BWC

Annual report
2025 – 2026



Brighton Women's Centre
Empowering women since 1974

womenscentre.org

Our new home gives us more room to do what we've always done. To listen for longer, support more women, bring more services together and reach further across Sussex. More room to make sure no woman has nowhere to turn.

Our new address is:
Globe House
Morley Street, Brighton
Brighton, BN2 9RA



Welcome from the Chair of Trustees



> “Together, we are not only responding to today’s challenges, but helping to shape a fairer, safer and more equitable future.”

Welcome to Brighton Women’s Centre’s Annual Report 2025 – 2026.

This year has been one of both challenge and progress; balancing pressures from the policial and economic landscape, alongside a need for resilient services on which women in our community continue to rely. Nevertheless, it has been a year that has strengthened our partnerships and reaffirmed why our mission matters more than ever.

Demand for our services has continued to grow; reflecting the increasingly complex realities faced by the women and gender-diverse people we support. Against a backdrop of sustained economic uncertainty, widening inequalities, and significant national policy developments; we have remained focused on upholding the purpose of BWC, whilst ensuring we are equipped for the ever-changing, ever-growing needs of the community we support.

Throughout the year, the Board of Trustees has maintained close oversight of the Strategic Business Plan, as we move towards its final year. We have worked in partnership with the team, testing ambition against risk and sustainability, to help ensure the services at BWC remain strong and ready for whatever the future might hold.

One of the most significant strategic milestones was the relocation of our Brighton headquarters. Guided by consultation with staff and the women who use our services, we moved into a space that better supports the way we work. This transition created an opportunity to reimagine how we deliver services, developing new collaborations with other local organisations, as well as exploring innovative ways to enhance our women-centred approach.

The Board has maintained strategic supervision of our work to strengthen equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging, embed trauma-informed practice, and respond to the Supreme Court ruling and subsequent Equality and Human Rights Commission guidance. Together, these priorities reflect our commitment to governance that supports inclusivity and safety at its core.

None of these achievements happen in isolation. They are made possible by the extraordinary dedication, expertise and compassion of our staff, volunteers, trustees, partners and supporters. As Chair, I am continually inspired by the determination of everyone connected to BWC. Together, we are not only responding to today’s challenges, but helping to shape a fairer, safer and more equitable future.

Amber Woodward-Brown
Chair of Trustees

Letter from the Director



> “Our work in Brighton and Hove goes from strength to strength, while we further embed our provision pan Sussex and into Kent and Surrey through our key partnerships.”

Welcome to this year’s 2025 – 2026 Annual Report.

We have steered our way through another busy year with continued and increasing demand on our services (having supported 1037 women), whilst maintaining focus on implementing the five strategic aims in our Strategic Business Plan (SBP) and responding to unprecedented external socio-economic pressures.

Our work in Brighton and Hove goes from strength to strength, while we further embed our provision pan-Sussex and into Kent and Surrey through our key partnerships.

All this, while we undertook one of the most significant changes this year by moving our head office in Brighton to new and improved premises in response to staff feedback and consultation with the women who use our services.

Our move also gave us an opportunity to review our service delivery model in the city, considering how to enhance our women-centred way of working by developing partnerships, new and old! We also took the decision to pause our Ofsted registered pre-school to consider sustainable models.

Strategically, we have taken positive steps to implement workstreams from our SBP, including capacity building our EDIB objectives to improve diversity and embed an anti-racist culture.
We are also well on the way to achieving Silver Accreditation with the One Small Thing Quality Assurance mark.

We have responded to the external impact of the Supreme Court Ruling and the more recent publication of the Equalities and Human Rights Commission Code of Practice, as well as taking on commitments relating to the environment and climate crisis in recognition of the specific impacts on women.

None of this, of course, is possible without the wholehearted dedication of a team of passionate and generous women, volunteers, staff and trustees, to whom I give thanks, and who work tirelessly to ensure our doors are open for any woman, trans woman and non-binary person who feels comfortable in our female spaces.

