

**Women's Fund  
Impact Report 2018**



Photo: Changing Lives at the Women in Philanthropy Celebration 2018.

## Your Year 2018

Dear Supporters

Welcome to your annual Impact Report for financial year 2017-2018.

The Women's Fund awarded grants with a total value of nearly £50,000 during the year. They are all listed in this report to give you an oversight of the wide range of groups and projects. Notable were specific contributions to the work of four local charities that Northumbria Police identified as being involved in supporting victims of Operation Sanctuary after the court proceedings were made public last autumn. The Community Foundation encouraged our donors to help us make contributions to recognise the role they had played and to support future preventative work. It seemed fitting that the Women's Fund should contribute as part of this response.

Our annual Women in Philanthropy event went ahead despite the *Beast from the East* bringing plenty of snow. We were delighted with the turnout, as we hadn't known how many people would still be able to join us, and we raised over £10,000 despite absences from those who simply could not get to the venue.

I'd like to remind you that, as a supporter of the Women's Fund at our Community Foundation, you're part of a movement. The UK Community Foundations network has now collectively given away over £1 billion thanks to the generosity of local philanthropists. And more than 10% of that figure is here in Tyne & Wear and Northumberland; we have been able to distribute more than £120m in grants since we were founded in 1988. Thank you for your part in helping us to change the world on our doorstep over the last three decades.

2018 is our 30<sup>th</sup> birthday and we wanted to find a way to engage with partners to celebrate the role philanthropy and giving plays in our lives. We are very proud therefore to announce **GeNErosity – a festival of Philanthropy and Giving in the North East in November 2018**.

It will be a unique celebration of the region's philanthropy and generosity. Designed as a series of events, debates, and performances, **GeNErosity** shines a light on the best in all of us. Delivered in partnership by Newcastle University and the Community Foundation Tyne & Wear and Northumberland, it is the first event of its kind in the region, celebrating and highlighting how we all play our part. Do watch out for more details about the programme of events as the year progresses.

I'd like to finish by drawing your attention to the next section of this report, which outlines priorities for local philanthropy emerging from our latest Vital Signs report published online in November 2017. Alongside social issues like poverty, mental health and wellbeing and diversity and inclusion we suggest there is a need to boost funding to areas such as South Tyneside and Sunderland where grant making is relatively low. I've included a link to the full Vital Signs reports, which include information to inspire and inform giving.

Many of the projects supported by the Women's Fund touch on these issues and, in particular, we make a significant contribution to supporting diversity and inclusion of our Black and Minority Ethnic communities where cultural challenges faced by women can limit their access to services, advice and support. For example, Peace of Mind, which some members of our grant making panel for the Women's Fund visited, were supported with a grant to provide training to asylum seekers and refugees in Gateshead about domestic violence, Female Genital Mutilation and forced marriage to raise awareness of the law and support services available that are often different to those they are accustomed to.

Thank you so much once again for your continued support to the Community Foundation, and our region, in 2017-18.



Gill Lowing

Gill Lowing  
Senior Philanthropy Advisor

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## Photos from the 2018 Women in Philanthropy lunch



We were joined this year by representatives from Changing Lives who talked about the vulnerabilities of women affected by sexual violence. Over £10,000 was raised for a range of women only projects supported by the Women's Fund including further workshops and support that will be delivered by Changing Lives.



## Vital Signs

A fully updated [Vital Signs report](http://www.communityfoundation.org.uk/vitalsigns/) (<http://www.communityfoundation.org.uk/vitalsigns/>) covering the whole of North East England was published online in November 2017. Behind it were four in-depth research reports covering [Northumberland](#), [Tyne & Wear](#), [County Durham](#) and [Tees Valley](#). Now for the first time we can offer philanthropists and charitable funders a comprehensive picture of local needs, and suggested priorities, to inform their charitable giving.

Vital Signs spotlighted many examples of inspirational giving, showing how it has enabled voluntary and community groups to make a real difference in their communities. But it also flagged up four areas of unmet need, where the generosity of our donors is particularly vital to help individuals and communities rise to the challenges they face.

**Poverty** emerged as the primary issue affecting our region. The North East remains one of the poorest regions in the UK, with high rates of benefit dependency and low paid employment. Over 20,000 children are reliant on foodbanks, whilst 17% of the adult population is in serious debt. The signs and symptoms of such deprivation are easily detectable in South East Northumberland or urban areas in Tyne & Wear. But

poverty can also exist hidden in small pockets in prosperous market towns, or as a blight on the lives of individuals in isolated rural communities experiencing a lack of local services, poor public transport and high fuel costs. It is a problem that can only become more marked as public services continue to shrink, and which undermines community cohesion and local quality of life by fuelling social problems such as low educational attainment, unemployment, poor health and crime. Poverty on this scale is perhaps not a problem that can be solved by local philanthropists alone, but it is one where, with their support, charities can transform the prospects of individuals and their families.

