



womankind

bristol women's therapy centre

Annual Review

2017-2018



Who we are

Womankind is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee. The organisation was founded in 1986 and since that time has provided a range of services for women with mental health problems in Bristol and the surrounding area.

Our mission:

is to help women to improve their mental health and well-being. Through our help, we believe that women will experience a better quality of life, participate more fully in society, enjoy more fulfilling relationships and be better able to care for themselves and their families.

Our values – Womankind exists to:

- enable women to define their own mental health needs
- improve the quality of women's lives by helping them to become less dependent on mental health and social services
- ensure our services are accessible to women on low incomes
- recognise that the roots of women's difficulties are often linked to personal life histories and the social and political environment in which they live

Our organisational aims are to:

- provide support, professional therapy and a therapeutic environment that is either free or affordable to women living in Bristol or the surrounding area
- increase the availability of psychodynamic therapy in the area by providing training and support for therapists
- enter into partnerships and working arrangements with other organisations to maximise the availability of support for women
- through judicious use of funds, ensure our services respond to emerging needs and provide best value

Our provision includes:

Talking therapy services, support services, training and supervision. An overview of our achievements and impact, followed by a review from each of our services, is given in the following pages.

Chair's report

Womankind continues to work hard to develop and maintain services that provide help to the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups within the community. Women contend with difficulties related to poor mental health, disability, financial hardship, isolation, language barriers and relationship problems.

The main areas of charitable activity are the provision of a telephone helpline, a befriending service, therapy groups, high intensity therapy and individual counselling. Over the year, we have provided specialist and unique services to Deaf women, transgender women, refugees, trafficked women and asylum seekers as well as many survivors of domestic abuse, rape, sexual assault and childhood sexual abuse. We have supported 439 women through our face-to-face services and have handled 6,564 helpline calls – a 45% increase on the previous year.

In addition to receiving statutory grants for commissioned services, we have secured grants for specific services from a range of sources – further information is given in the subsequent pages of this report. Despite this recognition of our work, Womankind continues to operate in challenging times with dwindling resources and an ever increasing number of women seeking our help. In the year ahead we are committed to developing a dedicated service for young women to respond to the large number of enquiries for support from this group.

I would like to thank my fellow Trustees and our dedicated and experienced team of staff and sessional workers for their hard work during the year. Grateful thanks are also due to our volunteers - without them we would not be able to help as many women. Finally, I would like to thank the generous funders and donors on whose support we rely.

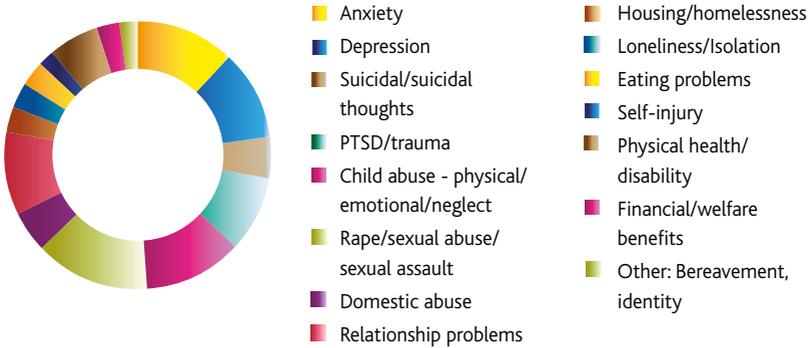
We are very proud of our successes in 2017/18, and we look forward to continuing to develop and provide high quality services to improve the mental health and well-being of women in the coming year.

Melody Brown, Chair

Who we helped in 2017/18

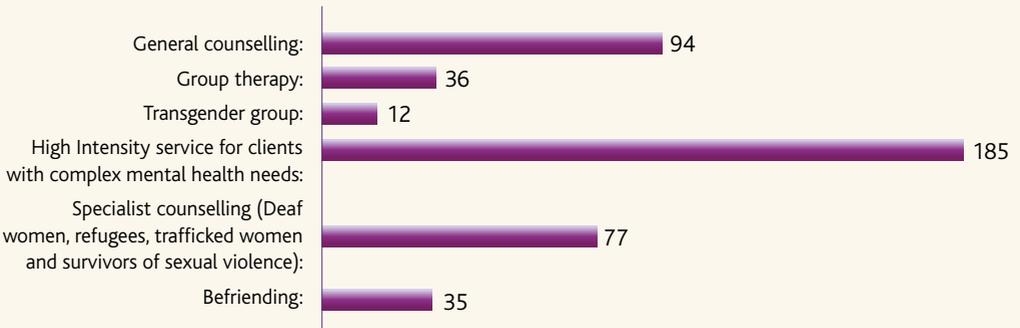
Helpline: 6,564 calls 1,350 emails

Presenting issues for Helpline listening calls



Therapy services

Numbers of women receiving face-to-face services



Age

16 – 24	7.5%
25 - 49	48%
50 - 64	37%
65 and over	7.5%

Ethnicity:

