



Annual report for the period September 2021 – August 2022

Introduction

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 disadvantages; 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 'the two Doreens' 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.

CEO Report

As The Magdalene Group journeys towards our 30th year, we renew our commitment to address Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and to eradicate this violence throughout every level in society. We will deliver sexual violence services and are committed to sharing practice-based evidence of the hundreds of women and girls we have supported each and every year throughout this time in order to raise their voices and provide representation to remove barriers and inequality.

The term "violence against women and girls" covers a range of abuse types which, although men and boys also suffer, disproportionately affects women and girls.

The United Nations 1993 declaration, defines VAWG as:

"Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life. Crime types include domestic abuse including homicide, sexual assault, stalking, sexual exploitation, child abuse, female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage and harassment in work and public life."

Our approach is trauma- and gender-informed; whilst also recognising women and girls' intersectional identities in that race, class, gender identity, alongside experiencing multiple disadvantages, for example, rough-sleeping, hidden-homeless, mental health and contact with the criminal justice system, requires specialist support to create safe, just and equal communities.

We recognise how well-placed we are to be part of leading the VAWG strategy, developing our voice to speak up to drive systems-change, through influencing, advocacy and awareness raising, to develop specialist responses for the benefit of women and girls.

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 provide a platform but more staff, money and resources are always needed to expand this work, but ensuring funds reaches vital grassroots women's services always remains a challenge. We remain committed to collaboration and meaningful partnerships aligned with our values to work towards systems-change to improve safety outcomes and to develop our staff to be the advocates and changemakers for women and girls.

Over the last 30 years our small charity has worked tirelessly to make a meaningful impact in the lives of women and young people, and I am proud of all that we have accomplished. I extend heartfelt thanks to our dedicated staff, trustees and donors (in particular Coutts Charitable Foundation for supporting my role) and their unwavering commitment to our cause.

Suzi Heybourne CEO

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.

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 was consulted on at our 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 strategy, and the following key organisational objectives remain for The Magdalene Group for this period.

Governance

Trustees who have specialist skills and experience to help the board fulfil its roles and responsibilities are recruited. A trustee induction programme 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 & remuneration and finance. These sub-groups also meet four times a year.

There are leads on the trustee board for key areas which include safeguarding, finance and equality & diversity.

Quality

A key area for the organisation is safeguarding. The board are in the process of recruiting a new safeguarding lead with extensive management experience within Children's Services to the board, as our previous lead has stepped down after 10 years of service. The organisation has undertaken the statutory Section 11 review with Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership which is an annual process. We are committed to learning and best practice with all frontline services as well as the governance and leadership of safeguarding.

Financial Income

The organisation continues to work hard to maintain and secure income, recognising the uncertainty and challenge that charities are facing with the cost-of-living crisis and post-pandemic times. We continue to work on diversifying income to reach the needs of women and girls through innovation and responsiveness; developing partnerships and collaborations, specifically with women's specialist organisations; aiming to share space and resources; increasing unrestricted reserves in order to ensure organisational sustainability and accountability and continuing to develop our competencies framework, to deliver high quality services. Through undertaking these measures the organisation has been able to keep providing services to women and young people throughout Norfolk. A recent position of Business Development Manager has been created. This role has come about at a time where concentrated focus is needed on funding, income-generation and sustainability to continue to see the organisation - not only sustain its level of income - but increase the diversity of our income streams.

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

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 2022 amount to £300,498. In the year to 31st August 2021, 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.

Risk Management

Fundamental to managing risk is the organisational risk register. The Magdalene Group reviews this on a quarterly basis, with senior management and board of trustees. This is a standing agenda item at trustee meetings, where time is taken to discuss sections within the register to ascertain and mitigate risks and plans are updated to reflect this. The five key areas identified in the risk register are: governance, operational, financial, external customer risks and regulatory risks.

Equality and Diversity

The organisation has implemented policies and procedures to embed being an inclusive organisation for both clients and staff. We are committed to collaboration and continue to work towards an environment that is diverse, equitable, inclusive and anti-racist.

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 these include unconscious bias and special educational needs.

Workforce Development

Regular workforce meetings are held to ensure a dynamic decision-making process is promoted to support staff in their job roles. Feedback from staff on the hybrid working policy implemented last year is positive and has benefitted frontline delivery. The charitable sector has faced difficulties in recruitment, retention and delivery and we continue to look at staff support and wellbeing. Clinical supervision, regular 1:1's and employee assistance helplines remain available. Initiatives such as communication meetings, 'donut' staff times, team meetings, open door policy, staff socials and away days are embedded into the framework and culture of the organisation.

