

**BWC**

# Inequality

Strategic Plan  
2018 - 2022

Brighton Women's Centre  
*Empowering women since 1974*

[womenscentre.org.uk](http://womenscentre.org.uk)

# Contents

Our Purpose	3
Summary	5
Background	6
Why Brighton and Sussex needs BWC	7
Services	11
Organisation	16
Sustainability: challenges and risks	18
Sustainability: strengths and opportunities	19
Sustainability: key actions 2018 - 2022	19

## Our Purpose

BWC (Brighton Women's Centre) has been supporting women in Brighton and Hove for over 40 years and women across Sussex since 2014.

BWC makes a positive difference to the lives of women and children in the South East. We are run for women by women and as such we are passionate in our commitment to empower women and children.

Women we work with include those at risk or who have faced abuse, loss, trauma, poverty, homelessness, and some who have been in contact with the criminal justice system. Whenever we can, we address needs at an early stage to avert or mitigate further crisis.

We do this by placing women at the centre of support by recognising that each woman is the expert on her own experience.

BWC offers a reparative experience that is premised on a flexible, asset based, women centred approach. This enables each woman to develop strengths and seek to live life to its full potential, so that she, her family and the wider community all benefit.

We understand the challenges women face and design services that are holistic and integrated to meet diverse needs. BWC advocates for women, by working in partnership and leading on the development of women-centred policy and practice.

## Our Vision

An equal and fair society where every woman has the opportunity to live a full and rewarding life.

## Our Mission

We want to give every woman the freedom, the support and the power to change her life – making things better for her, for those around her, and for society.

## Our Offer

We create a safe space where a woman can be herself, where we can build a strong, supportive relationship with her – giving her the security she needs to take the next steps towards a better life.

We recognise that each woman is an individual, with her own history, her own challenges, her own hopes.

We give her whatever kind of support she needs: practical support such as childcare, moral support such as advice and encouragement, and even specialist support from counsellors or therapists.

We understand that the problems in women's lives can sometimes come from a deeper root cause – and so, using our connected services, we work to improve all parts of her life.

Through our work with each individual, we fight social injustice and advocate for gender equality. Ultimately, we give women – and wider society – the strength to succeed.

# Our Values

## *Openness*

We approach every woman with an open mind and an open heart. We never judge anyone, we never turn anyone away, and we build trusting relationships where every woman can be completely herself.

## *Strength*

Our team must be strong, to fight the inequality we see around us. And we need to help women build their own inner strength, so that they can go on to live independent, successful and happy lives. Of course, this also strengthens the people and the society around them.

## *Equality*

We care equally about every woman, and every team member. And we believe passionately in building a society where every individual is treated equally, regardless of their gender.

## **Empowering women, enriching society**

**It's hard to know exactly what it's like to walk in your shoes. But, we'll walk the next mile with you**

We have over 40 years' experience of making women's lives better, so have learned what really works. We work with women across Sussex, whatever their history, their challenges, their hopes.

All our team members are women, so are best placed to understand the challenges women face.

Every woman should have the chance to live life to the full. But many women find themselves held back, perhaps by other people, or by events from their past – perhaps by discrimination or injustice.

By supporting you through difficult times, we give you the freedom, the support and the power to become your best self.

## Summary

In 2016 BWC was successful with its bid to the Cabinet Office and Big Lottery Local Sustainability Fund. This funding has enabled us to implement our vision for a project which will allow BWC to review and transform its service delivery model to ensure it is fit for purpose at a time of changing market conditions, reduced public funding and increased demand from service users.

The aim of the project is to support BWC to demonstrate high quality, professional services, market ready for meeting the increased demand from beneficiaries. This project has been informed by an organisational change plan which has prioritised the development of this five year Strategic Business Plan.

Within this plan we will develop our:

- Marketing and Communication Plan – we recognise that marketing our brand in a competitive environment is central to our strategy when traditional sources of funding are diminishing. This work to date has evolved the BWC brand and values with a view to accessing new and innovative forms of funding.
- Fundraising Plan – which, informed by our Marketing and Communications Plan, will include a diversification of our income generation including untapped resources to date, e.g. social finance, crowd funding, developing a donor base, and charity trading so that BWC's services are sustainable and more resilient.
- Partnership Plan - BWC is part of a wider community, both in the sense of being in Brighton and Sussex and also a part of the community of organisations supporting women across the country. In the case of a small charity with limited resources such as BWC there are great benefits from exploring areas for co-operation for mutual benefit in these communities.
- Service Re-design Plan – we aim to transform our service delivery model and develop a clear understanding of its impact and cost effectiveness. Our new brand and messaging will sit at the heart of our service provision and inform future development and implementation. Through this, BWC will continue to provide high quality services to women and children with multiple complex needs. Services will be relevant and accessible and extended to the South East.

