

# **Annual Report**

**April 2016 - March 2017** 

Charity Number: 1156492



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# Women's Community Matters is established to carry out the following for the benefit of women:

- Promoting, protecting and improving the safety of vulnerable women
- Advancing education in relation to the issues affecting women (including but not limited to) the areas of criminal justice, addiction, domestic violence, financial poverty and poverty of opportunity
- Preventing or relieving sickness, disease or suffering in women in the area of benefit (whether emotional, mental or physical)
- Promoting equality and diversity for the public benefit by, for example:
  - Eliminating discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation or religion
  - Advancing education and raising awareness and equality and diversity
  - Promoting activities to foster understanding between people from diverse backgrounds
  - Conducting or commissioning research on equality and diversity issues and publishing the results to the public
  - Cultivating a sentiment in favour of equality and diversity
- Furthering such other purposes which may be charitable according to the law of England and Wales as the Trustees see fit



#### **Love Barrow Award Winner**

In March 2017 Women's Community Matters was awarded Community Group/Project of the Year. We attended a wonderful awards evening at The Forum in Barrow where, surrounded by lots of wonderful individuals and groups from Barrow, we received our trophy which now sits proudly in our reception.

# An introduction from our Chair of Trustees, Ann Thomson

# Hello Everyone

It was with great pride and pleasure that I took the Chair of the Trustees of Women's Community Matters at the AGM last year.

It has been an extremely busy year with the number of women accessing our services growing week by week.

The highlights of the year have been our graduations, where our wonderful women share their experiences with us and other organisations. The sheer bravery at sharing their journeys is extremely humbling and there is never a dry eye in the house.



One other highlight was our organisation winning a Love Barrow Community Award. We won the Group/Project of the year 2017. This was a proud moment for us as it gave public recognition to the hard work and dedication of all our Staff, Trustees and Volunteers.

This seems an appropriate time to thank the Staff, Trustees and Volunteers who work so hard to make our Centre such a wonderful safe happy place full of love and caring for everyone who comes through the doors.

It is an exciting time to be part of our organisation, as I am writing this we are anticipating our move to our new premises and are busily packing – it is amazing how much stuff we have accumulated in such a small place!!!

The Centre which we are in now has been perfect for our needs for the time we have been open, but it has been apparent for a time that with the growing number of women attending we are getting too big for the space we had which was detrimental to both staff, volunteers and the women themselves.

By the time you read this we will be safely in situ in the Nan Tait Centre and trying to get used to having so much space. We will be taking the essence of the Centre now with us, which is the wonderful women.

I would also like to thank The Big Lottery, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, Barrow Borough Council, Cumbria County Council and all the other grant givers and donors who allow us to provide the wonderful services we do.

Finally thank you for reading this and we look forward to the next year and the organisation going forward, helping women in a non-judgemental way with Care, Kindness, Love and Compassion.

## Ann Thomson

Chair of Trustees

## **Headline figures:**

- In the 12 months from 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017:
- We have received 10,751 visitors to the Centre
- Volunteers have given 7,699 hours of their time to the charity
- 553 women and their families have received 8,208 items from our clothes bank
- 470 different women have accessed our support
- 29 different women carried out their unpaid work with us (Community Service ordered by the courts)

#### **Summary Overview**

This Annual Report is our third such report and as last year, it represents another key moment in our development as an organisation. On 1st April 2014 the organisation had one member of staff. Three years later we have 8 committed trustees with another 3 expected to be appointed at the AGM later in the year; 11 members of staff; and a wonderful team of 46 volunteers carrying out a variety of roles. We have welcomed a record number of students from a variety of universities, schools, colleges and organisations over the last 12 months and each of them has contributed greatly to the organisation. As the year drew to a close we were busy preparing for a move of premises as the number of services and women accessing them, along with staff and volunteer numbers meant we had outgrown our old home.

# **Women in the Criminal Justice System**

## **Vision Programme**

This a rolling programme for women in the Criminal Justice System.

"At
any given
moment you have
the power to say this
is not how the story
is going to end"
Unknown

It delivers group sessions based around life skills and is replicated by other organisations across Cumbria and Lancashire. 12 women completed the programme at the Centre during the year and received 610 hours of support from staff.

