

## TRUSTEES REPORT 20??

### Related Parties

#### **WCRP**

The Women's Centres Regional Partnership (WCRP) is a partnership of four lead regional women's organisations linking with fourteen frontline women's organisations across Northern Ireland. This partnership emerged from and has been ongoing, from the report of the Review Group on women's organisations providing support and services to disadvantaged areas.

#### **TWN**

Training for Women's Network is a regional network who delivers higher level courses for women. They are also a lead in producing information and services for the Women's Sector in NI.

#### **GSPB**

The Greater Shankill Partnership Board was established in 1995 with the aim of producing and delivering a strategy for the social and economic regeneration of the Greater Shankill area. The CEO represents the Women's Centre on this board and is also the acting chair at present. It also acts as a delivery agent for a number of programmes which assist in the regeneration process and in particular Neighbourhood Renewal through Department for Communities.

#### **WSN**

The Women's Support Network is an umbrella organisation for women's groups, centres and projects which are women centred and community-based or adopt a community development approach. It is a charitable and feminist organisation, which operates in the Greater Belfast area while maintaining strong links with women's projects and networks regionally and nationally. The Women's Support Network plays a unique role in co-ordinating and networking with community-based women's organisations and facilitating joint lobbying to challenge inequity and promote positive policy change.

**North Belfast Contract Holders** is a grouping which meet on a monthly basis and receive funding from The Executive Office (TEO). – This is the primary unit for promoting and providing good relation projects across North Belfast.

The Centre has 2 representatives on this group.

**Clonard, Mid-Shankill Initiative (CMSI)** This a cross-community group which meets on a monthly basis in order to organise activities such as – An annual xmas market and various projects which bring the people of Shankill and Clonard areas together.

## **OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES**

### **Organisational Background**

Shankill Women's Centre Mission Statement:

"Providing an accessible resource and development support for women in the Greater Shankill and beyond".

Shankill Women's Centre was formed in 1987 by a small group of women interested in running women only education classes and by 1998 it had obtained new shared premises with North and West Belfast Health and Social Services Trust. The Shankill Women's Centre currently runs:

**SHANKILL WOMEN'S CENTRE**  
**TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (*continued*)**  
**YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 20??**

The Health & Well-Being Project takes a holistic approach to the prevention of social isolation.

We do this by covering an array of topics including emotional and mental health, physical health, and social wellbeing classes. All classes are cross-community and intergenerational. Emotional and Mental Health classes allow women a safe environment to explore and express their feelings in positive and healthy ways. Physical Health classes provide a range of different activities ensuring that women with all abilities and disabilities can participate in exercise classes. Social wellbeing and recreational classes help with hand-eye coordination, maintaining and learning new skills, supporting their peers while making new friends preventing social isolation. These classes also help to improve not only their mental health but their physical health.

A range of classes The Health & Well-Being Project provided:

**Emotional and Mental Health**

<b>Positive Vibes</b>	<b>12 participants</b>
<b>Women's Emotional Health</b>	<b>18 participants</b>
<b>Kintsugi Hope</b>	<b>11 participants</b>
<b>Mental Health Resilience</b>	<b>15 participants</b>

**Physical**

<b>Bootcamp</b>	<b>21 participants</b>
<b>Zumba</b>	<b>13 participants</b>
<b>Chairbased Activity</b>	<b>28 participants</b>
<b>Aqua Aerobics</b>	<b>22 participants</b>

**Social Well-Being and Recreational**

<b>Stitching Sisters</b>	<b>35 participants</b>
<b>Glasshouse Art Group</b>	<b>9 participants</b>
<b>Ceramics</b>	<b>15 participants</b>
<b>Allotment</b>	<b>9 participants</b>

As well as regular classes The Health & Well-Being project also provide one off workshops and information days on topics such as Mindfulness and Mental Health. SWC also provides alternative therapies

**SHANKILL WOMEN'S CENTRE**  
**TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (*continued*)**  
**YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 20??**

**Childcare Unit**

The child-Care Facility within the centre provides an invaluable resource to the parents through the provision of high quality care for their children it is also there to help and support parents either if they are working or taking part in Education/ Health Project. All staff are qualified and this is a safe and nurturing environment where children learn and develop through play. We work in partnership with parents to ensure children's needs are paramount. The child-care programme is organised by a Child-Care Manager. A Child-Care Organiser who runs the facility on a day-to-day basis and a team of qualified staff

The Childcare Facility is registered as Full Day Care with North & West H.S.S.S Trust. Opening hours are Monday to Friday 8.30am – 5.30pm

The staff have completed and a number of courses – child development, health and safety, safeguarding children and child protection to add to their continuous development to ensure we help all the children in our care meet all their areas of development.

