

## **Nottingham Women's Centre is run by women, for women\***

It is a welcoming, supportive, non-judgemental, women-only space that is open to all women. The women who use the Centre tell us that this is a place where positive relationships are built. We feel very proud of that and we celebrate and respect the diversity of every woman who comes here. We welcome and work with women of all ages, all races, all nationalities and national origins, women who hold various religious and cultural beliefs, women with disabilities, both seen and unseen, heterosexual women, lesbian women, transgender and non-binary women, women from lots of different backgrounds and with different stories to tell.

# **A year in the life of Nottingham Women's Centre April 2017 - March 2018**

\* All self-identifying women are welcome to use our Centre, access our services and events and to apply for staff and volunteer roles.

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# Chair's Introduction

We last held an AGM in December 2017 but have since decided to move the cycle so that this important event for us falls at a less socially busy time of the year. This seems to be a decision that has worked, and we are happy to welcome so many of our members and supporters to our AGM this year, and to take this opportunity to cover not only the business side of such an event but to showcase some of our achievements this year. In addition, we would like to thank friends who have moved onto new roles and new friends who have come to join us.

Reflecting on the last year we have, amongst many other events, seen a change of CEO and two valued trustees have left us.

I must give our thanks to both Melanie Jeffs, who stood down as CEO in June 2017, and Helen Voce who took up the role on that date. It has been a pleasure to work with both and it has been appreciated that they have both been generous enough to keep communication open between themselves, thus making the job of the Board a lot easier.

On the Trustee Board Lesley Steele (who chaired NWC for many years) stepped down as has Nabila Wakefield. I would like to thank them both for their considerable contributions. We hope to have 7 new trustees coming onto the Board over the next few months. They bring a

range of skills and attributes and I believe will ensure that NWC has a strong and diverse governance profile going forward. I am sure that these women will offer the Centre a wealth of plans, ideas, support and reflection.

This brings me to the volunteer group. Ably supported by our volunteer coordinator, these women have brought the Centre national recognition and a heightened profile this year with the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service. This group of women are core to the work of the Centre and I feel extremely proud to be associated with them.

Looking forward our lease at Chaucer Street runs out in a few years. This will be a big challenge for us but also an opportunity to look forward and develop new ideas with the women of Nottinghamshire for the Centre in a new location.

To our new friends attending the AGM, we are delighted to welcome you to our event today. There are many ways in which you can get involved with the Centre and we look forward to exploring these opportunities with you over the coming months.

# NWC achievements over the last 12 months



## Targeted support for vulnerable women such as those experiencing or at risk of violence, homelessness, offending or substance misuse

We ran 290 group sessions for women completing their probation order in the community in Nottingham City, Mansfield and Worksop. The sessions cover subjects such as healthy emotions, positive parenting or healthy relationships as well as problem solving, self-awareness and mindfulness.

We have supported **28 women** to overcome barriers to getting **into education, training or employment** through a range of skills based workshops, volunteering, accredited courses and 1 to 1 support.

we supported **94 Women** in financial hardship and crisis and enabled them to **achieve more long-term stability**. **Total benefit gain for the last year was £169,976.75 and a total of £32,633.36 in backdated benefit payments.**

We have seen an increase in women and their families affected by the 'benefit cap' and 'bedroom tax,' resulting in mounting debts such as rent arrears and council tax. We have helped women directly to resolve these debts to the value of **£7,956.65 and supported many more to access specialist debt advice.**

Changes in disability benefits and difficulty in accessing mental health services have seen us supporting many women with complex needs and working hard to maximise income and avoid further hardship and ill health. Women have received emergency support packages/vouchers to prevent severe hardship and to enable them to continue to access our services.



## Safe and supportive space for women in an all-female environment

Over 11,000 women visited the centre last year, about **42 women each day**. Our **office space** continued to be rented by local women's organisations – Women's Aid Integrated Services and Nottinghamshire Sexual Violence Support Services, making 30 Chaucer Street a **women's hub**, offering holistic, person-centred services and supporting women with a broad range of needs.

