

*Supporting Sisters;
Doing it for Themselves*

EVALUATION IMPACT REPORT
NOV 21 – MAY 23

for more information :
www.aspire-northeast.co.uk





Executive Summary

The past 18 months has seen our services grow in demand as women face increasing challenges. Key to the success of the project has been our peer led Supporting sisters' model.

Women with lived experiences have accessed a comprehensive training programme to tackle and support women through an array of trauma related issues.

The Supporting Sisters' have been involved from the start and through consultation sessions and regular volunteer meetings have not only influenced the direction of the services but have brought their strengths to support and mentor one another.

They lead on the delivery of the one to one services and group support, responding to the complex challenges women face dealing with the impact of trauma and difficulties times.

The success of this project is down to the dedication of the staff and volunteers driving forward our peer led model which has been recognised supporting Aspire to develop and roll out services to a new area and grow new partnership opportunities as we reach out on to support more women in the Spennymoor area of County Durham.

Undoubtedly we face challenges ahead too in these uncertain times where women are more greatly impacted by inequality and the cost of living crisis, however we remain positive in our believe of when women support other women they can rise to the challenges.



Janice Rokni
Director

What We Set Out To Do...



We set out to respond to the needs of women by taking a holistic person centred approach to improving their lives and respond to the ever changing challenges women have faced over the last few years post pandemic and the ever increasing challenges of the cost of living crisis.

The support and wellbeing services have been in great demand and have had a positive impact for many women.

By building their confidence and resilience and feelings of belonging women have also gone on to improve their physical, mental health and wellbeing.

Support Services Headlines

290

290 individual women have benefited from this approach as we have provided peer led interventions supporting women through difficulties, addressing issue of trauma, the impact of poverty and isolation.

190

190 women have accessed one to one support via the listening service, covering issues of relationship difficulties, mental health, Domestic abuse and sexual violence, issues with alcohol and other form of self-harm. Telephone befriending and financial guidance, access to safe loans, build their credit scoring and save even the smallest amount when they can afford to has also been available.

165

165 women have engaged in various weekly group support sessions to maintain and support their mental health and wellbeing. Specific groups respond to women dealing with trauma as a result of difficult relationships issues, domestic abuse, cohesive control and thoughts of self-harm and suicide. Specific support is also available to older women who are experiencing or are at risk of isolation and loneliness.



Wellbeing Services Headlines



457

457 Individual sessions have been utilised by our women. Our women's wellness service continues to promote the importance of self-care and is very popular with women saying they value the time for themselves and the attention on their own wellbeing "The wellness sessions has made a massive difference to me and my well-being."

76

76 Weekly sessions of podiatry and massage promote good mental health, reducing stress and anxiety and promotes and maintains good mobility. 76 women have benefitted from this service in the period some accessing regular health maintenance sessions.

28

We also provide wellness packs for women with financial difficulties, experiencing domestic abuse or at risk. These packs have provided a life line for many women with food, toiletries and household essentials 28 women have benefitted from this service quote "Thank you so much the kids wouldn't have had any food or Xmas treats for xmas without this help"

