



# Annual Report 2019/2020



## **A message from our Chair of Trustees** **Pauline Geraghty MBE**

**Every year our committed and dedicated team of staff and volunteers help to achieve our mission of helping people live their lives free from domestic abuse. This has been another successful year where we have developed the services we provide and increased the number of people we have supported.**



**The report highlights our achievements, gives an overview of those we support and offers us an opportunity to say thank you to everyone who has helped us make our work possible. We rebranded during the year and are encouraged that the new Wish Centre logo and straplines are helping us to broaden our reach with the general public.**

**We started the year with the excitement of two new commissions and ended it with the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic so this has been a year to remember. One constant throughout the year however has been the resolve of all who work and support the Wish Centre to keep a focus on those people who rely on our services to safeguard them and enable them to survive the devastating effects of domestic abuse. We give thanks to our CEO, Shigufta Khan and our Operational Manager Debbie Springham for their leadership during the year and the way they have steered the organisation but every single member of staff and volunteer has played their part. We are fortunate too to have new trustees joining the Board and recognise the expertise these new appointees bring will strengthen the strategic direction of the organisation.**

**We are eagerly waiting for the Domestic Abuse Bill to receive Royal Assent and hope this new legislation improves responses to domestic abuse. We need to have sustainable funding for specialist services so that charities, like ours, can continue to support all those needing tailored provision.**

**As we end another year it is important the trustees say thank you to everyone who has supported the Wish Centre. Our funders are crucial to the continuation of our work but so are local people and organisations that donate to us in many different ways. Whether it is a grant from a national funder, a small monetary donation from a local person or gifts in kind they are all valuable. We urge anyone who is passionate about ending domestic abuse to carry on supporting us. Rest assured we will carry on the work to help people live lives free from abuse.**

**Pauline Geraghty MBE**

**Chair of the Wish Centre (BDDWA) Board of Trustees**



**The Conservatory at one of our refuge provisions provides a wonderful social space.**



**The WISH Centre**

## **A message from our CEO**

### **Shigufta Khan**

**We celebrated our 30th anniversary in 18/19 and reflected in the growth and development of the organisation over the last 30 years. In the last twelve months we have grown again by securing two commissions. The first as the commissioned provider for domestic abuse services in Blackburn and Darwen and the second to deliver perpetrator services across Lancashire.**



**We are proud to have directly supported 3292 people in the last twelve months and responded to 19,382 helpline calls from people seeking help and support victims and from professionals. In recent years we have noticed an increase in the number of people with complex needs who have come through our service and over the past year we have supported 1872 service users with additional vulnerabilities. These service users have required more time and extra support to ensure that they are able to live lives free from abuse. The services we offer include a helpline, and support at the point of crisis by our team of specialist IDVAs and advice workers. We now have a specialist stalking case worker in the team adding to the support we can offer. We have safe accommodation that provides sanctuary and holistic support and in the last twelve months we have been able to support 65 women and 85 children.**

**We offer a range of therapeutic programmes for victims, children and perpetrators. Our victim's programmes are AIM and Recovery toolkit. Our children's and young people's programmes include Helping Hands, Young People's Recovery toolkit, Expect Respect and Parachute programme. We also deliver a social integration programme called Living Together in our refuges. Our extensive experience and knowledge around working with children and young people has helped us to secure the Investing in Children accreditation and in 2019 a contract from the OPCC to develop resources for teachers to support Operation Encompass.**

**We are extremely proud to have expanded our provision for perpetrators across Lancashire. We believe that holistic support in conjunction with a programme can deliver more positive outcomes and the results we have seen with this approach are extremely positive. This year we gained Respect accreditation in recognition of the high-quality work being undertaken with perpetrators and support given to their victims. We also offer a legal surgery in conjunction with local solicitors and a counselling and volunteering service.**

**In March this year we faced one of our biggest challenges COVID 19, we had to transfer all of the services above to remote delivery. Following government advice on social distancing we closed our offices and transferred our team to remote working. We have continued to provide a helpline, crisis support, refuge accommodation, online programmes and counselling. In addition, we have launched an online chat service to support service users who are unable to make a call. We have also developed a range of resources for service users and professionals on keeping safe and emotionally well in lockdown.**

**The world as we know it has changed and we will take the learning from our ability to adapt and deliver services in a new way forward to the next twelve months.**

## **Shigufta Khan**



**The Courtyard at one of our refuge provisions.**

# In the last year we have received **19,382** calls to our helpline

Many of these calls are from people seeking advice. That advice can be needed by individuals who are taking their first, tentative steps to obtaining more in-depth support, needing to know what help is out there before making firm plans. Many are from professionals who require support to help the people they are working with. Occasionally calls are from from organisations developing their own services. We believe offering this advice to professionals and organisations is vital as it benefits not only individuals, but the wider community. It enables broader and better understanding of domestic abuse and supports development of skills to ensure that victims of abuse receive understand and appropriate support from all agencies they are involved with.

## Referrals

We have accepted **3292** referrals into service in the proceeding 12 months, their requirements for support were:-

IDVA & Advice Service - **2156**

Refuge - **163**

Children's Programmes & 1:1 - **330**

Victim's Programmes - **295**

Perpetrator Programmes - **313**

A total of **3548** children were linked to the number of referrals we received.



Of the total referrals, some **1872** had additional vulnerabilities. **1078** suffered from mental ill health and **794** were dealing with issues of drug or alcohol dependency.

We are fortunate to have specialist staff members and an in-house counselling service who are skilled in dealing with an array of complex needs and can develop individual support plans that meet these needs. This also means we do not need to decline referrals because of individual's complexities. We regularly co-work with colleagues from other agencies to get the best plan and outcome for every person referred to us.

