

Over the financial year 2023-2024,  
Women's Health Matters (WHM)



worked with  
**1554**  
women and girls

**1219**

women and girls  
received intensive  
group support

**335**

women and girls  
received light touch  
outreach support

**387**

children received  
support

We ran **3933** sessions, including **1221** group sessions, **2712** 1-to-1 sessions and **2411** light touch contact and short term work sessions.

**50%** of our staff team and **70%** of our trustees have lived experience of domestic violence and abuse.

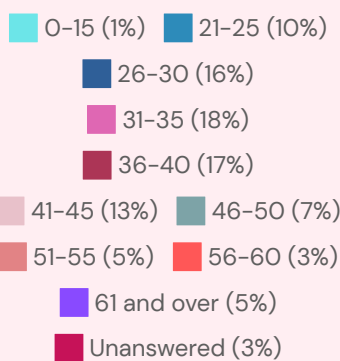
We engaged with **79** volunteers including trustees, volunteers and students and worked with **13** external workers who are seconded to us to support our groups free of charge from their organisations.

We engaged with people **65,229** times across **Facebook**, **Instagram** and **X**. Across these platforms, and our **MVP Facebook** group, we have **5939** followers.

We hosted our **co-produced** and **co-facilitated** Survivor's Voices: Domestic Abuse Awareness Training for **31** delegates.

### Age, Ethnicity and Disability

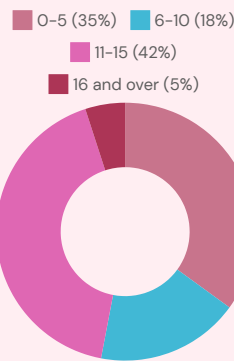
#### Women



- African (1%)
- Arab (2%)
- Bangladeshi (0.5%)
- Black Caribbean and White (1%)
- White British (54%)
- Caribbean (1.5%)
- Chinese (0.5%)
- Eastern European (1%)
- Indian (1%)
- Pakistani (4%)
- White and Asian (1%)
- White and Black African (0.5%)
- Other Black background (1%)
- Other multiple backgrounds (0.5%)
- Other White background (2%)
- Other Asian background (3%)
- Any other (4%)
- Unanswered (9%)

**40%** of women report having a disability, of which **17%** report multiple disabilities.

#### Children



- African (6.5%)
- Bangladeshi (0.5%)
- Caribbean (0.5%)
- Eastern European (3.5%)
- Pakistani (1%)
- Roma (0.5%)
- White British (44%)
- White and Black Caribbean (1%)
- Other Black background (0.5%)
- Other multiple backgrounds (2.5%)
- Other Asian background (2.5%)
- Other White background (0.5%)
- Any other (1.5%)
- Unanswered (35%)

**19%** have a disability, **7%** of which have multiple disabilities.

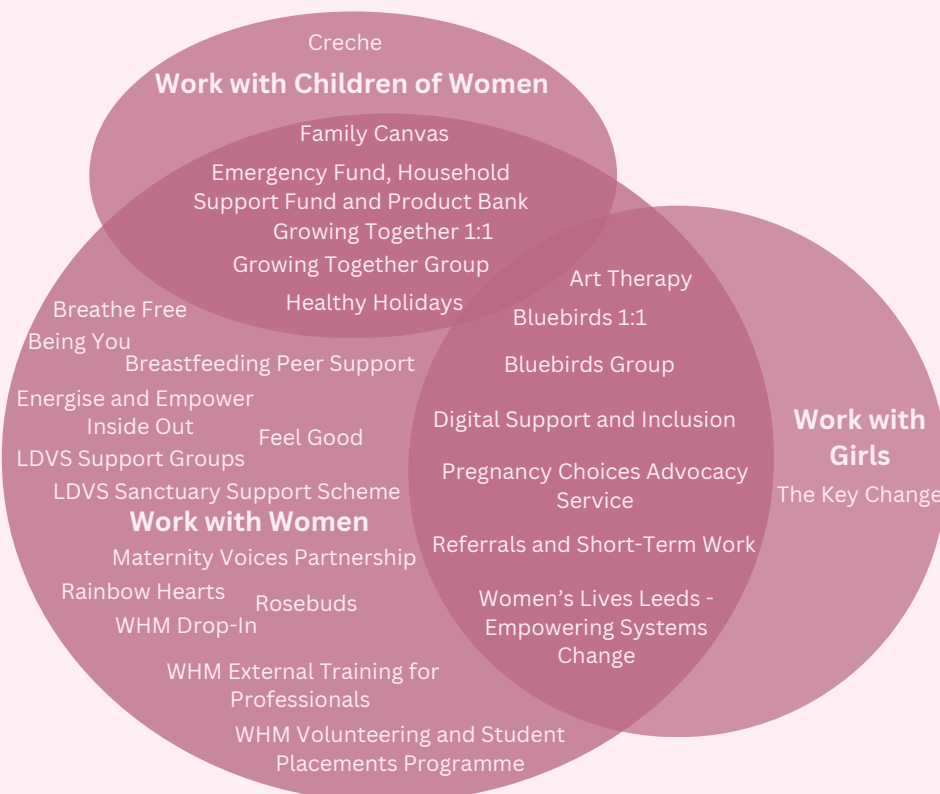
These women and girls are most at risk, including those experiencing **domestic violence, sexual and emotional abuse, those with children in care or at risk of being removed, women seeking asylum, women with learning disabilities, and women with complex needs or mental health and wellbeing needs.** We also support with parenting and pregnancy choices. We take a **woman-centred holistic approach**, creating a safe, nurturing environment to **help women and girls recover their confidence, explore their own needs and regain control over their lives.**

WHM supported women and girls of **39** different nationalities, who spoke **30** different languages.