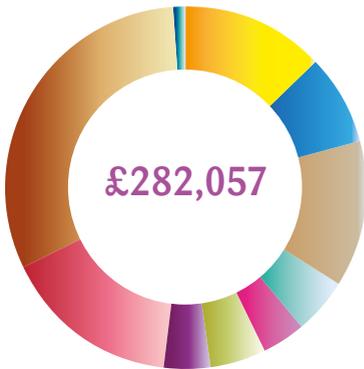
Black, Asian or minority ethnic	15%
Mixed race	5%
White British	76%
White other	4%

Disability: 48% of clients considered themselves to be disabled

Financial review

In 2017/18 Womankind successfully generated just enough funding to cover our expenditure. The figures below are extracted from our examined Statement of Financial Activities. The full accounts are available on request.

Our income in 2017/18 - £282,057



- Bristol City Council - £37,244
- NHS Bristol - £21,618
- Comic Relief - £37,808
- Henry Smith Charity - £14,800
- South Gloucestershire Council - £10,500
- Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner - £14,278
- Safer Bristol - £10,000
- Other grants and donations - £45,212
- Fees - £88,030
- Rental Income & Investments - £2,567

Our expenditure in 2017/18 - £281,581



- Staff Costs - £215,910
- Volunteer Expenses - £2,493
- Office, IT and phone - £16,569
- Premises and utilities - £33,353
- Management and legal - £13,256

Introduction to Services

Womankind is an established charity that is run by women for women. We help thousands of women every year to improve their mental health and well-being so they can experience a better quality of life.

We recognise that the roots of our difficulties are often linked to personal life histories. We also recognise that the social and political environment in which we live affects our mental health.

It's not always easy to ask for help but we encourage women not to suffer in silence as talking to someone about your problems and how you feel can really help. We work with women to understand their situation and we can help women to think things through so that they get the support they need.

Womankind supports women in Bristol and the surrounding area with professional counselling, group psychotherapy, befriending and a helpline service. More detail, together with client stories, follows for each of our services.

Counselling

Womankind's counselling service is in high demand and supports diverse groups of women from all areas of the city. Women contact us seeking help, alongside referrals from GPs and health professionals. The Helpline is the main referral point and can support women whilst they are waiting for a service.

The women we see present with ever increasing levels of complexity. Womankind can offer six month contracts to clients which gives them the opportunity to work through some of the most troubling aspect of their lives. We also provide a high intensity service of up to 12 sessions for women referred by both Bristol and South Gloucestershire Wellbeing Therapy Services. The majority of the women we see within this service have complex needs with histories of abuse.

Our latest evaluation shows that 93% of clients expressed satisfaction with the service and 85% indicated an improvement in their mental health and well-being. 89% of women also reported an improvement in their relationship with their children.

Penny was referred by her GP for support around her acute anxiety and the ways in which it limited her life. With her counsellor, she talked for the first time about her childhood experiences and it became clear why she had struggled. Penny's stepfather began to make sexual advances to her when she was nine. Penny told her mother who didn't believe her and told her not to tell lies. The abuse escalated and Penny was eventually regularly raped by her step-father.

Penny was very distressed when she talked about her childhood memories, yet she said it felt much better than just having them inside herself. At the end of her sessions, Penny remained fragile, but she was in a much better state and able to manage her anxiety levels successfully.

"It is essential that people with little money can access counselling"

"It has been incredibly helpful and rewarding. Without the opportunity I don't know where I'd be."

Group Therapy

Womankind runs four weekly therapy groups which provide longer term support for women who have mental health issues and histories of abuse. In the safe environment of the group, members can take the time they need to work through difficulties together. Many women struggle with the trauma of their early years including childhood sexual abuse, neglect and violence. The stable and secure nature of the groups enable the women to feel they belong and can trust others, which helps them grow in strength and capacity. Women leave the group when they are ready and feel able to manage their lives again.