#### **Unpaid Work**

During 2016-17 29 different women completed their unpaid work at the Centre contributing 2,142 hours to the smooth running of the organisation. A number of these women have continued to volunteer once their unpaid work has come to an end and continue to offer their time to support the Centre and its activities.

helped me when

I was a bad person. You
that I could make better

Community Payback Volunteer

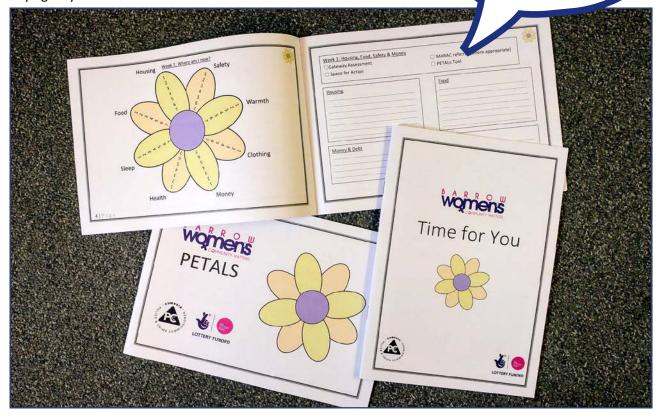
helped me to see that I made
that I could make better

community Payback Volunteer

#### **Petals Programme**

This programme has been developed for those women who may be at risk of becoming involved in the Criminal Justice System. It offers a blend of support to ensure women have their basic needs met, alongside the safe space in which they can make changes in their lives that will offer opportunity for long term sustainable change. It offers women the opportunity to develop and practice skills which are transferrable to the world of work and volunteering. During 2016-17 staff, volunteers and women who have personal experience of the criminal justice system developed and trialled this package of support. Women in the area will begin to benefit from April 2017 and most of the referrals are expected to come from the police, although referrals from any agency are welcome as are self-referrals.

"Thank
you for giving me
this chance. I do see
being able to do my hours
here as a chance. I won't
waste my chance and I'm
getting things right from
now on."
Community Payback
Volunteer 2016



# **Beautiful Women**

Beautiful Women is Part 1 of our flagship Personal Development Course. It offers support to women looking to build their confidence and self-esteem in a safe, trusting and women only environment. Women feel enabled to begin the process of self-acceptance; have space to challenge discrimination and prejudice; and experience being listened to and understood as part of their personal growth.











"Beautiful
Women was
scary at first, but very
positive. It has given me
faith that not all people
are bad, despite what I
thought. My first steps
into the world!"











# **Beautiful Me**

Beautiful Me is Part 2 of our Personal Development Course. As well as supporting women to further develop their self-confidence, it also offers the opportunity for women to develop their own self-awareness. During the six week programme, women encourage each other to reflect on their thoughts, feelings and behaviour. Women come to recognise and name their own emotions and are able to build on their own levels of empathy and emotional intelligence.



"After
Beautiful Me I feel
my confidence and selfesteem has increased and I feel
more equipped emotionally to deal
with life. I also feel I am calmer
and more understanding in
certain situations."















# IF I WERE....

If I were a bird Phoenix like I'd rise Take hold the sun A charismatic prize

If I were an artwork
And the secret it belies
I'd be a beauty of renown
With enigmatic smile

