

2025-2026

Annual Report

LANCASHIRE WOMEN

Report from the Chair



Last year, we celebrated Lancashire Women's 40th anniversary and reflected on our growth as an organisation. We also considered how our Board of Trustees has evolved to support who we are today.

This year brought significant, planned changes to the organisation's strategic direction. Our priorities were to raise the profile of women's issues, use intelligence to target service delivery, secure financial sustainability and growth, and consolidate the areas in which we excel. These are long-term plans, but we are very pleased with the progress we have made. Our gratitude is extended to the senior leadership team and our colleagues for working so hard in these times of uncertainty.

We know that more women than ever have accessed our services and we want to understand why and what we need to do to ensure we are offering the right choices and services. The Board is leading on the development of a Women's Voices Partnership model of coproduction for Lancashire Women putting them at the forefront of development and decision making

We are on the threshold of an exciting new chapter. Our Festival of Women events will provide a springboard for advancing our proposals and building momentum for the future.

Lynette Harwood,
Chair of the Board of Trustees



Message from the Chief Executive



Siobhan Collingwood,
Chief Executive Officer

We are probably all familiar with the phrase, "Life begins at 40." It is a reminder of the power we find when we challenge society's fear of ageing—especially the way women's ageing is viewed. The optimism of this statement reminds us that with maturity comes the freedom to embrace our autonomy, claim our experience and step confidently into leadership.

Lancashire Women turned 40 last year. We look back with justifiable pride at everything that has been achieved over those years, but we are also looking forward with energy and ambition. After four decades of standing alongside women, we are not slowing down—we are truly hitting our stride.

Lancashire Women began in Blackburn, exemplifying a history of fierce northern female activism and resilience, exemplified in the birth of suffragettes, Lancashire Women against Pit Closures and the anti-fracking Knit on Nannas. A small group of Blackburn women started our charity, outraged by local incident rates of infant mortality and the poor response of institutions, they refused to stay silent and took matters into their own hands, starting a Well Women's centre. What a movement they started.

The world has changed around us, but Lancashire Women still refuses to stay silent. We are choosing to amplify women's voices and speak clearly about the inequalities that continue to affect our health, wealth and safety. We know that lasting change cannot be achieved alone, so we are working with allies across the commercial, public, faith, voluntary and charitable sectors. Together, we are writing the next chapter of female empowerment in Lancashire—and our movement is gathering pace.

This year alone, through our whole-person, trauma-informed approach, across programmes supporting women's health, wealth and safety, we have helped more than 6,000 women. This work has been made possible by our growing team of more than 124 staff and 52 volunteers, supported and guided by a tireless group of trustees. Together, we draw strength from women and allies all of whom are united by a shared determination: no woman in Lancashire should have to face her challenges alone. The future is bright, and our momentum is building. In the words of Karen Carpenter – "We've only just begun".



OUR VISION & MISSION

Our Vision

A Lancashire where all women and girls are valued and treated as equals.

Our Mission

To empower women and girls to be able to transform their lives by bringing them together to:

- Find their voice
- Share experiences and understanding
- Develop their knowledge and skills
- Challenge stereotypes and misconceptions about them

...so that they can have choices in becoming the individuals they want to be.



SERVICE DELIVERY MAP

OUR SERVICES

We provide the following services throughout Lancashire:

- Justice & Safety
- Money & Energy Advice
- Employment Guidance
- Communities, Mental Health & Wellbeing
- Lancashire Women Hub
- Outreach Locations



OUR YEAR AT A GLANCE

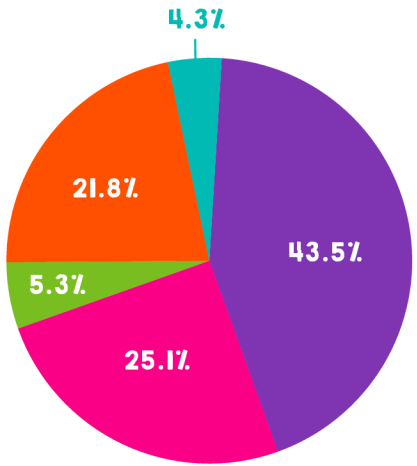
In our financial year 2025-2026, we received

9,668 referrals

from **6,467 individuals**, of which **98.3%** were new service users.