Lisa Dando
Director







New Doors, New Chapters: BWC Moves Home

In 2025, BWC began an exciting new chapter with the move from Richmond Place, which had housed our Brighton services for 11 years.

BWC relocated to Globe House, the long-standing home of the Oasis Project, ensuring that this important community space would continue to serve women, children and families across Brighton and Sussex.

We vacated our previous home at Richmond Place on 31st October 2025. Following a period of remote working and relocation of major services while the moving process was completed, we officially moved into our new premises on the 27th November.

A carefully planned phased return of services followed, and we reopened in the new year, with an official building launch on 12th February 2026.

This move represents much more than a change of address. It is an investment in our future and in the women that we support every day. Globe House provides significantly more space, creating opportunities to strengthen and expand services while maintaining the warm, trauma-informed environment that is central to our work.

The larger premises will bring tangible benefits for women, children, staff, and volunteers. Most importantly, Globe House creates capacity for growth.

With more room to deliver services, welcome visitors and develop new opportunities, we are better placed to reach women who need our support most. By bringing key services, such as our Support Hubs, in-house; opening our BWC Cornershop (previously our foodbank) and supporting other local organisations; the move strengthens our ability to fulfil our mission of improving the lives and wellbeing of women across Sussex.

As we settle into our new home, we look forward to creating a space where women, children and families can feel safe, supported and empowered for years to come.

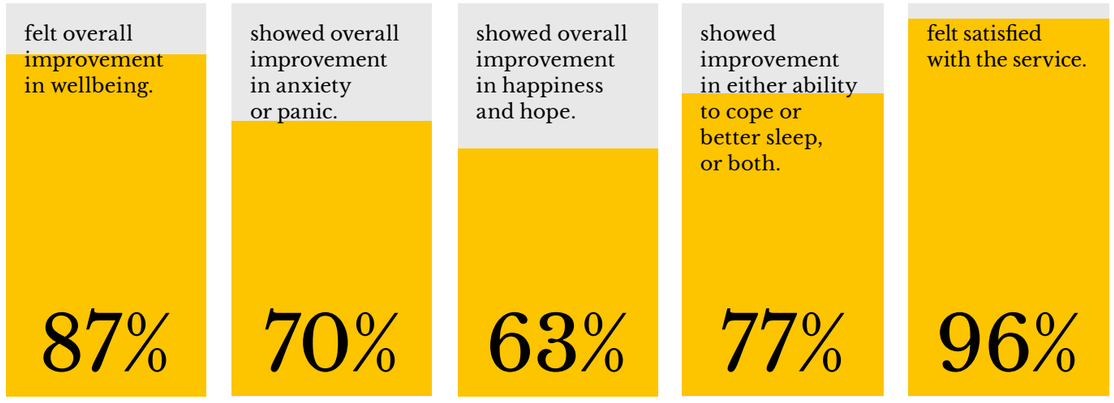
Counselling and Therapeutic Services

BWC's Therapeutic Services provide time-limited, trauma informed therapy with a broad range of modalities, including talking therapies and creative approaches. This service supports women who would struggle to access therapy and other services due to complex challenges relating to physical or mental health, relationships, and financial circumstances.

Overview:

- 575 therapy sessions were delivered. This is a 20% increase on the previous year.
- During the year 74 women had at least one therapy session, with 22 additional assessments also carried out.
- There has been an increase in the number of clients our therapists see on a weekly basis. This has been beneficial for women seeking therapy and it has helped our therapists-in-training to gain clinical hours.
- The service continues to be valued and appreciated by women, and this is evident in increased engagement, along with continued high demand for the service.

"It's been incredible. I've learnt so much, especially about validation. It's changed my life – helped me move forward from those thoughts and feelings. Recognition – has been so important. Sitting with my feelings. Felt seen, heard, and understood, which has been life changing."



Inspire - Community Rehabilitation Service

Positive alternatives for women in the Criminal Justice System in Sussex and Kent. Inspire provides holistic, wrap-around and gender-specific support for women in the Criminal Justice System. Our Community Rehabilitation Service is funded by the Ministry of Justice and works in partnership with Kent, Surrey, and Sussex Probation Service.