Volunteers


Volunteers have successfully been recruited into the organisation following a time where we have not had volunteers due to the pandemic. Volunteers have gone through a welcome programme as well as undertaken Volunteer Passport training provided by Voluntary Norfolk who provide a training package for volunteers. Volunteers are now embedded within the organisation and are involved in various roles supporting staff with our clients. Volunteers have ongoing support from staff and

are invited to all internal training opportunities as we seek to develop volunteers who are engaged, valued and nurtured to be leaders, change-makers and advocates, and supportive of our mission.

Digital Marketing and Communications

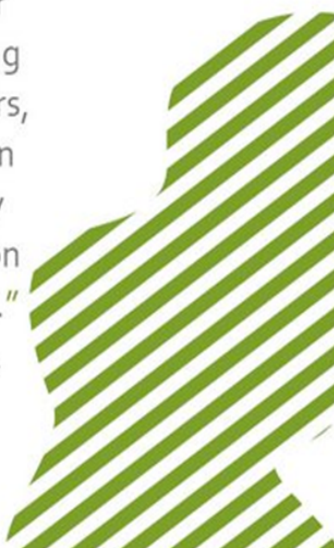

We recognise the need for a dedicated marketing and communication post to maximise and develop our profile in this digital climate. We have included this in our business development strategy for 2022-2023. This year sees us prepare for our 30-year anniversary, and expertise and skill to promote our longstanding service in the field of sexual violence is required.

During the month of May, as part of National Walking month, the organisation launched the 141 Challenge. Everyone got involved with walking 141 miles - to raise awareness of the 141 women murdered in 2021 - as part of our work raising awareness around Violence Against Women and Girls.




"Suzi and her colleagues should be really proud of their achievement of not just walking 141 miles, but for nearly 30 years, helping and supporting women and young people affected by sexual violence and exploitation to walk new, safer paths in life."

PCC Giles Orpen-Smellie



Giles Orpen-Smellie, Norfolk Police Crime and Commissioner, joined us for one of our walks. We were so pleased to have been awarded £21,996 from OPCCN (Office of Police & Crime Commissioner for Norfolk) for our work.



Norwich-born Harriet Martineau's words resonate on these plaques as clearly today as they did nearly 200 years ago: We were pleased to receive a blue plaque acknowledging charities that have gone above and beyond in reaching out to those in need and to mark people coming together in mutual practical support and encouragement over the past two years of Covid.



Doorway Women's Services

"I am extremely grateful to you, for being there for me in such a pivotal time in my life. You definitely have made an impact on my life. "U all are bloody amazing at what u do, honestly, I mean this from the bottom of my heart that you all do incredible work and have helped so so much, so thank u. xx".

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. 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 and sexual violence support.

There is a strong correlation between sexual violence and multiple disadvantages, 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.

The practitioner works to ensure engagement is maximised, as many agencies can fail to understand the link between repeated sexual violence and multiple disadvantages, 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 women's journey to understand how trauma manifests in behaviour, in addition to how to respond appropriately.

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.

We are so appreciative that our womens service is supported by Charity of Dick Whittington and Lloyds Foundation.

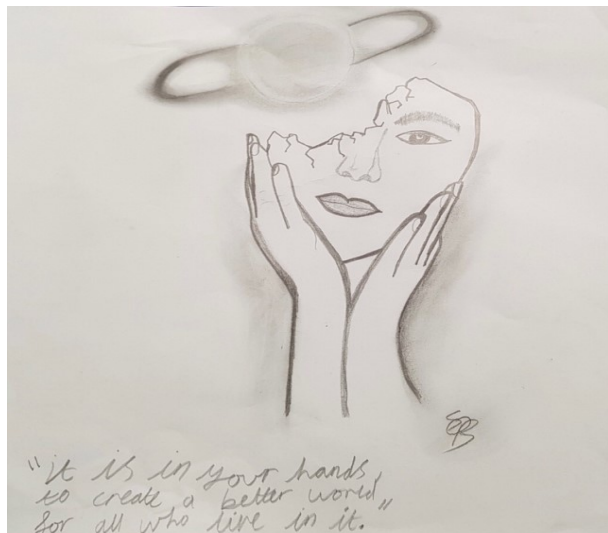
"I just wanted to provide some feedback to you for the services that you provide, I have really found this to be outstanding and also comforting for those ladies that you provide the support to.