Referrals per workstream:

- Communites, Mental Health & Wellbeing
- Employment Guidance
- Money & Energy Advice
- Justice & Safety
- Core Support / Groups

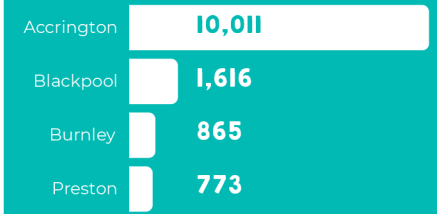


Our organisation consists of:

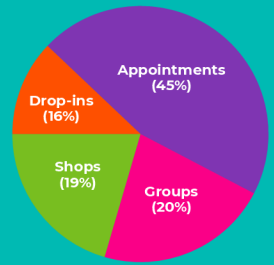
124 Members of staff

52 New volunteers across the county

How many people visited our hubs:



These visits consisted of:



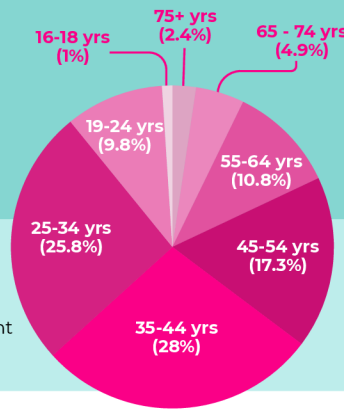
Gender identity:



94% Identified as female

6% Identified as male

Age of our service users:



Employment Status:

23% Unemployed or unable to work

15% Employed

2% Retired

1% Student

59% Not disclosed

Finding My Thing: A Career Built at Lancashire Women

From Admin Apprentice to Data & Reporting Manager

When I joined Lancashire Women in December 2012, I could never have predicted where the journey would take me. I had been working as a cleaner after university and was looking for an opportunity to gain office experience. An adult apprenticeship advertised through Blackburn College opened that door and introduced me to an organisation where I would grow, learn and find the work I was good at.

Starting Out

I signed up for the apprenticeship programme, and an adviser arranged an interview for me. I still remember arriving at the old Strawberry Bank building and asking, "Is this the women's health place?" Somehow, I passed the interview and joined Lancashire Women as an Admin Apprentice.
Since then, I have held six different roles, taking on more responsibility as I developed my niche: Admin Apprentice, Core Admin, Women at Risk Admin, IAPT Admin, Impact Data Officer and, now, Data & Reporting Manager.

Finding My Strength in Data

A key turning point came when the Data Lead was leaving and the organisation needed someone to take over its NHS data submissions. Because I was already providing administration for the project, I was trained to step in. It felt like being thrown in at the deep end, but it helped me discover "my thing" the work I was good at and genuinely enjoyed.

> **"I moved up a little bit each time as I developed my niche."**

> **"My advice: Find your thing, something you are good at and enjoy, and which makes you invaluable."**

Most of the skills I use today have been learned on the job: by encountering problems, asking whether something could be done better, learning from colleagues and searching online forums. The Impact Team, past and present, has also played a huge part in building my confidence and helping me recognise my own abilities.

The achievement I am most proud of is the work behind our new Dynamics CRM. Going live with minimal disruption, and without any problems affecting our NHS submissions, still blows my mind. It showed what careful preparation, teamwork and persistence can achieve.

Growing in confidence

My biggest challenge has been trusting my own abilities and overcoming the feeling that I might be an imposter. My advice to anyone who feels the same is simple: listen when other people sing your praises, they are not lying.

I also try to share what I know. Everyone should be able to do their work as easily as possible; often, something is not actually difficult once you know the right formula or the best keyboard shortcut. Helping colleagues work more confidently and efficiently is one of the ways my own development can benefit the wider organisation and the people we support.

A place to be yourself

The best thing about working at Lancashire Women is the people. I work alongside colleagues who care about what they do and genuinely want to be here. Just as importantly, I feel able to be myself.

I would not describe myself as especially ambitious. I tend to go with the flow and see what the universe has in store for me as long as I can pay my bills and buy myself a few little treats, I am happy.


