



History

The Magdalene Group has been established in Norwich for almost 30 years, supporting women who are affected by sexual violence, coercion and exploitation and specialist providers of support for sex-working women. More recently providing housing services for women who experience multiple disadvantage. In addition, we deliver interventions to young people at risk of sexual exploitation. We have built up an excellent track record over this time in building trusted relationships, engaging with some of the most marginalised women and hard-to-reach young people.

The Charity was founded by two female magistrates and grew to receive National Recognition by being included in the Home Office Report Paying the Price in July 2003 and went on to receive the Queen's Award in 2004.

We are most proud of the dynamic approach that the charity adopts in building trusted relationships, genuinely engaging and supporting the most vulnerable women and girls. We achieve this through our trauma-informed approach and recognise how the impact of trauma can affect behaviours and life journeys. 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 we work hard to ensure pathways into support are established between services.

CEO Report

As with many organisations, the impact of the pandemic has been wide-reaching; significantly there has been staff transition and turnover higher than normal due to the difficulties and vicarious trauma of working from home and the impact of the huge demand on our service. This has led to recruitment, induction and training of new staff which in many ways has been positive in that we have been able to re-look at what we offer and why, get feedback from clients and ensure that our service remains relevant, dynamic and continues to meet the needs of our clients.

We have yet to see the level of need decrease to pre-pandemic levels and our expectation is that this increase will continue for the foreseeable future due to the increase in barriers and the compounding of complex and multiple needs.

As we continue to develop our strategy and our expertise it is often difficult and challenging to work with partners and ensure our voice is heard in the wider multi-agency environment. Consultation with bigger funders and agencies delivering services is often lacking which leads to ineffective models being established which bring about duplication and confusion. With almost 30 years of frontline delivery we are also keen to share the needs and challenges of the cohort we support and highlight the gaps that exist. We know that certain demographics of women face increased risk, those with mental and physical health issues, homelessness and addiction, face added prejudice and discrimination and become easily-labelled.

Taking an intersectional approach to violence against women and girls considers the specific vulnerabilities of different populations and aims to transform unequal power relations. Marginalised women already at greater risk are often further marginalised from systems that should protect them. Society can place less value on the lives of some women over others. It is frustrating to see that women with complex needs have to work through a succession of separate and uncoordinated professional appointments whilst managing chaotic lifestyles, often resulting in them becoming overwhelmed, missing appointments and facing punitive measures and therefore ultimately failing to have their needs met.

This year has seen us develop trauma- and gender-informed support to housing providers, supporting entrenched homeless and hidden homeless women into accommodation, then providing wrap-around support towards tenancy sustainment. To do this we continue to be a part of a local consortium of agencies who offer specialised support to clients who are homeless and hidden homeless.

Overall, quite simply not enough is being done to stop violence against women and girls – in fact it is the least prosecuted and punished crime in the world and should be recognised as a major Public Health concern in national policies. The Magdalene Group is looking at ways to extend our service to work towards eradicating gender-based sexual violence which includes psychological, physical and sexual violence, and harmful practices such as intimate partner violence, sexual violence and harassment, child exploitation, child marriage, female genital mutilation and human trafficking.

We are also looking to develop services in the night-time economy, offering responsive support and prevention towards the safety of all women which is part of our strategy moving forward. The Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and subsequent Safer Streets initiatives provides a platform. More staff, money, resources are always needed to expand this work. but ensuring funds reaches vital grassroots women's services remains a challenge.

Suzi Heybourne CEO

During COVID, 100% of support services found that co-existing disadvantages had been exacerbated as a direct result of the pandemic.

(Agenda, 2021)

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 third annual return reporting as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation and as we submit this annual report we are nearing 30 years of safeguarding vulnerable women and young people who experience sexual violence coercion and exploitation. *The trustees, CEO and staff team have been working on the strategy leading towards our 30 year anniversary which will see an Away Day in July 2022 to bring about further clarity in our response. More than ever the need to support women and girls around sexual violence is paramount and the organisation is well-placed to respond. This report forms part of our five-year strategy, and the following key organisational objectives remain for The Magdalene Group for 2021- 2022.*

Governance

Trustees who have specialist skills and experience to help the board fulfil its roles and responsibilities, are recruited. A trustee induction is in place which covers the provision of a range of documentation and training. This programme is reviewed on an annual basis.