*High scope Ongoing*

The childcare project within the Shankill Women's Centre implements the High-Scope Programme which is an early learning plan for pre-school children. The programme is based on the idea that children learn best from activities that they plan and carry out themselves. High-Scope is based on a balance between activities initiated by the children and those arranged by the adults. It is important to build on children's strengths, interests and abilities and to develop their self-esteem and problem solving skills and to help them to understand and accept differences in a wider social setting.

*Media Initiative Ongoing*

The childcare is containing to use the Media Initiative for Children Respecting Difference Programme. The children would use this resource each week wither with the puppet's or the story books. Major research has found evidence that the programme is effective in improving outcomes in young children in relation to their social and emotional development and awareness of and attitudes towards cultural differences.

*Project Objectives:*

With the resources in place the project will be able to monitor the development of the children's intellectual, verbal, cognitive, social and emotional skills. Children will also gain confidence and independency. The Childcare facility will provide the children with the social contact of other children that will crucial to their individual development.

- To provide a quality child focused environment in which children feel secure and safe.
- To foster and develop each child's sense of self-value and esteem.
- To welcome all parents and their children regardless of their religion, race, marital status sexual orientation or disability.
- To provide child-care which embraces social policy and legislation in respect of children (Children N.I. Order 1995)?
- To promote equal opportunities and ensure that all children are encouraged to participate.
- To be sensitive of the wishes and feelings of parents whose children are in our care.
- To implement the High Scope programme.
- To provide a structured programme that will enable children to develop socially, emotionally, intellectually, verbally and physically, encouraging children to learn and explore and develop.
- To recognise and meet the developmental needs of each child and to offer choices, to involve them in all decisions affecting them, to seek their opinion at all time opportunities.
- To help raise awareness in the children of attitudes towards cultural differences and respecting those differences. This will in turn improve effective outcomes in the young children which they will take home to their families. Staff are all trained to deliver this programme and ensure all children are valued and respected in a safe and nurturing environment. Childcare Unit.

### **Welcome Space/Drop-in Area**

The Shankill Women's Centre provides a welcome space/drop in facility for all women irrespective of religion, culture. This is a female only, secure, safe and welcoming environment. This facility is a way for women to meet others, socialise and find out more about the women's centre and the work that is carried out there, without the commitment of signing up to any classes or services. This is a 'warm space' that is available to all the women throughout the winter months as a space that is continually heated and where hot water, tea and coffee are available. This provides an alternative to women sitting at home using their heating and absorbing the subsequent cost.

**SHANKILL WOMEN'S CENTRE**  
**TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (*continued*)**  
**YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 20**

**Education**

Our Shared Education Project is funded by The Executive Office and The North Belfast Good Relations Programme which is managed by the Community Relations Council (CRC) this enabled the delivery of formal and informal courses that were both personally progressive and which supported participants to find employment.

Good Relations underpins this project and compliments shared learning as a standard for good practice. It enables the participants to gain a better understanding of cross community related issues. The participants gain a better understanding and can challenge their personal views and ideals inherited generationally.

Personal development courses delivered by SWC develop confidence and raise self-esteem, aiding the participant to make informed choices on how they can progress. Sharing and learning together offers the two diverse communities the opportunity to unite and grow, breaking down barriers and forming organic friendships while sharing the safe 'Shared Space'.

- GOALS programme
- Acrylic Nails course
- Open university
- OCN Working with children and young people with disabilities
- Essential Skills (English & Maths)
- GCSE (English & Maths)
- Good Relations drama project
- Good relations through Art
- Emotional health
- Myths & Legends
- Drama & Performance
- STEP's to Excellence
- Classroom Assistant L3
- Paediatric 1st Aid
- Sign-Language level 1 level 2
- History group
- Construction Skill Register (CSR)
- Autism Awareness L2

**SHANKILL WOMEN'S CENTRE**  
**TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (*continued*)**  
**YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 20??**

**Greater North Belfast Women's Network**

GNBWN has continued to actively engage with other women's organisations providing opportunities to involve members in campaigns, consultation responses and participation in relevant research to ensure that their voices are heard.

