager of Ukrainian Support Greenwich, Sue Elsegood, Chair of Greenwich Association of Disabled people, Eleanor Lisney, Director of Sisters of Frida and founder of Culture Access, and our own Zainab Hasan, board member of the Her Centre. All shared their experiences and journeys, giving inspiration to all 72 people attending.



**Oksana and Zainab speaking at our International Women's Day event.**

## **SECTION 12: ONE STOP SHOP AND THE ADVICE HUB**

Though we are no longer directly involved in food distribution, we are still helping families who need it access the weekly Clockhouse food as well as covering the advice hub with other key advice agencies. Our One Stop Shop has seen numbers increase by 22% from last year as we come out of restrictions, with 223 women attending our weekly drop in and the new drop ins opened in October this year.

### **SECTION 13: TRAINING FOR PROFESSIONALS**

Her Centre has run training for our stakeholders this year including Stand by Me, teaching men and women how to be active bystanders where they see sexual harassment and abuse in public, as well as our GP training, our training for council staff and other volunteer sector agencies on our work. We ran our 3 levels of basic English courses, basic IT training and confidence building for women we work with, and for our staff ran refreshers in our data base and our safety system, and in lone working and avoiding burn out. In the coming year we will run more Stand by Me training again, and awareness training for women in diverse local communities, to ensure women know what services are available and encourage women to support other women. This is funded from the new increase in our Equalities grant from Greenwich council.

### **SECTION 14: FUNDRAISING**

Our fundraising with the Big Give match funding programme raised **£30,000** over both the women focused funding and the Christmas challenge. With central government funding shifting to a prevention focus we have only been able to replace one of the two posts we had funding end for, so we are running one staff down. While we are managing, this does limit the depth of service we can provide to the most complex cases, who need numerous calls and appointments to stay engaged. We continue to search for funds to meet this need.

### **SECTION 15: THE COMING YEAR**

Our work with women experiencing abuse continues with phone and face to face support depending on what works best for the client. Our One Stop Shop expansion will be reviewed, to ensure we have the right location in Eltham and to better promote Thamesmead. Our English classes are still hugely popular and give us a platform to inform women of our wider services. We continue to develop prevention work and will rerun the Stand by Her Training throughout the spring. We are seeking how we can do more partnership work with Little Fish Theatre to better raise awareness with young people and are talking with the council to keep this work joined up and so most effective, picking up schools where each agency has identified concerns. We continue to work closely with the Violence against Women and Girls Strategic Partnership group and with our user steering group who actively voice their views, at both local level through council meetings and events and at national level when speaking with the Ministry of Justice on family courts.



The team continue to work extremely hard and face ever growing numbers of clients to support, but they stay focused on supporting women to make their own choices. We face another year that starts in deficit but are confident we will find enough money to meet our service commitments, as we did last year. Our board of trustees continue to provide support with their range of skills and experiences and will help us to keep the service meeting women's needs in Greenwich.

#### SECTION 16: FUNDERS

Her Centre would like to thank all our funders, especially Greenwich council who now fund us through a number of funding streams. We would also like to thank Henry Smith, City Bridge and Lloyds Foundation, who have all funded us over multiple years and projects, and Brook Trust and Charles Hayward for funding our outreach and drop in work. We secured our first major grant from Health in October for our Health Independent Domestic Abuse Advocate, and our first grant from the Betsy Foundation and from Sara Charlton. Rosa funded us as part of the Covid crisis funding, We also had funding from Mercers and Goldsmiths towards our English and other classes for women and both Peabody and Southern Housing group gave us pilot grants to expand our one stop shop to 3 other locations. Thank you all for keeping our work alive.



**RB Greenwich supporting our Big Give fundraising appeal**