Women's Words

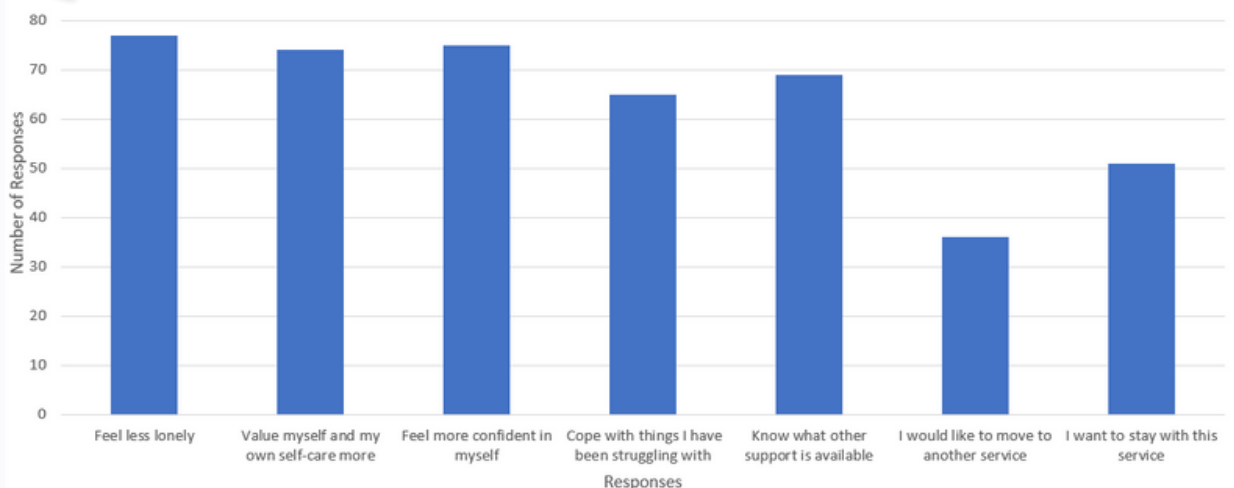


"Excellent support to help me move on from my complex difficulties"

"Aspire is a very safe environment and offers lots of opportunities to women."

"Excellent support and encouragement from all tutors at Aspire. Always very friendly and professional. Very safe environment."

Responses from Women who have accessed Aspire Support Services
Snapshot January - March 2023



"I have really enjoyed and feel I have progressed with my confidence and self-esteem"

"I love aspire and I love the people. I would honestly say aspire saved my life"

"Aspire is a fantastic Place and gives you so many opportunities to become a better person and more confident"

"It is so healthy to be able to share my struggles and bad days with the group, be heard and receive advices, tips and comments. I am absolutely grateful ."

"This place has kept me alive - Literally! Aspire gave me a routine and a purpose for life again."



Our Model

“As the team of supporting sisters grew the natural development of our peer led model was for the longer term/more experienced volunteers to mentor newer ones into their roles.

This also meant that as women came to us for support the supporting sister facilitators would build a relationship with them and nurture women until some felt ready to undertake the volunteer training .

This has been the ultimate achievement for the Supporting Sisters’ project as we now have women who came for support but are now providing it to others.”



Val Kilner

SUPPORT AND WELLBEING
SERVICE AND VOLUNTEER LEAD

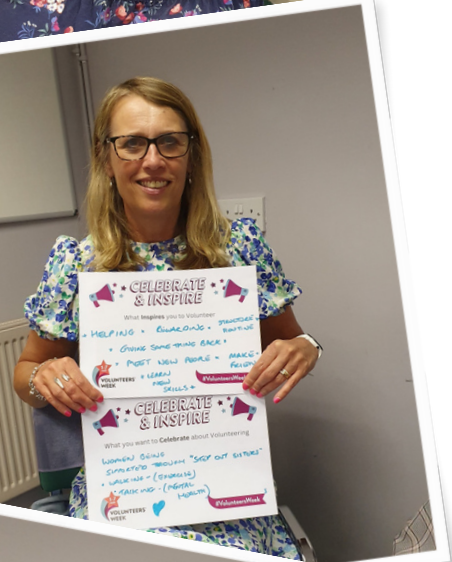
Meet the Team – Supporting Sisters



Supporting Sisters



"It makes you feel part of a lovely team."



"You feel valued and it feels good to help others"

"I celebrate working with the staff and women to feel safe and comfortable"

To help Aspire in their amazing work; supporting and encouraging women inspires me"



"Giving your time to others is rewarding. It gives personal satisfaction and this is good for wellbeing"

"It is lovely to be recognised"

"Volunteering is a huge confidence boost and everyone should give it a go"

"Seeing the faces of the women we are helping when they realise they are not alone anymore"