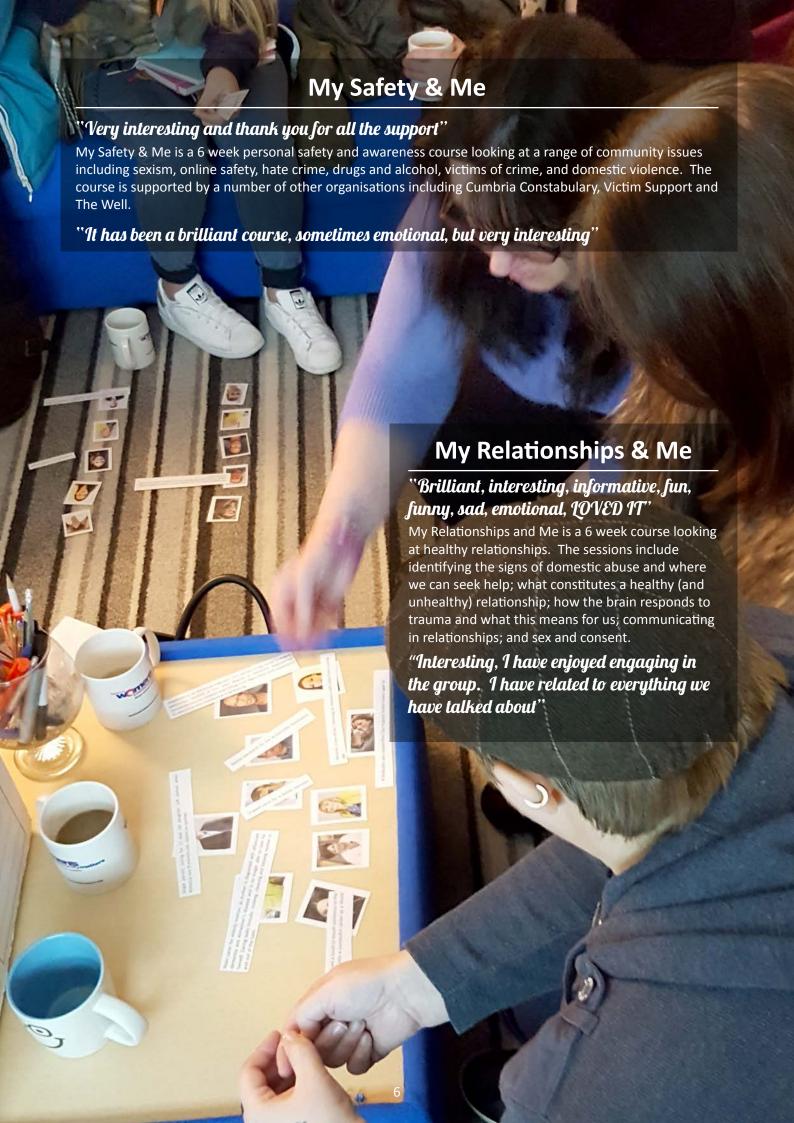
If I were a mountain Above misty clouds arise As Philosophers teach balance To the worldly and the wise

> If I were a story Chinese whispers, subtle changes Enthralling, brave, revolutionary Spanning creed and many ages

If I were a language To speak only as you find Let truth and kindness resonate Reach each and every mind

If I were a silence
Let me have the Midas touch
In space void reside and
Give peace to those owed so much

Poem by Viv Blaimire



# Pause, for thought

Pause, for thought is a 12 week rolling programme for young women aged 14-19. Women can join at any time and 'in their own time'. We offer a range of ways in which young women can get to know us before coming to the Centre and joining the group. Pause takes place on a Thursday evening with the first part of the evening being 'drop-in' style, and a more 'session based' second half. Topics and content of the sessions have been developed, adapted and improved alongside the young women who have attended to date. Some of the topics currently included are Womanhood; The Media and Celebrity Culture; Healthy Relationships; Love and Belonging; Drugs and Alcohol; Mental Wellbeing; Communication; Eating Habits; and Embracing Difference. During the last year some of the young women went on an 'away day' in the Lake District which produced some great photos!





"I thought the session was interesting because you never really know what's going on in other people's lives, you always think it's only happening to you."

Age 16 with experience of self-harm





#### "Today went well, we got to discuss stuff I wouldn't usually discuss."

Age 14 with experience of ADHD and being excluded from school









#### "The atmosphere is good, relaxing and welcoming."

Age 18 with experience of anxiety and depression

# "I think I have developed as a person, I'm more understanding of what other people go through."

Age 16 with experience of acute mental health issues

# "I like the people who come to speak to us and I am excited to be doing the filming."

Age 16 with experiences of child sexual exploitation

"It takes me a long time to trust people and I get sick of having to tell my story to each new person that works with me but I know I can come here and leave my baggage at the door. I'm not going to be thrown out because I've missed a few session, that's what counts. Knowing someone understands."

Young woman with experiences of anxiety and depression



# **New Lives**

New Lives supports women and their families who are or have experienced domestic violence and abuse. We have specially trained workers who understand domestic abuse and its effects and have a knowledge of the extra support and advice available from a range of other organisations women may need. They offer support, care and kindness as women seek to rebuild their lives, make changes, or find their own peace and understanding. We work closely with Barrow Borough Council Housing Department on this project which enables us to offer two furnished properties for women and their children escaping domestic abuse.