Overview:

- Inspire supported 199 women over the year.
- The Inspire team delivered quality support to women, which was recognised by the Ministry of Justice and received consistent positive feedback from women.
- Inspire exceeded the monthly KPI targets set by the Ministry of Justice and has been working as a coherent and supportive team.
- Case work sessions have been offered pan-Sussex, with women often attending our Women's only Drop-in Hubs.

"The most significant change is that I feel more confident now. When I talk to you, I no longer feel alone. If something bad happens like a wrong decision or a misunderstanding, I feel I can turn to you as a massive support."

of women who use Inspire reported an improvement in overall life satisfaction.

70%

reported an improvement in feelings of happiness.

60%

reported an improvement in feeling their life was worthwhile.

70%

Inspire - Care not Custody

Our Out of Court Diversion for women involved with the police is funded by the Ministry of Justice in partnership with Sussex Police. The scheme also provides support for women in breach of, or at risk of breaching, their Probation Community Orders.

Overview:

- 105 women were supported by the Care Not Custody team.
- A total of 62 eligible referrals made from Sussex Police, with 38 women referred for Conditional Cautions and 29 women referred for Community Resolutions.
- A total of 43 eligible referrals from Probation, with 17 women referred by Probation Practitioners and 33 women referred by Court Probation Staff.
- Over the year, police referrals have been affected due to a re-organisation within Sussex Police and the creation of a new Out of Court Resolution team.
- The CNC team continue to deliver quality support to women referred from Sussex Police, the Probation Service and the courts, and received consistent positive feedback from partnership agencies and the women supported.
- Due to the funding end date, referrals reduced for a while, allowing the team to refocus efforts on developing probation and breach referral pathways across Sussex. Funding was extended until the end of December 2026.

"Thank you so much, I had no idea how much it means to me that you actually care."

felt an improvement in their ability to trust others.

80%

reported an improvement in feeling their life and the things they do are worthwhile.

60%

reported improved satisfaction with their life.

60%

felt more in control of their life.

71%

felt an improvement in their ability to deal with problems well.

67%

Muscular-Skeletal Link Work Support (MSK)

The MSK Link Worker project is a partnership between BWC and the Sussex MSK Partnership (SMSKP), providing advice and information to women accessing the SMSKP service who need additional support.

Overview:

- 30 service users attended a total of 59 sessions.
- Due to a sudden change in funding, the service was given three months' notice to close, concluding in June 2025.
- We contacted 35 women on the waitlist to inform them of the service closure. and 23 women were referred to the NHS MSK team for social prescribing support.

felt an improved ability to trust others.	felt more in control of their lives.	felt an improved ability to respond to their own needs.	felt an improved ability to manage their finances.	felt they were able to deal with problems well.
100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Women's Secure Pathway Project

Connecting with women in adult secure mental health wards as part of the Women's Secure Pathway, in partnership with the Kent Surrey Sussex Mental Health Provider Collaborative.

Overview:

- In partnership with the KSS Mental Health Provider Collaborative of three NHS Trusts and Woking Women's Support Centre, BWC developed a model for a service which delivers consistent, trauma-informed 1-1 support and weekly group activities to women based in three forensic units within this region.
- The service went live in December 2025, supporting 16 women across 25 group sessions in three wards this year. Themes for groups included Celebrating the Chinese New Year, Recipes Around the World, Mindful Colouring, and Creative Coping Toolkit.

"[I get] great support and 1:1 sessions, including hand massages that are very relaxing and card making sessions, helping us make cards for our children and she provides great materials."

Outcome tools have been co-produced alongside NHS colleagues, with full evaluation to begin in 2026-2027

Peer-to-Peer Service

The Peer-to-Peer Service (P2P) provides supportive peer groups to enable women to build relationships with other women, and to promote a kinder relationship with themselves. The service allows women to gain confidence and connection through peer support, while accessing opportunities for developing new skills and experiences through the service in a way that feels safe and comfortable.

