

Annual Report
2011/12



DERBY WOMEN'S CENTRE

Charity Number: 1135743

Company Ltd by Guarantee: 07191201



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Who We Are

Derby Women's Centre was established in 1978 by a group of local women who were keen to tackle issues affecting females in their community. From these humble beginnings, we have grown to become one of the leading providers of essential support and advice services for women in Derby city and county.

As one of only a few local organisations who deal exclusively with women, our female-only status is a big selling point. Many of our service users are vulnerable and feel uncomfortable accessing services in mixed gender environments.

We pride ourselves on our ability to provide a warm, friendly, confidential and non-judgemental environment in which even our most vulnerable service users can feel relaxed and comfortable. We welcome all women irrespective of religion, cultural background and disability. We are committed to making our services accessible even for women on a low income so that those who need our help the most are able to benefit from our work.

What We Do

Our support services and activities are aimed at local women aged 16+. We are committed to empowering women so that they can be more independent. This year has seen a strong focus on delivering courses and workshops to develop confidence, reduce isolation and encourage our service users to learn new skills. For example, we have offered confidence-boosting courses and arts and crafts workshops. Overall, our service delivery has included counselling, courses, workshops, support groups, debt and benefit advice, employment advice and complementary therapies.

Who We Help

A lot of the women who visit us are experiencing disadvantage due to factors such as unemployment, low-level skills, poor housing, poor mental health and wellbeing, isolation and living in areas of Derby City which have high levels of deprivation.

Our Mission

We empower women to enable them to lead more independent lives.

Our Values

- To provide a supportive, welcoming and non-judgemental environment

Our Objectives

1. To improve the physical and mental health of local women
2. To facilitate personal development
3. To relieve poverty amongst women in Derby and Derbyshire

General Information

Charity Registration Number

1135743

Registered Office

4 Leopold Street
Derby DE1 2HE

Board of Trustees

Nasreen Quayum
Maureen Underwood
Hedia Aslam
Majid Waris
Sue Lum-Wai
Rachel Bradley
Tolu Egodibie
Shazia Parveen

Staff Members

Yasmin Nazir	CEO
Elaine Clancy	Counselling Coordinator
Elaine Robinson	Services Coordinator
Rehana Kauser	Debt & Benefit Support
Farah Akhtar	Admin/Finance Officer
Sarim Ahmed	Finance Assistant
Zulikha Bokhari	Key Skills Support Worker
Sally Aquire	Marketing Officer
Sarah Stirland	Volunteer Coordinator
Asma Kiran	Advice Officer
Rose Williams	Communications Officer
Mary Wright	Cleaner

General Volunteers

Sue A
Sue L-W
Aminah
Meena
Naffia
Nafeesa
Serish
Ayesha
Nosheen
Qudsiya
Nicola
Pat
Gweno
Alice
Tara
Lisa

Services Volunteers

Sylvia
Liz
Helen
Kate
Majid
Pamela
Complementary therapy students

Fashion Show Volunteers

Hannah
Kim
Annie
Carole
Ruth
The designers – Cathryn, Fazane,
Monika and Laura
The models

Chair Overview

Like many charities, we have faced some tough challenges this year. The most difficult of these was the loss of core funding from Derby City Council, which will impact on our ability to retain key members of staff and continue the same level of service provision.

This was not entirely unexpected given the proposed cuts across the voluntary sector but it was still a huge disappointment, not least because of the potential knock-on effects for our service users. To the best of our knowledge, they were the only local authority to cut funding to women's services during what is undoubtedly a time of economic hardship for many women and their families.

They invited the general public to consult with them as part of the appeal process and we received good support from this. This was not enough to change the outcome so our future is still at risk, but we are working hard to try to secure more funding.

While we were obviously hugely disappointed with the decision, we have been determined to stay positive and fight for our survival. Thanks to Derbyshire County Council, we now own our building - this will help us to cut core costs and we're thrilled that they have recognised the importance of our work in this way. We have also been helped by the generosity of our supporters, who have enabled us to raise over £1,000 for counselling support.

We are working hard to change our situation and I'm pleased to say that the situation is looking a lot more positive now!