Our Strategic Plan is informed by the above plans which have been formulated through implementing our organisational change plan which has resulted in the agreement of 15 key sustainability actions. Implementation of these sustainability actions through the above plans will mean that BWC will be able to support more women with multiple complex needs by the successful delivery of integrated and holistic services. Women will become more resilient and independent by moving from a dependence on statutory services to opportunities such as: volunteering, gaining skills and experience of the workplace, training and development opportunities.

## Background

BWC (Brighton Women's Centre) was formed in November 1974. BWC delivers services Sussex wide and has premises in Brighton as well as operating from community venues across the county. We offer diverse, affordable and holistic women-centred services and an Ofsted Registered Pre-school, ToyBox, in Brighton.

BWC has a track record of developing and delivering innovative and effective front line services in a safe women-only environment and continues to evolve as an organisation. This is supported by our track record of trusted commissioning with public sector bodies.

In the past, the organisation has relied on a combination of small grants from charitable trust funds, donations and earned income from charging low cost fees for services. In recent years, however, it has taken a more focused and strategic approach to income generation and a key element of this is the partnership approach it has taken. An example of this being the coming together of the city's women's organisations (of which BWC was the lead body) that secured resources for the delivery of services for women in the CJS and a synergy in the deployment of these. Through this partnership BWC has developed an award winning and nationally recognised community based service, Inspire, that has attracted target and outcome driven central Government funding to deliver services to women offenders and those at risk of offending.

Our charity had income of £604k in the year to March 2016 and its expenditures in that year were £554k, with the balance rolled over into reserves to spend in 2016/17. Most of the charity's income, £547k, is in restricted funds – mainly in funding from the public sector. These public sector funds are under severe pressure and will decline due to spending cuts. To continue to pursue the aims of the charity it has become increasingly necessary for BWC to seek other sources of income.

These other sources of income would include: charitable bodies with funds to allocate to front line charities, private individuals (especially including those able to donate significant funds) and corporates with charity budgets. To date these potential sources of funds have been largely untapped.

## Why Brighton and Sussex needs BWC

With women leading countries around the world, you may think that the work on women's rights is done. Yet equality isn't a reality for everyone: here in the UK, for every £1 a man earns a woman receives only 85p. Our work is as vital as ever. *We know we can make things better* We've been supporting women for over 40 years. We understand where inequality is most damaging, how we can make a difference to women – and we have a track record in making a big impact from limited resources. *We can change lives* – and change society. When a woman becomes strong and independent, she doesn't just change her own life. She helps change the attitudes and behaviours around her, building a society that is more diverse, more inclusive – and better for all of us, men and women alike.

### The reality for women living in the UK today:

- **Despite the Equal Pay Act 45 years ago, women still earn less than men in Britain today. The difference in pay between men and women remains the clearest and most dramatic example of inequality for women.**
- Overall, women can expect to earn significantly less than men over their entire careers as a result of differences in caring responsibilities; clustering in low skilled and low paid work, the qualifications and skills women acquire; and outright discrimination.
- **The pay gap for full time workers in the UK is 13.9%**
- **The Women's Budget Group analysis shows that female lone parent and single pensioner households will experience the biggest drop in living standards as a result of cuts to public services compared to other households. In total, their living standards will be down by 10% in 2020 due to real term cuts in public services, compared to just over 2% for couples without children.**
- **Single parents have long been at a disproportionate risk of living in poverty, and children in single parent families remain twice as likely as those in couple families to live in relative poverty (DWP, 2013).**
- **Women save around 40% less into their pension's pots than men.** This gap represents the culmination of a **life long gender pay gap** that most women experience and which is highest for women in their 50s, but there is also more at play here. Women tend to save less than men right across the income spectrum, are less likely to report that they understand pension products than men and 76% of women do not know how much they need to save for a comfortable retirement.

### Fair Representation?

**Women are under represented in politics. The lack of women in Westminster is increasingly reported yet the dearth of women in local government is very often forgotten.**

- Women make up only 32% of local councillors in England and 24% in Northern Ireland

## Women's Safety

- **Cuts to street lighting** mean that increasing concerns about personal safety at night –from crime or from injury – are affecting how women behave.
- **Over one million street lights are now switched off or dimmed for a set period overnight across Great Britain.**
- **Cuts to supported bus services** affect women disproportionately, because they use bus services more than men do. **Many women depend on buses** to get to work. But 70% of councils are cutting bus funding, with a £19m cut in the past year alone, and the cost of using the bus goes up each year. These cuts make it more difficult for women to get to work and restrict their employment options.