From February to August 2017 we ran a pilot group for Transgender women. This was the first of its kind in this area and it supported individuals who are often subjected to discrimination and abuse. Trans women were offered a safe, confidential space where they could share their experiences and current difficulties. It provided regular support to those who were feeling isolated and socially excluded, building their resilience and sense of belonging in the community. The success of the pilot led to funding being secured for a further group from April 2018.

Frankie reported feeling female as long as she could remember. Her family were not supportive and would humiliate her which led to her keeping her identity secret. At 25, Frankie decided to come out but on the first night dressing as a female she was severely beaten by a gang and taken to hospital. She attempted to get medical help but the NHS had long waiting lists for trans-gender clinics. She then sourced hormone replacement medication from the internet which made her ill.

When Frankie joined the group she found it difficult to talk about her issues. Over time, her self-confidence and understanding grew. She switched to private health care and was able to have her treatment prescribed by a doctor. At the end of the group she reported feeling more comfortable with who she is and more connected to others. She also started volunteering.

“I’ve learnt a lot about other people, friendships and relationships.”

“I’ve been more involved with local groups and volunteering because I feel more confident within myself.”

Specialist Sexual Violence and Abuse Services

Womankind works in partnership with a consortium of agencies including Somerset and Avon Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Service (SARSAS), the Green House, Barnardo's BASE and The Southmead Project. The Bristol Sexual Violence Consortium was set up in 2015, is funded by Safer Bristol, and provides a range of specialist services for male and female survivors. As a consortium, we are committed to developing collaborative services so that more survivors can be supported by the right service at the right time.

Womankind's sexual violence counselling service supports women who have experienced childhood sexual abuse, rape or sexual assault. Many of the women have had their lives shattered as a consequence of sexual violence and the counselling needs to be skilled and sensitive to help them recover and cope with what's happened to them.

Ava was referred for sexual violence counselling by the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service – her 14 year old daughter was school phobic and was being hospital educated. They had recognised that Ava herself had severe social anxiety, linked to child sexual abuse.

When she started the counselling, Ava was extremely anxious and struggled to take her daughter to the teaching centre, thus it was hard for her to contain her daughter's own anxieties. She was not close to her husband or family. The counselling gave Ava the chance to think about the way the abuse she had experienced had impacted on her and affected her feelings about herself and others. By the end of the counselling, Ava was able to take bus trips to meet with her sister, attend the hospital school with her daughter and her relationship with her husband had improved. Ava had learned many parenting skills and was putting them into practice, and she and her husband could think about what their daughter needed from them together.

“Very happy with my counsellor. She made something very difficult as easy as possible..”

“I was in total despair at the beginning of counselling but am not feeling that as much..”

Safer Women's Project

This project, funded by Comic Relief and the Henry Smith Charity, supports women who have suffered abuse and exploitation. We have been successful in reaching 'hard to reach' groups of women who are trafficked or fleeing war torn countries and have arrived in the UK in a range of different and often very dangerous ways. Clients come from different parts of the world, diverse cultures, ages and backgrounds and present with extremely difficult problems as a result of traumatic experiences.

16 counselling sessions were delivered each week at Womankind and at our outreach location at Wellspring Healthy Living Centre in Barton Hill. 38 women received counselling in the year, with therapists from different cultures and backgrounds. Our end of counselling evaluations showed that 100% of women were satisfied with the service, 72% felt less depressed and/or anxious, 90% had fewer post-traumatic stress symptoms, 80% were more aware of risk to themselves or their children, and 80% reported being better able to keep themselves safe.

Likla had suffered extreme domestic abuse since early childhood. She developed grand mal epilepsy and this caused her to be rejected and abused by her mother – her culture associated epilepsy with demonic possession. Her adult life was one of gruelling physical work and continuous domestic abuse from her husband. Likla managed to escape but as a result of the violence, she is disabled and deaf and this makes her very vulnerable.

At the start of the counselling Likla was almost silent and hunched over in a painful way. Building trust in her counsellor and the interpreter took time and slowly Likla was able to reveal more about the traumatic experiences she had suffered. Likla spoke about almost being "afraid to breathe" but gradually her body unfurled and she held herself as a woman beginning to value her own right to be in the world and be listened to with compassionate attention.

"I won't let myself be treated like this any more."

"I feel like a blind person with sight for the first time – I can see and understand why I have had the kind of experiences I have."

Service for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Women

Womankind's service for Deaf and hard of hearing women is part-funded by the James Tudor Foundation. The service is unique within the Bristol area and aims to meet a need that is generally unrecognised. Womankind's service offers 6 months' one to one counselling with full access in British Sign Language (BSL), Sign Supported English and English.