I have a young lady on my case load who you know very well but who has also been reluctant to engage with social services, we have had great cause for concern with regard to her welfare but with your particular support - us as a team have had the comfort and knowledge knowing that someone out there in Norwich is looking out for her.

This young lady has various issues and challenges but she has been clearly thought of throughout all the difficulties of late and has never been given up on, I am pleased to hear that she has been safely housed and that's because of your support alone but that she could also always come to your service for housing and benefit advice, to access the food kitchen, medical services or to just chat.

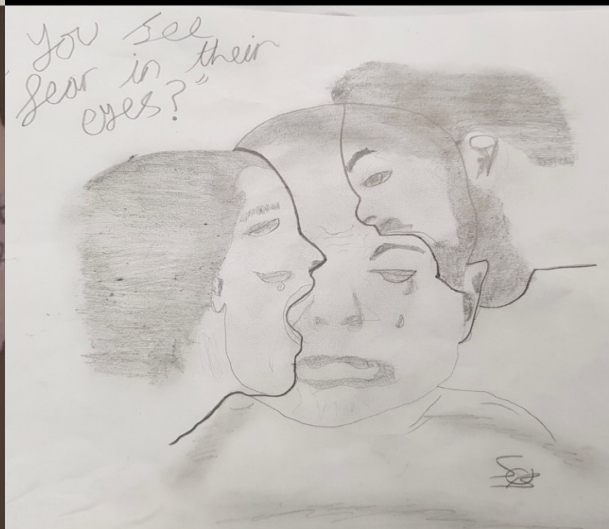
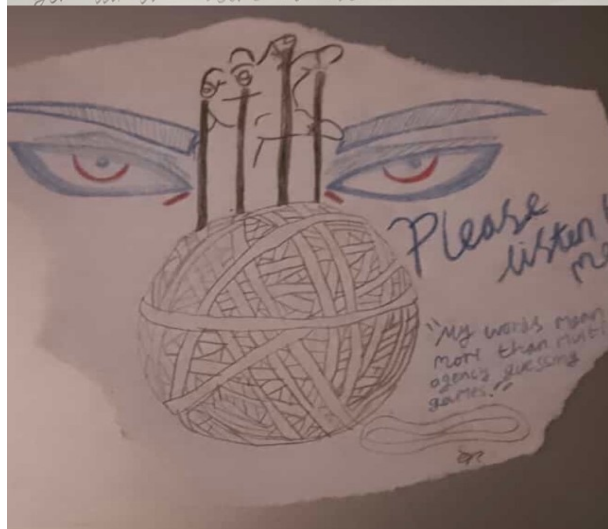
Working with partner agencies can be difficult but I have found yours a pleasure to work with and cannot thank you enough for all that you do."