**30% of poor people who find work remain in poverty**

**The suicide rate in Tyne & Wear and Northumberland is 30% higher than average**

A second major area of need was **mental health and wellbeing**. Our region does not do well on national wellbeing measures. Alongside higher than average rates of mental illness, we identified a major concern about the prevalence of self-harm. Our region is largely bucking the downward national trend in this regard, with a marked increase in suicide rates across Tyne & Wear and Northumberland since 2008. Whilst mental ill-health can affect people from all backgrounds, and all stages of life, those experiencing

disadvantage seem particularly vulnerable. Of course, much work in this area is funded by government and should not be duplicated with charitable funding. But there is a role for good quality "soft services" such as mother and toddler sessions, practical advice and support, self-help groups and volunteering and befriending schemes. These can reduce the harm to mental health

and wellbeing that may be caused by problems such as childhood deprivation, unemployment, homelessness, long-term ill-health, alcohol/drug dependency and social isolation in rural areas.

**Diversity and inclusion** was a third area of need that Vital Signs flagged up as important to address. For our communities to prosper we need to harness the talents of all our people and maintain social harmony. Yet some of our minority communities – ranging from disabled people (23% of the population) to older people (17%) and black and ethnic minorities (5%) – experience substantial disadvantage and social exclusion. The problem can manifest itself in areas such as work, where unemployment is higher for groups such as black or disabled people. At worst it can be expressed as hate crime, which in our area rose by 202% from 2014 – 2016. As well as supporting these communities to address the challenges they face, philanthropic funding can help build the strength of self-help organisations and so enable them to become better at accessing other sources of funding.

**Reported hate crime doubled between 2014 and 2016**

**Community Foundation spend per head in South Tyneside and Sunderland is 29% lower than in the rest of Tyne & Wear and Northumberland**

**Funding “cold spots”** was our final Vital Signs priority. The voluntary sector has more capacity to secure charitable funds in some parts of our area, and donors often start out with a natural preference for funding projects near to home. As a result, Northumberland and Newcastle are better served than other parts of our area. In the past funding from government and national funders have helped ensure that other areas do not miss out, but now those sources of support have largely disappeared. Our intention is to encourage donors to consider whether they

might support more projects in areas like North Tyneside, Gateshead, Sunderland and, South Tyneside. The latter area is a priority because Vital Signs research revealed that the level philanthropic spending there through the Community Foundation is very low, despite it being one of the most deprived areas within our patch.

Vital Signs covers the full range of philanthropic causes, including areas such as the arts, culture and heritage and the environment not mentioned above. Whatever your priorities for charitable giving, we hope you will find it informative and that it will inspire your giving.

You can read our Vital Signs reports in full, and comment on them, at [www.communityfoundation.org.uk/vitalsigns](http://www.communityfoundation.org.uk/vitalsigns)

**Mark Pierce**

Director of Community Knowledge and Funding

## Grants awarded – Women's Fund

<b>Grants awarded - 2017/2018</b>	
<b>Sunderland Women's Centre</b> Speaking and Listening skills sessions	<b>2,826.00</b>
<b>Rape Crisis Tyneside and Northumberland</b> Group work for survivors of sexual violence	<b>3,000.00</b>
<b>Peace of Mind</b> Sessions on domestic violence, FGM and forced marriage	<b>1,317.00</b>
<b>Fenham Association of Residents</b> FAR Women together	<b>3,000.00</b>
<b>Leam Lane Community Association</b> Mindfulness sessions and self-defence through tai chi	<b>2,000.00</b>
<b>Kenton Bar Tenants and Residents Association</b> Ladies all together	<b>2,000.00</b>
<b>Josephine and Jack Project</b> Josephine: a new lease of life!	<b>3,000.00</b>
<b>Changing Lives</b> Supporting victims of sexual exploitation	<b>4,000.00</b>
<b>Bright Futures NE</b> Contribution to work to combat the sexual exploitation of children and young people in Tyne & Wear and Northumberland	<b>1,250.00</b>
<b>Barnardo's Mosaic Project</b> Contribution to work to combat the sexual exploitation of children and young people in Tyne & Wear and Northumberland	<b>1,250.00</b>
<b>Changing Lives</b> Contribution to work to combat the sexual exploitation of children and young people in Tyne & Wear and Northumberland	<b>1,250.00</b>
<b>Children's Society</b> Contribution to work to combat the sexual exploitation of children and young people in Tyne & Wear and Northumberland	<b>1,250.00</b>
<b>Bright Futures</b> Empowering women to move forward in their recovery from exploitation	<b>2,870.00</b>
<b>Newcastle Women's Aid</b> Freedom Forever group programme	<b>2,340.00</b>
<b>US</b> Fit for the Future: sports sessions for young women with mental health issues	<b>2,890.00</b>
<b>Wansbeck Disability Forum</b> Weekly health awareness drop-in	<b>2,895.00</b>
<b>Womens Health in South Tyneside</b> "Reaching Your Potential" four courses to support vulnerable women	<b>3,000.00</b>

