



## Annual Review

2018-2019



## 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 is proud of its achievements over the year. We have continued to develop and maintain services that provide help to the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups of women within the community. Women contend with multiple difficulties related to poor mental health, sexual violence, past and/or recent abuse, disability, financial hardship, isolation, language barriers and relationship problems.

In 2018/19, we supported 468 women through our face to face services and handled 4,865 helpline calls. (A full description of our charitable activities can be found throughout this report).

In addition to receiving statutory grants for commissioned services, we have secured grants for specific services from a range of sources – in particular to develop our innovative instant messaging service targeted at young women and Deaf/hard of hearing women, as an extension to our helpline. Womankind continues to operate in challenging times with an ever increasing number of women seeking our help. In the year ahead we are committed to developing our support for young women in response to the growing number of enquiries from this group.

Womankind was a runner-up and won a prize for the GSK/Kings Fund IMPACT Award 2019. 'The annual scheme is to reward small to medium sized charities for the excellent work they are doing to improve people's health and wellbeing.' We made it into the top twenty out of 370 charities. We know how necessary our work is and intend to continue to offer the highest quality of support to all who need it in the coming year.

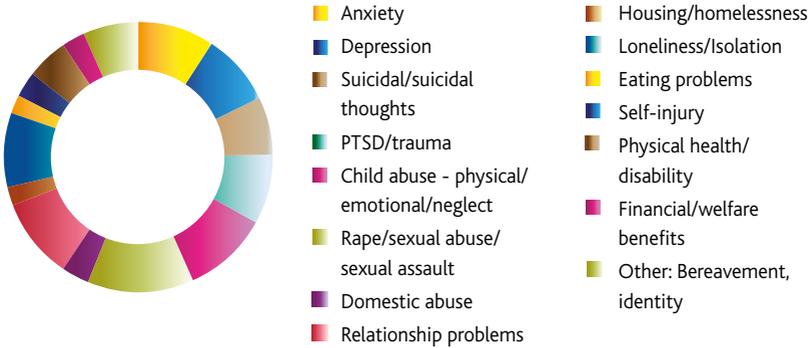
I should like to thank my fellow Trustees and our experienced team of staff and sessional workers. Their dedication makes it possible for Womankind to continue to offer so much and their flexibility and focus means that the charity has the resilience to work and thrive in difficult times. Warmest thanks 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.

**Melody Russell, Chair**

# Who we helped in 2018/19

Helpline: 4,865 calls and 694 emails handled

## Presenting issues for Helpline listening calls



## Therapy services

### Numbers of women receiving face-to-face services



### Age

|             |     |
|-------------|-----|
| 16 – 24     | 8%  |
| 25 - 49     | 72% |
| 50 - 64     | 19% |
| 65 and over | 1%  |

### Ethnicity:

|                                 |     |
|---------------------------------|-----|
| Black, Asian or minority ethnic | 13% |
| Mixed race                      | 10% |
| White British                   | 66% |
| White other                     | 11% |

**Disability:** 43% of clients considered themselves to be disabled

## Financial review

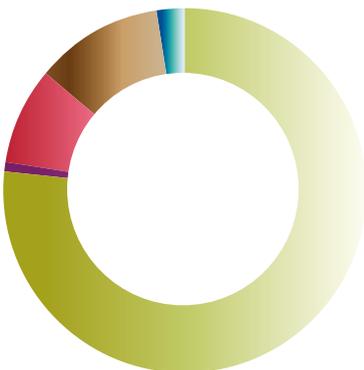
In 2018/19 Womankind successfully generated enough funding to cover our expenditure. The figures below are extracted from our examined Statement of Financial Activities. The full accounts are available on request.

### Our income in 2018/19 - £344,239



- Bristol City Council - £37,080
- NHS Bristol - £21,618
- Comic Relief - £35,048
- Henry Smith Charity - £15,100
- South Gloucestershire Council - £8,925
- Avon and Somerset Police - £32,125
- Safer Bristol - £10,000
- Other grants and donations - £93,141
- Fees - £79,005
- Legacy - £8,755
- Rental Income & Investments - £3,442

### Our expenditure in 2018/19 - £320,997



- Staff Costs - £246,205
- Volunteer Expenses - £3,161
- Office, IT and phone - £27,066
- Premises and utilities - £37,111
- Management and legal - £7,454



## 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 them 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 therapy, befriending, and a telephone and instant messaging helpline service. More detail, together with anonymised client stories, follows for each of our services.

“This is a wonder charity who has helped my friend in a way I couldn't Great work.”