## Health Inequalities

The following details the degree to which the women in our communities experience health inequalities:

- **Homelessness: the average age of death for a homeless woman is 43 years**
- **Domestic Abuse – 2 women per week are killed by their current/past partner**
- **Mental Health - Stress** has reached a frightening level because of the cuts. Increasing costs of food, travel and childcare mean that **61% of families are short of money each week and 16% of parents are being treated for a stress-related illness because of money worries.**
- **More women than men experience depression. One in four women will require treatment for depression at some time, compared with one in 10 men.**

## What is happening locally?

From the Public Health Report for Brighton and Hove, women are significantly more likely to have depression - 22% compared with 15% for males, although part of this difference may be due to lower presentation at GP practices by males. In Brighton and Hove there is an increasing number of women experiencing homelessness and rough sleeping. Approximately 18% of rough sleepers in Brighton and Hove are women. As the national average percentage of female rough sleepers is 26%<sup>1</sup> this suggests there is under reporting of female homelessness in Brighton and Hove.

The St Mungo's report 'Rebuilding Shattered Lives'<sup>2</sup> highlighted the differences in support needs between female and male single homeless clients, and the need for services that specifically address these separate needs. Their findings were as follows:

- Over half the women they worked with were mothers
- Of those that were mothers, 79% had children who were in care or had been adopted

<sup>1</sup> 'Rebuilding Shattered Lives' St Mungos <http://www.mungosbroadway.org.uk/documents/4752/4752.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> 'Rebuilding Shattered Lives' St Mungos <http://www.mungosbroadway.org.uk/documents/4752/4752.pdf>



- 70% of women had mental health needs ( compared to 57% of men)
- More than a 1/3 had a history of sex work
- Almost half had experienced domestic violence and 19% had been abused as a child, (compared to 5% and 8% of men)
- A 1/3 advised that domestic violence contributed to their homelessness
- A 1/3 of women leaving prison had no place to live on release
- 48% of women had substance misuse issues

The Strategic Assessment of Crime and Community Safety 2013 provide local information on the levels of Violence Against Women and Girls in Brighton & Hove<sup>3</sup>:

- 79% of recorded incidents of domestic violence in 2012/2013 were against women
- The Inspire Project (which works with women involved with the criminal justice system In Brighton & Hove) reported between 66% - 75% of the 133 women they worked with reported current or historic experience of domestic violence
- 39% of clients requesting counselling via the Brighton's Women's Centre disclosed sexual violence as a factor in their support need

The 2015/16 Director for Public Health Annual Report, Strengthening Personal Resilience in East Sussex identifies that women (31%) and those aged between 18-24 (48%) are more likely to state that something prevents them or makes them less willing to leave the home, with fear of crime being particularly high amongst the 18-24 age group (18% vs. 4% overall)

44% of single parents in the county report feeling lonely which is almost twice as high as the county average of 24%.

For West Sussex, the Annual Public Health Report – Foundations for Wellbeing (2014) - poverty is the main risk factor for poor housing in childhood. Housing costs form a major part of household expenditure.

In 2010 an estimated 18% of household income was spent on direct housing costs (e.g. mortgages, rent) and a further 37% on wider housing related costs (e.g. fuel, water, power, household goods). Poorer families spend a greater proportion of their income on housing than more affluent families.

Approximately 22,000 children in West Sussex live in low income families, half of all families in poverty in West Sussex have a young child, aged 0-4 years.

Over 60% of all families accepted as homeless are “female lone parent” families.

A striking difference of homeless families compared with the general population is that the parents in families accepted as homeless tend to be considerably younger than parents in the overall population, with a third of parents being 25 years or younger compared with only 5% in the general population. Women tended to be younger than men.

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<sup>3</sup> Strategic Assessment of Crime and Community Safety 2013 <http://www.bhconnected.org.uk/sites/bhconnected/files/Strategic%20Assessment%20of%20Crime%20and%20Community%20Safety%202013.pdf>

Less than 10% of families accepted as homeless included a pregnant woman.

The majority of households contain young children (under 5 years), and a third of the children affected were under the age of one. Over half of adults had experienced mental health problems, including depression and anxiety, and 2 in 5 adults experienced violence within the home.

Most families accepted as homeless were found to be “workless families”. A third of adults in homeless families had reported living on benefits for most, or all, of their adult life.

The Safer West Sussex Partnership Community Safety Agreement 2017-20 states that In West Sussex, police recorded crime figures for domestic abuse indicate that domestic abuse crimes, which include any crime with a domestic abuse marker, have risen between 2014 and 2016 across all district and borough areas apart from Adur . Increases in numbers are particularly noticeable in Arun, Crawley and Horsham.

### Making Sussex a Fairer place for women – would this be cost effective?

**In 2012, BWC performed a Social Return On Investment study of the ‘one stop shop’ Inspire project. It demonstrated for every £1 invested into Inspire, £3.57 is generated in social and economic value.**

**Cost benefit analyses have identified that the sooner services can be wrapped around service users the more costs are saved.** Until women are supported to meet their multiple and complex needs there are continuous domestic abuse call-outs, loss of accommodation, children placed in care and attendance at A&E in addition to possible custodial sentence.