**Cross Community Engagement:**

The network also provided and supported members to engage in various workshops, seminars and conferences providing information and awareness on topics and issues that affect their day to day lives. The underpinning rationale was to enable women to attend these and other events and this would act as a 'hook' to promote engagement in other good relations initiatives at grass roots. Throughout the year forum members attended many activities and events held by other members and stakeholders

**Members of the Network:**

1. LOCA (Lower Oldpark Community Association)
2. GlenBank Community Association
3. Women's Tec
4. Ardoyne Association
5. Good Relation Forum (Barron Hall)
6. TDK Community Group
7. Reclaim The Agenda
8. Women's Support Network
9. Ben Madigan Women's Group
10. Queenspark Women's Group
11. Ardoyne/Shankill Health group
12. Tiger's Bay Women's Group
13. Whitewell Surgery Association
14. Cliftonville Community Group

SHANKILL WOMEN'S CENTRE  
TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT *(continued)*  
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 20??

### **Empowering Young Women's project (EYW)**

Our EYW project is currently funded through Big Lottery, Empowering Young People, to support young women aged 15 – 25 years, who reside in the areas of North or West Belfast. Engagement can range between 12 – 15 months. The programme offers a range of personal and social development courses, fun-based opportunities, alongside accredited OCN qualifications in Money Management, Step's to Excellence and Mentoring.

Participants can avail of additional 1-2-1 mentoring support through an allocated support worker. We can support our young women through signposting and advocacy work. We can also support with childcare, transport, and hospitality. On completion of 80% of the programme participants can avail of a non-monetary incentive up to the value of £350.

### **Life Skills project**

Funded through DFC, Developing Women to support Women aged 16+, across the DEA's of Court or Oldpark. Our Life Skills project offers an 8-week programme, looking at topics such as: Relationships, Peer Pressure, STI's, Contraception, Risk Taking Behaviour, Teenage Pregnancy. Through completion of the programme all participants gain an OCN qualification, level 1 in Life Skills. All participants are given the opportunity to take home an Infant Simulator to experience the realities of parenting.

Each grouping is supported and encouraged to organise a celebration event at the end of the course. This programme also encourages participants to actively seek out and avail of volunteering opportunities within the community to enhance their skills and knowledge of the community sector.

### **Change Makers project**

Change Markers is a project supporting women 18+, who live in either North or West Belfast. Currently funded through Department of Foreign Affairs, as one of their strategic partners.

Delivered over a period of 30-week's the programme content is as follows:

- Participants can work towards three OCN Level 2 accreditations in Community Development, Civic Leadership, Mediation and Facilitation.
- Workshops are offered throughout the length of the programme, examples of which could be, a conversation with (elected representative)., meet your MLA, welfare advice, gender identity etc.
- Site Visits to four political institutions – Belfast City Council, Stormont, The Dáil/Senate, Westminster. These visits are an opportunity to put learning into practice and view how politics really operates.

- Six Change seminars that will run throughout the year and offer an opportunity to bring women together to have their voices heard on issues affecting them, their families, or the wider community arena.

For those individuals that are unable to commit to the longer programme a short 4 x week programme is offered and explores the following: current political voting system, mediating challenging conversations, exploring political manifestos and the workings of the local assembly.

## **Volunteer Project**

Shankill Women's Centre Volunteer Project started in December 2022 with the target of reaching, recruiting, and training 20 volunteers within its 1<sup>st</sup> year. As of now (Aug 23) 30 volunteers have been recruited with a core group of 17 volunteers taking part in all training that has been provided, with a majority taking part in all essential training and gaining necessary qualifications. Two volunteers have progressed into work through the confidence gained and support given by SWC, while another is actively seeking employment.

Throughout all SWC projects volunteers have taken part in over 30 different events, ranging from being in the Women's centre for VIP visits, going on trips with staff to help and support them, cooking for SWC creche, weekly advice clinic and reception cover.

The volunteers have also taken part in fundraising by, going out getting materials, making up baskets and going round all the classes running to sell ballots. This was done at easter and again for the creche at the kings' coronation.

The participants (10-20 vols) meet once per month for a casual catch up with both the coordinator and each other, but also have one to one supervision sessions with the coordinator.

Th project will be finishing the year with a celebration/Christmas dinner where they will be thanked for all their help and given out all certificates.



**SHANKILL WOMEN'S CENTRE**  
**TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (*continued*)**  
**YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 20??**

**FINANCIAL REVIEW**

Currently SWC is in a unique position having secured funding from various government departments and are in the depending on the fulfilment of target outcomes we could be in the position to secure further funding. This is due to sound financial management, forward thinking and strategic planning.