## Counselling

Womankind's counselling service is in high demand and supports diverse groups of vulnerable 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 a very wide range of difficulties and with ever increasing levels of complexity. Some women seek help for enduring mental health issues; others with a more recent trauma. Following initial consultation sessions Womankind can offer six month contracts to clients which offers 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.

**Lucy** came to Womankind suffering a lot of physical pain. She had seen various specialists and it had been suggested to her that the pain may be psychosomatic. Lucy was angry about this and felt helpless as to how she was going to get the help she needed.

During her counselling Lucy eventually talked about being sexually abused by an uncle when she was 7 years old. She told her Mum but was told not to be silly. So Lucy had shut the experience inside herself and never told anyone else about it. At this time, she developed bad eczema and when she talked more about this, it became clear that physical ailments or pains were the only way she had had of letting anyone know that she was not OK. As Lucy linked her anger with the things that had happened when she was a child she began to feel better physically and her pain reduced significantly.

"I do not want to self-harm so much. I am doing the things that keep me well."

I found my counsellor very approachable, easy to talk to, and she has helped me through a traumatic period."

"I have felt very supported and that my feelings mattered."

## Group Therapy

Womankind runs four weekly groups which provide longer term therapy for women. 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 abuse, neglect and violence. The open, honest and meaningful relationships which develop between group members support the growth of self-confidence, self-awareness, self-acceptance and the capacity to trust our own judgement to make appropriate decisions about the way we wish our lives to develop in the future.

Over the year, we ran a one-year group for Transgender women. This was funded by National Lottery Awards for All. The group 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.

**Carla** was in the process of transitioning but had a troubled past and was in an abusive relationship. She struggled to cope with stresses of everyday life which affected her employment and led to frequent dismissals. As a result, the Gender Identity Clinic did not feel her mental health was good enough to progress to the next stage of her transitioning.

When Carla joined the group she was withdrawn and pessimistic about her future, finding it difficult to talk about her issues. During the course of the year and with the support and encouragement of the group, Carla made the decision to leave the relationship. She also managed to secure a job and even started her own small business. Attending the group every week gave her confidence to pursue her goals, and Carla is now through to the next and final stage of her transition.

“I understand people better and smile more. As a result of not feeling depressed, I have more energy.”

“It was an immensely positive and helpful experience. I learnt a great deal and found the support extremely valuable.”

## 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 and Barnardo's BASE. 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. Demand for specialist services is great and 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.

**Sara** was referred for counselling about the sexual abuse she suffered as a disabled child. She had been born able bodied but had been in an accident at 4 years old - her mother had been driving whilst very drunk; the car had crashed and Sara had been badly injured. Her injuries prevented her from ever walking again and left her with other life-long damage. Then Mum got a new boyfriend when Sara was 8, who sexually abused her for several years. Eventually a friend went to the Police; Sara was removed from her home and placed in long term foster care.

Sara had never previously been able to talk about her anger towards her mother for failing to protect her from debilitating injuries and from sexual abuse. She spent time raging about her experiences. Towards the end of the counselling Sara began to feel more stable; she started horse riding and got a part time job. She commented, "I felt so disabled when I first came to see you. Not just physically but in my mind too. Now I feel as though I can manage to do things I want to do and have friendships with people that respect me."

"The flashbacks have greatly reduced and I have now reduced the episodes of going over and over the abuse and trying to put it into some semblance of order."

"I now have a way of dealing with the negative thoughts."

## Safer Women's Project

This project funded by Comic Relief (until March 2019) and the Henry Smith Charity supports women who have suffered abuse and exploitation. Many women have been trafficked or are fleeing war torn countries. They come from different parts of the world, diverse cultures, ages and backgrounds and present with extremely difficult problems as a result of traumatic experiences.

Sixteen sessions of weekly trauma counselling or EMDR therapy are delivered with language interpreters at Womankind and in our outreach location at Wellspring Healthy Living Centre in Barton Hill. We offer everyone a three month follow up appointment to review progress and recovery; women who need further support are referred on to other services. Our evaluation shows that women can recover and move on. The changes women make after attending their counselling differ enormously but are very significant for each and every one of them. Many women leave us feeling better, less afraid and more in control of their own lives.

**Mouna** is a young woman from Bangladesh who was referred by her GP, suffering from severe post-traumatic stress disorder, depression and anxiety. She was spending days in bed, neglecting herself, and feeling hopeless and terrified. She had had an arranged marriage to a British Bangladeshi man who treated her as a domestic slave, denied her access to medical treatment and adequate food, beating and sexually exploiting her for several years. The Home Office found Mouna in very poor health when her visa expired. They accepted her as a victim of human trafficking and contacted a relative who she has since lived with in a supportive environment.