### Costs

Cost of Prison Place: £56,415<sup>i</sup>

Cost of child in care for one week ranges from £700 (foster care) - £2,995 (residential home)<sup>ii</sup>

Cost of DV call out £2,470<sup>iii</sup>

Cost of A&E admission £106/visit<sup>iv</sup>

New Economy cost calculator based indicates that the cost of a police detention is £593.

Funding will ensure we continue to deliver sustainable services to the most vulnerable and disadvantaged women including those in contact with the Criminal Justice Service, those experiencing domestic and sexual abuse, mental health difficulties and living in poverty and in poor accommodation.

The sustainability of services to these women will deliver wider benefits to Commissioners and funders as well as society at large. We aim to deliver more and better health and social care services, education and training, children and families services and offender rehabilitation to more women and across the South East. We will do this through improving access to a wide range of holistic and integrated services and ensuring alignment of our current service offer.

In 2016/17 the demand for our services increased by 60% on the previous year and we extended the reach from Brighton and Hove across Sussex. Our ability to grow services for vulnerable and disadvantaged women in the future is excellent in terms of our track record over 40 years.

For example we have consistently met and exceeded targets for the provision of offender rehabilitation services. **Evidence from the Ministry of Justice Data Lab clearly demonstrates that Inspire is statistically significant at reducing offending behaviour in women**

We deliver services that improve women's lives and save tax payer's money. At a time of reduced public spending and welfare and NHS reforms, it is imperative that the services we deliver are able to meet the needs described above and be sustained.

The demand for BWC services continues to rise and outstrips the current potential of supply.

## Services

### Volunteer Services

#### Peer Group Drop-In

We continue to receive interest from professionals and organisations in delivering new health and wellbeing services and are always looking to enhance BWC's overall volunteer services offer with developments that respond to women's needs. In partnership with Mothers Uncovered, we are establishing new Drop-In services across the city in locations such as Moulsecomb, Bevendean, Hangleton and Knoll.

These have been identified as areas in which women experience higher levels of need and isolation. One of our aims is to maximise access and inclusion to our services through enhanced partnership working with external colleagues. This will include working on Neighbourhood Action Plans and developing neighbourhood hubs in order to improve local community resources and build capacity.

We are an open access and free service providing a safe women-only environment for all self identifying women. The service is Volunteer delivered and offers support and information about specialist organisations. Many women come to us in need of a kind ear or a supportive voice, company, advice on other services at BWC or come to use the computers, phones, or printers. We also run a Food Bank, Clothes bank and free essential items including sanitary ware.

#### Mentoring Service

Mentors offer woman-centred one to one support to help women achieve goals and overcome difficulties. This service is an outreach service with women meeting at various venues in the community.

Volunteer mentors develop caring, honest and safe relationships with the women they support in order to empower them and support change. Women flourish with this support with one service user reporting her mentor saw 'potential in me when I couldn't or didn't think anyone else did.'

Brighton Women's Centre Mentoring Service has been awarded the Mentoring and Befriending Foundation's Approved Provider Standard quality assurance mark and assessed to be 'a good quality, safe and effective mentoring programme'.

## What are the outcomes of Volunteer Services? In 2016/17:

82% of women felt that the Volunteer Services were good or excellent at creating a safe welcoming space

89% service users are very satisfied with the service we offer

86% said the volunteers listened and understood the way they were feeling

66% of women felt that the Peer Group Drop-In and Food Bank improved access to other support services

73% of women reported that accessing Peer Group Drop-In and Food Bank had a good or excellent impact on them feeling connected with others

73% said that the service helped them understand what help and support they needed and to identify the choices open to them

71% of service users are satisfied that the service has helped them to find the information and services they are looking for

68% felt more in control of their lives

87% used the Drop-In service

## Inspire and Homelessness Support

**When women are sentenced to time in prison, 95% of children are removed from the family home as a result.**

**Inspire provides a positive alternative to a prison sentence. Women work intensively with an Inspire case worker to address the complex circumstances that have led to their offending and to work towards a positive future.**

In 2016/17, following engagement with their Inspire support worker 85% of women stated they felt better able to respond to their own needs and more in control of their lives. 77% had better access to support services. 91% said their case worker was excellent at supporting them to identify the help and further support they needed.

In 2016/17, 182 women were referred to Inspire from Kent Surrey Sussex Community Rehabilitation Company KSS CRC). 95% of all women referred to Inspire from the CRC engaged with our support. 95% of all the women Inspire supported completed their community orders.

Our Women's Diversionary Project was rolled out to ALL Custody suites across the three Sussex counties. The number of women referred to WDP was 230 with 64 voluntarily accessing the support.

