



25 years of building trusted relationships

1st September 2019 – 31st August 2020 Annual Report



CEO report by Suzi Heybourne

This year I celebrated my ten-year work anniversary here at The Magdalene Group and it has, quite simply, been the most challenging to date.

Covid demanded a lot from the organisation as we sought to provide continuity of support to the women and young people who have come to rely on the trusted relationships they experience through engaging with our services. The pared-back provision of services from local authorities, health & criminal justice amongst others, saw an increased demand on our services - seeing an 300% increase in need from women who use our Doorway service. The national message during lockdown of 'stay home, save lives' is not always true for women who experience domestic and sexual violence; in fact home is one of the most dangerous places women and children can find themselves, with one in every 20 women experiencing extensive physical or sexual violence and abuse in their life time. Women facing multiple disadvantage and sexual exploitation, violence and/or sex work have to navigate systemic barriers to access the support they need, as they face stigma, prejudice and are deemed too 'high risk' for some support whilst not meeting thresholds for statutory support. Homeless women who face multiple disadvantage are at a disproportionate risk of violence and abuse and we have strongly advocated around women's experiences of homelessness over the years and have been pleased to be invited to become a partner in the Pathways Consortium as a specialist women's service, offering trauma- and gendered support to rough-sleeping and 'hidden homeless' women. Data on child sexual exploitation during lockdown is not yet clear; however, nationally, the police recorded over 10,000 online child sex crimes in a year for the first time. This is reflected locally at the increased demand for referrals to our Rose Project. A key concern of ours remains the 'cliff edge' for continued protection from exploitation from perpetrators when someone reaches the age of 18 where lack of support and protection through robust safeguarding falls away and all too often results in a pathway to criminalisation. We were pleased to highlight our considerable work in this area where we were able to share our experience of developing a transitional service for young women aged 16 – 25 years, through the National Working Group, as a model of best practice. The existing demand on services has always been high, and as demand for support intensified as a result of Covid, we were incredibly stretched. The short-term Covid financial help supported the huge surge in demand but, moving forward, resource allocation for small specialist women's voluntary sector organisations remains troublesome. Despite our best efforts, disappointingly we have never received sustainable investment from statutory or government monies, hence our huge appreciation of grants from funders who not only seek to understand the complex issues, but also provide vital money for us to carry out our services.



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Covid has further entrenched social and economic inequality for our clients and this will continue to have a long-term impact, after the pandemic has passed The notion of 'home' has been equally challenging for staff who have had to continue to work in the field of supporting women and girls experiencing complex trauma, from their own living spaces, complicating and compromising their personal boundaries, which previously offered some degree of distance and sanctuary. On behalf of the trustees, I would like to offer our thanks and praise for the quality of service delivered by our staff during this challenging time.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Suzi Heybourne', followed by a long, sweeping horizontal line.

COVID-19 statement

The safety of our staff and clients remains paramount. The demand for services has remained high this last year and has continued due to the pandemic. Throughout the year, service-delivery has had to adapt but has been able to continue as we are essential workers.

We review guidance from Government, including health and safety, to ensure staff are safe and working within the correct guidelines. Business continuity plans and robust risk assessments are in place with regular reviews. There are weekly meetings with the CEO and senior management to review practices and to respond to individual staff matters concerning Covid.

Vision

Reaching out to build trusted relationships, to bring an end to sexual violence, exploitation and coercion.

Mission

The Magdalene Group supports positive change by building in-depth trusted relationships and responding to needs in a trauma-informed way for women and young people who are affected by sexual violence, exploitation and coercion.

Aims

- To be a dynamic, innovative service-provider and be driven to look for creative solutions to identified issues within our field of work.
- To develop trusted relationships and to embed a trauma-informed approach throughout all services.
- To ensure our service-users and supporters are always at the heart of everything we do.
- To demonstrate social impact through monitoring and evaluating our work to ensure we focus on building positive improvements in the lives of women and young people.
- To actively ensure that a culture of trust is built and maintained through openness and transparency, internally and externally.
- To work in a collaborative and inclusive way and actively seek constructive and productive partnerships.

Values

We are a value-driven charity seeking to make a real difference to the lives of the people we support.

Structure, management and governance

This is the second annual return reporting as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation building upon our 25-year history. This is also the second report updating progress against our five-year strategic plan which followed our Away Day in 2019 and which was attended by staff, volunteers, service users, stakeholders and trustees.