At the beginning of the counselling, Mouna was very fearful and anxious. Within a few sessions, she began to trust her counsellor and the interpreter, which allowed her to express the incredibly difficult experiences she had had and how it affected her feelings and thoughts about herself. Mouna now feels more optimistic about her life and her trauma symptoms have decreased. Counselling has helped her to become more resilient to cope with challenges.

"I definitely feel change. I feel my son likes being around me now."

"My time with you has allowed me to 'speak my mind' and to understand for myself that I am supported and not alone."

## 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. We offer women six months' one to one counselling with full access in British Sign Language (BSL), Sign Supported English and English. Research has indicated that there are only 40 counsellors working in BSL in this country for an estimated population of between 60 and 80,000. There are no services similar to Womankind in Bristol and the only national counselling provision increasingly provides online services rather than face to face which most clients prefer. Deaf women bring similar issues to counselling as hearing women but their feelings are often exacerbated by communication barriers, isolation, employment challenges, and frustration about lack of access to mainstream services, including mental health services.

Nine women used the service in the year and reported an overall improvement in their mental health and well-being. Examples include reduced depression and anxiety and choosing to cut down or stopping taking prescribed medication, coping better with emotions, improved self-care and relationships and taking better care of physical health.

**Anya** is a young woman who was born Deaf and grew up with British Sign Language (BSL) as her first language. She is now a single mother with three children. She had been in a violent and emotionally abusive relationship with the children's father for several years from which she bears the physical and emotional scars. When Anya came to Womankind she was experiencing flashbacks, panic attacks, was cutting herself and couldn't sleep.

During her BSL counselling Anya was able to talk about the traumatic events of the last few years and about her early life experiences. She explored how, while being an intelligent woman, she had been caught up in an abusive and controlling relationship for several years. By the end Anya had stopped cutting herself and had stopped her antidepressant and anti-anxiety medication. Her children are more confident and have been discharged from the support they were having. Recently Anya secured local part-time employment in a job she enjoys, and she says that her life is 'back on track'.

"I'm happier in myself and proud of my achievements."

"I'm able to recognise feelings and think through problems."

## Telephone/Instant Messaging Helpline

Womankind's telephone Helpline offers confidential listening support to any woman experiencing emotional distress. Trained volunteers 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 2018-19 we developed plans and secured funding for a new instant messaging (webchat) extension to the Helpline, targeted at young women and Deaf/ hard of hearing women (this was launched in June 2019). The Helpline handled a total of 5,559 calls and emails in the year – a third of the callers had suffered sexual abuse/sexual assault, rape, or domestic abuse. The amount of callers presenting with loneliness and isolation has more than doubled. Similarly, we've seen a vast rise in callers presenting with more complex mental health needs and suicidal feelings. Feedback from our callers shows that the helpline makes a significant difference to women going through challenging times. 89% of callers reported feeling less isolated as a result of the call and 66% experienced a reduction in suicidal 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 young woman** called the helpline for support regularly for nearly a year, having been sexually abused as a child. Initially she shared a lot about her self-harming and suicidal thoughts. Over time she began to disclose information about the abuse, and we saw how she used the helpline to speak about it anonymously for the first time. This seemed to give her confidence to then go to other support agencies working with her face to face and share with them what she had disclosed to us. The helpline continued to offer emotional, empathetic listening support to this caller in a way that empowered her to seek the other help she needed.

“ Thank you so much for listening, it's so helpful to be able to talk.”

During the period that the young woman was calling, we saw a huge reduction in her preoccupation with self-harming and communication of suicidal thoughts. We continued to hear her finding the courage to talk over the phone about her abuse; more recently the abuse she suffered as a young adult from a family member. She was then able to leave the helpline and share the same information with the police.



## 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. Trained volunteer befrienders provide consistent 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 such as keep fit or wellbeing classes.

Over the year befrienders supported 60 women from different backgrounds, cultures and ages. All the women who received a service reported improvements to their mental health and wellbeing; they felt less isolated and closer to others, safer, more relaxed and confident and optimistic about the future. One woman said *“having someone to talk to who relates to me, has empathy, understanding and genuinely cares for me has made an enormous difference and made me feel like I am worth it which in turn has done wonders for my confidence and self-esteem. My befriender is normal and nice and she makes me feel normal and nice.”*

**Fran** was referred into the Befriending service with a history of sexual abuse by her school teacher and when she was a teenager was sexually assaulted and raped by a friend of a family member. She was living in supported accommodation due to her mental health difficulties and was very isolated as she lived away from her family and had no friends. She had Complex PTSD and regularly suffered nightmares, flashbacks, panic attacks and had attempted suicide on numerous occasions.