At first assessment: 79% of Inspire clients had drug or alcohol needs; 73% had mental health needs; 60% were experiencing domestic abuse and 51% had children in care or living with relatives.

**Women say they look forward to being listened to without judgement, having a safe place to talk about things they don't tell anyone else and being understood.**

**Women report that the main benefit of engaging with us** has been feeling more confident, having better understanding of self, having the ability to manage thoughts and feelings, being able to take time to reflect and think and have a changing outlook on life.

“I felt very hopeless. My son wasn’t going to school, everything I was doing just wasn’t right and social services were constantly on my case. I feel like I can speak to [my case worker] about anything and everything. She’s helped my confidence. It is getting better, it has got better.” An Inspire client.

## **The Impact of Homelessness**

### **Accommodation Support Services**

BWC has extended its proven and effective model of supporting women with multiple and complex needs in the Criminal Justice Service to working with women across Sussex who are Homeless and insecurely housed. The WASW’s bring expertise and experience in women centred solutions to generic homelessness agencies ensuring that Homeless women in East and West Sussex can receive a bespoke, holistic, trauma informed response to the multiple issues they experience. Although Homelessness amongst women is rising, women are still a minority in the Homeless community and most generic Homeless services do not take a gendered approach. The opportunity for women specific services in both areas has created considerable added value for clients and agencies.

The creation of women only Drop-In spaces in Worthing and Littlehampton has enabled more women access to WCHP Day Centres. Increasing staff understanding and knowledge has enhanced the ability of all staff to respond more appropriately and effectively to women’s needs. The success in Worthing enabled a roll-out of the model into Littlehampton.

In Hastings, Seaview outreach and community based staff have supported women to access the WASW, who in turn brings a rapid, responsive and flexible approach to supporting women. The WASW supports women to secure and sustain accommodation.

In 2016/17, 97 of the women who accessed our women only services across Sussex were homeless or insecurely housed.

In West Sussex 100% of the insecurely housed and former entrenched rough sleepers that we worked with were prevented from rough sleeping.

33 homeless women accessed a BWC women only Drop-In. 50% of these have now secured accommodation.

## Counselling

Brighton Women's Centre has been delivering a free one-to-one counselling service for women who are recovering from a range of complex issues. For many women this is the first step in healing from trauma. This funding for this service was terminated in March 2018 and it is now a priority to secure funding to re-instate this vital service at BWC.

Our counselling service, previously run in partnership with Here (previously BICS), provided intensive support to women for up to 10 weeks. In 2016/17 we supported over 100 women, recovering from everything from bereavement to exploitation.

With Trauma Training for Therapists offered to the team and the purchase of specialist trauma resources, this is the focus of our work with clients. Counselling is a safe and progressive pathway to recovery.

We also deliver an enhanced Mental Health service to provide additional intensive case work support to ensure women with particular vulnerabilities and social isolation access and engage with the range of BWC services.

### Counselling In Numbers. In 2016/17:

822 counselling sessions were provided over the year

83% of women said they thought their counsellor had helped them to gain a better understanding of themselves

94% of women said their counsellor had helped them to be aware of what choices were open to them

94% of women said that counselling had helped them to view their situation differently

100% of women are satisfied with the counselling they have received

88% of women stated that as a result of counselling they are managing their anxiety better

72% thought counselling had helped to develop the skills for employment opportunities

"[Through counselling I gained] different ways of managing my outlook on life."

"The kindness and gentleness of my therapist and her willingness to listen made me feel understood, without pressurising me - ever."



## ToyBox Pre-school

### Support For Women Through Outstanding, Low Cost Child Care.

Through over 40 years of experience, we know that many women can't access vital services unless they have access to child care. But paying for child care can be a huge financial burden, which is why ToyBox is so important for families with complex needs.

ToyBox is an OFSTED-registered Pre-School offering quality early years education in a caring and learning environment. We welcome all families in Brighton and Hove.

Toybox provides flexible and tailor made childcare, alongside Early Years Education for children of 0 to 5 years. We do this in two ways: An Ofsted Registered Pre-school for 2 – 5 year olds and appointment-based childcare for clients accessing BWC services, such as Inspire or Counselling or short notice court hearings.

We offer a free flow learning environment which includes messy play, painting, block play, dressing up and home corner, sand and water activities music, singing, puzzles, stories and mark making. We promote the development of first hand learning experiences and we visit the nearby Level playground in all weathers.

Funding for up to 15 hours per week is available for children ages 2-5 years old. Staff can help you apply for The Early Years Free Entitlement (EYFE).

Women report that Toybox is often the 'constant' in their lives and that it has provided a **safe and caring space** for their child, which increases their own feeling of safety whilst they attend to their own needs.