Nasreen Quayum

CEO Overview

Once again, it's been a challenging year for Derby Women's Centre. The funding setbacks have been very disappointing but we've always been determined to fight for our survival.

Despite these obvious difficulties, I'm proud of our achievements this year. We have continued to deliver services relating to our key aims - improving mental health and wellbeing; encouraging self-development, and reducing poverty and inequalities. We also introduced a new service: Employment/Key Skills Development to support women into work.

We spent much of the year planning our fashion show fundraiser, which was held in October. This was by far our biggest challenge to date and we were thrilled at how successful it turned out to be. You can read more about it in the Fundraising Report on page 11.

The efforts of the staff and volunteers have been nothing short of exceptional. Volunteer support has enabled us to continue offering some degree of counselling support and popular services such as creative courses and complementary therapies. This has helped us to bring in some much-needed additional income.

We've also had a fantastic response from the public over the last few months in particular. Our October fashion show fundraiser brought in £2,500 and more recently, we received almost £1000 in donations to support the revival of the counselling service.

Yasmin Nazir

Counselling Report

Service Overview

The counselling service is open to women aged 16 and over in Derby city and county. Our counselling clients come to us for a number of reasons, ranging from depression, anxiety issues and low self-esteem to deeper issues such as abuse and domestic violence (both past and present). On the CORE system, most of the counselling clients are in the moderate to severe level of rating when they first receive counselling support. This is much improved for the majority of clients by the time they stop accessing counselling.

The Funding Situation

Our funding from the Big Lottery ended in March 2011 and this had a big effect on the counselling service. Losing vital counselling staff impacted on our ability to deliver the service and forced us to scale back our counselling support. This meant that we were only able to offer a much reduced service which focused on existing clients and we were not able to support new clients. The service was reduced to 6 qualified counsellors working with their existing clients, who were supported by a Trustee (who was a qualified counsellor).

This was done with much regret as we were still receiving a significant number of requests for immediate counselling support, which we were not able to meet for much of the year. Naturally, we were not comfortable with this situation given the number of enquiries still being received and in September, we started to use the rest of our reserves to keep the service alive while we sought new funding opportunities.

The service has been managed by a Volunteer Coordinator on a part-time basis since December 2011, which has enabled things to move forwards again.

We now have 6 student counsellors who have recently joined on placement alongside 9 qualified counsellors. A further 9 counsellors are awaiting checks and interviews before they begin their placements.

There were concerns that counselling support would be forced to end but fortunately this has not been the case. By December 2011, we had made the decision to get the service fully up and running again to meet the obvious demand for appointments.

Who We've Helped

Despite the difficulties in funding the service, we were still able to offer assessments to 23 women this year. This is considerably less than we have been able to support in previous years but this was to be expected given that we were forced to scale back our counselling support and work solely with existing clients for most of the year. We are now working towards getting a full complement of counsellors on board so that we can return to our previous levels of support.

Waiting Times

We had previously been able to reduce the waiting times to less than 4 weeks but the scaled-back service meant that we were not able to take on new clients for much of the year. After making the decision to reopen the service to new clients, we have been busy offering assessments to clients and arranging placements for new volunteers so that we can re-establish the shorter waiting times that were previously the norm.

Support Services

We have been delivering several support services this year. Alongside the well-established debt and benefit support and legal support services, we have recently developed an employment support service.

Debt and Benefit Support

Who we've helped

75 women were supported through the service between April and September 2011. At this point, our funding from Nationwide ended and we were forced to suspend the service for the rest of the year. We hope to reinstate it as soon as possible if new funding can be secured.

Overview

The service was aimed at women struggling with debt problems and/or wanting advice on financial support.

Some of the problems tackled by the Debt & Benefit Support Worker included providing debt and housing support, drawing up easy payment plans with creditors, producing better of calculations, making benefit claims and claim appeals, preventing repossession by bailiffs and teaching money management techniques.

How we helped

With our support, beneficiaries were able to improve their financial situation and rebuild their lives.