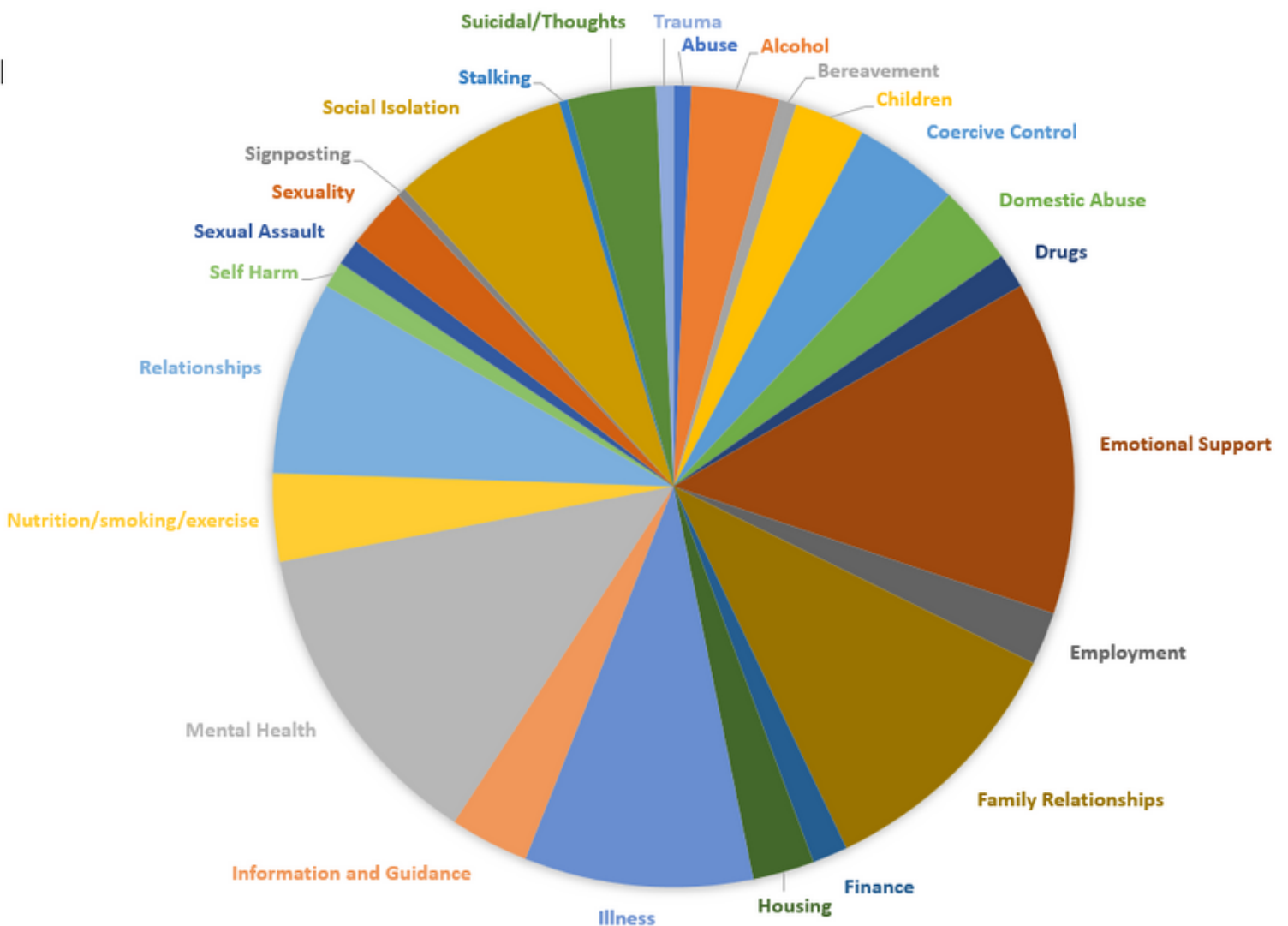
"Bringing hope and help to others"



Peer-Led

When Aspire say we are 'peer-led' we mean we work closely with women who understand and empathise with the lives of those using our services covering a wide plethora of issues reported. Volunteer involvement in the development and delivery of our services is key to tackling barriers for women accessing them.

Including volunteers in our service delivery team greatly expands the range of skills and experiences we have access to as well as the diversity of our provision.