This snail was a gift from a very special woman who escaped an abusive relationship. Women here at the Centre are now busy knitting and crocheting snails of all colours and sizes to raise funds to support women in the future. The snails are in memory of our friend Debbie and in honour of all the brave women still fighting to survive.

and my children are safer thanks to the advice and support You gave me...thank you from the bottom

"Me

of my heart"

"After suffering years of abuse you have given me the strength and support I needed to say 'no more'. I am now looking forward to MY new life"

can breathe again'

"You said you believed me and my life changed forever. You helped me make sense of all the hurt and thefear...I know I can look after my children better now and that I am a good mum and that's what I'll carry on doing forever."

# **Changing the World Together**

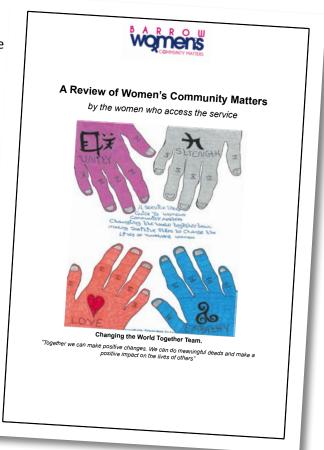


Changing the World Together Team, August 2016

This group of remarkable women are the central tenet of our organisation. The group has been running since the organisation's inception and is a forum where all women are equal, all contributions are welcomed and where women take action for themselves and do nothing less than change the world.

This year has been remarkable for this group of women as they have evaluated the services of Women's Community Matters. Who better to judge whether services are effective and what people want than those who use them. The team put an incredible amount of work into looking at all the different projects, courses and groups the organisation delivers. They spoke to staff, partner agencies, trustees, volunteers and many women accessing the Centre. They looked at what worked and what didn't and any improvements needed. They published their findings in March 2017 and their report has been well received across the community. The team were very pleased to discover that one of our funders, The Big Lottery, shared their report with other organisations they are working with as an example of best practice.





#### **Shadow Board**

In October 2016 women who access or have accessed services at the Centre were invited to join a Shadow Board. The aims of the Board was to enable members to do the following:

- To find out more about the role of trustees at WCM
- To find out general information about the role of a trustee
- To provide scrutiny/feedback with regards to decisions made by the WCM trustees
- To develop the skills and knowledge needed to be a trustee
- To nominate at least one woman, who has accessed the services of WCM, to join the Board of Trustees by July 2017

By March 2017 the Board had met a number of times to both receive training around the role of a trustee and to enable them to better understand the papers presented at Trustee Board Meetings. Members of the Shadow Board attended trustee meetings to provide their views to the trustees in advance of decision making, ensuring their voices were included and considered. The Shadow Board has become a vehicle by which women who access the service provide feedback on the service WCM provides as well as being a direct route into the forum where strategic decisions are made about the organisation.

Trustees have found the Shadow Board to be an excellent addition to the organisation's structure and are looking forward to welcoming a member of the Shadow Board to the Trustee Board at the AGM in 2017.

### **Graduation events**

Women who have completed a number of courses at the Centre are invited to join an Event Planning Group. Together, and with the support of previous graduates, they plan and host an event to celebrate their journeys. The events are always emotional and always exceptionally moving.









Clockwise from above: Sharon receiving her award from PCC Peter McCall, Guests enjoying the event, Lynne giving her speech, The Inner Self Event November 4th 2016

### Some of the wonderful women we work alongside

Adele graduated alongside a group of women in 2017. You can watch Adele's story of survival on our <u>Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/WCMBarrow/</u>. Adele uses art as a means of expression and healing and has kindly permitted us to share her piece below which she titles Breaking Free. Thank you Adele.



have drawn my
you have helped me to build
words what that means."

have drawn my
myself back up from and
lowest ebb. I can't put into
violence childhood sexual

Anne worked alongside Paula during 2016-17 and together they renewed what was broken. Part of their work together was refurbishing an old table which was used to raise funds for the Centre. Thank you Anne.



know that if I think
of all the love and support
that everyone has given me from
WCM, I know that I can do anything
I strive to do. You have been my rock
in times of trouble and I really do only
to think of you all and I feel stronger
than ever before. I wouldn't be
where I am now if it wasn't for
you lovely ladies at WCM."
from a women who is a survivor of rape

"I

There are also a number of other stories of survival with women's thoughts about the Centre at: <a href="https://www.beautifulwomenuk.com/">https://www.beautifulwomenuk.com/</a>

#### FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2017

#### **FOR**

#### **WOMENS COMMUNITY MATTERS**

#### **FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

for the Year Ended 31 March 2017

#### ACCOUNTANTS' REPORT TO

#### **WOMENS COMMUNITY MATTERS**

In accordance with instructions given to us we have presented without carrying out an audit the annexed financial statements from the accounting records of Womens Community Matters and from information and explanations supplied to us.