Key organisational objectives for The Magdalene Group for 2020 – 2025.

Governance

Our trustee board meets four times a year as a full board. Alongside this, two sub-groups - finance and employment & remuneration – also meet quarterly.

The importance of trustees with relevant experience and capacity is essential for the organisation's continued growth and success. Our trustee induction programme has been reviewed this year to ensure trustees have access to training to ensure a good understanding of the operating environment of the voluntary sector.

Quality

This year it was announced that the Trusted Charity Mark would be coming to an end in 2021 and therefore we are exploring other quality marks to take the organisation forward with our approach and success in learning and achieving robust and effective systems.

We work in partnership with local agencies, both strategically and operationally, to both contribute to and learn from best practice and approaches.

Quality is embedded across the organisation with quality plans pertaining to key areas such as safeguarding and health & safety. We operate a continuous cycle of improvement which is communicated to all staff, variously through communication meetings, team and contract meetings, training and internal best-practice events.

Financial income

We have worked hard to develop a diverse income strategy, in order to build the resources needed to achieve our strategic aims: understanding our financial operating environment and proactively planning income-diversification and capacity-building support for wider partnerships and collaborations. Our governance and quality ensures we have capacity for contract- readiness and social investment. Trustees are mindful of the expertise that the organisation has built up through its staff and for the need for sustainability moving forward. Reserves will be built up to enable 12 months running costs and to enable allocated resources to be managed in response to the direct support needs of service-users.

Risk management

The trustees and CEO understand their responsibility for the development and review of strategic and operational risk to the organisation. A comprehensive risk register is reviewed quarterly and discussed at each full trustees meeting.

Frameworks such as PESTLE (political, economic, sociological, technological, legal & environmental) and SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities & threats) analysis are used to inform future development opportunities and growth.

Equality and diversity

As an organisation working in the 'violence against women and girls' arena, we are exploring best practice within the area of our equality and diversity policies and operations. We are working with an independent consultant on the issue of gender to ensure we are making informed decisions on becoming an inclusive organisation and we are actively seeking dialogue as we work together with staff, volunteers, service-users and wider stakeholders to

inform our approach and response to ensure we provide clarity. Continuous improvement and action planning is central to ensuring that we support protected characteristics to further improve our approaches. Training is underway and progress is reported to trustees at every full board meeting.

Workforce development

The staff team has grown this year and with this growth it has been timely to review a range of areas regarding human resources. The induction programme has been reviewed and alongside this a separate manager's induction programme has been introduced to provide in-depth knowledge around expectations of a manager's role within the organisation. The appraisal cycle has also been reviewed to provide clarity for staff and best equip them to achieve greater levels of skills and performance, which in turn improves the performance of our charity.

The expertise of the frontline teams continues to develop and has resulted in opportunities to share and disseminate learning and best practice from our front-line teams at a national level.

Digital marketing and communications

We continue to build upon the principle that all communications need a strong foundation and that our digital practice should achieve our mission and goals. Last year saw us needing to adapt and rely on technology to a far greater degree in order to continue to deliver our services. We were able to utilise the progress we had already implemented to ensure our staff were connected and able to deliver their work.

We recognise that further work is required in developing new services and approaches in digital formats to be creative with our engagement and to reach those that face barriers in accessing support or who remain hidden. We are working to continue to understand the challenges and barriers our service-users face with digital poverty and accessing technology and we continue to embed this learning within our service-delivery.

The Rose team enjoyed working with students from the Media Learning course at City College Norwich, looking at the reality of online grooming and some of the key signs to look out for. This short documentary showed how sexual exploitation can begin and is available to watch on our website.

This year - against the backdrop of Covid – we have seen many people rely on and use a range of technology to communicate and deliver services. As technology evolves and more people use it, we are aiming to ensure that we are relevant and approachable with these different platforms and continue to review and audit digital channels, communications, technology, social media and the use of apps.

Volunteers

Due to Covid-19 and the complexity of working with our clients we made the decision to postpone our work with volunteers and this is now under review moving forward.



Reaching out to build relationships with women who experience sexual violence, exploitation and face multiple disadvantage.

Doorway Women's Services offers trauma- and gender-informed personalised and holistic support to empower women, who experience sexual exploitation, violence and/or sex work and who face multiple disadvantage. Providing a safe space that caters to individual cultural and personal needs in which to build trusted relationships where they feel 'cared for,' safe and are able to feel less isolated. A key objective of the Doorway Service is for women to experience improved well-being and life-outcomes through an increase in access to specialist support around their experience of multiple disadvantage.