The full board meets four times a year. There are two sub-groups: employment and remuneration and finance. These sub-groups also meet four times a year.

There are leads on the trustee board for certain areas such as safeguarding and equality and diversity.

Quality

We have a strong commitment to developing robust safeguarding approaches across the organisation and senior managers and Designated Safeguarding Officers work on this together. Alongside this we engage in the statutory Section 11 review with Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Internal audits are carried out on frontline services to identify good practice, areas for improvement, training needs and identified service gaps.

A number of action plans drive the quality agenda in a range of areas within the running of the charity. Reports and updates are regularly made available to the board.

Financial Income

The organisation has worked hard to maintain and secure income with the backdrop of the global pandemic and the uncertainty that has brought. Through this work the organisation has been able to keep providing services to women and young people in Norfolk throughout the pandemic.

Reserves Policy

The trustees are mindful of the expertise that The Magdalene Group has built up through its staff and of the need for sustainability going forward in continuing to provide services to both clients and funders. In view of this, the trustees have reviewed their original policy and consider that the charity should aim to retain enough unrestricted funds to cover 12 months of the running costs of the charity.

This will enable continuity of service and retention of experienced personnel whilst identifying and securing new funds to continue to operate. These costs approximate to £483,000. Actual unrestricted reserves as at 31st August 2021 amount to £303,430. Trustees agreed to allocating a legacy gift of £51,112 to our designated funds making this a total of £211,358 which is towards the provision of future women's accommodation as our data consistently evidences this is the highest need of the women who use our services.

The organisation continues to work hard at a diverse income strategy through grants, donations, contracts and partnership work.

This period we joined the Pathways Consortium (led by St Martin's Housing) to specifically support women who are homeless, sleeping rough or hidden homeless with multiple disadvantages delivered with a trauma- and gender- informed approach.

Risk Management

The pandemic has highlighted further risks which senior managers and the trustee board have looked at to ensure continuity of our services which is outlined in further detail in the Business Continuity Plan.

Review of the risk register takes place quarterly through senior management and the board to ascertain and mitigate risks and plans are updated to reflect this. The five broad areas identified in the risk register are: governance, operational, financial, external customer risks and regulatory risks.

Throughout this period regular COVID-19 reviews have taken place by managers to ensure safety of staff, clients and those who come into contact with the service. Reviews have ensured that the organisation is following government guidance and procedures for service delivery are clear for all.

Equality and Diversity

The organisation is implementing policies and procedures to embed being an inclusive organisation for both clients and staff. This work involves people at different positions within the charity to ensure policies are clear.

Mandatory training programmes for staff are reviewed annually and this year further courses have been added to embed organisational knowledge and approaches towards equality and diversity.

Analysis of those using the service as well as those applying for jobs was carried out this year to understand our current position and to identify actions to ensure accessibility for all as well as embedding diverse approaches. Actions raised have been captured within the equality and diversity action plan.

Workforce Development

Following the pandemic, the way organisations work has become much more flexible and varied across the sector. Through staff consultation we have recently introduced a hybrid working policy for those that would like to work in this way.

Staff have access to a comprehensive induction programme over their 6-month probation which provides opportunity for training, learning, shadowing and networking. Staff have monthly 1:1 sessions with their line manager and frontline staff receive case management support.

We recognise the potential for vicarious trauma and frontline staff are provided with external supervision sessions either on a group basis or 1:1 on a monthly basis. Well-being is important for staff in the field that we work but also recognising the impact the pandemic has had on everyone. Regular socials are organised for staff and this year we introduced Donut Time where staff are paired up each month to get a coffee, go for a walk or similar and spend some time getting to know one another.

All staff are offered our Employee Assistance Programme which is 24/7 and free and confidential.

Digital Marketing and Communications

Work continues to develop our digital strategy to be creative with our engagement and to reach those that face barriers in accessing support or who remain hidden.

Social media has developed over the past year with new platforms being added, Instagram and TikTok, to raise awareness of the issues we work with and to reach out to people.

Leaflets, the website and other materials are reviewed regularly to ensure they link in with the strategic goals and language is current. This work is carried out by a marketing group within the staff team.