<b>Patchwork Project</b> Young women only drop-in	<b>3,000.00</b>
<b>CREST (Compact for Race Equality in South Tyneside)</b> Swimming project for women	<b>2,910.00</b>
<b>West End Women and Girls Centre</b> One Stop Shop for advice and support	<b>3,000.00</b>
<b>20 Grants</b>	<b>49,048.00</b>

## Acknowledgements from some of our recent grantees

“On behalf of the Sunderland Women’s Centre I would like to thank the Women’s Fund for the generous grant of £2826.00 towards the cost of our Speaking and Listening skills sessions. Your commitment to helping community projects like ourselves is sincerely appreciated.” **Sunderland Women’s Centre**

“On behalf of the Trustees, and all of the team here at the **Josephine and Jack Project**, I would like to say a huge thank you for your kind grant offer ... Without your support we would not have been able to afford to make a new Josephine.”

“... We will ensure that it (our grant) is used wisely to provide a meaningful and effective fitness and healthy living programme for young women with, or at risk of, mental health difficulties.” **US**

“I would like to thank you for the recent Community Foundation award which was awarded in recognition of the ongoing support to victims of Operation Sanctuary. We plan to utilise this fund to provide ongoing support to victims of Operation Sanctuary, specifically South of Tyne victims as trials are still ongoing.” **Changing Lives**

“It is increasingly difficult to find appropriate funding sources for our work and we very much appreciate your support” **WHIST (Women’s Health in South Tyneside)**