MBE Accountancy Ltd Chartered Certified Practice 10 High Street Windermere Cumbria LA231AF

9 August 2017

#### WOMENS COMMUNITY MATTERS

#### PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT for the Year Ended 31 March 2017

	31.3.17	
	£	£
Income		
Tudor trust	20,000	
Donations and fundraising	2,547	
Donations - crisis fund	1,023	
BAE Give as you earn	500 2,500	
Barrow public health locality Barrow soroptimists	2,300 450	
BFKSafe OPCC	32,490	
Big Lottery Women & Girls Initiative	108,845	
Focus Families	4,179	
Francis C Scott	20,000	
Furness Lions Donations	500	
Keswick to Barrow	300	
Lancashire WCM Projects	10,000	
Mayor's Fund	3,000	
Nationwide	100	
OPCC Petals Programme	19,089	
Rampside WI	400	
Skills for Care	4,000	
Students of Dowdales School	75	
Supporting People	11,648	
Tesco Colour Run	1,560	
Ulverston Tangent Club	30	
Vagina monologues	1,800	
Bank interest	46	
Work Placements	3,050	
		248,132
Expenditure		
Accountancy	2,544	
Activities Expenses	10,499	
Cleaning	294	
Client Expenses	990	
Cooking Together Expenses	265	
Crisis Fund Out	4,563	
Equipment	6,627	
Event Expenses	173	
Insurance	1,096	
Printing, Stationery & Postage	3,739	
Rent & Rates	1,344	
Repairs & Maintenance	26	
Staff Costs	169,820	
Staff Training & Expenses	3,341	
Telephone & Internet	6,175	
Trustee Training & Expenses	68	
Utilities	680	
Volunteer Training & Expenses	1,975	
Sundry expenses	135	
Research & Evaluator	3,710	
Legal fees	3,350	221 111
		221,414
NET PROFIT/(LOSS)		26,718

#### BALANCE SHEET 31 March 2017

		Notes	31.3.17	£	31.3.16 £	£
Trade de Crisis Fu	und count no. 2		27,697 30 79,100 16		1,667 64 73,540 72	
CURRE Trade cr	ENT LIABILITIES reditors		8,229	98,614	75,343 3,447	71,896
NET AS	SSETS			98,614		71,896
FINAN	CED BY					
CAPIT	AL ACCOUNT	1		98,614		71,896
NOTES	ENS COMMUNITY MATTERS S TO THE FINANCIAL STATE Year Ended 31 March 2017	MENTS				
1.	CAPITAL ACCOUNT		31.3.17		31.3.16	
	Brought forward Add		£ 71,896	£	£ 71,918	£
]	Net profit		26,718		<del></del>	
1	Less		98,614		71,918	
	Net loss		-		22	
				98,614		71,896
				98,614		71,896

#### 2. FUND ANALYSIS

	£	£	£	
	Brought	Movement	Carried	
	Forward	in fund	Forward	
	01.04.16	in year	31.03.17	
Restricted funds		·		
Crisis fund	5,946	(3,645)	2,301	
Tudor trust	10,000	-	10,000	
Francis Scott	-	10,000	10,000	
Anything is possible	-	3,000	3,000	
New kitchen	-	3,500	3,500	
Project delivery	23,602	2,553	26,155	
Unrestricted funds				
Alloctated to reserves	32,348	11,309	43,657	
	71,896	26,717	98,613	

The trustees consider, in line with sector recommended best practice, the most appropriate level of unallocated funds should at least be equivalent to 6 months operating costs. At the end of 2016-17 an appropriate level would be £110,707. At the end of 2016-17 unallocated funds are currently £43,657 equivalent to approximately 2.5 months operating costs.