Volunteers

Throughout the pandemic it has been difficult for us to utilise volunteers and so we have not openly recruited for volunteers for the past two years. This year we are now in a position to be able to open up volunteering opportunities and are currently undertaking a volunteer recruitment and induction programme.



Doorway Women's Services

It's just been so lonely, it's lovely to see a familiar face'

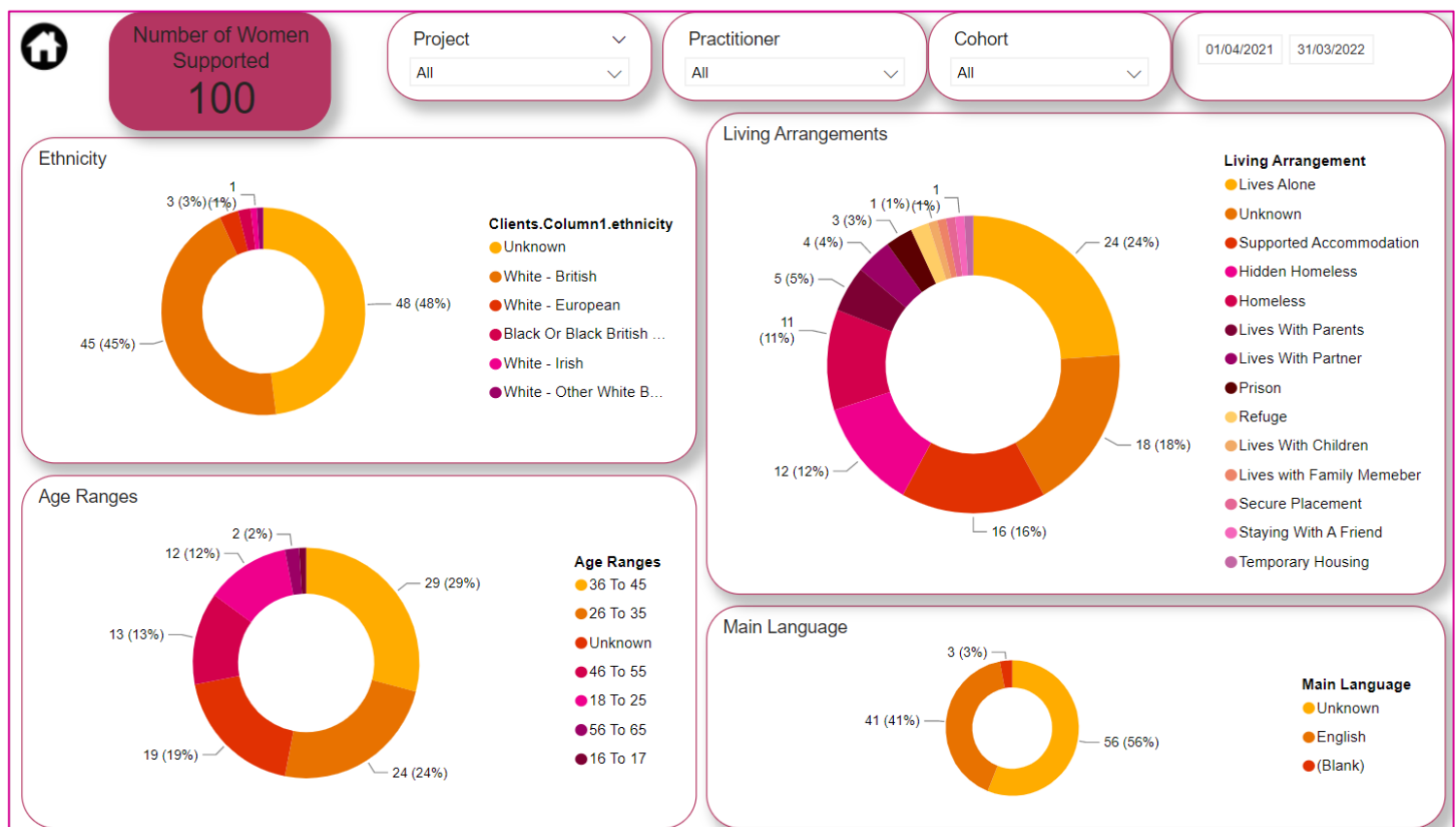
Doorway client

- This service provides specialist, personalised and holistic support to women predominantly in Norwich through outreach, intensive 1:1 support, inreach, specialist Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA), housing support and 'Through the Gate' support in Prison. Our approach is trauma-informed and we build trusting non-time-limited relationships with those who access our support through our Doorway Women's Service. The trauma- and gender- informed approach we have embedded within the service sees women who are hard to engage with other services, want to engage with us. Flexibility and consistency are key components of this.
- We have a specialist sex worker service overseen by our Independent Sexual Violence Advisor providing 1:1 Intensive support, advocacy, safety planning, sexual health, sexual violence.
- There is a strong correlation between sexual violence and multiple disadvantage, therefore we also provide support to women who experience hidden and street homelessness, addiction, debt, mental ill health, stigma and isolation, breaking the cycle of abuse, exploitation and poor life outcomes.
- Doorway Women's Services provides tailored and holistic support, advocating and removing barriers to accessing support across categories of need including: mental health, physical health, housing, criminal justice system contact, sexual violence, domestic abuse, crisis intervention, substance misuse, sexual health, safety, and benefits/finances