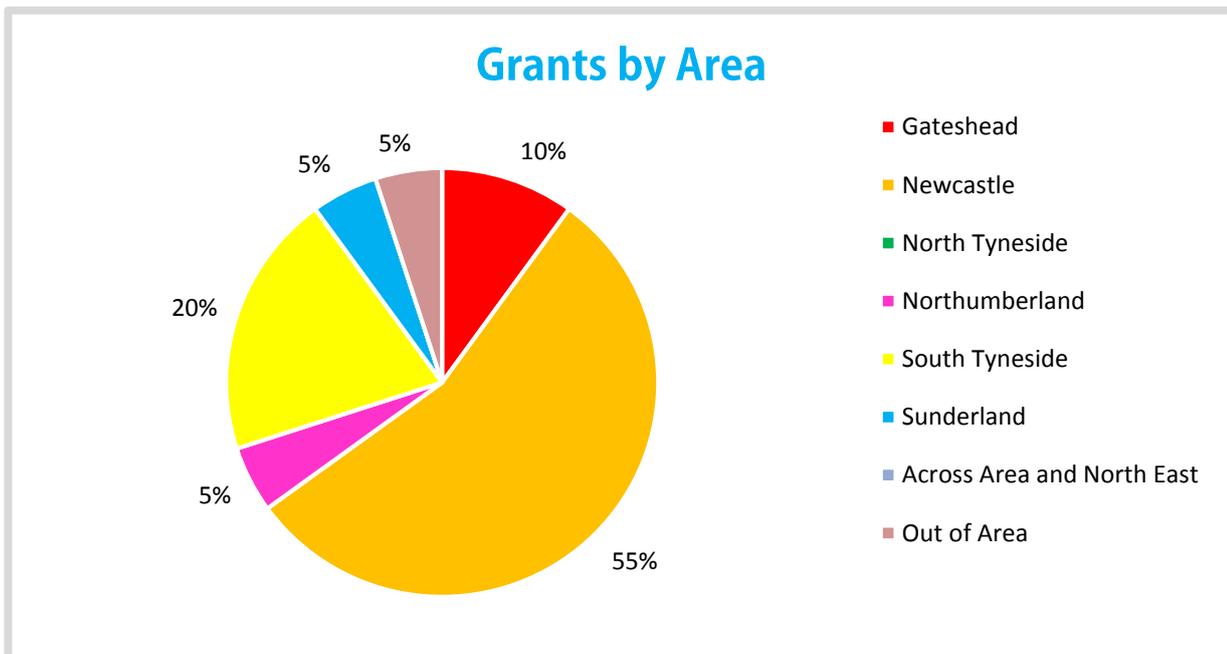
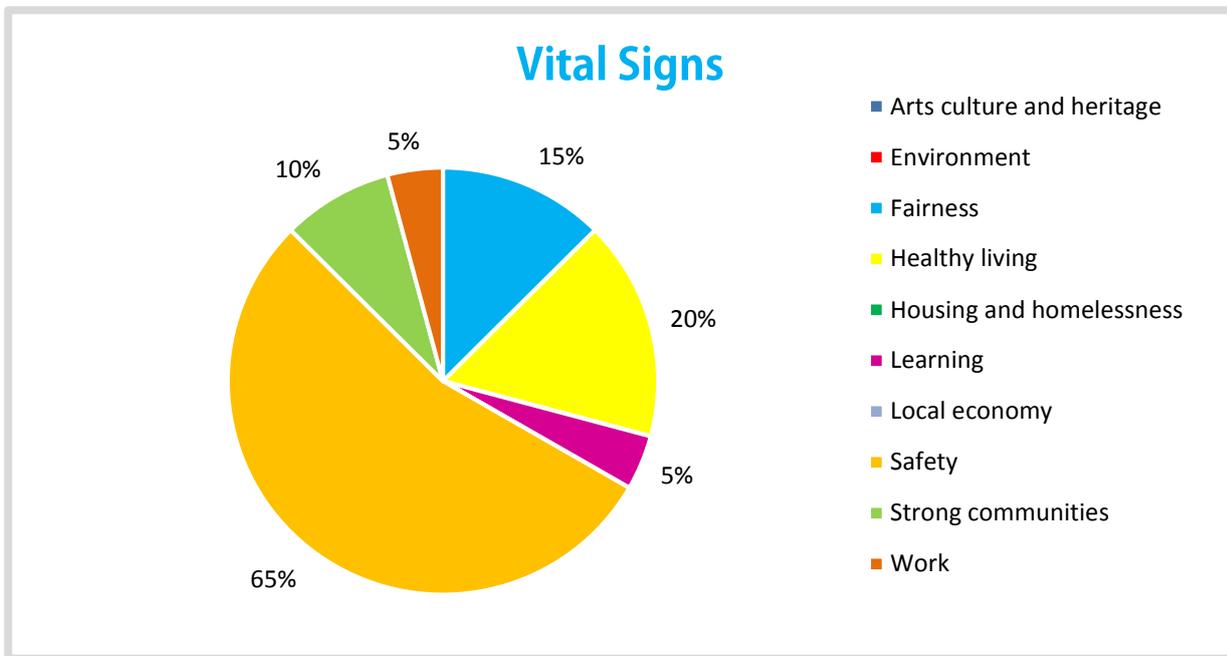
“The grant enables us to not only deliver the services but to develop relationships within the community that all too often help us to offer much more than single areas of support”

**Patchwork Project**

## Grants breakdown – Women's Fund

The following two graphs show the breakdown of grants across our Vital Signs areas and by region.

### Vital Signs



## News from the people you have supported

First Step North East	
Project:	'In Her Footsteps - Steps for Survivors'
Grant amount:	£2,577
Area of benefit:	Newcastle

Eight local women from BAMER communities enrolled and attended all sessions on how to deal with harassment, coercive and violent behaviours. Conversation groups of up to 16 local women debated both the subject and offered peer support mentoring.

H. is originally from Iran and although well educated was very isolated and lacking in confidence as a result of her domestic circumstances which were extremely violent. She heard about First Step and was encouraged to come by a close friend but it had to be on the basis of complete confidentiality. She started as a beneficiary and undertook a range of basic courses in language, computing, creative arts and writing. These last two were very important to her as it was through the arts that she feels best able to express herself. Confidence restored she was supported by First Step through a very difficult divorce, has British citizenship and now supports others in similar circumstances to herself through her creative work.

Eight women enrolled to train for a ONE Awards qualification (30 hours over 10 months) in Survivor Advocacy and five have achieved the qualification so they have skills and knowledge to mentor others.

As a result of this funding we encouraged women to come forward with their stories and opened up a well of emotional release that is often suppressed. It has given us the opportunity to access other funding to support us going forward.

Wor Hoose Community Project	
Project:	Women's "Feel better" group
Grant amount:	£750
Area of benefit:	Newcastle

We ran three different courses as that was what our group expressed an interest to do. Fifteen women obtained an accredited level 1 certificate in food, hygiene, 8 of these women also did a level 2 in first aid and then a further 5 went on to do level 3 in emergency first aid.