Many of the women accessing the service had mental health issues. Others were experiencing a range of situations which affected their ability to access mainstream support services or their desire to do so. This included single parenthood, being from an ethnic minority background, having poor numeracy and literacy skills, being at risk of eviction, homelessness and/or bankruptcy, and relationship difficulties and/or not having the confidence to attend appointments alone.

Employment Support

Who we've helped

There were 126 attendees for the workshops, although some of these were repeat attendances by women coming to more than one workshop.

Overview

Through Lloyds TSB funding, we delivered employment support. From September 2011 to March 2012, we ran workshops to help women to get into or back into work. This included support on writing CVs and cover letters, communication and telephone skills, time management skills, building confidence, assertiveness, preparing for interviews, first aid and health and safety.

These workshops were often delivered in partnership with other agencies, including JET, Next Step, Remploy, Derby Learning and Development Consortium and British Red Cross.

How we helped

35 women were able to find work or volunteering roles after accessing support at the Centre.

Service User Feedback

- "Good tips on how to develop my CV and gained invaluable feedback."
- "Boosted my confidence."

Legal Support

Who we've helped

39 women attended legal appointments at Derby Women's Centre.

Overview

In partnership with Nelson's solicitors, we offered free legal support on Wednesday lunchtimes and this was extended to include Legal Aid appointments on selected Wednesdays.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Support Groups

We currently deliver two support groups at Derby Women's Centre: the Freedom Programme and the Phoenix Group.

Freedom Programme

The Freedom Programme is an on-going domestic violence support group, which runs in twelve-week cycles. An average of 13 women attended each session and this rose to 17 on occasion. The group was frequently oversubscribed, to the point that we were reluctantly forced to allocate places on a first come, first served basis for some of the year.

Phoenix Group

The Phoenix Group is a mental health self-support group. Through the group, members were able to boost their self-esteem significantly and reduce their isolation. A depression workshop was held as part of the group. An average of 6 women attended each session, which rose to 13 for some workshops.

Service User Feedback

- "Learnt techniques that are supportive."
- "Liked seeing /hearing how others feel."
- "Learnt some useful ways of thinking about depression and ways of coping."

Confidence Courses/Workshops

We have regularly delivered courses and workshops designed to improve confidence and self-esteem.

Thoughts, Feelings and Behaviour

This course was repeated thanks to high demand and through money raised at a coffee morning. It focused on the thoughts-feelings-behaviour cycle and how it can impact on everyday life. Women who attended the course learnt how to recognise negative thoughts and turn them into positive ones. An average of 12 women attended each session.

Service User Feedback

- "Gained insight into self-managing thoughts, feelings and behaviour."
- "Learnt that there is hope and I am not on my own."

Love Yourself, Heal Yourself Course

This course was based on improving self-esteem and self-worth. It ran from January to March and was attended by an average of 10 women per session.

Belper Confidence Course

As part of our commitment to delivering support in both Derby city and county, we delivered a confidence course in Belper. This was funded by John Weston and attended by 5 women.

Service User Feedback

- "I learn something new every time I come."

Healthy Self Development Course

This 6-week course was delivered in September and October in partnership with Derby College. It promoted a healthy lifestyle and also enabled attendees to improve their communication skills. An average of 9 women attended each workshop.

Wellbeing Workshops

This course was held in May and was funded by The Body Shop. Its aims included building a healthy outlook and developing self-acceptance. It was attended by 7 women.

Service User Feedback

- "Learnt to be kinder to myself and less critical."
- "Please keep up this invaluable work ...The thoughtful, respectful and informative attitude of the facilitator makes me feel safe and comfortable enough to try to express myself."
- "My self-esteem improved and my sense of self."

Complementary Therapies

In line with our aim of improving mental health and wellbeing, we regularly offered complementary therapies to service users. These were frequently delivered by third year students from the University of Derby as part of their degree course but others were provided by qualified volunteers.

The range of complementary therapies on offer included aromatherapy, reflexology, Swedish massage, shiatsu and Indian head massage and therapeutic massage.

We charged a flat fee of £5 per session, which meant that the cost was affordable for many of our service users. Therapeutic massages were delivered in partnership with British Red Cross and the money raised was split between both organisations.