- The practitioner works to ensure engagement is maximised, as many agencies can fail to understand the link between repeated sexual violence and multiple disadvantage, this in turn perpetuates feelings of shame and stigma and ultimately the client not engaging.

- The practitioners have an informed understanding of sexual violence in an integrated way. It is important for all staff and services involved with the victim's journey to understand how trauma manifests in behaviour, in addition to how to respond appropriately. We ensure we work alongside victims to normalise and explain what is happening, avoiding re-traumatising, traumatic responses and behaviours as this is effective in making a significant difference to their recovery and feelings of safety.
- An effective model to support clients who experience sexual violence and multiple disadvantages is the 'Team Around Me' approach which considers the barriers clients face when engaging with a variety of cross-sector services and the barriers we face as practitioners trying to support them. Thinking about systems rather than individuals may help when working with clients or other agencies.
- Doorway's housing support is part of a formal partnership that increases our access to a range of other partners including mental health and social care, presenting further opportunities to challenge and raise the voice of women to highlight safeguarding concerns, remove barriers and improve understanding of how women experience homelessness differently to men.

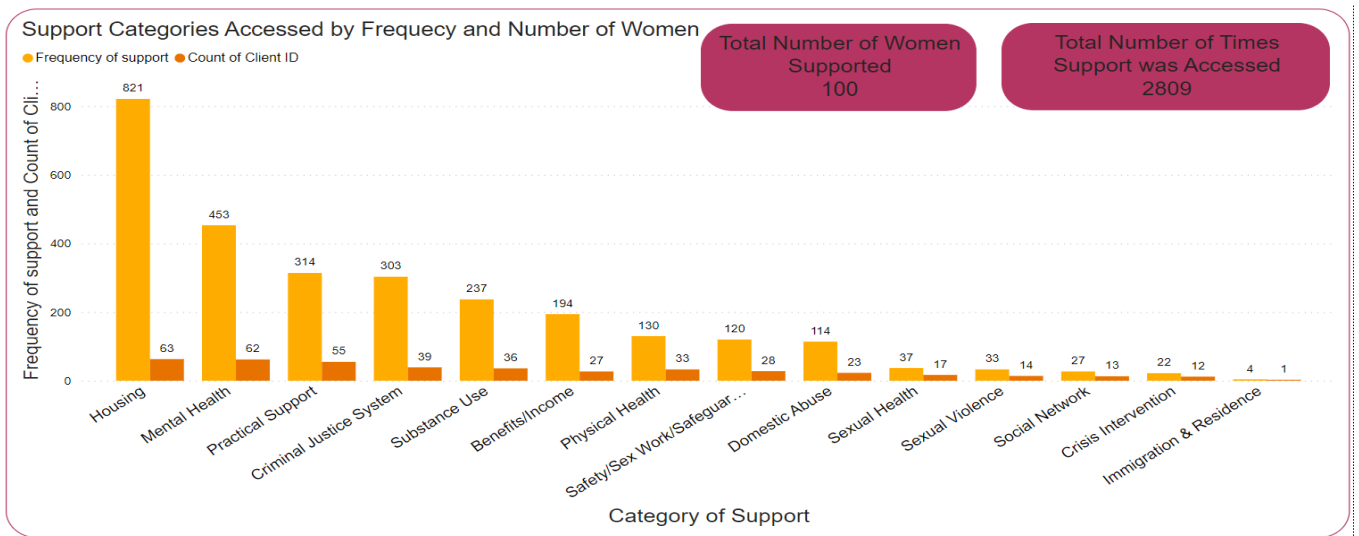
"I've never been to court on the right date and at the right time. I always have a warrant out for my arrest so thank you for supporting me."