### Building trusting relationships

Our effective multi agency work is key and we privilege the strong and trustful relationships with mothers that have endured through considerable challenges.

### ToyBox: A Snapshot

21 Children, aged 5 months to 3.5 years, attended ToyBox Pre-School during April 2016 to March 2017.

ToyBox engages with a wide range of Community and Voluntary Sector groups, working closely with groups such as Puffin Neighbourhood Nursery and the Early Childhood Project.

Parents say: "This service has been invaluable for me following the breakup of an abusive relationship. ToyBox has been a place that both of my children have enjoyed coming to. The staff have been very sensitive to our experience as a family. When I leave my children there I know that they are really well cared for, and this has been so helpful in enabling us to get on our feet during what has been a very stressful year. It's a place where I feel safe and my children feel safe. I hope that the staff realise just how important this has been for me."

**Congratulations to Jan and her team at ToyBox for achieving a Outstanding in their recent Ofsted Inspection, confirming the incredible work that they do to support mothers and children in Brighton and Hove.**

## Activities

We offer a range of personal development activities for all women. These can help women improve their emotional wellbeing through the development of self-esteem, confidence, literacy, and skills for life and work.

**BOOST Your Self-Esteem** - This is a 10-week course for women who have low self esteem. The course is run in small groups and is aimed at improving relationships and increasing confidence to access college, work and social activities. This course provides a nurturing environment; guidance through some of the complex issues which affect self-esteem, development of self-help techniques and strategies; and opportunities to share feelings or just listen to those of others.

BWC offers high quality, low cost holistic therapies to all women.

- Osteopathy
- Holistic Massage Therapy
- Hypnotherapy and Emotional Freedom Technique

## Organisation

Brighton Women's Centre is a charitable company limited by guarantee, with our trustees serving as directors of the company.

### Our Current Team

The Director of BWC is Lisa Dando, who has worked with women's organisations in the community and voluntary sector in Brighton and Hove for over 20 years and has a background in mental health service provision.

BWC employs a small team of 16 members of staff.

Lisa Dando is supported by Senior Staff and Pre-school Manager. The core staff members are supported by a team of invaluable volunteers who are involved in every level of the organisation and in all services. Volunteers come from all sections of the community and with a commitment to support other women.

### The Trustee Board

The BWC Trustee Board consists of the Director and 8 Trustees. Trustees undertake training on specific areas of development, including fundraising, financial responsibilities and strategic planning. Our current trustees are:

**Jane Simmons – Chair** Apart from spells running a factory and working in PR, Jane has worked in the public/not for profit sector for 30+ years. Initially as a Social Worker, working in Children and Families, Mental Health and Older People and then in a range of senior management posts within Social Care and the NHS. Much of the work has been in joint planning, commissioning and partnership development across health and social care and with other statutory organisations. Currently Jane is working as an independent consultant working for ADASS (Adult Directors of Social Care) alongside other projects to commission services.

**Rachel Beck – Treasurer** Rachel has been a feminist since she was old enough to wear dungarees (in about 1949) and is proud to be part of Brighton Women's Centre. She has worked in the voluntary sector for Homeless Action – now Eaves Housing for Women – and in the statutory sector for Hackney Council's Mediation Service. She was one of the founders of Lesbian Line in 1977.



**Melissa Drayson – Vice Chair** Melissa has enjoyed a varied career in the community and voluntary and public sectors. She currently works at two Further Education colleges where she specialises in governance and policy. Melissa is deeply committed to supporting and promoting equality across the board and to women's issues in particular. As a trustee, she sees her primary role as helping to ensure that Brighton Women's Centre has a strong and sustainable future delivering vital services to some of the most vulnerable women and their children.

#### **Linda Beanlands – Vice Chair**

**Emma Drew** - Emma has twenty-five years' management experience in the creative sector, in commercial, public and voluntary sector environments (sometimes simultaneously). She is currently Director of the Old Reading Room, delivering arts and health projects. Emma is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts and sits on the Brighton & Hove Employer Skills Task Force. She is the author of *The Whole Person Recovery Handbook* (Sheldon Press, 2015), a guide to supporting people through recovery using cultural and social capital.

**Moira Nangle** - Moira works in the field of Organisation Development and has qualifications in Training, Teaching, Psychotherapy, both one to one and team coaching, and an MSc in Organisation Development. Moira has worked across all three sectors and her career has primarily been spent in learning and development, in HR, and latterly in one to one and team coaching. Moira has been involved in women's groups since the early 90s, and in her professional life often coaches women aspiring to more senior roles. Over the years Moira has also volunteered as a helpline counsellor, as a Governor of a self-managed learning college for young people and in the field of mental health. Moira was delighted to be accepted as a Trustee for BWC in 2017.