The Doorway Team consists of an Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA) Manager, a Specialist Outreach Practitioner (ISVA), a Women's Integrated Housing and Care-Coordinator, and an Outreach & Inclusion Practitioner.

Areas of need are safe-guarding, safety advice, practical support, sexual health, domestic abuse, sexual violence, benefits/income, physical and mental health, homelessness, substance misuse, contact with the criminal justice system, social networks/isolation and immigration and residence.

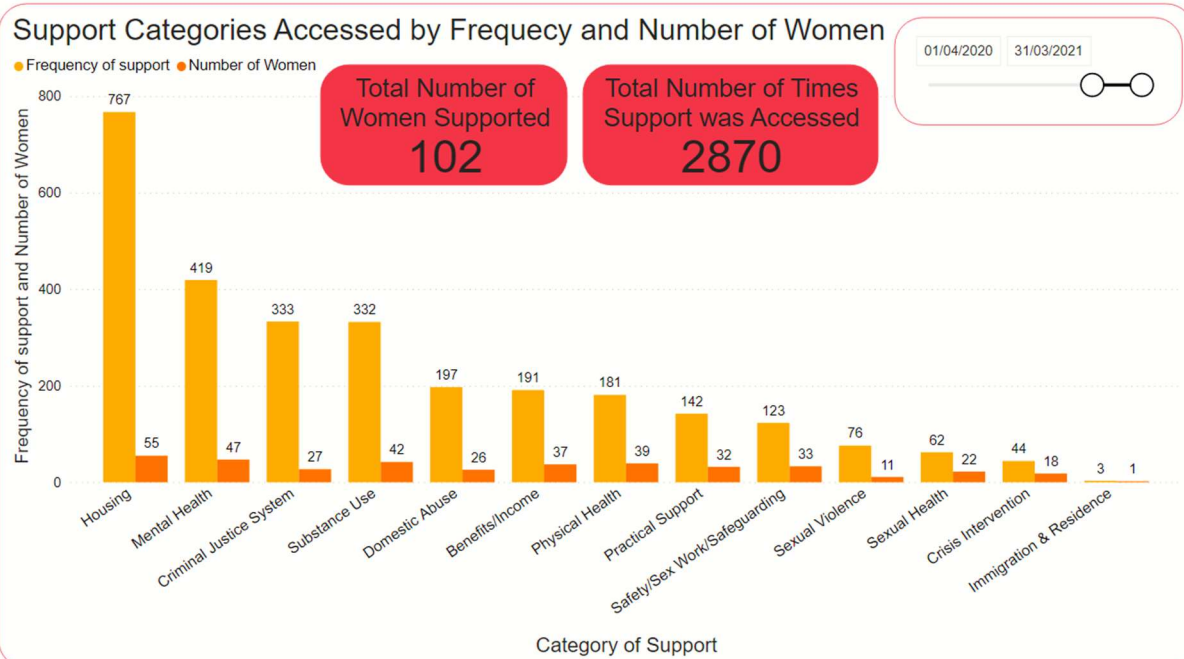
We have a track record of engaging marginalised groups including sex-workers and victims of sexual exploitation and coercion. It is imperative when working in a trauma-informed way that women can access the right service at the right time, services need to be flexible and responsive and clear pathways into support must be established between services. Doorway Women's Services are built upon this ethos.

Doorway offers intensive relationship-based support at the woman's own pace never forcing disclosures of trauma. Women experiencing multiple disadvantage can often be excluded from services due to the complexity of their needs.

100% of women who access Doorway have experience of sexual violence, sexual exploitation and/or sex working.

15% of women are aged between 18 - 25 years old.