Due to the low cost, the complementary therapies were extremely popular. Because we were only able to offer 2-6 sessions per week (per therapy), we were not able to fulfil the full demand for appointments. Waiting lists were in place to accommodate women who could not get appointments but were keen to take up cancelled slots if they became available.

Highlights: A total of £793.55 was raised in service fees from the various therapies.

Creative and Social Activities

Creative Workshops

In line with our aim of encouraging service users to develop themselves, we delivered a series of creative workshops throughout the year. Many of these workshops also helped to reduce isolation and acted as a welcome social opportunity.

Creative Writing

We delivered three creative writing workshops in partnership with volunteers from Derby College. An average of 8 women attended these workshops.

Service User Feedback

- "I feel I have learned how to be more creative with my writing."

Crafts Workshops

In partnership with Derby Museum and artist Philippa Larkham, we delivered a number of crafts workshops. An initial six workshops introduced Philippa and demand meant that a further 10 workshops were held in the autumn. At least 8 women attended each workshop and this rose to 16 on occasion.

Service User Feedback

- "Learnt things I have wanted to do in ages!"
- "Gained self-esteem and practical skills."

Quilting/Sewing Workshops

The Soroptomists of Derby returned to deliver two courses. In October and November, they facilitated a short course in quilting. This gave our service users a unique opportunity to produce Medieval Christmas banners. They were back again in March and this time, the group produced some very stylish cushions. An average of 6 women attended the workshops.

Coffee Mornings

Our coffee mornings are our main social activity and one of our most popular activities. They are held on a twice-monthly basis and each based around a different theme. These included St. Patrick's Day, St George's Day (and the Royal Wedding), a Taste of Italy and Medieval Christmas.



Fundraising

Funding difficulties have made this year difficult but we have been touched by the support from the general public, which has helped us to weather the storm somewhat.

Fashion Show Fundraiser

In October 2011, we hosted a fashion show fundraiser at the Riverside Centre, Pride Park. This was a big step up from our previous fundraising events and included a sit-down meal, raffle and pre-show and post-show entertainment.

In line with our aim of empowering women and boosting self-esteem, we wanted to promote positive body image through the event. This was a special event for us as several of our service users were heavily involved in the planning process and also acted as models on the night. These women have been coming to DWC for some time and most were in a bad place when we first met them. The fact that they now feel confident enough to get up on stage shows how far they have come with our support.

We raised £2,500 on the night through ticket sales, raffle tickets and donations on the night.

Grants

Several of our grants ended this year, notably Derby City Council, the Big Lottery and Nationwide, but we have been applying for various funding sources to replace this income.

One of these has been successful and we can confirm that we have been awarded a £47,000 grant from the Advice Services Fund to provide advice on debt, housing, benefits and employment.

Fundraising / Donations

Since news of Derby City Council's funding proposal was made public, we have received great support from the general public. This raised over £1,000 in donations, which will enable us to expand our counselling support.