Principal Funding Sources

1. DFC - Core Staff & Health Project
2. DFC/VCD – Childcare Project
3. DFC/Developing Women (Fresh Start)
4. CRC/Pathfinder – Network Coordinator
  
5. BCC – Revenue
6. TEO – North Belfast Strategic Good relations
7. TEO Central – Shared Community Education
8. Pathways Fund – Childcare Project
9. The National Lottery – Empowering Young Women
10. SEUPB – New Build Shared Women’s Centre/Programme Money
11. DFA – Shared Education / Change Makers Project

**SHANKILL WOMEN'S CENTRE**  
**TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (*continued*)**  
**YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 20??**

**Reserves Policy - Shankill Women's Centre**

Shankill Women's Centre delivers a range of programmes and services and has been successful in obtaining funding from a variety of sources. All of these grants, however, are in the form of restricted funds. Non-restricted income amounts to less than two per cent of total income.

The Directors have reviewed the charity's need for reserves and consider that these are necessary:

- (a) to protect the charity against –
  - (i) late payment of grants by funders;
  - (ii) non-renewal of existing grants and so ensuring continuity of services while alternative sources of funding are sorted or to allow a smooth and gradual wind-down of one or more services; or
  
- (b) in circumstances where there is a proportionately high number of redundancies.

The equivalent of four months annual revenue costs is considered by the Directors to be a reasonable target.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Directors.

This figure is based on the number of staff.

**CEO Report up to December 2023**

Funding cuts has caused a lot of uncertainty throughout the Centre and I have managed this by keeping staff informed and as up to date as possible.

**Core Staff** – The funding for core staff was only funded on a three-monthly basis from April 23. However, we were informed in July that this has been changed to March 25 by Dept for Communities (DfC)

**Shared Education** – We were unsuccessful with this funding from TEO due to funding cuts.

However, have managed to keep project manager on from April 23 through funding from a joint Lottery project (connect 4) Women's Tec and Levelling Up monies through WRDA.

**Network** – we were also unsuccessful with this funding from CRC due to lack of funding however we quickly applied to DFA and were successful for 1 year from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2023.

**Finance**- The assistant left this post in March 2023 and following a period of absence we filled the post in November 2023.

**Youth Empowerment Project** – Running well and is very successful – meeting targets – we will be approaching lottery for an extension to this project as there is an underspend.

We will also be re- applying for a further 3 years.

**Health and Wellbeing** – this project is part of the core funding and is secure – working the classes ‘out of the centre’ is not ideal but cannot be helped as space is an issue.

**Change Makers** – is running well and has been very successful. We have expanded some of the work due to interest and demand.

**Volunteer project** – a very successful project with volunteers who are very keen to be involved – they have been going through their training and have all been vetted - there is also a waiting list.

This is presently funded by SEUPB and we will be submitting to Lottery to extend this project.

**Communications Officer** – is also from SEUPB funding – and this post has been very successful – we will be looking for a way to extend this post.

**Creche** – running to usual capacity.

## **New Build**

This build is like a phoenix from the ashes and is rising fast!!

We have been in constant contact with all relevant parties and been attending relevant meetings with Belfast City Council/ Todds Architects/Special European Programmes Body and others.

The Build is on schedule to be finished on December 2023 however, we will be doing a gradual ‘move in’ in order to ensure a smooth and trouble-free transition.

We have been working with Belfast City Council who are our lead partner on an ‘Official Opening’. This is likely to happen in late spring of 2024.

Funding from the NI Housing Executive for a business plan – This has been going well and will inform the Centre on its strategic direction going forward.

## **Logo and Branding**

As a decision was made for the Centre to change its name to Shankill Shared Women's Centre we have been working with a company called She Said – who have helped with our new branding and new logo for the new build – this has been approved by all funders

Funding from the NI housing Executive for a business plan – This has been going well and will inform the Centre on its strategic direction going forward.

A consultancy called Blu Zebra will be carrying out the new business plan.

This is an essential piece of work as so much has changed over the past number of years – covid /lockdown and the present funding and cost of living crisis.

This will help to direct us in a strategic manner towards our work from now – to the move- and what we do afterward within the new build.

Overall, this has been the main thrust of the work as well as the day-to-day work of the Centre which has been carried out by our team of hardworking, dedicated staff who are a credit to SWC.

The period ahead (2024) will be a massive upheaval and change for all involved however, the Centre – and all involved are not women to shy away from a challenge and I have no doubt that we will overcome any issues that arise.