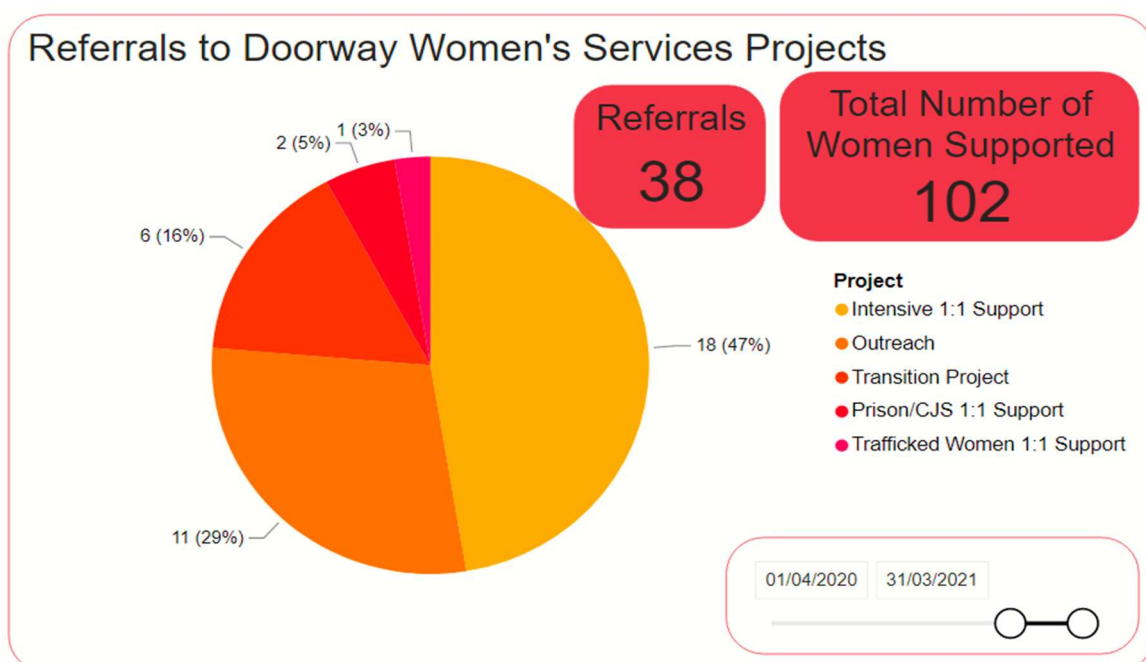
49% of women are aged between 26 - 45 years old.



90% of women accessed support across 3 or more categories of need.

1/4 of all women who accessed accessed across 9-13 different categories of need.

100% of women experience exploitation and/or sex work in addition to these categories of need.



Note: Data for the project runs from 1st April 2020 - 31st March 2021.

Outcomes

+ 25 women accessed food 110 times and improved their physical and mental wellbeing.

+ 16 were safeguarded 63 times relating to Domestic Abuse.

+ 10 women were safeguarded 42 times relating to mental health.

+ 11 women were retained access to public funds 39 times.

+ 16 women were provided with phones 29 times and experienced better safety, reduced isolation and increased access to specialist services.

+ 14 women were supported to maintain their housing provision 30 times.

+ 11 women were connected to the complex needs team which increased their access to services and improved their emotional, mental and physical wellbeing.

+ 6 women were supported to manage community orders and avoided recalls to prison 8 times.

1063 phone calls & 870 emails were made to other professionals in the last year.

307 Face-to-face sessions occurred in the last year.

1177 phone calls were made to women in the past year.

The Doorway Service commits to:

- ❖ Trauma-informed services that help to minimise the risk of re-traumatisation and promote a culture of safety for all involved.
- ❖ Adhering to the trauma-informed principles of safety, trustworthiness, choice, collaboration and empowerment.
- ❖ Providing a safe space for women based on safety, respect and facilitating recovery.
- ❖ Ensuring the woman is clearly at the heart of any intervention and that her views are central to any support.
- ❖ Ensuring choice is explicit at every point for the women we support.
- ❖ Working from a strengths-based position looking at positives and achievements whilst challenging negative language and victim-blaming.
- ❖ Advocacy with partners around exploitation post-18 years and the impact of trauma on behaviours.
- ❖ Providing flexible and responsive support to meet the needs of women.
- ❖ The involvement of women with lived-experience ensuring their voices are centred and heard.
- ❖ Effective multi-agency working improving access to support for women facing multiple disadvantage.
- ❖ Identifying “system blockages” looking at issues, at a service/system level, that may be preventing access or preventing a woman achieving her goals.
- ❖ Conveying “systems blockages” at an operational and strategic level to affect change and have a long-term impact.



Reaching out on sexual exploitation of young people in Norfolk

The ROSE team has provided a range of specialist services to young people who have experienced or are affected by child sexual exploitation (CSE) in Norfolk since 2007; working with young people to understand their experiences of exploitation and sexual violence and to reduce their risk of being harmed by those who want to exploit or hurt them.

The team consists of a Team Manager, three CSE Practitioners who provide intensive 1:1 support and a CSE Outreach and Inclusion Practitioner who provides prevention and early intervention support.