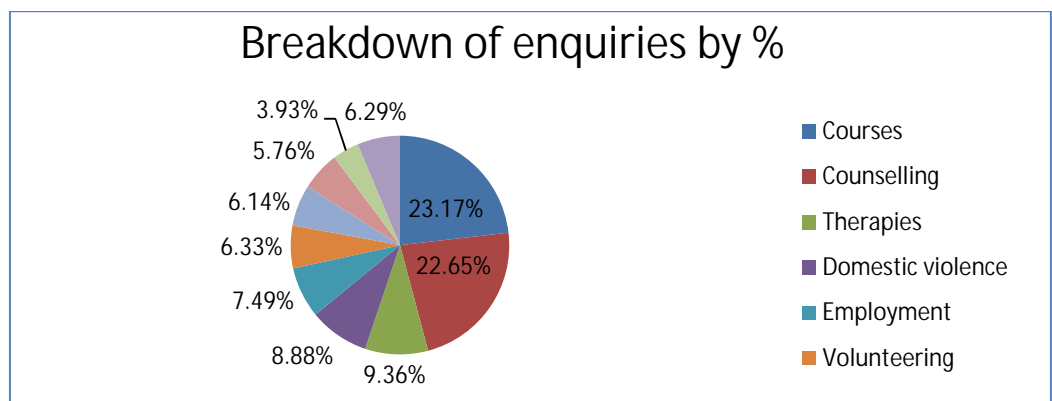
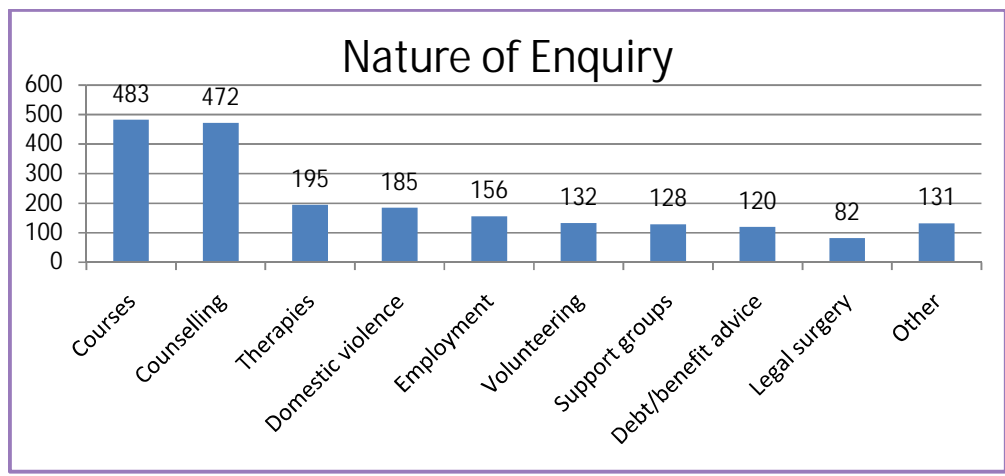
Service User Statistics

Telephone Enquiry Statistics

We have seen even more interest in our courses and workshops, which have predominantly been aimed at boosting confidence levels and encouraging self-development.

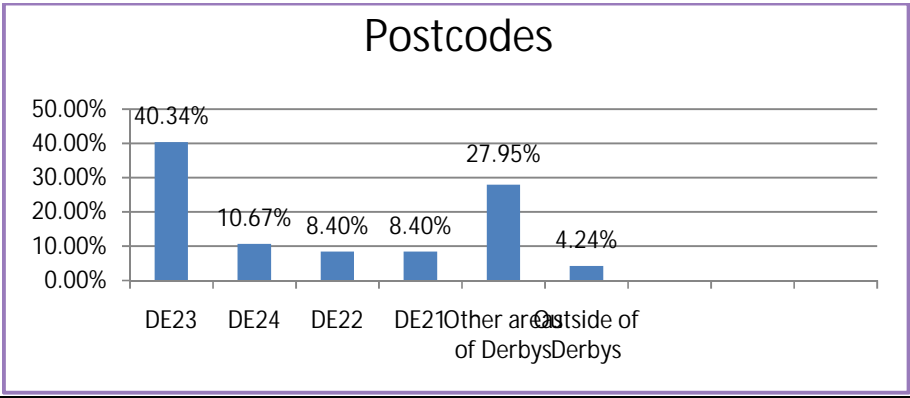
Despite being forced to scale back our counselling support, we continued to receive many enquiries about the service. This demonstrated our position as a leading provider of low cost counselling support for local women.

In total, we received just over 2,000 enquiries - an increase of around 300 from the previous year. As other services were cut back, more women have been turning to us help.



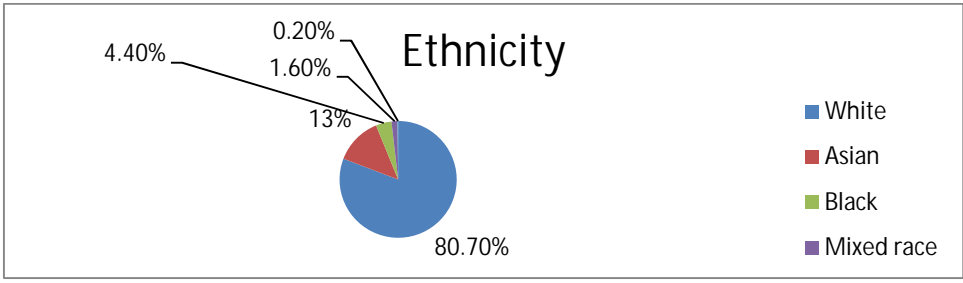
Location Statistics

Over 2/3rds of visits were from postcodes in and around Derby city centre, notably Normanton, Littleover, Allenton, Alvaston, Chaddesden, Spondon, Mackworth and Allestree. We had more visits from women in Derbyshire as services in their area were affected. We also received a number of visits from women living outside of Derbyshire.