Doorway client



We saw an increase in the number of categories of support women accessed

from 80% accessing for 3 or more categories in 2019/20 to 90% accessing for 4 or more categories in 2020/21 as well as experiencing sexual violence, exploitation and/or sex working.



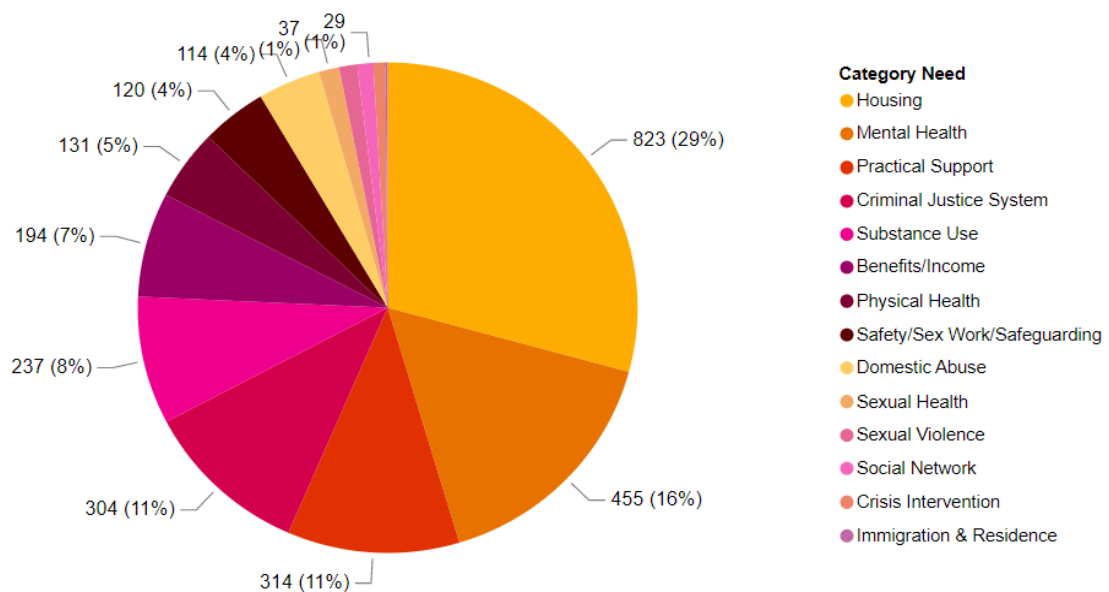
Street-based sex work is a reinforcing factor to multiple disadvantages. 73% of street-based sex-workers use crack cocaine or heroin daily; 65% are homeless and over half have previously attempted suicide.

Elmes et al (2021)