Overview:

- 108 women were supported by the Peer-to-Peer Service this year.
- 164 Peer Groups were held, attended by 68 service users on a regular basis.
- The Peer Service ran 104 weekly in-person sessions, and 48 fortnightly online sessions, Release and Reset ran 45 online sessions, and the Menopause Group ran 12 sessions.
- There were 12 Grounding Group Sessions and 6 additional workshops throughout the year.
- Key themes that arose throughout the year included a rise in the number of women struggling to get neurodivergence assessments alongside other challenges in the Primary Care system, as well as need for support for women engaged with Children's Services.
- In line with the integration of more Peer delivered groups in the move towards co-production, Peer Facilitator and Peer Mentor training was held 29 times, and 8 supervision sessions were completed for these roles.
- We initiated a new partnership with Gloriously Ordinary Co-production that invites a core team across the organisation to be involved in monthly meetings alongside two members from P2P involved in the core team.

"I don't know how I would have got by without BWC. I think this service should be available for everyone worldwide. I have received enormous amounts of support in various ways, and it's always so caring and thoughtful. Thank you so much from the bottom of my heart."

of women said they felt Heard, Held, Happier and Hopeful being involved with BWC's service*.	rated the service 5 out of 5.
100%	81%

*The Peer Service piloted a new evaluation framework, whereby women assessed their own experience based on the BWC Theory of Change, with outcomes linked to women feeling heard, held, happier and hopeful.

Support Services

Support Services provides emotional and practical support in safe, open-access, trauma informed spaces through our weekly Women's Hubs and Foodbank.

Overview:

- This year saw the commencement of the BHCC funded and Trust for Developing Communities. led Thriving Communities Partnership, through which we received funding for our Support Services Manager and were able to sub-contract Network of International Women to provide a Link Worker.
- A new role of Foodbank Facilitator was created to add capacity to this vital service, and in March, the Foodbank was paused to accommodate re-modelling of this area of the service.
- The end of the year focussed on bringing services in house to our new building. Staff spent time and care preparing women for the change and welcoming them to the new space.

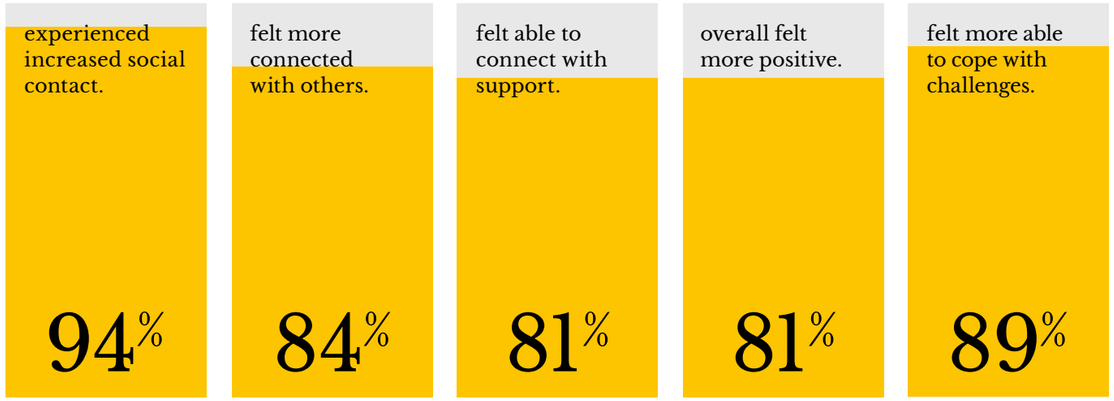
Hubs:

- 3 drop-in hubs per week in 3 Brighton and Hove locations.
- 118 hub sessions were held supporting a total of 149 women.
- 40 women attended our end of year celebration and donations enabled us to give each woman a small gift bag of pampering items.

Foodbank:

- 46 sessions were held.
- 110 households were supported with 1680 parcels of food.
- 73 households received £50 in Supermarket Vouchers to cover times when the foodbank was paused for four weeks for necessary remodelling discussions and consultation in April 2025.