Ethnicity Statistics

Of the women who detailed their ethnicity on our sign-in sheets, most were of White British or White Other backgrounds, as has been the case in previous years. We plan to introduce services/activities targeted at BME women in the next as we feel to a large extent that their needs are not being met elsewhere.



Age Statistics

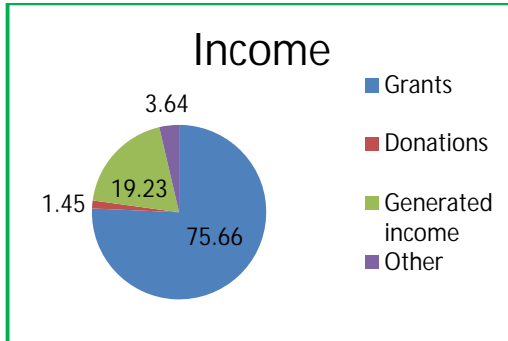
Most of our service users were aged 25 -44. Supporting more younger and older women is a key future priority.

Disability Statistics

While most of the women visiting us were not disabled, 8.4% stated that they consider themselves to be physically or mentally disabled.

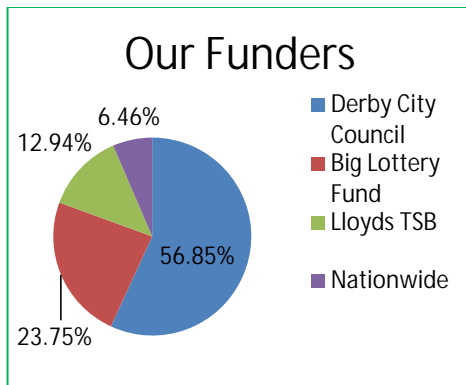
Finance Report

Income



Most of our income came from grants but we were also able to generate additional income from service fees room hire and donations.

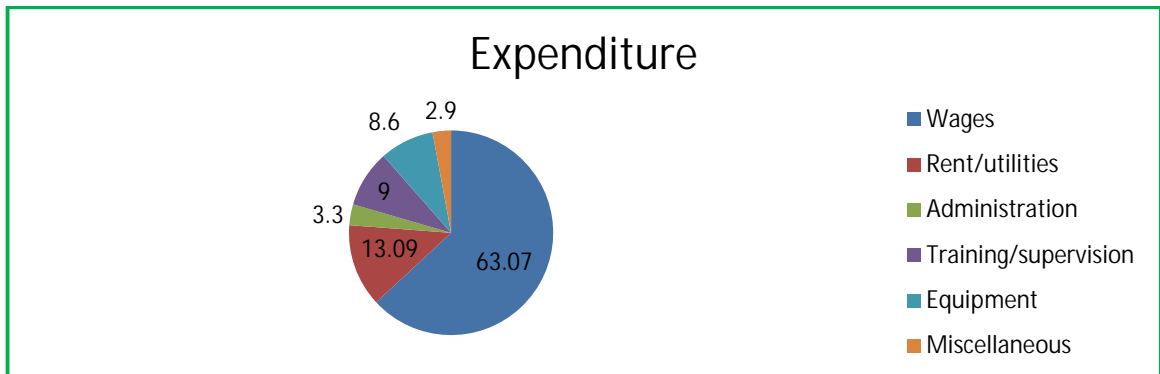
Funding Overview



Our main funder was Derby City Council, who continued to assist with revenue costs.

Some of our core services were also supported by funding. This included counselling, employment support and debt and benefit support.

Expenditure Overview



Equipment – Includes repair and maintenance costs.

Training- Includes the costs of regular training and supervision for volunteer counsellors.