Total Contacts

3175

Support Categories Accessed by Frequency and Number of Women





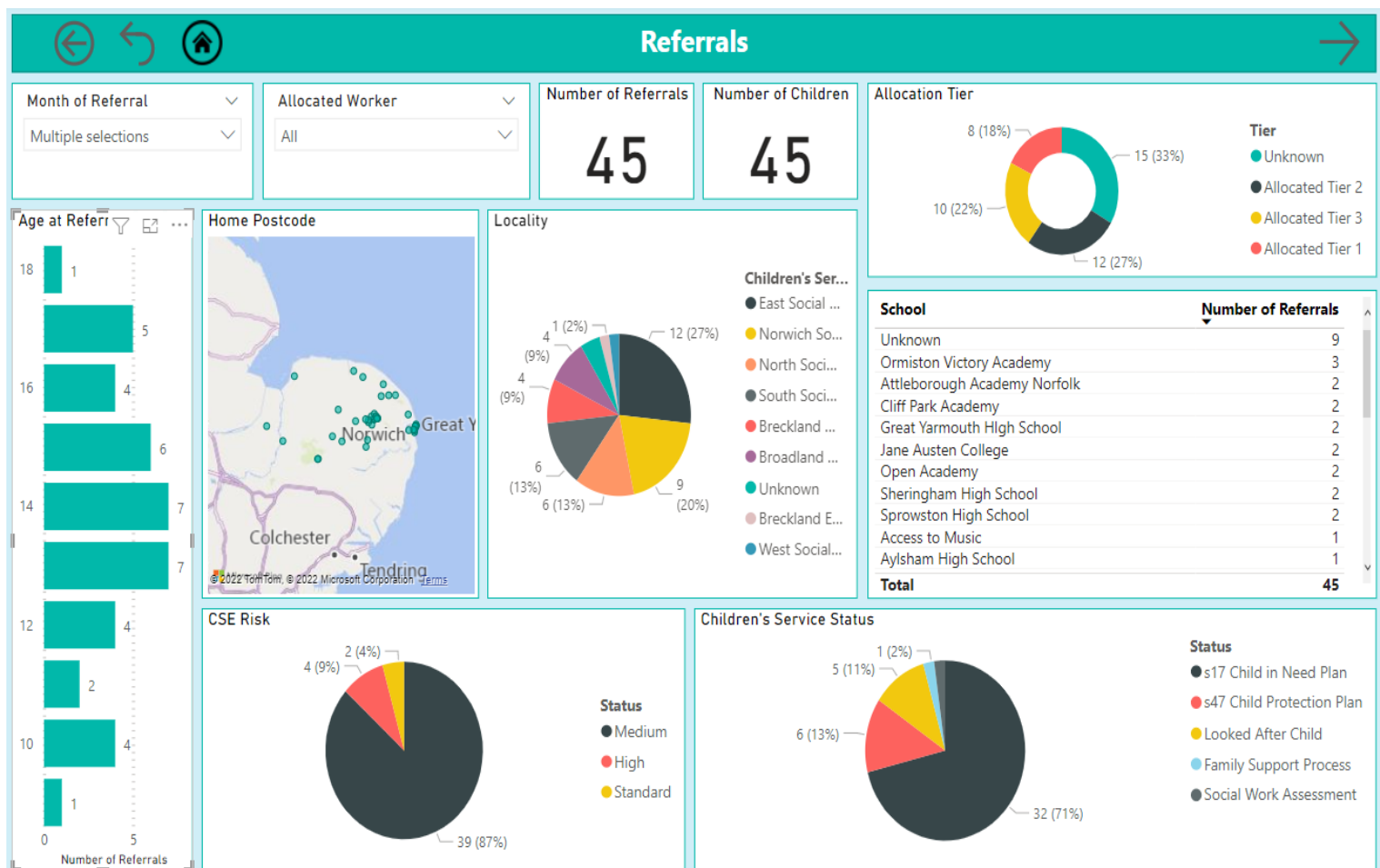
“My worker was the one who helped me realise that what happened was wrong, I wouldn’t have known this...I learnt it’s ok to say no – I now know what consent is.”

ROSE young person

- We continue our work with young people screened as medium- or high-risk of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in 1:1 support sessions; this long-term intervention is trauma-informed and client-led, designed to equip young people with knowledge around exploitation and healthy relationships and to address any underlying issues that have made or might continue to make them vulnerable to exploitation such as low self-esteem for example.
- The Rose Project data informs us that we are seeing more referrals for young children at primary school age compared to previous years. This year we saw an increase of 50% for referrals for 9-11 year olds. Work has had to be adapted and created to make it suitable for this younger age group. There continues to be a high number of referrals around online exploitation across the different ages and we have seen this trend since soon after the beginning of the pandemic.
- Our approach as an organisation is trauma-informed and we take this knowledge and practice into the direct work we do with young people and adults including professional meetings. Our direct work with young people sees us respond accordingly to their individual circumstances and requires the practitioners to assess and think on their feet and change the direction of the session if appropriate.
- We share knowledge with young people to help them understand what trauma is, how the body responds and what trigger responses are. This brings clarity to young people to help them understand what they are experiencing.
- When working with professionals, social workers, police and schools as the trusted relationship with the young person we are able to share our knowledge around trauma and where required bring professional challenge to help others

understand a different perspective. The challenge we bring frequently is around helping professionals consider there might be another reason for what is viewed as difficult behaviours, victim blaming language, challenging school exclusions and being a voice for advocacy and participation on behalf of our clients.