OUR PROGRAMME
DELIVERY
IN 2025-2026

COMMUNITIES, MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING

Providing support to women and their families to help improve their emotional wellbeing and resilience providing them with the skills, knowledge and tools to better manage their mental health within communities.

We had **4,526 people** referred into our Communities, Mental Health & Wellbeing programmes in 2025-2026.

NHS TALKING THERAPIES (EAST LANCASHIRE)

Delivering psychological treatments for mental and emotional problems like stress, anxiety and depression. This is through face to face, telephone or online depending on the needs of the individual either on a one-to-one basis or through a group.

FAMILY WELLBEING SERVICE (BLACKBURN WITH DARWEN & BLACKPOOL)

Providing one-to-one therapy and therapeutic Groups and wellbeing drop-ins to families accessing the Family HUBs in Blackpool and Blackburn with Darwen.

RAISING ASPIRATIONS

Whole person approach to improve people's resilience, health and wellbeing. Increasing confidence and self esteem to raise employment prospects, delivered by specialist caseworkers.

12,853 therapy sessions were conducted through our NHS Talking Therapies programme.

Through Raising Aspirations:

92%
of service users reported increased levels of motivation & self-worth.

88%
of service users who completed the project felt more confident in themselves.

91%
of participants rated their experience as positive - a testament to the quality of support delivered.



"It's been really easy to talk to you and given me my self-confidence back and think differently about things in a positive way. You have helped me out of a very dark place, and I feel more at peace, and know how to look after myself more and feel safe within me."



JUSTICE & SAFETY

All of our Justice & Safety projects work to reduce the risk of reoffending or prevent the criminilisation of women with multiple and overlapping needs. We have developed a package of services which provide a gender considered response to offer more effective support for women who are in contact, or at risk of contact, with the criminal justice system.

We had **2,112 people** referred into our Justice & Safety programmes in 2025-2026.

CRS (COMMISSIONED REHABILITATIVE SERVICE)

Lancashire Women work closely wth HMPPS in custody and into the community to meet key areas of rehabilitative services by providing a trauma informed approach to navigate women through our female specific services. They accessed a range of services in one location to reduce barriers, improve wellbeing and reduce the risk of reoffending.

SNAPBACK RECOVERY

SnapBack provides specialist trauma informed addiction & recovery support to women across Lancashire. We support women who may struggle to engage with drug & alcohol treatment providers by reducing and addressing potential barriers in respect of: stigma, housing, finances, emotional wellbeing, education & employment and family & relationships.

RECALLS PROJECT

Intensive support for women who are returning to custody on 2+ occasions. This project helps to mitigate their return to custody and identify any gaps in provision or support to enable them to reintegrate back into the community,



70% of women were not called back to custody after their second intervention.



82% of women accessed other services through our Whole Person Approach.



> “I have never got this far asking for support, you have got me further than I’ve ever been. I feel like you understand me and I can talk to you, and you don’t judge me. I have felt so alone but I don’t feel alone anymore.”



MONEY & ENERGY ADVICE

We have a specialist team who provide one-to-one money advice, casework support and group delivery or drop-ins. This service is person-centred and regulated by the FCA (Financial Conduct Authority) and IMA certified.

We had **2,423 people** referred into our Money & Energy Advice Service in 2025-2026. Of which, we carried out **3,643 hours of advice.**

Support includes:

- **Budgeting Packs:** Step-by-step guide to help individuals improve their finances by creating their own budget to save money in order to help them become more in control of their finances.
- **Debt Advice:** Includes one-to-one support discussing their debt options, help completed forms, activating debt breathing space if needed, dealing with enforcement agents, supporting with council tax and rent arrears.
- **Benefit Advice:** Help with benefit appeals and mandatory reconsiderations & appeals. We'll also help with benefit entitlement checks, income maximiser checks and activating debt breathing space if needed.
- **Energy Saving Advice & Small Repairs:** We provide energy saving tips and personalised energy saving plans. Home visits can be arranged by our energy advisors which includes a small team of handywomen who can carry out small repairs if identified during the assessment.