Being the only one of its kind in the East Midlands, our **Feminist Library** is a great resource for archive and more current material. It's a safe space with books available to all women visiting our centre and to inspire members of the Radical Readers book club that meet here.



## Therapeutic services for women experiencing emotional challenges and mental health issues

Women can access up to **48 tailored sessions** with a female counsellor. Group therapy sessions provide a supportive and encouraging environment in which women build networks and benefit from peer support such as our Anxiety Group and Empowerment Circle.

**Last year 134 women benefited from receiving counselling services.**

In March we heard we were successful with our bid to the Big Lottery to expand this popular and much needed work in the city and county.



## Training courses and activities focused on personal development and increased skills

Over the last 12 months we have run **13 Courses for 177 attendees** covering subjects such as: English, Maths, ESOL, confidence building, yoga, archery and others.

Crafty Club regulars have been busy with an exhibition in John Lewis Café and have been making cards to raise money for their materials.

The archery group has organised a couple of successful fundraising events for the centre while the Lesbian, Bisexual and Trans café provided a warm and friendly social group to help women gain confidence and build up social networks.

We hosted regular clubs including the auROARa drama group and the Radical Readers feminist book club

We held a number of one off events too. Our **open day** attracted **175 women**, many of whom were visiting the centre for the first time. The **Stop it** event last Dec saw 75 women celebrating the progress we've made in creating a safer city for women and on **International Women's Day** we saw many women celebrating 100 years since some women were entitled to vote.



## Lobbying, advocacy and partnership working

Our approach to partnership working with key stakeholders and other women's services is based on knowledge sharing and collaboration. We are active members of a number of cross-sector forums and co-ordinate the city's **Women's Organisations Network** to help foster closer relationships between over 50 groups. We are a member of Nottingham Citizens and work with 36 other institutions to create positive change in our city and hold decision-makers to account.

Where possible, we help build the capacity of other local organisations working with women. Our Help Through Crisis project does this and through the **Communities of Identity funding** from the City Council we **awarded grants to 14 LGBT+ and women's organisations** including POW, Base51 Outburst, LGBT+ Network, Notts Sexual Violence Support Services, Trans Space, SheAfriq, An Nisa, Box Smart, New Rose Associates, African Women's Empowerment Forum, Badminton Social, OWL, SHEnanigans, AuROARa, Who do you think I am?, Kairos, Somali Women's Organisation and NCBI.

We want to amplify women's voices. Our focus groups report last year resulted in us working in partnership with Opportunity Nottingham and bringing women together across our organisations to identify important issues they'd like to address. We've run events together too and women have spoken directly to service providers about how they could improve their services to be more responsive to women.

We've continued to campaign and lobby for women's rights both locally and nationally. We submitted evidence to the **Women and Equalities Select Committee enquiry** into sexual harassment in public places and we've been influencing behind the scenes and speaking in the media to encourage a national roll out of **misogyny hate crime** policy. We're taking action locally with Unions via our **#TimesUpNotts** Network, bringing women together to address sexual harassment in the workplace.

We worked with other women's organisations to run the local **Reclaim the Night** march in November to demand an end to male violence against women. We spoke to women to ask why they thought the march was important. Some felt that it was about making their community safer for women and families to be out and about at night, others felt passionate about challenging the wider political agenda that often holds the victims of male violence accountable. One woman said *"I don't like coming into town after dark, I have to plan my routes and know where I'm going and I still shake from the bus to the meeting point. Coming together in a group like this means I can walk confidently through the streets. I feel amazing tonight."*



# Impact and value

## Powerful quotes by empowered women

"The laptop I applied for will help to do my school assignments and for more practices at home for my further studies"

"I love everything about the Nottingham Women's Centre. They are really helping women achieve amazing things"

"I have earned how to love myself and am working towards meeting my needs"

"Nice and Peaceful"

"Made me realise that I have the answers within just need to work on persuading myself I am able to solve problems"

"It has helped me to achieve moving on with my life and knowing I can do life skills on my own"

"You have made me remember that no matter what life issues we encounter we as women are strong independent people who deserve nothing but the best"

"The grant has really helped me get back into self employment"





# Plans and Ambitions

## How will you help us?

The last 12 months saw unprecedented levels of activity around issues relating to women – we all took part in the celebrations for Vote 100, witnessed incredible moments of female activism and empowerment such as #MeToo and #TimesUp and were reminded about continuing employment inequalities through the gender pay gap data – all these have made us super energised to continue with our mission to empower women in Nottinghamshire.