**Natalie Blunt** - Natalie was born and raised in Sussex and has worked within NHS and not-for-profit organisations since 2003; largely within Sussex with stints in Westminster. She is a Director of a Brighton-based social enterprise Here, and is passionate about delivering high quality care, free at the point of delivery, to the people of Sussex. Having deeply admired the work of BWC for many years, Natalie joined as a Trustee in 2017. Natalie also volunteers as a befriender for Brighton-based charity Time to Talk, and really values this experience to connect on a one to one basis with her local community. In her spare time Natalie enjoys learning Italian, roaming the Sussex countryside and attempting to train her errant rescue dogs.

**Kirsty Baker** - Kirsty has a 30 year career in financial services – she is extremely interested in businesses and Charities that have a strong sense of social purpose. She has a background of scale leadership experience along with strategic planning and change management skills.

Kirsty has been mentoring women in the workplace for most of her career. She lives in Sussex and has a strong family connection to Brighton.

## Sustainability: challenges and risks

BWC is a relatively small charity, our income in 2016/17 was £627k and we have a small team of employed staff, bolstered by volunteers. We have achieved a great deal for women in Brighton and Sussex within our limited resources.

Most of the charity's income, £564k, is in restricted funds – mainly in funding from the public sector. These public sector funds are under severe pressure and will decline due to spending cuts. To continue to pursue the aims of the charity it has become increasingly necessary for BWC to seek other sources of income.

Without these additional sources of income it would become necessary for BWC to reduce the breadth and depth of services offered to the women of Brighton and Sussex as public sector funding declines.

Key challenges and risks:

For sustainability	For our Service Users	Regarding our Funders
Stretched over 2 sites	Over stretched services	Multiple funders: time managing relationships
Siloed service provision	Interventions limited to short term	Lack of clarity of exact purpose and mission of organisation
Lack of core /unrestricted funding	Lack of women only spaces E and W Sussex	Challenge to get funders to meet core costs
Government policy increasing need - demand exceeds supply	Unable to deliver complete service to all users	Competition from similar services
Diminishing funding	Short and long term service closure due to lack of resource	Termination of contracts due to re-procurement
Over reliance on restricted funds	Rigid criteria of funding impact quality of service delivery	Partnerships may fail
	Staff time spent on monitoring/data and less on delivery	
	Childcare ratios	

## Sustainability: strengths and opportunities

BWC has an excellent reputation amongst those who fund and use the charity. It is the only holistic women-centred organisation in Brighton and Hove and has a culturally diverse service user base.

Key strengths and opportunities:

For sustainability	For our Service Users	Regarding our Funders
Reputation for delivery and results	Highly effective trauma informed relational approach	Good funder relationships
Committed and expert staff	One to one support in navigating complex systems and services	Good reputation for partnership working
Holistic model across multiple pathways. i.e. Wider offer to funders	Women only	Donor priorities met
We can adapt structure to improve resource deployment across service areas	Ability to reach across Sussex	Diversify funding streams with funders who align with BWC values
Services can be developed	Improved integration of services	Developing a more focussed fundraising strategy/activities
Partnerships can be made	Expansion of services	Influence policy and commissioning of services

## Sustainability: key actions 2018 - 2022

We have embarked on a strategic planning exercise so that BWC can be more resilient and sustainable into the future. An important element of this exercise has been an examination of our “purpose” as an organisation. We have a body of work in this area that can inform decisions to assess and remodel the breadth and depth of services and also help us to develop compelling and persuasive expressions to present to potential funders as to why they should donate to BWC so that we can continue to carry out our aims as a charity.

Key actions to ensure the sustainability of BWC include the following:

### 1. Develop points of distinction from Purpose.

Firstly, this will inform our assessment and remodelling of the breadth and depth of services we offer.

Secondly, this will enable us to focus our communication to potential service users. Thirdly, this will help us to find compelling and persuasive expressions to present to potential new funders as to why they should donate to BWC so that we can continue to carry out our aims as a charity.

## **2. Link purpose with policy/campaign goals**

BWC's objectives include: championing awareness about the multiple and complex needs faced by women and their children as a way to seek workable solutions and influence local and national policy; and innovating and inspiring new and different approaches to women-centred services to meet emerging and changing needs. These policy and campaign goals must be consistent with our purpose to be effective politically and also engaging to our funder base.

## **3. Maintain/develop messaging around issues.**

Demand for holistic women centred services will continue to outpace provision, especially in view of public sector cuts and the disproportionate impact of these on women's lives. Maintaining and developing and communicating ongoing messaging around these issues will be essential in helping Brighton Women's Centre to inform local and national policy and to generate awareness amongst potential funders.

## **4. Develop proof of impact via data collection and reporting and communication.**

BWC's services make a positive impact on women and our community. Potential funders require proof of impact, qualitative as well as quantitative. Collating and communicating the positive outcomes arising from our services diverts resource from delivery so the charity needs to maintain a manageable process for this.