We developed a monthly programme of rolling activities, and to ensure our group remained a women's only activity, turned Thursday's into our Feel better women's activity day. During the length of the project the women who attended took part in a series of activities including swimming, walking, alternative therapies, tai chi, yoga, dance and Zumba, relaxation, hand massages, arts and crafts, aerobics, stretching, shared lunch cooking activities, diet and body health checks, stress management and life balances. We were also able to do some activities on financial inclusion, debt advice and savings and supported some women to attend basic literacy and maths 1:1 sessions.

This group has been very successful as the women involved found the group to be supportive and beneficial to their weekly lives. Women who took part in feedback said the group enabled them to be more supportive to their own families, they also felt they could share and give something back to their community, challenge the under-representation of women within the area, raise awareness on a range of issues to others and overall felt the group had improved community cohesion and integration.

Being a women-only group made a huge difference, as we had women participating in community activities who had never attended anything before. Fifty attendees stated they would not have attended the group if it had been the normal mixed sex activities group which we usually run.

Everyone commented that coming here to Wor Hoose had given them the opportunity to try new things and learn simple achievable health benefits.

16 women now have gone onto attend other local fitness clubs, after reporting they felt more confident, happier and healthier in themselves from accessing the Feel Better club.

Even our 2 female workers involved in the group said they enjoyed working and being part of the women-only activity as the group became close as it's focus was on meeting women's needs.

We plan to deliver more women only activity clubs as through consultation with other organisations realise there is no other women-only space for women to support each other over health issues in the Walker ward. Our future plans are:

- ◇ To continue with the group with the support of obtaining additional funding

- ◇ To provide creche services with all exercise and learning sessions
- ◇ To set up a women's only relaxation room within Wor Hoose to provide a tranquil safe space where women can drop in to, as often they want to, as many do not have the opportunity for any private time within their own homes, or current daily living demands.
- ◇ Work with our local GP's/other agencies to run more educational activities on the causes and prevention of obesity, heart disease, diabetes and strokes to increase awareness and knowledge.

#### Community Foundation comment

The group has achieved a lot with a very small grant as their core costs are already covered. This grant shows what can be achieved by providing a small budget to enable some additional provision.

Sunderland Women's Centre	
Project:	Practical arts and crafts sessions for socially excluded and disadvantaged women
Grant amount:	£2,960
Area of benefit:	Sunderland

Four 20 hour courses were delivered. All courses enrolled successfully with an average of 10 women per course. Women were of all ages, abilities and from a variety of backgrounds with diverse needs. Each course is evaluated and feedback has been both positive and informative.

Accessing community learning improves quality of life and helps combat isolation. Our outcomes for the project were to offer women a program of courses, which had no pressure of assessments or exams but gave opportunities to establish social networks and increase confidence, as well as to gain knowledge or learn new skills.

Through evaluation and feedback of the courses it has been shown that our initial aims were met. Women reported benefits of, increased confidence, being mentally active, making friends and improving spoken English. In addition, many women have gone on to further learning activities.

**Mental Health Concern (Moving Forward, South Tyneside)**

Project:	Moving Forward Women's Group
Grant amount:	£1,880
Area of benefit:	South Tyneside

Our female clients have been able to engage in many social activities which they would not normally have the opportunity to participate in. Many have been able to leave South Tyneside for the first time in many years due to having both the finances and support to enable them to do so. This has led to an increase in their confidence.

We provided opportunities for clients to attend community fitness sessions such as Zumba and Tai Chi, as well as providing several trips and meals out.

Clients have had the opportunity to exercise their decision making skills by taking part in discussions surrounding the activities they would like to participate in, again leading to an increase in confidence and self-esteem.

In addition we have been able to involve female clients from our Carer Support Service (which support those who have caring responsibilities for a person with mental illness) with some of these activities enabling them to have a break from their role and promote and improve their own mental wellbeing.

We intend to continue with this engagement through the purchase of a laptop computer to allow clients access to wellbeing information on-line, alongside training and work search opportunities

Peace of Mind	
Project:	Training on UK laws around children and child care
Grant amount:	£1,710
Area of benefit:	Gateshead

The funding enabled us to run three training workshops around parenting in the UK (Laws around children) and these workshops were attended by 67 new arrivals.