At the start of the new financial year, we became the recipient of The Queen's Award For Voluntary Service. Classed as the MBE for volunteer groups, it is the highest award given to volunteer groups across the UK! All down to the incredible work and time our volunteers dedicate to the centre and our women.

We feel that 2018 truly is the Year of the Woman and we strongly believe that it could bring a significant step-change towards female equality. Will you be part of the solution?

We have big plans and ambitions:

- Searching for a new building to provide easier access to more women
- Looking to increase our membership and develop our membership offer
- Expanding our provision of courses and activities e.g. our Counsellors and Therapists are expanding their service into the county and offering more sessions in the city too.

- Planning an exciting calendar of events with opportunities for engagement for ALL women
- Hoping to establish new partnerships with more local businesses



**The Queen's Award  
for Voluntary Service**

*The MBE for volunteer groups*

## Feel like you could help us achieve these goals? Then please get in touch!

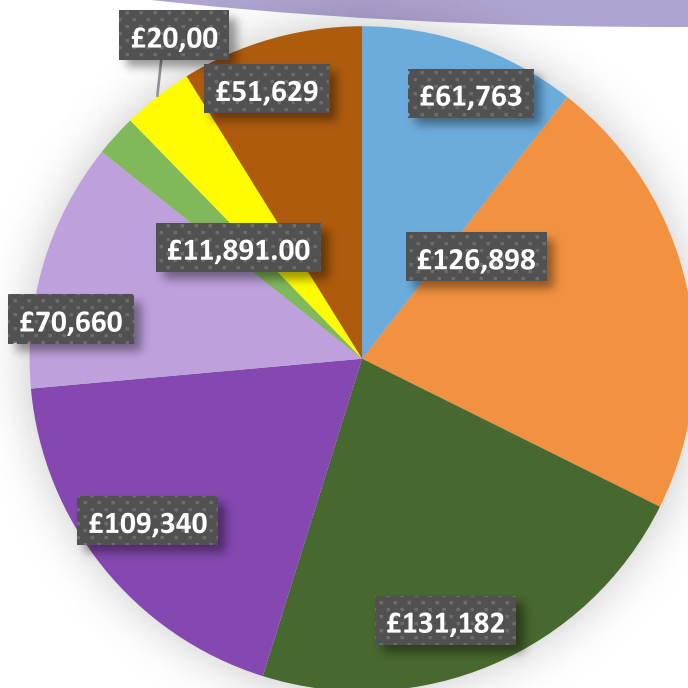
Use this speech bubble to let us know how you'll support NWC over the next 12 months - we'd love to hear your ideas.

Simply scribble down your answer, take a pic and tweet it to us at @nottswcentre using the hashtag #nwcandme and don't forget to stick it on our #nwcstickywall.

None of our work would be possible without  
Your help and support

Thank You!

## Income 2017-18



- National Lottery/ESF - BBO projects
- National Lottery - Help through Crisis and Renew+
- DLNR Probation - CHANGES
- Nottm City Council - Communities of Identity
- Nottm City Council - CoI subcontracted to partners
- Police and Crime Commissioner - Safer for Women
- Donations and other fundraising



NATIONAL  
LOTTERY FUNDED



Nottingham  
City Council

Derbyshire  
Leicestershire  
Nottinghamshire  
& Rutland  
Community Rehabilitation Company



European Union  
European  
Social Fund

## Local businesses fundraising for NWC and offering in-kind support



John Lewis  
in store | online | mobile



HM Revenue  
& Customs