Deaf women bring similar issues to counselling as hearing women but their feelings are often exacerbated by communication barriers, isolation, employment challenges, as well as frustration about lack of access to mainstream services, including mental health services. Eight women used the service in the year and reported an overall improvement in their mental health and well-being. Examples included feeling more positive, less isolated, increased self-esteem and confidence and being able to think and respond to situations differently. Women also reported physical health changes, for example eating better, giving up smoking and become more involved in community events.

Orla contacted Womankind after seeing a poster about the service for Deaf women. She was in her late 40's and had reached a crisis point in her life. She was born Deaf into a hearing family and had spent much of her early life trying to make sense of what was happening at home, feeling that any problems were her responsibility. When Orla came to Womankind she was struggling at work and in her relationships, feeling that she was "no good".

In counselling Orla explored her feelings and was able to express the anger and humiliation that she had suppressed for many years. She said that talking to someone who understood her experience gave her space to think how she might address her own needs. She is now negotiating with her employer to get more appropriate support, and has found creative ways to manage her low mood and plan for her future.

"I'm able to go places unattended without anxiety attacks."

"I trusted the counsellor and I could say things to her that I struggle to tell others. She helped me to think of things differently and understand why I thought in a certain way"

Helpline

Womankind's telephone Helpline provides confidential listening support to any woman experiencing emotional distress in any area of her life. In-house trained volunteer listeners provide a safe space where women can express and explore their feelings without judgement. The Helpline also acts as the first point of contact for women wishing to access our therapy services. During 2017-18 the Helpline handled a total of 6,564 calls, a 45% increase on the previous year - almost half of the callers had suffered sexual abuse/ sexual assault, rape, or domestic abuse.

Feedback from our callers shows that the helpline makes a significant difference to women going through challenging times. 85% of callers reported feeling less isolated as a result of the listening call. We also receive calls from women who are feeling suicidal; 57% of these callers experienced a reduction in these troubling thoughts and feelings as a result of having an opportunity to talk about them. We are fortunate in having a dedicated and skilled team of volunteers who provide our high quality listening service.

A caller to the helpline shared that she had been raped by a friend a year ago. She experienced a range of emotions around this which she was struggling with. She had reported the rape to the police and she spoke about her sense of having been let down by the justice system and how this had made her feel helpless and unsafe. She also felt those in her life were no longer keen to hear about this and said she should be 'moving on'.

However, the most difficult feelings were ones she had been unable to share with anyone else. As this man had been a friend, she was feeling the loss of the friendship, but this was combined with feelings of shame and anger. She expressed her relief and gratitude at being able to share these anonymously with the helpline volunteer.

"The people on this phonenumber are telling me that it's not my fault. One day I want to work to help make other people this has happened to realise it's not their fault either."



Befriending

Our Befriending service supports isolated women who are experiencing mental health problems, and/or who are survivors of rape or sexual abuse, to improve their mental health and well-being.

Befrienders are trained and supervised volunteers who provide consistent weekly support for a year. They encourage women to become more confident and independent by helping them to set their own goals, get out and about, build social relationships and engage in community activities.

Over the year volunteer befrienders supported 35 women from different backgrounds, cultures and ages. All the women who received a service reported that their mental health had improved; they felt less isolated and had less support needs; their confidence, self-esteem, coping skills and ability to function had improved and the risk of harm to themselves or others had reduced. 80% of the women supported had significantly more involvement in their local community – attending keep fit or well-being classes, church groups, or volunteering with local charities.

Anne was referred by mental health services. She had a very traumatic childhood due to sexual and domestic abuse. She has severe trauma symptoms and experiences anxiety and depression. She is also agoraphobic and had not left the house alone in thirteen years.

Anne's befriender worked very hard with her on leaving the house. During the last 4 months of the befriending they joined a yoga class together which Anne loved. She then attended without her befriender and went with a neighbour who she got to know through the class.



“My befriender was an inspiration!”

“My befriender helped motivate me as I was very depressed about my situation. Talking to my befriender also helped as I was able to see things from a different perspective”.

Volunteers

In order to provide our valuable services, Womankind is supported by a dedicated and skilled team of volunteers who we thank wholeheartedly. Our volunteers make a positive difference to the lives of the women they help, and their role also brings added value to them as volunteers. They benefit from the training and supervision we provide, together with personal and career development.