## **5. Develop sustainable funding streams.**

To continue to pursue the aims of the charity it has become increasingly necessary for BWC to seek other sources of income. These other sources of income would include: charitable bodies with funds to allocate to front line charities, private individuals (especially including those able to donate significant funds) and corporates with charity budgets. To date these potential sources of funds have been largely untapped.

## **6. Develop unrestricted funding to build infrastructure**

90% of BWC's funding is in restricted funds, whether derived from other charitable organisations or the public sector. Restricted funding ensures that monies are directed to the front line, however, the organisational infrastructure supporting the front line also costs money and needs funding. Unrestricted funding also enables the charity to be resourced to meet any unexpected service user needs that may arise.

## **7. Develop and execute funding plan.**

The funding plan needs to develop sustainable sources of funding and a greater proportion of that funding needs to be in unrestricted funds. We plan to add at least £60k in funding during 2018/19 from these untapped sources and to increase these new funding sources by at least £50k per annum over subsequent 4 years so that by 2021/22 these untapped sources are delivering at least £400k per annum.

## **8. Increase fundraising resource.**

We have a small team of staff and volunteers and no in house branding, communications or fund raising campaign expertise. Our budget for expenditure in this area is limited to £ 10,000 inclusive of VAT which has been allocated for 2017/18 via a Local Sustainability Fund grant.

We are seeking external expertise in branding, fundraising campaign and communications to assist us to meet our funding challenge.

## **9. Develop outbound services/ service users communication plan**

We know that there are many women in Brighton and Sussex who may be in need of our services but who are unaware that BWC is able to help. Outbound service user communications delivered through carefully chosen channels, including via partners will broaden awareness of our services amongst these women.

## **10. Rebalance delivery to available resource.**

BWC faces greater demand for its services than it is able to deliver. This manifests itself in either inability to provide services at all or the provision of partially adequate solutions. This scenario is likely to persist whilst demand increases and public sector funding is in decline. Until the charity is able to generate sufficient alternative and sustainable sources of funding, choices will have to be made around which services can be offered in line with the purpose and how they are to be delivered.

## **11. Revisit service redesign.**

For a relatively small organisation, with limited infrastructure we provide a very wide array of services: peer group Drop- In, mentoring, Inspire, counselling, accommodation support, Toybox and activities (including therapies). These services are organised across 4 centres, Counselling, Case Work, Volunteer Support and ToyBox. Our mapping of these activities has demonstrates not only a very wide array but also that they involve a high degree of complexity. In line with rebalancing delivery to available resource, we need to revisit service design to reduce the level of complexity in line with the capacity of our infrastructure.

## **12. Resolve the property question.**

Running premises is expensive. We operate from two premises in Brighton. This causes additional complexity in delivery of services within the city. Additionally, in order to serve Sussex more broadly BWC needs access to women only space outside Brighton. We need to determine what our ideal property requirements are ideally and how they can be delivered and in what time frame and at what cost.

## **13. Maintain/improve induction, training and retention**

Our results, both qualitative and quantitative demonstrate that BWC has an excellent reputation and this is founded on the experience, expertise and commitment of our staff and volunteers. Our onboarding, training and retention procedures should be revisited to ensure that we are able to develop and retain staff and volunteers who are able and committed to our purpose.

## **14. Maintain quality of recruits**

As an organisation, we need to ensure that the quality of staff we recruit is consistently high and they are passionate and committed to the values and purpose of BWC.

## **15. Identify key partnerships and explore areas for co-operation for mutual benefit**

We are part of a wider community, both in the sense of being in Brighton and Sussex and also a part of the community of organisations supporting women across the country. There are great benefits from exploring areas for co-operation for mutual benefit in these communities. This includes: shared facilities and resources- economies and resilience, access to funding, and sharing good practice and learning with other organisations.

## Conclusion

Our Strategic Plan is informed by the above sustainability actions plans which have been formulated through implementing our organisational change plan. Implementation of these sustainability actions through our Fundraising Plan, Marketing and Communications Plan, Partnerships Plan and Service Re-design will mean that BWC will be able to support more women with multiple complex needs by the successful delivery of integrated and holistic services.

Women will become more resilient and independent by moving from a dependence on statutory services to opportunities such as: volunteering, gaining skills and experience of the workplace, training and development opportunities.

With the implementation of the key sustainability actions BWC is confident that it will implement its vision for a healthier, more sustainable organisation that is fit for purpose at a time of changing market conditions, reduced public funding and increased demand from service users. As a result, BWC will demonstrate high quality, professional services, market ready for meeting the increased demand from beneficiaries.

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i Prison Reform Trust 2104

ii New Economy unit cost database

iii New Economy unit cost database

iv New Economy unit cost database