Social worker

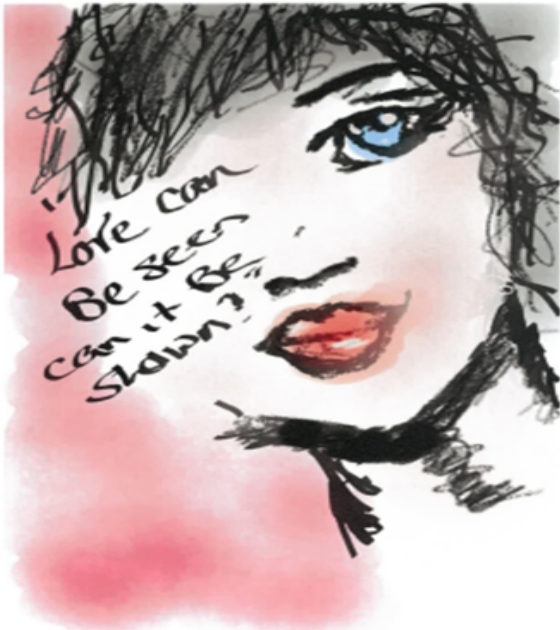
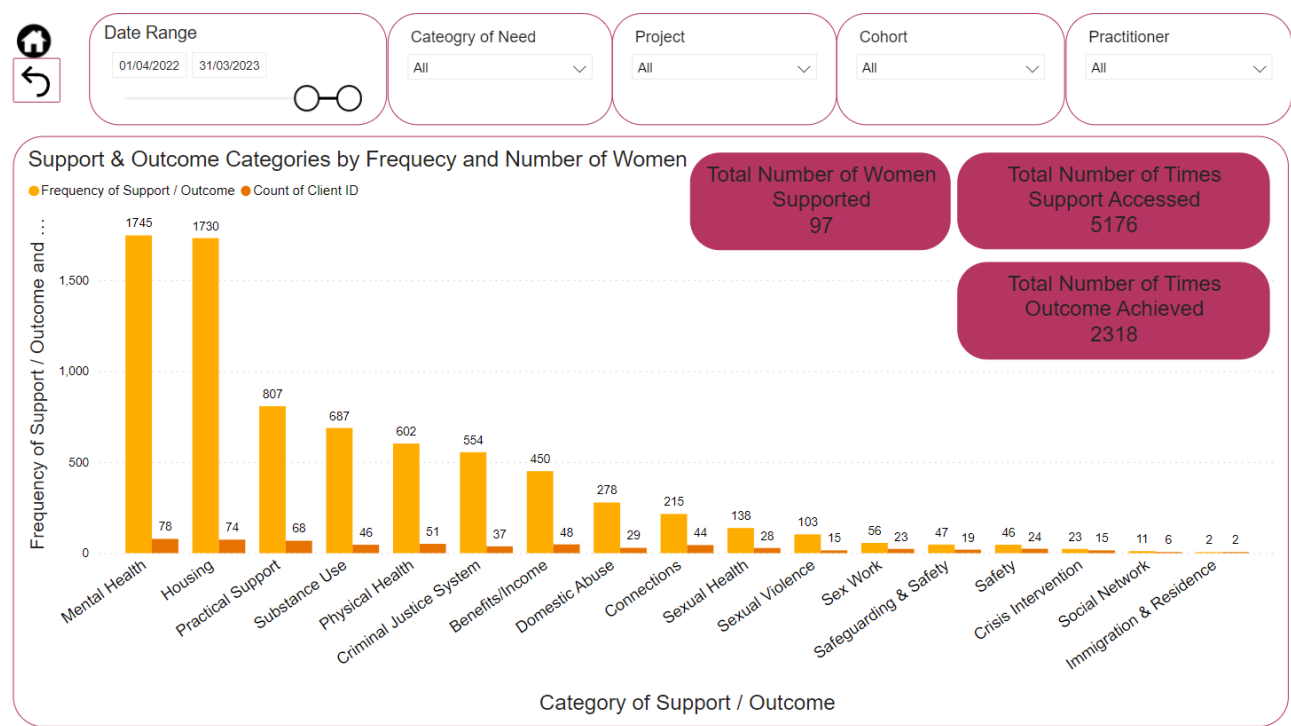


This year the Doorway team have established creative workshops in a safe space for women to talk and share.

This is some of their work.



Data from April 2022 – March 2023 – evidencing the number of women and the support categories delivered.





Rose Project

We continue to work relentlessly to ensure that child sexual exploitation (CSE) is prevented and that those affected are provided with the right support. We work with a range of agencies to highlight:

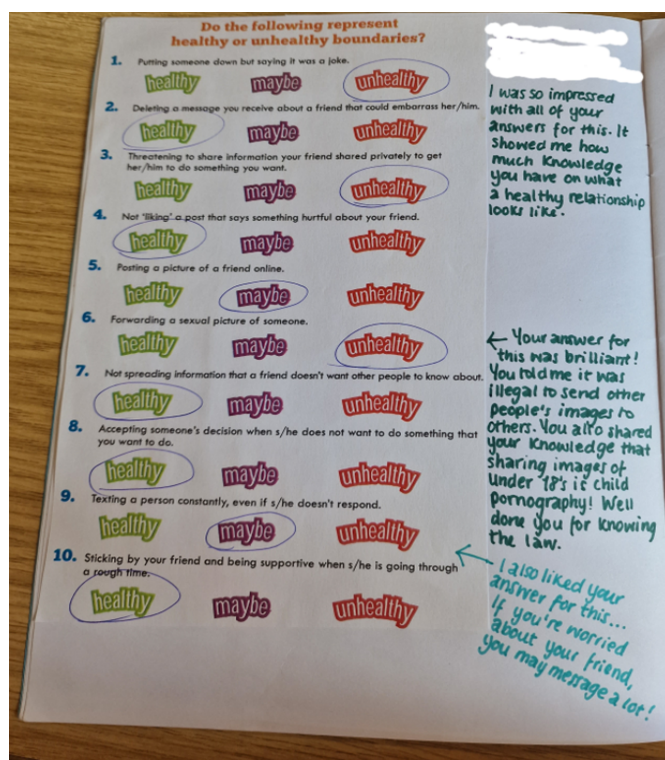
- How children and young people are targeted and groomed for the purpose of CSE.
- Signs that a child or young person is being groomed for CSE or is a victim.