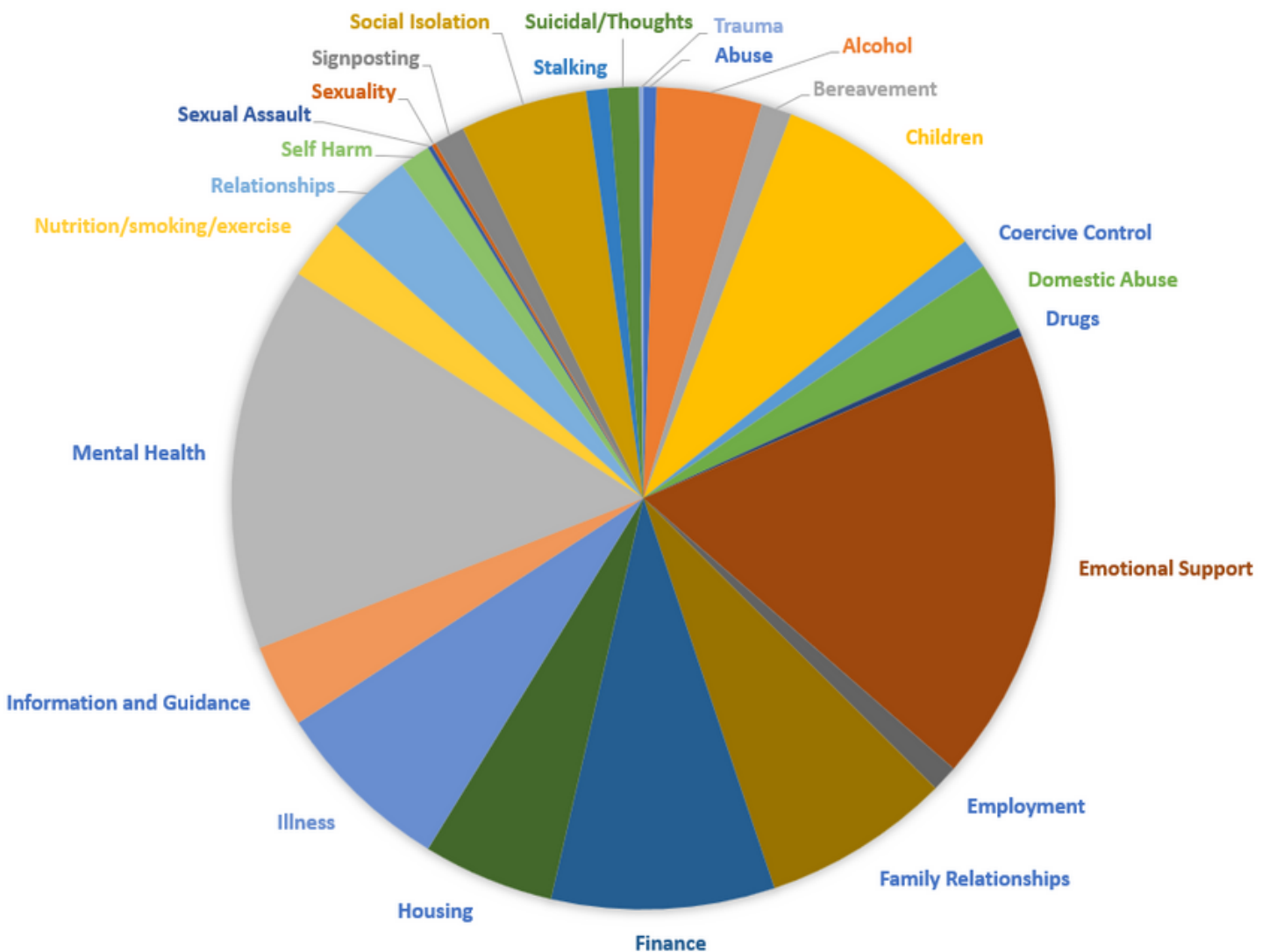
Group Session Reported Issues
January - March 2023



Co-Production

Working together to understand the issues our women face is of the utmost importance. Tracking means we can ensure that our services are designed holistically to meet the needs of our women.

Aspire volunteers facilitate the majority of our support services including our social and support groups, placing them the ideal position to help us develop, evaluate and improve them in what is called a model of 'co-production.'



1:1 Session Reported Issues
January - March 2023



Partnerships

The lottery funding has been a great platform to develop and showcase our model of delivery alongside our comprehensive offer of women's support and wellbeing services.

We are closely linked to many networks and local partnerships through our area action partnership, mental health alliance and specifically areas such as domestic abuse; we are working with the police and crime commission.

Through these networks and positive partnership working we are now rolling out our model to support women in the Spennymoor area impacted by domestic abuse along side working in partnership with Durham County Council to roll out recognised domestic abuse training. Our local area action partnership is a great supporter as featured here with local councillor Tracie Smith.

We also work closely with the local MP for North Durham; Kevan Jones and he regularly visits our Chester le Street facility to discuss any issues and to support the work of Aspire and the impact we have on the local community and his constituents.



**Cllr. Tracie Smith, Dir. Janice Rokni,
MP Kevan Jones, Dir. Jan Vincent**



Thank You



On behalf of all the staff, volunteers and women accessing and benefitting from the services the National Lottery Community Fund has provided we would like to say a huge "THANK YOU" for the positive impact and difference it has made to the lives of women and their families.





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