"I think the service provided by the team and organisation is absolutely incredible and I am deeply grateful for the support I have received, many, many times. I believe I would have 'sunk' without trace otherwise."



ToyBox Early Years Education

ToyBox offers inclusive, trauma-informed Early Years education and support for children 0-5yrs from low-income families facing multiple disadvantages.

Overview:

- ToyBox supported 11 families with 757 sessions of childcare until temporary closure at the end of July 2025, after which relocation was completed in December 2025. The pause enabled a full-service consultation.
- 40 sessions of face-to-face parent support, 49 sessions of telephone support and 32 sessions of referrals and financial support were also delivered.
- Parent feedback survey data completed in July 2025 demonstrates exceptionally high levels of trust and satisfaction, with all respondents strongly agreeing across all measures.

"I always felt I could reach out and never felt judged. The support from ToyBox has been life-changing for my family."



Women's Accommodation Support Service (WASS)

The Women's Accommodation Support Service (WASS) offers trauma-informed, women-centred 1-1 casework support and women's open access Drop-In Hubs across Sussex. The over-arching aim of the service is to improve women's access to safe accommodation by co-producing support to address intersecting needs.

Overview:

- WASS supported 213 women over 2025-2026 through a combination of 1-1 casework and informal support through our Women's Drop-In Hubs.
- 132 Women's Drop-In Hub sessions took place across 3 venues – Eastbourne, St-Leonards-On-Sea, and Worthing.
- We increased capacity across the team in 2025/2026 which enabled us to reach more women across Sussex.
- Funding was once again awarded by the Domestic Abuse Small Grants fund in East and West Sussex allowing WASS to offer increased support to women experiencing domestic abuse and/or sexual violence in those areas.

"I come every week as it changes my mind and I enjoy talking to the other women as it makes me feel better. The staff help me with forms and doctors' appointments for me as I am still learning English. I have been coming every week for a year now and it helps clear my mind, I love you so much."

of women felt they had good quality of life and were being healthy.

88%

of women felt an improved ability to cope and hope for the future.

93%

of women felt they were reducing risks and feeling safe.

97%

of women felt they had good social support and relationships.

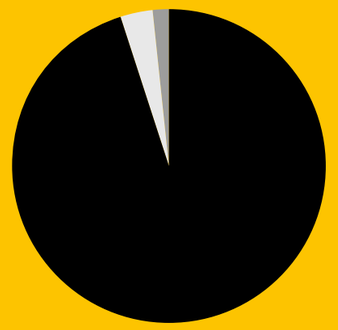
94%

of women felt satisfied with the service.

100%

Accounts

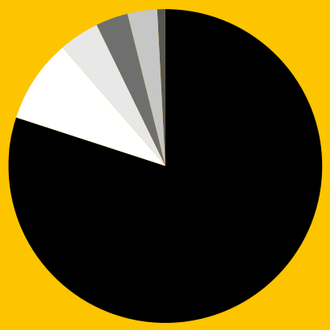
Income



Contracts/Grants £1,415,639
Fundraising £45,833
Earned Income £24,433

Total income £1,485,905

Expenditure



Staff Costs £1,104,778
Direct Costs £117,439
Fundraising £56,508
Office Costs £48,335
Establishment Costs £40,827
Governance Costs £9,730

Total expenditure £1,377,617

We gratefully thank all of our partners and funders

advance
Brighton & Hove City Council
CAF Charities Aid Foundation
Chalk Cliff Trust
Community Trust of the Blessed Virgin Mary – Supporting women & children since 1896
East Sussex County Council
Ernest Kleinwort Charitable Trust
Fonthill Foundation
The Grace Trust
Henry Smith Foundation
Here
Hollick Family Foundation
The Lawson Trust
Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government
Ministry of Justice
Community Fund
NHS Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust
NHS Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust
Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner
U OK Brighton & Hove
Wesleyan
West Sussex County Council

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We've moved to Globe House. The name feels fitting: when the world feels big, having somewhere safe can make all the difference. Our new head office gives us more room to support more women, bring services together and help more women take their next step.

Brighton Women's Centre

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Thank you to all those who have supported us this year.