Modern slavery is an umbrella term for all forms of slavery, human-trafficking and exploitation and CSE is a form of this. The National Referral mechanism was introduced in 2009 as a framework for identifying, referring and supporting victims of modern slavery and human-trafficking in the UK.

We continue our work with young people screened as medium- and high-risk of child sexual exploitation (CSE) in 1:1 support sessions; this 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.

Our approach as an organisation is trauma-informed and we take this knowledge and practice into the direct work we do with young people, parents, carers and professionals.

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. Building upon our trusted relationships we can work with professionals, social workers, police and schools to share our knowledge around trauma and where required bring professional challenge to help others understand a different perspective, considering reasons for what might be viewed as difficult behaviours, victim-blaming language and being a voice for advocacy and participation on behalf of the young people.



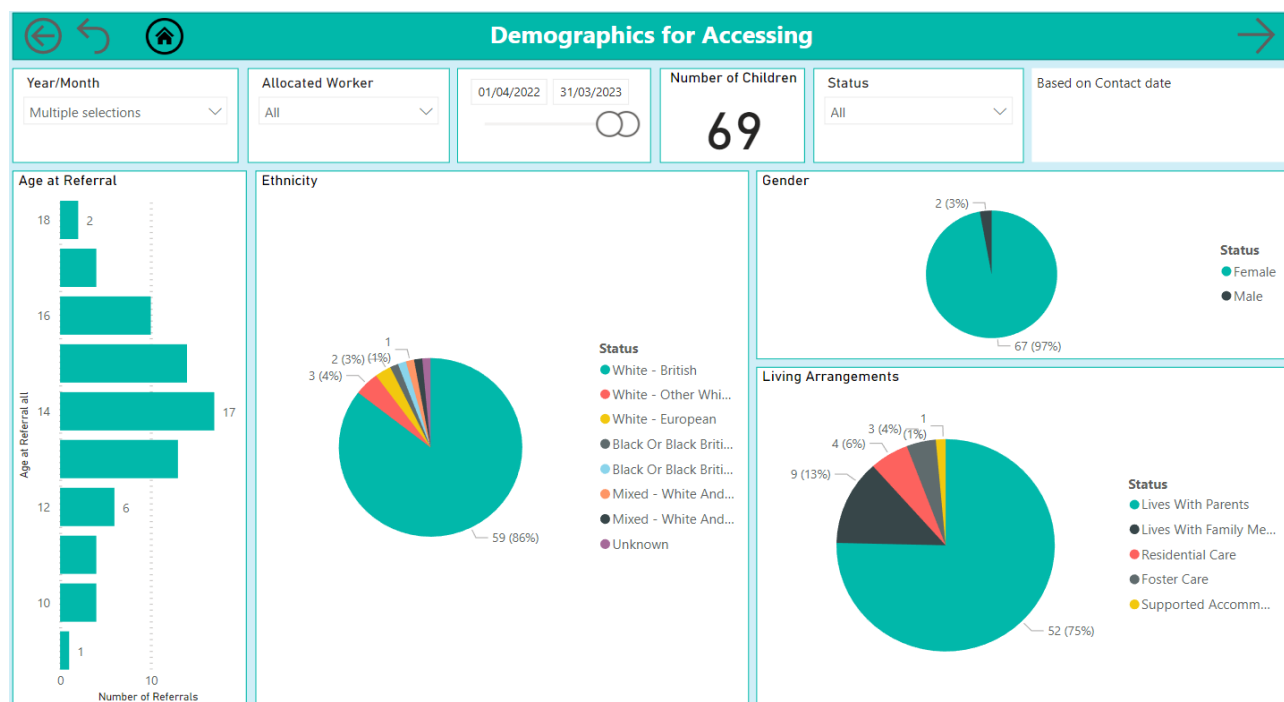
"I didn't know what the Rose Project was and didn't think I needed to speak to anyone or open up. I was glad once I found out what it was and could talk about the relationship I was in. I realise it wasn't good for me – I was very unhappy but now I've learnt how to say no and assert my own needs."