**27%** of women state they are not British nationals, of these **46%** are seeking asylum, **26%** are refugees, **8%** have limited or indefinite leave to remain and **2%** have settled status. The remaining **18%** include those on a spousal visa, and those with unknown status.

We worked across the **12** areas in Leeds ranked in the **most deprived 1% nationally**, by the Index for Multiple Deprivation (2019).

### We delivered work across 28 services:



WHM's Annual Snapshot Survey ran between **January** and **February 2024**.

**94** (37%) out of the **256 women in service at the time** responded to the survey.

**100%**

of women felt satisfied with the support they have received from WHM

**98%**

agree that they feel able to get the support that they need from WHM

**98%**

agree that support received has improved their mental wellbeing

**95%**

agree that they feel better able to make their own choices following support

**93%** agree that they feel **safer** following support

**93%** agree that they feel **less anxious** following support

**94%** agree that they feel more **positive about the future**

**95%** agree that they received help from WHM that they **couldn't have got anywhere else**

**97%** agree that they have **increased their self-confidence**

**96%** agree that they feel **better about themselves**

**"I am not alone, I am more confident now about understanding what has happened to us. I have been given the tools and support to help me improve my mental health. I feel understood and more informed."**

**"This service has been a lifeline to me. I honestly do not know where I would have ended up without it."**

**"Has helped me to feel safe, cared, heard, seen loved and confident."**

**"I feel strong, confident and beautiful again. I finally feel like myself again."**

**"They have made me feel like I have value, feel empowered. I have strong shoulders to lean on, to learn from, grow and renew a stronger version of myself."**

**45%** have received financial support from WHM

**70%** have received support with travel costs to attend sessions

**59%** agree that they would not have been able to attend sessions without travel costs

**77%** of women have received items from WHM

**"It has helped my mental well being and helped me financially."**

**98%** agree that they are better able to **respond to abusive relationships** following support

**99%** agree that they can leave or **feel able to leave an abusive relationship** if they wanted following support

**"I now recognise 'red flags' early, improved all relationships, I have the tools to achieve my goals."**

**94%** agree that they feel better able to **stand up for themselves**

**"Makes me feel safe, validated and listened to."**

**92%** agree that support received has improved their **physical wellbeing**

**96%** of those with children agree that they have **improved their parenting skills** following support

**100%** of those with children agree that **their children** have **increased their confidence** following support

**"I don't feel as lonely anymore. I don't struggle as much being a single parent. I do feel a bit confident. I worry less about being a parent to two kids."**

**94%** agree that they have **widened their support network** following support

**94%** agree that they **feel less lonely** following support

**93%** agree that they have **made friends who understand them** following support

**95%** agree that they **understand what abuse** is following support

**"Changed my life. It has reiterated that as women we are 100% better together. The future looks exciting with job opportunities and the confidence to parent my son in a healthy, inspiring way. I had so much self-doubt due to the abuse I survived being non-physical. I've learnt that emotional, psychological, financial and sexual abuse are just as damaging and that no one deserves it."**

## Case Study

Olivia (pseudonym used), originally from South Africa, lived in France for many years before coming to Leeds, where she has been granted 'settled status'. She has three daughters aged 12, 14, and 17. Her ex-husband remains in France, and Olivia reports that he was extremely abusive during their relationship. She experienced verbal, psychological, and physical abuse and coercive control. Olivia moved to Leeds with her children, fleeing the abuse from her husband, but has been experiencing Child-to-Parent abuse from the two older daughters.

Olivia made a self-referral to Breathe Free and was enrolled on the course and within two weeks of attending, she informed staff that this was the first time in 10 years that she felt listened to and supported and that people had made onward referrals for specific support for her. By the third week, Olivia felt empowered to go to the police to report her continued coercive control from her ex-husband via social media, his influence on her children, and the abuse she was experiencing from her children.

Breathe Free staff advocated for Olivia, organising professional meetings to plan support but also highlighting previous barriers identified in Olivia accepting support in the past, including language and cultural barriers and a lack of understanding of what support entails. Breathe Free staff have spent over 50 hours outside of group time to support Olivia in a 1-to-1 capacity, liaise with professionals, coordinate support, complete referrals, and manage safeguarding incidents.

At the end of the course, Olivia stated, *"I have achieved the hopes and aims I had for the group. My expectations have been exceeded every time. I am now able to ask for and accept help and support. It has helped me grow in confidence. I kept learning something new every week - honestly brand new information for me. I am going to use all of the knowledge going forward with my life."*