Structure, Governance and Management

Derby Women's Centre was founded in 1978 and became a limited company in March 2010. The CEO is responsible for the operational delivery of the organisation to ensure that it runs as smoothly as possible. This includes overseeing the delivery of key services and monitoring performance targets to maintain the current high standards of efficiency and service user satisfaction.

In addition to this, the Board of Trustees has a significant role in shaping the strategic direction of Derby Women's Centre. There are currently five members who meet on a bi-monthly basis and who have been recruited in line with the trustee recruitment policy to ensure that they are capable of guiding the organisation both now and in the future.

Strategic Planning and Development

Following a previous full-scale review of the strategic direction of Derby Women's Centre, we have continuously assessed our performance to ensure that we are on target for meeting the original aims.

Risk Management

The governing is constantly reviewing the main risks that may affect the organisation and taking steps to ensure that they have as little impact as possible. The SWOT technique is one of the key aspects of our risk management process.

Reserves Policy

In line with the practices outlined by the Charity Commission and National Council for Voluntary Organisations, the governing body operates a reserves policy in which unrestricted funds in the organisation's possession account for three to six months of expenditure. This was developed by the Trustees as part of the risk management approach to ensure that a shortfall does not occur. This year, we have found our reserves invaluable for maintaining the counselling service.

Acknowledgements

Funders

Derby City Council
Greggs
Lloyds TSB
Nationwide

Partners

British Red Cross
Business Link
Chinese Community Centre
Community Action
Connexions Derbyshire
Derby Citizen's Advice and Law Centre
Derby College
Derby Community Safety Partnership
Derby Homes
Derbyshire MI ND
Derby Museum
Derbyshire Police
Disability Direct
JET
Job Centre Plus
Little Black Dog
NatWest
Nelson's Solicitors
Next Step
NHS
University of Nottingham
Probation Service
Relate
Remploy
Rethink
The Sherwood Institute
The Soroptomists of Derby
SureStart Children's Centres
University of Derby
The Write Care Project

Donations / Fundraising

Alison Stirland
Al Shafquat Hajj
Derby County
Derby Quad
The Body Shop
John Lewis
Lush
Morrisons
Pak Foods
Private donations
Rollerworld
Wilkinsons

We would also like to thank everyone who has donated to us over the past year to support our survival via text, credit/debit card or in person at our Open Day and fashion show fundraising events.

A special mention must go to the anonymous lady who generously donated £500 to help us expand our counselling service after previously receiving support at DWC.

Statements of Support: Our Patrons

"What I really admire about the Centre is the variety of services offered and the integrated delivery. The importance of being able to access a number of services in the same place - a women-only environment in which they feel welcome and safe - cannot be underestimated."

--Kavita Oberoi

"I became a Patron of Derby Women's Centre in March 2010 after learning more about their work at an International Women's Day event in Derby. I was impressed by their commitment to helping all women, regardless of situation or background. We all need support and stability, and for many women in Derby, it's Derby Women's Centre that they turn to for help and guidance."

--Perween Warsi

"The assurance of a women-only environment, the confidentiality and non-judgemental welcome that all women receive needs to continue in Derby. Any suggestion of a reduced service or closure amounts to women at real risk of having nowhere else to go or denied the choice of where to go.

What I most admire about the Centre is that women really do use it. In any year, they help around 3000 women through any number of personal difficulties including domestic violence and sexual abuse - things we don't always want to talk about!

It's been my privilege to support the Centre since 1994 and I'm not going away!"

--- Jo Brand

Statements of Support: Our Service Users

"It's a place where you feel safe and can be who you want to be. I can't say enough how my life has changed for the better and if it wasn't for the Women's Centre, I don't know if I'd still be here."

"It would have a great impact on me if the Women's Centre closed. I would have no support, no counselling and nowhere to provide relaxation therapies or a friendly, relaxed environment."

"(Closure would mean) no female-friendly and supportive environment for vulnerable women at risk of domestic violence or vulnerable in other ways."

"Contact with the Women's Centre changed my life by providing a package of services to support me."

"Gives me a chance to meet new people, build my confidence and control depression."