Repeat referrals for the year are 23%. This is an increase on last year but much lower than increases we have seen in previous years, in 2014/2015 the rate was 46%. We believe that this is partly down to the offer of longer-term support for victims and an increase in referrals for our perpetrator work. However we need to remember that we encourage victims to seek help and support so a repeat referral highlights that a victim is acting on the safety plan that is in place however is potentially being failed by services if the offender is continuing with their persecution.

## Programmes

Our programmes for children and young people, adult victims of abuse and those perpetrating abuse have been well received over the year.

Over the last 12 months we have received **330** referrals for children & young people and **608** referrals for adults (victim and perpetrator groups). We are proud of the way our programmes have been developed and have received very positive feedback from participants, some of which you can read later in this report.

We have a skilled staff team, supported by volunteers, who deliver these programmes within the community and in our refuges. In special circumstances staff members are able to offer 1:1 programme delivery to meet service user's individual needs.

## Refuge

In the last 12 months we have received **163** referrals for refuge and we have been able to accept and support **65** women and **85** children. Every service user has an individual support plan that is made with them and identifies areas where they need help and support to enable them to live independently. This may include help with parenting, budgeting, cooking, mental health or substance misuse.

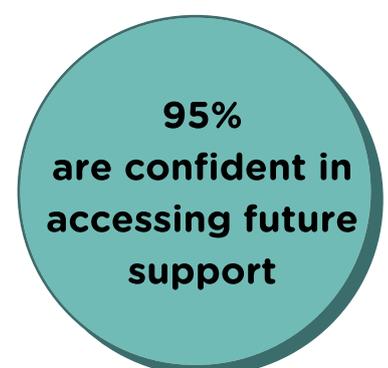
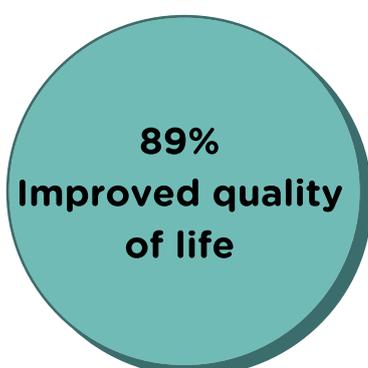
We offer support to children & young people and this includes activities such as gardening, cooking, crafts and our living together programme.

## Volunteers

We continue to develop a strong and diverse volunteering team. They are providing support in a number of areas including programmes, peer support group, peer mentoring, cooking classes, help with improving service user IT skills and educational opportunities, orientation when moving to refuge and counselling. Our volunteers are supported by a dedicated coordinator, are offered comprehensive training in domestic abuse and ongoing training in areas such as mental health, substance misuse, befriending and mentoring.

## Outcomes

We want to make people who come to us as victims feel safer and gain confidence to live their lives free from abuse. It is encouraging to hear that **89%** of service users feel they have an improved quality of life, **95%** feel safer and **95%** are confident in accessing support in the future should they need to. Service user satisfaction is important to us and these figures encourage us that we are providing the correct support to meet the needs of people who make the huge step to ask us for a service.



## Service User Feedback

Thanks Anne, its been a pleasure working with you, I'll miss our chats on a Tuesday evening when I get home from work.

I am madly in love with my partner and I have realised through working with you that I wasn't as nice as I thought I was and some of my actions were abusive .

Thankyou for all you help.

Dave\*

Sue\* stated that AIM had really opened her eyes and helped her to see that she did not need to put up with abuse, that she needs to be independent and in control of her own life. Sue said that she thought she was going crazy to do AIM `before she came to The Wish Centre tbut can now see that her perpetrator has been controlling and abusing her. She wants to be free from him. She wants to concentrate on getting her son the help he needs with his learning difficulties and to live in peace. Sue said she can see things more clearly, that 'something has twigged'. Sue feels that completing the AIM program has caused a shift in her thinking and that she feels supported and validated.

\*names have been changed to protect confidentiality

After our conversation the other day I have now received the work you have sent me. The course looks and sounds in depth and intensive, very interesting too. I can see I'm going to learn a lot from you and this course and get some personal growth too. It all links with my substance abuse recovery which I'm over 12 months into. I'm really impressed and looking forward to working with you. I wasn't sure when first referred but after speaking with you I have now changed my opinion.  
Philip \*

I have learned so much in the AIM program! In particular around stalking and harassment. I didn't even know what that was abuse and against the law. I can't wait to start Recovery Toolkit. I think this will be good for me because by confidence has been really badly affected.  
Elaine\*

**Roz\* has stated that she felt AIM has opened her eyes, helped her to think in a different way and take responsibility for controlling her life. Her partner is eager to start programmes himself now and they both want to move forwards. Roz said that initially she was not happy to engage in AIM programme because she felt embarrassed about the past and what had happened but says that she now looks forward to the sessions.**

**I've really enjoyed AIM and feel that it has really highlighted the level of control I suffered in my previous relations. I definitely think that I'll be able to spot warning signs if I get into another relationship now. I've learned what I need to keep myself and my child safe from harm and future abuse.  
Melanie\***

**Finding The Wish was the best thing that happened to me. I learned so much. I know now that the abuse wasn't my fault & that no matter how hard I tried to be "better" it wouldn't have stopped. I can finally be just me.  
Ellie\***

## **Our Funders**

**In the last 12 months we have received funding from:**

**Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council**

**Lancashire County Council**

**The Henry Smith Charity**

**BBC Children In Need**

**Lloyds Bank Foundation**

**National Lottery Community Fund**

**Brian Mercer Charitable Trust**

**The Pilgrim Trust**

**The Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government**



**We would also like to say thank you to all the individuals, businesses and community groups that have supported us throughout the year with fundraising and donations of Christmas gifts, Easter Eggs, household items, food and toiletries. Your donations make such a huge difference to the families we work with.**