- We have embedded a live dynamic data collection tool for the Rose Project and have established a dashboard which gives us access to a range of data pertaining to service delivery. This includes details on activities carried out by practitioners such as number of sessions with young people, meetings attended and contacts with professionals. Demographic information is collated to provide details on age, gender, living arrangement, Children's Services status, risk level and locality.
- The dashboard collects data on reasons for referrals enabling us to identify trends and specific issues in individual schools or localities. The dashboard collates collective data on outcomes and progress made for those in the service. We continue to work on developing this dashboard to inform CSE interventions and maximise data collection and analysis.



“I didn’t feel like I needed it at the start but I understand now that I made the wrong choice of relationship. I learnt a lot about healthy relationships and trust.”

Rose young person

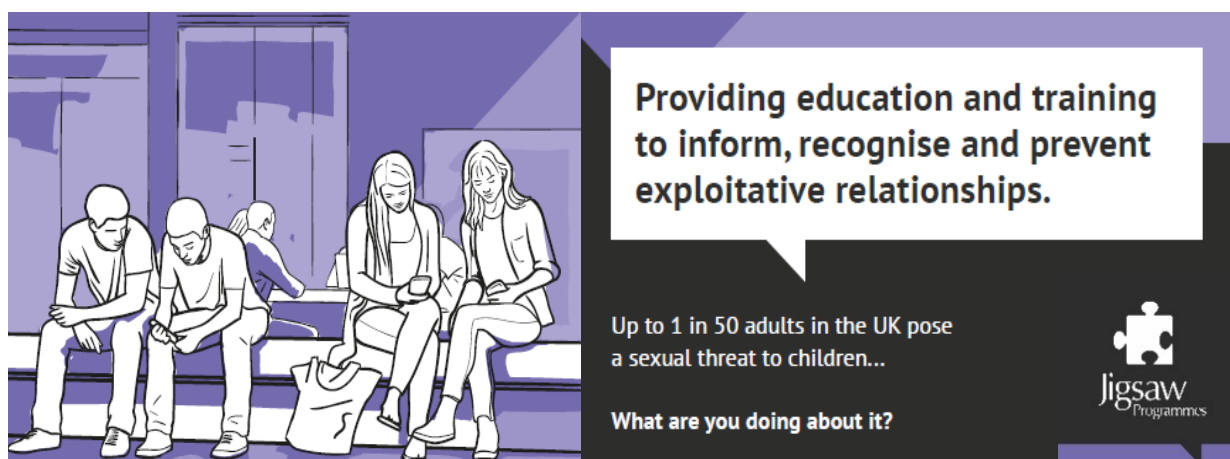
“With each young person, we develop and plan our sessions specifically around that child. Using a range of resources, from paper-based to games and crafts, we carry out a variety of topics with our young people. On top of exploitation, we also think about our young people’s wellbeing and emotional health. Thinking about how previous exploitation has affected them, we will often look at boosting self-esteem and confidence. Giving the young people a voice back and being able to say no or speak to someone if something has worried or upset them, helping them to understand consent and how this should look as well as knowing their rights. We also explore who their trusted adults are within their lives currently and occasionally try and expand this network. For example, if they cannot name anyone within school they can go to when needed, we look at encouraging and helping build relationships between the young person and a member of staff, such as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for that year group.

One outcome from all forms of exploitation, is how our young people are left blaming themselves and feeling guilt and shame. When we first meet our young people, they are in their most vulnerable state. Unsure whether to trust or being too trustworthy. Showing emotions of anger, sadness, fear. Sometimes a young person will want to talk and tell you everything, or they withhold taking weeks to build a form of relationship where they feel able to explore what you have to offer them. A big part of our job is to be consistent and genuine, showing up on time to appointments and maintaining our approach so that the young person knows what to expect from session to session”

Lauren, Young Person CSE Practitioner

“I could talk to my worker, and I got amazing support.”