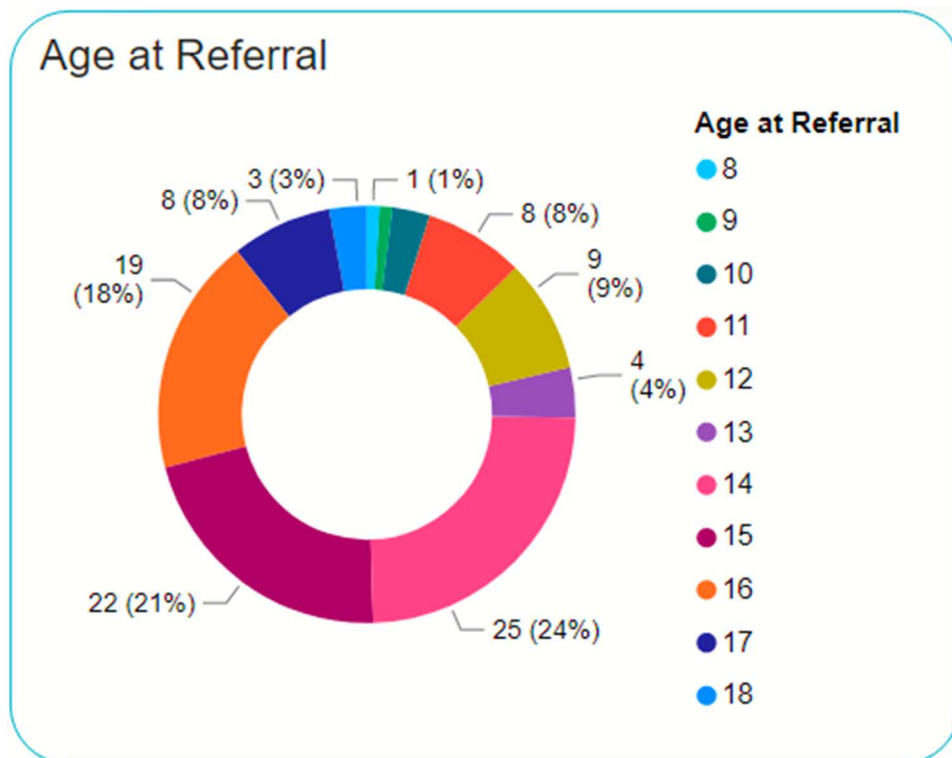
The Rose Project is holistic in its approach and explores with young people their needs and contextual factors they are experiencing to support them through experiences of exploitation and how to navigate the world to achieve good life outcomes.

Through building trusted relationships, practitioners work with the children and young people through open and honest communication, positive activities, informal education and structured activities to support them to:

- ❖ Understand what happened/is happening to them.
- ❖ Recognise exploitation, abuse, power and control.
- ❖ Rebuild their sense of who they are and their self-esteem.
- ❖ Move forward with their lives, however they choose.
- ❖ Understand what healthy relationships look like and what they want from relationships.
- ❖ Have confidence to have the kind of relationships they want, whatever these may look like, online or in person.
- ❖ Develop skills in safety-planning.
- ❖ Use the internet informed about the risk of people wishing to do harm and for themselves to use it responsibly and not to cause harm.
- ❖ Develop coping skills and strategies and promote well-being and good mental health.
- ❖ Promote good sexual health, and to access services like C-Card (all practitioners are trained to register young people) and sexual health screening and contraception.
- ❖ Report and seek justice for what happened to them in the criminal justice system, including support pre, during and post police investigation and during prosecution/trial of offenders (this choice is always made by the young person.)

This year has seen an increase in online exploitation experiences for the children and young people referred to The Rose Project and an increase in mental health issues as a direct result of the pandemic. The Rose Project continues to adapt and respond dynamically to the changing landscape of CSE as well as to the broader needs of the children and young people. Of further concern is an increase in under 13 year olds being referred to our services.