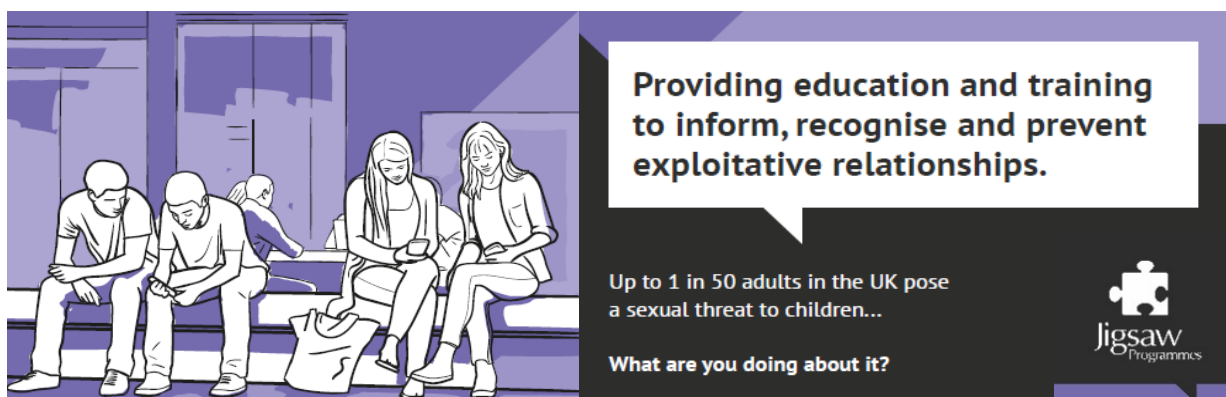
Rose Young Person

"Definitely listened to me. I'm more confident and no longer blame myself for what happened to me."

Rose Young Person

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; providing details on activities carried out by practitioners; number of sessions with young people; meetings attended; 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.





Jigsaw Programmes

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.

Project Aim

Variously 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.

The Jigsaw Education Programme intentionally positions itself at the intersection between CSE and sexual violence; recognising the need to safeguard potential victims and address societal issues of violence against women and girls. The content is regularly updated to capture and reflect changing landscapes.

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.

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 to maximise uptake.

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. We deliver engaging and interactive sessions on key topics such as online safety, consent, peer-on-peer abuse, sexual violence and healthy & exploitative relationships. 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 the 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.

We have recently gained CPD accreditation for these courses : '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.

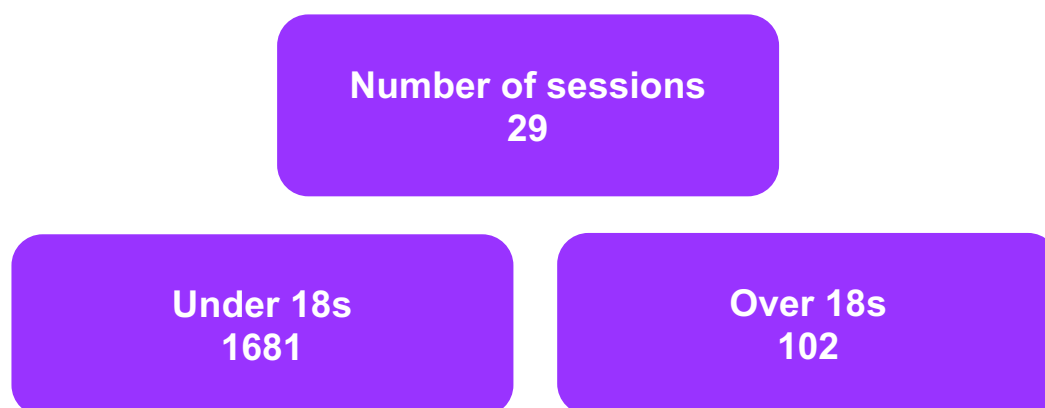
"Engaging, informative, interesting, thought-provoking, interactive."

Professional delegate.

"I have learnt what a good relationship is and more about sexual harassment and consent."

Young person.

Between April 2022 - March 2023 the number of young people who accessed the Jigsaw programme.



Registered Charity no: 1177626