We received a very positive feedback from the participants:

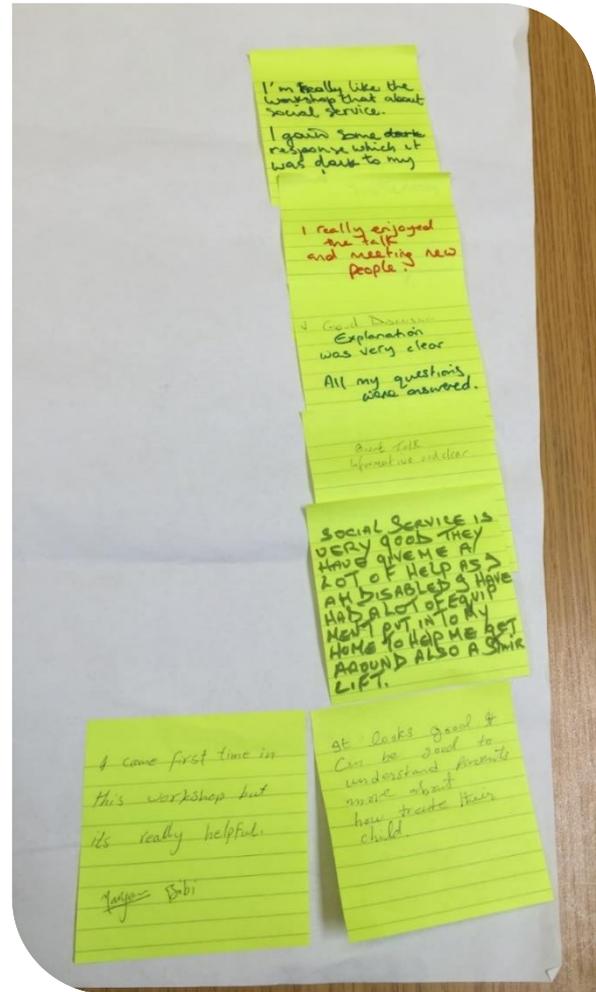
- 60% explained gaining more confidence and awareness about their rights and entitlements as a parent in this country
- 49% explained they were better able to understand what their responsibilities are around their children
- 80% were able to access parenting support more easily after attending the workshop

Overall we received very positive feedback from the service users and the sessions has achieved personal and practical support for parents who are new to this country and don't know their rights and responsibilities.

These sessions has been very helpful to raise the profile of our project in the area and as a result we were able to establish a partnership with Gateshead Youth Council.

We have set up a new project call "Peace of GYA" in partnership with Gateshead Youth Council to tackle the issue of homelessness among young people and we are preparing a welcome pack for new arrivals in Gateshead.

Peace of Mind would not have been able to run this workshop without the Community Foundation's funding and support. Peace of Mind is growing fast, the funding has been vitally important to us; through training sessions like this workshop we are able to grow our network of support contacts. Even after the workshop is over, we retain and maintain these contacts and our members have access to a wider range of support as a result.



Impact Family Services	
Project:	Change 4 Women - supporting women who have abusive behaviour
Grant amount:	£3,000
Area of benefit:	South Tyneside

The grant has enabled us to pilot a longer course for women who use abusive behaviours in intimate relationships. We found that the 6 week course initially written was not sufficiently long enough to effect change and the women themselves requested a longer course so this was extended to 10 weeks.

The development of this programme is now at 12 weeks and considers more communication skills, effects on children and the consequences of using abusive behaviour. We also found that majority of the women had other issues going on in their lives which were impacting on the programme, such as housing and financial issues. The service model moving forward will offer a more holistic approach which will include a one to one support package which will run alongside the programme to ensure other support areas are identified and addressed.

We found that we needed to use different teaching methods to provoke thought in the women and that they responded well to use of visual aids and also a DVD regarding the effects on children. We found this useful when discussing boundaries and the women were given small cardboard women and paints to visualise how they can lose their identity when someone violates their boundaries repeatedly.

We have identified that we need to complete follow up work with the women to see if they have able to put in place any positive coping strategies. We also recognise the need for a professional evaluation of our results in order to analyse our work with the women and assist us in identifying further good practice points. The women have completed Personal Learning Plans following each session and set themselves personal goals as well as the goals set by the tutors. They scored themselves on these goals at the beginning, midway and end of course and all reported a big change from when they started to the end of course on all goals.

All of the women completed evaluation forms following each session and the tutors also completed a staff debrief so we could then adapt the programme depending on the response of the women.

All the women who attended and completed the course reported positive changes in their current relationships. The women who attended also reported having more confidence in locating support services and asking for help. We collated stats around a reduction in police call outs, increase in safety and a reduction in incidents in their current relationships.

Grainger Park Boys Club	
Project:	Lighten your heart: women only sport and exercise sessions
Grant amount:	£2,000
Area of benefit:	Newcastle

We started with a small number of 5 then it gradually increased to sessions of 25 women. We provided boxing, Zumba, dance, badminton, trampolining, football, netball, basketball, boxercise, boot camps. We also included mums and little uns sessions so they were able to exercise with their children.

The women we worked with for these sessions have gone on to form groups and classes for their preferred sports. Sessional workers provided feedback after each session and session reports.