### **Trustee Board**

Caroline Green, Chair – resigned from Board 20 July

Ann Thomson – appointed Chair 20 July 2016

Anne Burns - Vice Chair

Tracy Irwin - Treasurer

Ali Dufty - resigned from Board 20 July 2016

Liz Williams

Ashley Gibson – resigned from Board 6 December 2016

Georgie Lofthouse - resigned from Board 30 September 2016

Julia White

Lynn Beach – resigned from Board 20 February 2016

Margaret Burrow

Zoe Guest

Pam Dilks - appointed 20 July 2016

"It

took such a long time to come to the Centre and I am so glad I did! I feel so lucky to know you - you give so much and not just to me - in everything you do, everyone you meet becomes a better person for having known you. I couldn't have done any of the things I have without you. There are not many people I let in completely but those people will always stay in my heart and obviously you are one of those people. Thank you for everything! Onwards and upwards"

From a victim of childhood sexual abuse, physical abuse, neglect, adult rape and domestic abuse. Prior to attending the course she struggled with her mental health, would self-harm, drink heavily and attempt suicide regularly

#### **Volunteers**

We thank each and every one of you for giving your time, love, care, compassion and kindness to make the Centre the wonderful place it is.

"Volunteers are chosen for their warm and caring nature, their ability to contribute to the feeling of warmth and safety, and most importantly, because they are each a beautiful woman."













# Staff team

Rebecca Rawlings - Senior Officer

Rachael Hoggarth - Development and Delivery Manager

Katy Wilson-Scott - Development and Delivery Manager

Mary Horner - Centre Co-ordinator

Pearl Collins - Project Worker: Women's Support

Sam Woolgrove - Project Worker: Young People

Bev Dixon - Volunteer Co-ordinator

Kerry Thistlethwaite - Project Worker: Education & Group Delivery

Paula Johnson - Project Worker: Criminal Justice System

Maggie Clark – Apprentice Business Administrator, appointed December 2016

Elisha Pearce – Apprentice Business Administrator, appointed December 2016

## In Conclusion

As the time to write another Annual Report arrives and I start to reflect on the past 12 months the first thing that comes to mind is how many wonderful women have come to the Centre for the first time this year. 338 women took the brave step of walking through the doors of the Centre for the very first time and I know that can take an awful lot of courage. I remain impressed by their strength and bravery as having visited once they continue to come back, take part in the various courses and activities on offer, share their stories with us and with each other, and say out loud the changes they have made in their own lives at an event they themselves have organised. I have been privileged to receive an invite to each of the events which this year have all been as moving, inspirational, uplifting and humbling as ever.

The words with love, care, compassion and kindness we will change the world have become the words we use to describe in a sentence what happens at the women's centre. At first, using the word love to describe a way of working felt like a bold step. Now it is accepted by everyone who works alongside us as the perhaps the only way to work alongside people.

As of the end of March 2017 the Centre has been open for just less than 3 and half years and we have received **26,875 visits** to Centre. We have **supported 949 different women** in that time and **volunteers have given no less than 18,176.25 hours** of their time. **73 different women** have completed their Community Service with us benefitting the Centre with an additional **4,483.5 hours of support.** The Clothes Bank continues to be a valuable resource with **19,653 items** benefitting women and their families over the 3.5 year period. The staff team has increased from one part time member of staff to a strong team of 11 committed women and the Centre continues to benefit from the support of our many partners agencies and organisations who give so freely of their time, skills and knowledge.

Looking forward to the year ahead is an exciting prospect. We will be moving to bigger premises part way through the year which will offer more new and exciting opportunities as well as challenges to be overcome. We are looking forward to working with our partners across the county, particularly Gateway 4 Women in Carlisle, as collectively we look to extend the opportunities for women across Cumbria. Staff, volunteers and trustees will continue to learn from each of the wonderful women who come to the Centre and together we are changing the world. I remain, as ever, proud and privileged to work alongside the many women who make up the Centre every day and I look forward to us continuing together over the coming year and during the many others to come.

I hope you have enjoyed reading this report and I look forward to welcoming you to the Centre very soon.