In 2025-2026, we saved service users

£627,892.71

Of which, energy savings accounted for

£294,906.81

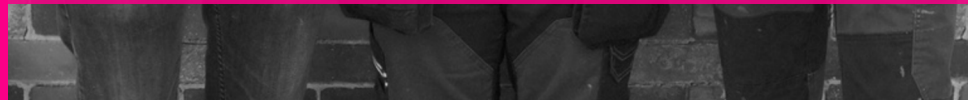
£8,085

worth of fuel vouchers were issued.

- **CISI Future Foundations - Money Matters:** Our Money Matters game delivers interactive financial skills sessions for young women aged 16-25, building confidence and practical money matters skills for life.
- **Independent Age Fund:** This service provides free, accessible financial advice to older people experiencing hardship in rural and coastal communities across Lancashire.



> "Very humbled that people care! It's an excellent service & I am happier now that I have this advice/help. More positivity for my future."



EMPLOYMENT ADVICE & GUIDANCE

Improving skills to help individuals move towards employment.

We carried out **908 one-to-one sessions** through our Employment Guidance programmes in 2025-2026.

EMPLOYMENT ADVISORS THROUGH TALKING THERAPIES (EAST LANCASHIRE)

Providing tailored support to individuals with their employment goals. Support includes: helping them progress at work, improving relationships in the workplace, reasonable adjustments, returning to work after a period of absence, career changes or managing stress in the workplace.

WORKWELL (PRESTON)

This programme aims to help people with low physical health and health conditions to start and stay in work. A tailored support programme is available to assist women in Preston to start, stay or succeed in employment while managing their wellbeing.

Through our Employment Advice & Guidance programmes, we carried out **1,692 hours of support.**

Through our support, **189 individuals** were able to return to work.

"You have given me the tools to think about my future, and what I can achieve - I couldn't have done it without you."

"The support from the employment team helped me realise I have more options - you have given me the confidence to explore these."



"Your support and patience has been amazing, it helped me focus on what I really wanted - I now have a job that I thought I would never get."



Our Fundraising Year

Community In Action

We are incredibly proud of everything that Lancashire Women has achieved in 2025-26 and none of it would have been possible without the extraordinary support of our community.

From the brave individuals who took on challenges like Race Across Lancashire, to those who joined us to celebrate over 40 years of Lancashire Women at our Anniversary Ball, the generosity and commitment of our supporters has been outstanding.

Our smaller events made a big difference too, including our Sleepout in Clitheroe and Fashion Show in Blackpool. We were also chosen as a charity beneficiary of the Freshies Awards, receiving £5,000 from Fresh Perspective Resourcing, and we took part in the Big Give Women & Girls campaign to raise funds for basic essentials for our Justice & Safety programme.

It takes more than a village to sustain a charity of this size for over four decades and we want to offer our heartfelt thanks to every individual and business who supported us during the financial year 2025-26.

Here are just some of the highlights.

Race Across Lancashire

We were absolutely blown away by the success of our first-ever Race Across Lancashire fundraising challenge, which has raised an incredible £27,538.

> Race Across Lancashire was a truly fantastic experience - it really was a laugh a minute. The people we met along the way and the stories that were shared were so inspiring, and there was never a dull moment.
>
> *Race Across Lancashire 2025 Challenger*



40th Anniversary Ball

Our 40th Anniversary Charity Ball was a night to remember and the 1980s theme made it one for the ages.

Shoulder pads, big hair and even bigger hearts filled the room as we celebrated four decades of Lancashire Women in true style, raising £13,711 to support the women and families we serve across Lancashire.



THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS

We are deeply grateful to our funders, whose support enables our continued work with women across Lancashire.

Active Lancashire
Blackburn with Darwen Council
Blackpool Council
British Gas
Burnley Council
CISI Future Foundation
Department of Health and Social Care
Energy Savings Trust
Hyndburn Council
Independent Age UK
Lancashire County Council
Lancashire Police and Crime Commissioner
Ministry of Justice
NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board
Office for Health Improvement and Disparities
Scottish Power Foundation
Smallwood Trust

Our sincere appreciation also goes to the business community and individual supporters for your contributions and commitment this year.



Supporting women across Lancashire

LANCASHIRE WOMEN

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