Administration

Ayaan Aidad
Natalie Caruso
Nazia Rehman

Befrienders

Sarah Alloway
Holly Bailey
Clara Butler
Suzie Carr
Jessica Charleston
Sally Collister
Jessie Davies
Dawn Dickinson
Davina Edwards
Jessica Flett
Laura Gallagher
Sue Gregor
Sammie Hollie
Lauren Kaigg
Dionisia Kiragu
Emese Kiss
Esther Kopp
Solvita Landsberga
Christine Lovett
Holly McCullough
Beci Monks
Chloe O'Connell
Hannah Parsons
Jessica Pickett
Marilyn Reynolds
Carrie Rhys Davies

Tess Rushton
Fiona Simpson
Katie Smith
Olivia Spooner
Emily Teague
Christine Thompson
Eve White

Counsellors

Angelique de Silva
Donna Lloyd
Tammy Payne

Helpline

Holly Aylward
Eleanor Bennett
Melissa Blackburn
Stephanie Bohin
Maddy Cunningham
Eleanor Emmanuel
Ruby Fowden-Willey
Charlotte Fry
Laura Gallagher
Ione Hatten-Brown
Rachel Hawkins-Crockford
Jenny Herd
Marcella Howard
Laura Keeling
Amelia Kilsby
Becca Masey-Chase
Isabelle Monk
Rae Pears

“What I get is a sense that the world can be a better place for women”

(Natty, Helpline volunteer)

Avril Pease
Emily Phelps
Chloe Powell
Camilla Qureshi
Lizzie Spencer
Alice Steel
Evanthia Triantafyllidou
Natty Triskel
Leoni Van Harver
Lorna Walton
Amy Warren
Georgina Watson
Sophie Welsman
Eleanor Wolfe

Who's Who at Womankind

Womankind has an experienced Management Committee (Board of Trustees) consisting of women from diverse backgrounds and ages, who bring a range of skills and interests to their role of overseeing the running of the charity. Our committed and well qualified core staff team are supplemented by sessional counsellors and group therapists, together with external professional supervisors.

Management Committee

Melody Brown (Chair)
Sue Isherwood (Vice Chair)
Terry Jones (Secretary)
Louise Lacey (Treasurer)
Sarah Bartlett
Gillian Carson (resigned Aug. 2017)
Lucy Downes
Vicki Morris (appointed Nov. 2017)
Joan Solomon
Hélène Titus-Glover (appointed May 2017)

Patrons

Rev. Angela Berners-Wilson
Ms Jane Lapotaire
Professor Deborah Sharp

Staff

Kyra Bond Chief Executive Officer
Suzi Brooke / Sue Walton
Volunteer Service Co-ordinator (Helpline)
Nicola Coggins Volunteer Service
Co-ordinator (Befriending)
Catherine Howells Administrator
Justine Rowe Book-keeper
Rosie Thoburn Clinical Manager
Helena Thompson Fundraiser

Supervisors

Christine Brookes
Josie Eckoldt
Frances Fox

Sue Krzowski
Dr Judy Malone
Deborah Nash
Susan Sparham
Jacqueline Stratford
Deirdre Sutton-Smith

Counsellors

Carrie Alexander
Yael Ben-Akiva
Aine Bourke
Anita Bradford
Ailee Breakspear
Diana Brown
Becky Clarke
Ruth Jones
Erica Lanigan
Dorothy Neal
Vicky Riddiford
Rosie Thoburn
Natasha Vdovkina

Group Therapists

Diana Brown
Erika Holloway
Deborah Howard
Rosie Thoburn
Natasha Vdovkina

Thank you to our Funders

We'd like to thank all the organisations who have funded our work during 2017/18 – it wouldn't be possible without your support. In addition to the funders shown below, we are grateful for the grants and donations provided by: Burges Salmon Charitable Trust, Denman Charitable Trust, Freemasons Grants Programme, James Tudor Foundation, Sir Jules Thorn Charitable Trust, Lark Trust, Lionel Wigram Memorial Trust, Marsh Christian Trust, Nani Huyu Charitable Trust, National Lottery Awards for All, Quartet Community Foundation, Reuben Foundation, Tidmarsh Fund, Verdon-Smith Family Charitable Trust, and others who asked for no publicity.

A special thank you goes to all the individuals who supported us through fundraising events and one off or regular monthly donations throughout the year. Your support has a significant impact on how we can help distressed women on a day-to-day basis, as well as on our long term sustainability.



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