Rose young person



The Jigsaw Education & Training Programmes have been developed as part of The Magdalene Group's early intervention against Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) strategy. They incorporate a wide range of approaches, tailored to meet the learning needs of both children and young people, and the professionals who work alongside them, with the aim of preventing exploitation and abuse.

Nearly 90% of girls, and nearly 50% of boys, said being sent explicit pictures or videos of things they did not want to see happens a lot or sometimes

Sexual harassment occurs so frequently that it has become 'commonplace'

92% of girls, and 74% of boys, said sexist name-calling happens a lot or sometimes

The frequency of these harmful sexual behaviours means that some children and young people consider them normal.

Source: Ofsted Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges (June 2021)

Project Aim

Various referred to as CSE prevention or healthy relationships education, such initiatives are largely based on the theory that if you can raise children's awareness of what constitutes healthy relationships and develop their understanding of key issues such as consent and grooming, you can reduce exploitation.

Against the backdrop of movements such as #MeToo, sexual violence – and violence against women and girls more broadly – have gained footing in the social conscience over recent years. Alongside CSE intervention, the Jigsaw programme has been updated to capture and reflect this landscape.

Sarah Everard's murder in March 2021 further sharpened public awareness of the issue of sexual harassment and sexual violence in society. As well as significant media coverage and public response, 'Everyone's Invited,' a website and social media account aiming to "eradicate rape culture" in the UK, saw its testimonials from sexual assault survivors soar following her death. With the campaign's emphasis on education institutions, 'Everyone's Invited' sparked an Ofsted review, and subsequent report, into the scale of sexual violence within schools.

The Jigsaw Education Programme intentionally positions itself at this intersection between CSE and sexual violence; recognising the need to safeguard potential victims

and address societal issues of violence against women and girls which lead to young people becoming perpetrators of abuse.

Laura Training and Education Lead

A child can find 'violent porn' in 15 seconds via Google, but it can take approximately 15 minutes to find 'soft porn'

- (Professor Warren Binford, 2018)

Education Programme – Children & Young People

With their ability to reach large numbers of children and young people, schools and other education settings are recognised as having an important role in raising awareness of CSE.

For this reason, the education branch of Jigsaw has been primarily marketed to primary and secondary education providers. By utilising existing networks, as well as directly targeting Norfolk schools on the 'Everyone's Invited' list, over 100 settings have been contacted, aiming for maximum reach across the county. The marketing material is sent to schools on a termly basis, offering multiple opportunities for them to make bookings, and we also offer free 'tasters' in the form of a 20-minute assembly to further generate bookings and build connections with schools.

Jigsaw offers a range of delivery modes, including one-off workshops, carousel days and six-week creative courses. It is important that the programme is flexible to accommodate the differing requirements and timetabling restrictions of schools and maximise uptake.

With engaging and interactive sessions on key topics such as online safety, consent, peer-on-peer abuse, sexual violence and healthy & exploitative relationships, these courses support and extend the updated Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) curriculum, as well as address themes detailed in Ofsted's review of sexual abuse in schools. There is an option for courses to be tailored to the specific needs of the children and young people, and all programmes are vigorously researched by our Education and Training Lead, informed by Child Exploitation & Online Protection (CEOP) and National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) guidance where appropriate.

CPD Accredited Training - Professionals

Currently there is no provision for Tier 1 CSE cases within our Young People's service. Undoubtedly there are vast numbers of children and young people within Norfolk who would not meet threshold for intensive 1:1 support from our practitioners but are nonetheless vulnerable to exploitation. Whilst the education programme hopes to address this in part, the demand will always exceed our team's capacity.

One way to mediate this is to upskill professionals already working with children and young people. Educating teaching staff, youth workers, residential home staff etc. on key topics relating to CSE; ensuring they know what support is available and how to access it; and promoting confidence in approaching these issues in a trauma- and gender-informed way, will create a web of professionals around young people who are equipped with the knowledge and committed to working together to deliver this early intervention.

To date, there are three professional courses being delivered: 'Staying Safe Online,' 'Child Sexual Exploitation' and 'Healthy Relationships,' and we are looking at developing a fourth course with a greater emphasis on peer-on-peer abuse/sexual violence. We have recently gained CPD accreditation for these courses.