Fran’s befriender supported her for a year, encouraging her to go out and become involved in the community. She reported “befriending showed me it’s ok to struggle but to keep going.” She felt safer with self-harm urges and more able to control her depression. She is currently enjoying a fulfilling life and now has her own home, a boyfriend, a number of volunteering roles and a future to look forward to.

“I am going out on my own which is wonderfully freeing!”

“My psychiatrist is amazed at my progress and the determination and resilience my befriender helped me to build.”



## 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 - they benefit from the training and supervision we provide, together with personal and career development.

### Administration

Natalie Caruso  
Jude Western  
Joss Yapp  
Becci Feltham

### Befrienders

Sarah Alloway  
Holly Bailey  
Clara Butler  
Suzie Carr  
Jessica Charleston  
Emma Clifton-Hadley  
Sally Collister  
Jessie Davies  
Dawn Dickinson  
Davina Edwards  
Hannah Embleton-Smith  
Jessica Flett  
Milly Foot  
Laura Gallagher  
Sue Gregor  
Holly Hills  
Sammie Hollie  
Tripti John  
Lauren Kaigg  
Dionisia Kiragu  
Emese Kiss  
Esther Kopp  
Christine Lovett  
Holly McCullough  
Jess Milton

Beci Monks  
Kathryn Noonan  
Chloe O'Connell  
Maxine Owen  
Hannah Parsons  
Jessica Pickett  
Marilyn Reynolds  
Carrie Rhys Davies  
Fiona Simpson  
Katie Smith  
Margherita Szabo  
Olivia Spooner  
Emily Teague  
Janice Traille  
Angela Walker  
Gemma Walker

### Counsellors

Angelique de Silva  
Donna Lloyd  
Tammy Payne  
Juliana G S Garcia

### Helpline

Holly Aylward  
Eleanor Bennett  
Melissa Blackburn  
Stephanie Bohin  
Maddy Cunningham  
Ruby Fowden-Willey  
Charlotte Fry  
Faye Gearing

Ione Hatten-Brown  
Rachel Hawkins-Crockford  
Jenny Herd  
Laura Keeling  
Amelia Kilsby  
Sabrina Lee  
Becca Massey-Chase  
Isabelle Monk  
Avril Pease  
Chloe Powell  
Camilla Qureshi  
Lizzie Spencer  
Alice Steel  
Evanthia Triantafyllidou  
Natty Triskel  
Lorna Walton  
Amy Warren  
Georgina Watson  
Sophie Welsman  
Eleanor Wolfe



*Volunteers running the Bristol 10k*

# 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 Russell (Chair)  
Vicki Morris (Vice Chair)  
Terry Jones (Secretary)  
Louise Lacey (Treasurer)  
Sarah Bartlett  
Lucy Downes  
Sue Isherwood (Resigned Nov.2018)  
Joan Solomon  
Hélène Titus-Glover

## Patrons

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

## Staff

Kyra Bond, Chief Executive Officer  
Yael Ben-Akiva, Counsellor  
Nicola Coggins, Volunteer Service  
Co-ordinator (Befriending)  
Laura Gallagher, Volunteer Service  
Co-ordinator (Instant messaging)  
Catherine Howells/ Anna Wyatt,  
Administrator  
Rae Pears, Volunteer Service  
Co-ordinator (Helpline)  
Justine Rowe, Book-keeper  
Rosie Thoburn, Clinical Manager  
Helena Thompson, Fundraiser

## Sessional Supervisors

Christine Brookes  
Josie Eckoldt  
Frances Fox  
Fiona Hassard  
Dr Judy Malone  
Deborah Nash  
Susan Sparham  
Deirdre Sutton-Smith

## Sessional Counsellors

Carrie Alexander  
Aine Bourke  
Anita Bradford  
Ailee Breakspear  
Diana Brown  
Becky Clarke  
Ruth Jones  
Erica Lanigan  
Dorothy Neal  
Michelle Rice  
Vicky Riddiford  
Natasha Vdovkina

## Sessional Group Therapists

Diana Brown  
Erika Holloway  
Deborah Howard  
Michelle Rice  
Natasha Vdovkina

## Thank you to our Funders

We'd like to thank all the organisations who have funded our work during 2018/19 – 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: Alec Van Berchem Charitable Trust, Anthony Gibbs Estate, Austin and Hope Pilkington Trust, Basil Brown Charitable Trust, GSK/Kings Fund Impact Award, Honourable Company of Gloucestershire Charitable Trust, James Tudor Foundation, John James Bristol Foundation, Lark Trust, Mall Fountain Charitable Fund, Masonic Charitable Foundation, Nani Huyu Charitable Trust, Nisbet Trust, Paradigm Norton Trust, Pat Newman Memorial Trust, Portishead Nautical Trust, and Thresholds.

A special thank you goes to all the other small companies and 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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