Rebecca Rawlings, Senior Officer

## **Feedback**

We are always interested to hear what you think about our service, how you think we could do better, what you like or don't like, and anything else you would like us to know. There are lots of ways to do this:

- In person at the Centre: Nan Tait Centre, Abbey Road, Barrow-in-Furness. LA14 1LG (from July 2016)
- By telephone: 01229 311102
- By e-mail: <a href="mailto:reception@womenscommunitymatters.org">reception@womenscommunitymatters.org</a>
- Using a contact form on our website: <u>www.womenscommunitymatters.org</u>
- Via comments on our Facebook page: search for Women's Community Matters
- We are also on Twitter: @WCMBarrow if you want to retweet our posts















We are deeply grateful to the following funders and supporters who have enabled us to make it all happen.

Barrow Foodbank

**Barrow Health Visitor Team** 

Barrow Inner Wheel

**Barrow Soroptimists** 

Barrow Library

BAE employees Give As You Earn Scheme

**Barrow Borough Council** 

Barrow Borough Council Housing Department

Barrow Citizen's Advice

**Barrow Community Foundation** 

Barrow and Furness Brownies and Guides

Barrow Credit Union
Barrow Inner Wheel
Barrow Market Traders

**Barrow Rotary Club** 

**Birchall Trust** 

**Cumbria Community Foundation** 

Cumbria Constabulary

Cumbria County Council – Local Area Committee

**Cumbria Clinical Commissioning Group** 

Cumbria & Lancashire Community Rehabilitation Company

**Cumbria CVS** 

Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service

Cumbria Police & Crime Commissioner

Dandy's Furniture Store

**Focus Families** 

Francis C Scott Charitable Trust

**Furness Rotary Club** 

Grange & Osmotherley Women's Institute

Holden's Solicitors

Home Office

Keswick2Barrow

Lancashire Women's Centres

Letgo

Local Area Co-ordinators
Love Barrow Families

Local GPs

Oaklea Trust

Rampside Women's Institute Sexual Health Clinic Barrow

Soroptimists International Barrow

Soroptimists International Grange & Windermere

The Family of our dear friend Debbie (Donna) Woodsworth

**Tudor Trust** 

**Ulverston MIND** 

Ulverston Women's Institute

Unity

University of Central Lancashire

University of Cumbria
University of Lancaster

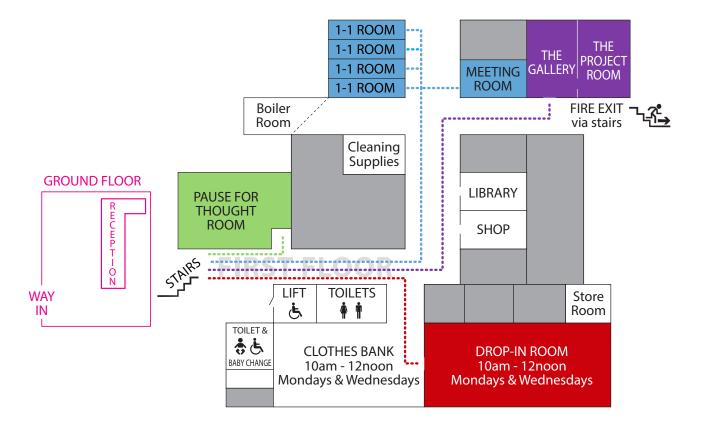
Vagina Monologues, Lancaster University

Victim Support

Women's Institute



## @ The Nan Tait Centre



## What's what?...

- 1-1 Rooms: These rooms supply a safe and secure environment for appointments with staff members, students and volunteers from Women's Community Matters
- Meeting Room: This space allows staff and women from Women's Community Matters and other professionals to come together for meetings in a comfortable setting
- The Gallery: an area to show our appreciation for women's amazing art skills!
- The Project Room: The room where our courses and groups run: Beautiful Women, Beautiful Me, My Safety & Me, My Relationships & Me, Vision and many others.
- The Library: A calm, peaceful and relaxed space where women are able to take themselves for some quiet time. Books are all free and any donations are welcome!
- The Shop: A place for us to showcase products that women have made to raise funds for Women's Community Matters.
- Drop-in Room: A welcoming space where women are able to come together, socialise, and have a chat over a brew!
- Clothes Bank: feel free to have a look around our wide range of clothes, all items are free and any donations are appreciated.
- Pause, for thought: A room for our young women aged 14-19 to come together, socialise and get creative with their ideas.



Women's Community Matters





01229 311102 • reception@womenscommunitymatters.org www.womenscommunitymatters.org