



Introduction

Women's Community Matters (WCM) has been working in the community since 2013. We offer a variety of one-to-one support, courses, activities, support groups and access to specialist services for vulnerable women and girls aged 13 and over, and to young men/boys aged 13-17. We deliver our services with love, care, compassion, and kindness and offer a safe space in which women and young people can make their own decisions about changes they want to make in their own lives. We have always offered opportunities for women to come together to make changes in the local community for the benefit of all as part of our Changing the World Together project. In 2018 we launched a new social action project, #thefutureisme, led by young women and girls who developed a Young People's Charter for services who work with young people.

Principles and ethos

We have found that the most important aspect of what we do and what we are known and respected for, is the way we do things, as opposed to what we do. The courses, activities and support we offer are important, but they can change over time. What does not change and what we believe is the reason people trust us, is the way in which we deliver our services, namely:

- ❖ With love, care, compassion, and kindness. Women and young people tell us time and time again that this is what makes us different. They find our ethos easy to understand, easy to challenge us on if we do not get it right, and easy to follow for themselves.
- ❖ All of our services, support, activities and courses are co-produced/co-created alongside those they seek to support. This is how the organisation was developed from inception. It is not something we do now and again, it is how the organisation is structured, managed, led and developed.
- ❖ Women and young people make the decisions they want to make about their own lives. In this way they tell us the changes are long lasting and they develop tools they can use throughout their lives. They do not need us forever. This is often referred to as person centred or asset-based working.
- ❖ There are clear progression routes for people out of our service including into volunteer and employment opportunities at the Centre.

Our Trustee Board and volunteer/staff teams reflect the communities we serve. There are those with visible (and invisible) disabilities; those with black and mixed heritage, those who openly identify with LGBTQI+ communities, and people with a range of academic and life experiences. Everyone is valued, loved, nurtured, and supported. As a team we model good behaviour and the women and young people who access our services tell us this is one of the reasons the Centre feels safe.

Courses/groups/activities on offer are described below in relation to a number of themes

Criminal Justice System – we support women who have unpaid work/community service to complete their hours/sentence within the Centre. We offer one to one support, a life skills course, and the opportunity to consider all aspects of life that may lead to offending. We offer women support to address these vulnerabilities

Domestic and Sexual Abuse – our project is called #ibelieveyou. We offer one to one and practical support to women who are or who have experienced domestic and or sexual abuse. We have a range of courses women can attend including Butterfly Group looking at the effects of domestic abuse, including on our children; Mr Relationships & Me, looking at all relationships; My Safety & Me, looking at community and personal safety; and our 12 week personal development course.

Health & Wellbeing – we offer long term one to one support; access to a range of social activities (COVID-19 restrictions permitting) including very small groups for those who struggle with larger groups; and peer support groups.

Poverty – we offer support to access specialist support including appointments available at the Centre with a DWP worker, Hazel. We have a Clothes Bank full of clothes and household items which are free to take and which have all been donated by the community. We have a birthday party fund which offers financial support for birthday parties. The With Love from Isabel Fund offers financial support to those we work with to address the barriers to engagement.

Employment, Training & Education – we are part of the Cumbria CVS led Building Better Opportunities Programme offering tailored one to one to help women move closer to the job market. Support with CV writing, interview techniques, and support with applications.

Social Action and Volunteering – a range of social action and volunteering opportunities for social inclusion and or to increase/evidence skills and experience to aid job or education applications

Young Women aged 13-19 – tailored one to one support for the full range of vulnerabilities experienced by young women. Access to a weekly group alongside other young women

Young Men aged 13-17 - tailored one to one support for the full range of vulnerabilities experienced by young men. Access to a weekly group alongside other young men

Other projects – these include the Love Barrow Together project which supports families to help shape the future of children and family services in our area. We are the lead partner for the Barra Culture Programme which will deliver cultural change across the town led and designed by the community.

Contact details

In person: Women's Community Matters, Nan Tait, Abbey Road, Barrow-in-Furness. LA14 1LG

Reception opening times:

Monday & Wednesday 9.30am-4pm; Tuesday & Thursday 9.30am-6pm; Friday 9.30am-1pm

Email: reception@womenscommunitymatters.org

Website: www.womenscommunitymatters.org

Phone: 01229 311102

We will also be offering support 2 days a week in Kendal from January 2021 – details to follow.