The grant made a massive difference to our charity as it enabled us to provide more sessions to the community and help women who might not have been comfortable joining in with the male dominated sessions.

It has given the community centre more recognition with the local community and the neighbouring schools and is enabling us to outreach and work more within the area.

North Tyneside Disability Forum	
Project:	Intergenerational women's choir
Grant amount:	£1,500
Area of benefit:	North Tyneside

We were so fortunate to have Celia Bryce as our singing tutor. In the main we had between 12 - 15 women of various ages attending. The variation of numbers of women attending each week, was dependent upon hospital/doctors appointments, one lady had a hip operation and almost passed away. We had twenty sessions and were fortunate in that we could continue with our Songbirds choir from June 2016.

We have sung at ASDA Benton, Sainsbury's Northumberland Park, The Beacon Centre, Park View Centre, NTDF Charity Shop. We held our International Women's Day Celebration and this was so lovely, lots of other women joined in the celebration. At the Whitley Bay Playhouse, our Herrings Heed song brought the house down.

One of our older ladies (aged 84), just loves to sing, she had been in a choir in South Tyneside, she had moved to Shiremoor to be closer to her daughters and as her hip was so bad it cost £5.00 each way to and from the Centre to come to our choir, when her daughter pushed her in her wheelchair it took seven minutes. She is an inspiration to us all. Her daughters advise us that they firmly believe that coming along to these sessions has helped her in the transition of house move. One of our younger women loves to sing, however she is a poor reader with a learning disability but can remember the words to all our songs. Our oldest lady is 87, she had a fall and broke her ankle, she only missed choir for three weeks. We are able to continue singing as we were able to get another grant, we contribute £2.00 per session. Our younger women were so excited about performing at the Whitley Bay Playhouse. We are available for gigs should anyone want our now Inter generational Songbirds Choir to sing for them.

### The Road to Recovery Trust

Project:	Conference and group sessions for women in recovery
Grant amount:	£1,165
Area of benefit:	Newcastle

The event itself was very well attended by 70 women in recovery. The women who attended the conference included women who are in long term recovery and women who were re-engaging with fellowship following periods of sustained abstinence and dis-engagement from fellowships as well as newcomers. The topics covered included nutrition, mindfulness, love and intimacy and other health and wellbeing topics related to recovery. An ongoing theme and one which we will take forward further in the coming months are issues faced regarding childcare to enable attendance at fellowship meetings. We are also planning more events which are suitable for children and the whole family to attend on the basis of what the participants in this programme have told us. They would also like to do more on healthy eating and nutrition so we will take this forward also. The women who attended want to make the conference an annual event. Some have already indicated that they are willing to take on the planning of this. All enjoyed being in a women's only space for the day.

In addition to the conference, we invited women who had their own small business to have a stand in a market place free of charge during the day. This was very successful and we are repeating this at Christmas. Mostly they were women in recovery who are starting small businesses including crafts and complementary therapies.

Most of the women who took part have very limited means and really enjoyed being part of this project. We are really grateful to be awarded the funding and will work to continue the themes identified.

### Friends of the Drop-In for Asylum Seekers and Refugees

Project:	Women's group for asylum seekers and refugees in Sunderland
Grant amount:	£3,000
Area of benefit:	Sunderland

We have provided a broad range of activities using both external facilitators and the expertise of the women themselves including staff and volunteers. The women have shared cooking sessions, sewing and knitting using donated materials, and their own cultural input in terms of song or dance. They have had a number of taught zumba sessions and input from a range of external people attending from public health, children's centres, breastfeeding, Angelou centre, Sunderland women's centre education services etc. Taught art classes in ceramics and currently batik have come from FACL funded MBC ceramics based in Sunderland and input from art teacher has been funded by Cultural Spring's refugee drawing classes. The majority of the women now have some educational courses they attend. The women complete learner programmes as part of these courses which can lead to other education and new directions in the future.

Much of what we did was informed by the women themselves and we have had suggestion boxes, discussions and views given on what they enjoyed the most. Their most asked for sessions were for Zumba, cooking and sewing, but they were always open to trying new things and the facilitators doing ceramics, drawing, dance, radio and batik were very positive about how much the women are able to embrace whatever is put before them to try. They are in fact, 'hungry' for new experiences and do not have the inhibitions of some other groups of women.

Individual support is offered through staff and volunteers and a lot of signposting is carried out. They are also given information on our other services, e.g. drop-in, cooking/art classes elsewhere and we give out free family swims or soft play vouchers.