Number of Children and
Young People receiving
1:1 Intensive support
111

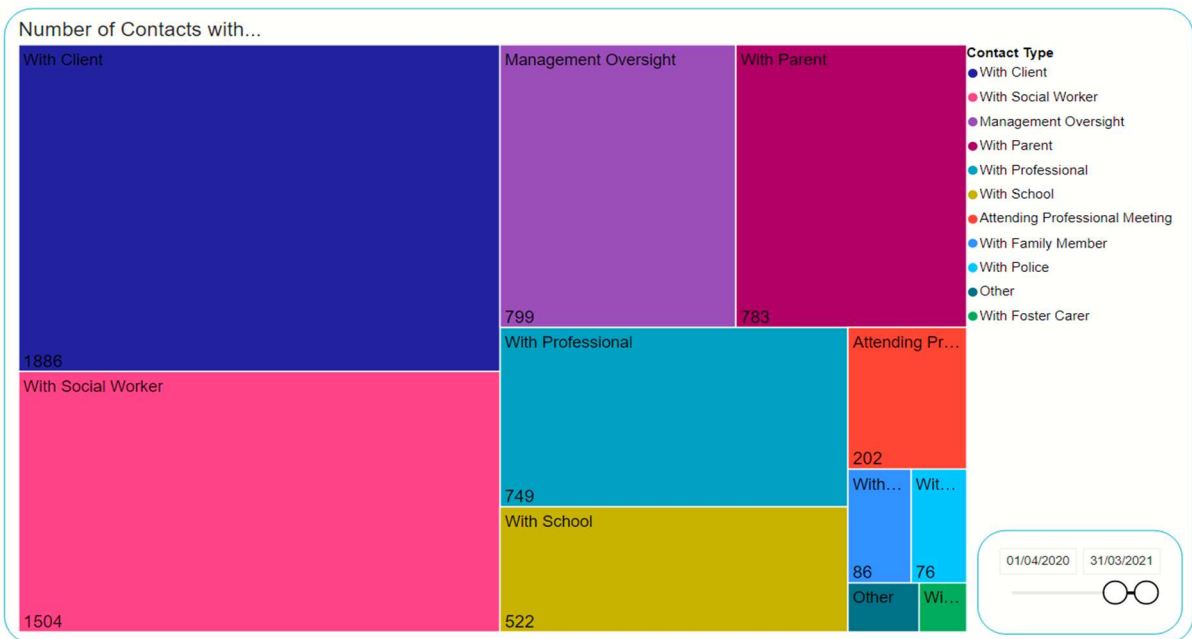


Note:

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Multi-agency working

The Rose team work closely with the young person's social worker and their Multi-Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) worker from Norfolk Constabulary, attending child planning meetings, reviews, strategy discussions and child protection conferences. Our assessments and plans are person-centred with the emphasis on empowering individuals, enabling positive engagement in the assessment and in making sustainable positive change. The young people design the support they want, for example, support to get counselling or with their mental health, others to get back in to school or work, or with moving care homes. Through the positive relationship we support young people to reach out and increase their confidence in using services. We also refer to other organisations as part of our exit -planning to ensure that young people have the support they need going forward.



Trauma-Informed approach

We recognise that young people we work with experience trauma as a result of the sexual violence and exploitation. Some young people have experienced compounded trauma and we avoid re-traumatising them and are committed to work to support them to understand their experiences and develop coping strategies and, when they are ready, to seek appropriate therapeutic interventions.

The Rose team commits to:

- ❖ Embed trauma-informed practice and interventions throughout all provision.
- ❖ Support which is timely, flexible and responsive.
- ❖ Young people setting the pace of the work.
- ❖ Young people not having to change workers as far as is possible.
- ❖ Operating in an open and transparent way.
- ❖ No waiting list and support is not time-limited.
- ❖ Small caseloads for workers to allow frequent work at flexible times.
- ❖ Persistence and creativity in engaging and staying with young people.
- ❖ Liaising with case-accountable workers to agree exit plans.
- ❖ Being experts in trauma and sexual violence in order to offer guidance to professionals.



The Jigsaw Programme works to support the prevention of child sexual exploitation through the delivery of accredited programmes through small group work, drop-in's and workshops throughout Norfolk in schools, youth groups and care homes.

Delivery of training programmes has been suspended throughout covid and lockdown and we have taken this time to review and further develop our digital reach to children and young people in response to the increase in online CSE that we are seeing through our Rose referrals.

We recognise that this year more than ever before virtual spaces have been a key area of engagement for young people and adults alike. We are responding by ensuring children and young people are able to safely navigate these spaces and move forward in their lives from harm and trauma they may have experienced in these spaces.



Following the move on of the girls in the supported accommodation provision in April 2020 we decided not to fill the placements due to difficulties in accommodating new placements and provision of staffing during covid and lockdown. We are taking this time to re-evaluate the scope of this project.