The women are always so positive in their feedback to different facilitators and develop close relationships with the teachers. This is particularly so with the Zumba teacher whom they really 'love!' and whom helped us do a wonderful joint Zumba class for Refugee Week with an ordinary Sunderland Zumba class and had a true exchange of experiences during the lunch after. This meeting of asylum seekers face to face is our way forward for attempts at understanding and empathy. The asylum seeker women cannot afford to join other local classes independently but may do this in the future if they get refugee status.



The women really support each other when they see someone is feeling down or have pressing problems. They have become a community in themselves. They help each other socially and in that way support each other's mental health. A good example of this is a recent pregnant woman whose baby is due at Christmas. All the women in the group now refer to this baby as 'their' baby wanting to know about its progress and want to help look after it. This particular woman speaks very little English but all in the group try and communicate with her.

Some of the women have attended separate Cultural Spring art classes, social chef cooking classes as well as the ESOL courses. We marry up our funding streams to integrate projects. Where limited funding was available for funded teachers and facilitators and materials, FODI has used available resources from other bodies together with our own funding. Essentially, the group exists because of the Community Foundation funding.

As the worker, I can still do a lot of practical support but this would not be possible without a fantastic volunteer team and we currently have four dedicated volunteers who attend almost every week.

Newcastle Carers	
Project:	Supporting women carers from BME communities
Grant amount:	£2978
Area of benefit:	Newcastle

We have run two kinds of sessions:

- information and support group sessions targeted specifically at BME women carers
- carer awareness and information sessions in community venues targeted at women from BME communities.

The grant has allowed us to give much needed additional time individually to BME women carers who need interpreting or who are unfamiliar with systems and entitlements. We have enabled women carers to access grants, benefits and entitlements for them and the person they care for, given emotional support, explained the support available eg adult social care and how to access it, liaised with other services on their behalf eg housing services, supported people to access a range of other organisations, and helped them feel more empowered to make informed choices moving forward.

The grant has also enabled us to do enough in-depth work with individuals to give them the confidence to come to group sessions, and has allowed us to strengthen group support to BME women carers, and to support additional women to come to group sessions. This has increased opportunities for valuable peer support networks.

A member of staff has supported group sessions including local outings, and this has helped strengthen relationships and combat isolation. The women are now feeling confident enough to share information and ideas in group sessions with one another about how to sustain their caring role in a balanced and healthy way, and are planning future sessions.

Through visiting groups of women meeting in a variety of community settings, we have also made/strengthened valuable links with organisations supporting BME women across the city, and this has increased awareness of Newcastle Carers services amongst their staff teams. We hope that this will increase referrals/signposts to our service in the future.

"...all the help and advice given was beneficial"

"When I needed to apply for concessionary travel I didn't know where or how... I got help from Newcastle Carer"

"I feel better meeting other carers, knowing I am not alone"

Tyneside Women's Health	
Project:	Safer Women: Peer support sessions
Grant amount:	£2,608
Area of benefit:	Gateshead

Our two peer mentors have supported staff to deliver healthy relationships workshops to young women in schools and colleges to raise awareness of perpetrator behaviour and what healthy relationships should be like. These sessions have reached 101 young people.

Our Peer Mentors tell us that by providing support to other women they have also increased confidence and have a sense they are 'giving something back.'

Two of our Peer Mentors helped to prepare 6 women to speak at a large White Ribbon Event we held in Gateshead in November. These women formed a panel to describe their experiences of domestic abuse and invited questions from the audience. There were 130 people present at the event to raise awareness about violence against women.

We are delighted to have 4 Peer Mentors currently accessing an accredited training course, and 2 of these Mentors have already supported in the delivery of support groups. These women have planned a rota of peer support sessions. We are disappointed that the formal training took so long to organise, however our mentors have benefited from shadowing our staff team for a longer period and we feel they are now better prepared to lead groups alone with the support of a supervisor. We are delighted with the progress they have made given the complex nature of the support they will be providing.

We have viewed this project as a pilot and have learned from this experience and will use this learning to work with more Peer Mentors in the future and may roll this out to other groups of women. Thank you to the Women's Fund for supporting our project.

Southwick Health and Community Forum	
Project:	Women's Hour
Grant amount:	£3,000
Area of benefit:	Sunderland

The project has proved very popular and verbal and written feedback from the ladies who attended the sessions has been excellent. Over the period of the grant we were able to recruit 42 ladies.

The aromatherapy and workshops were very popular , with the ladies attending realising emotional well being and physical health work hand in hand.

The tutor worked very closely with the ladies making positive relationships enabling a trusting session, indeed the ladies have become good friends and supported each other. Every one looked forward to the sessions and has proved one of our most popular projects.

The organisation will be looking for further funding to try and continue the project .

Thank you for providing the funds.

## Community Foundation

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