



our
impact

2023

improved quality of life
for women and children

Aspiring Futures CIC

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Aspiring Futures CIC is member of BACP (British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy) demonstrating our committed to providing safe, ethical and professional counselling and psychotherapy services and training.



what we do

Aspiring Futures supports women and girls to 'Aspire for Better' and improve their quality of life.

who we are

We are proud to be a women-led charitable Community Interest Company (CIC) and have been delivering services across Wolverhampton and surrounding areas since 2010. What began in a community hub has now evolved into the management of our own centre, the delivery of outreach initiatives throughout Wolverhampton and the provision of specialist mental health counselling services.

about this report

As a social enterprise we care deeply about the social and economic impact of our work and invite you to read about the difference we are making in numbers and experiences.

our model of impact

WOMEN ASPIRE FOR BETTER

VISION
Women have the confidence, skills and support to follow their aspirations

SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS

Women are open to people from different communities and are confident to share and interact with others and to access the services they need. They know what they can do and make purposeful, informed decisions.

TRAINING & EMPLOYABILITY

Women have the skills, readiness and confidence to remove barriers and achieve their aspirations by progressing into employment, or into volunteering, education or training.

HEALTH & WELLBEING

Women are confident, active and happy: they are independent, take control of their lives, and make the right choices to depend less on health services and improve their own and their families' quality of life.

OUTCOMES
Bold boxes denote measured outcomes

I interact with different cultures and share my own

I support other women in the community and they support me

I don't feel isolated and my loneliness has reduced

I can understand and access local services

I volunteer in the community

I have friends in the community

I have the skills to positively engage in society and become financially independent

I can prove my work readiness

I have the soft skills to succeed at interview and at work

I communicate confidently to express my feelings and needs

I am able to get the job I want

I can make the right choices for myself about things that affect my life

I am psychologically and emotionally resilient

I feel confident in who I am and what I want

I can manage my health

I can gain financial independence

I can improve my lifestyle

I am making positive changes in my life

ACTIVITIES

- Digital Skills
- ESOL for Health
- Feel Good Friday
- Volunteering
- Support Group
- 1:1 Support
- Chatty Café
- Yoga
- Children's Club
- Employability Support
- Befriending
- IAG
- Mindfulness and Meditation
- Literacy and Numeracy
- Counselling
- CV building



social connectedness



Making services accessible

Our aim is to make services accessible for hard to reach and economically disadvantaged women.

We do this by providing tailor made culturally sensitive services such as digital skills workshops, chatty café for Punjabi and Arabic speaking women, conversational English at several locations across Wolverhampton.

160+

women access our service each week

7,920

engagements with women and children in 2023

"I can now go to the job centre by myself. I can now speak to the delivery drivers after ordering things or when people from the council come to speak to me. I now feel able to communicate with others."

"I used to have depression and anxiety however now I'm looking forward to Mondays and Thursdays and I'm beginning to feel that my mental health is improving."

60%

were 25-50 years old

Services are accessed by people of all ages, from 0 to 75+

67%

were from ethnic minority communities

i.e. Asian, African, Caribbean, Arab

93%

were from areas of multiple deprivation

i.e. Bilston, East Park, St Peters', Blakenhall, Parkfields, Heath Town

91%

felt less lonely and isolated and more socially connected following their engagement

92%

developed new friendships

77%

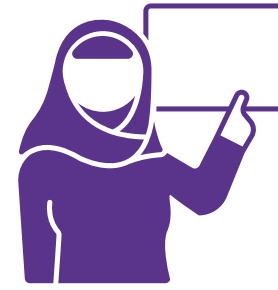
cited improved family relationships

100%

were satisfied with the quality of service received



training & employment



Improved economic prospects

Our aim is to provide the highest quality information, advice, guidance, training and personal development opportunities, to help women improve their economic futures.

We do this by offering a range of learning opportunities (ESOL, literacy and numeracy, CV and job search, functional skills) through one-to-one mentoring, coaching and group sessions to remove barriers and assist progression into employment, education, training or volunteering.

89%

said they were better able to make decisions about their lives after attending services

"This course helped improve my language and my level in English has increased, I can now read, write and speak. I've also made new friends."

86%

reported becoming more confident

"This course helped me get a new job after improving my English."

Access to volunteering

84%

said they had gained new skills, abilities and knowledge and were progressing their aspirations for paid work and volunteering

Hundreds of volunteers have supported Aspiring Futures over 13 years. Volunteers have helped us in management, organisational development, facilitation of group sessions, teaching, admin, event organisation and community engagement.

"[Volunteering] allowed me to gain first-hand experience in working with service users and also understand how staff have a clear and coherent plan. I have learnt a lot about how it actually is within a work environment through discussions with my supervisor and staff meetings."



health & wellbeing



Improved health and wellbeing

Our aim is to promote health and wellbeing and tackle loneliness.

We do this by providing opportunities to connect with others, improve health and develop life skills through self-care guidance, food and mood workshops, physical activities, arts and crafts, ESOL, befriending support, mental health workshops, peer support, family activities, and community events.

“My depression and anxiety have certainly reduced for which I’m very grateful. The peer support is amazing.”

“My mental health has become better, I used to feel alone since leaving my friends and family from Syria however now I feel more confident, and I have made some new friends.”

Improved wellbeing

During 2023, services with the highest level of take up were:

- ESOL
- Feel Good Friday social sessions
- Counselling.

Take up of our services is most frequently from personal recommendations and word of mouth.

There was significant improvement in self-image, self-worth and self-esteem amongst service users

95% reported they now have a positive self-image after attending our services

89% reported substantial improvements in self-worth and self-esteem

98% said that they felt healthier and happier thanks to Aspiring Futures

“Because I’m an immigrant my life wasn’t easy from when I arrived in England, however after this course it’s completely changed. I began to feel happiness. This has really eliminated the feeling of alienation.”

85

children used our services over the past year

Resilient children

Our aim is to offer safe and comfortable activities for children to grow and become resilient.

We do this by offering holiday clubs, family activities, stay and play, after school 'Minecraft' and 'Girls Rock' sessions and counselling.

"I really enjoyed the self-defence class that showed us how to get out of tricky situations and deal with bullies."

Aged 14 years

"The play group helps me create a routine of getting out of my house with two little ones. It allows my kids to build their social skills and gives me the chance to speak to other adults and receive support."

Mother, Stay & Play Group

Improved mental health

Our aim is to provide relief of mental and physical stresses and disorders of persons suffering from depression, distress, self-harm, family problems or breakdown, bereavement or loss.

We do this by providing a range of free or low cost confidential and empathetic listening help, mentoring and counselling services for women, children and young people delivered by professional female counsellors fluent in community languages.

81%

felt less tense, anxious, nervous or on edge after counselling

84%

felt less down, depressed, hopeless or unhappy during counselling

74%

felt they had better quality of sleep after Counselling

70%

have been able to make friends and combat isolation after counselling

70%

have been able to become less annoyed, irritable or angry after counselling

84%

had a positive difference in their lives during counselling

"Aspiring Futures have helped me overcome my anxiety and learn to live life again without life passing me by. I have made new friends and enjoy attending the groups at the centre."

"I have found the counsellor to be extremely patient, caring, empathetic. It was extremely helpful to me that I could build a rapport and feel comfortable."

"I would 100% recommend the service to others as it has been hugely beneficial for me personally and would undoubtedly be the same for others like me."

our people & partners



Throughout 2023 we have been working on sustainable solutions to maintain and grow levels of service with the support of our staff, volunteers and strategic partners. We have consulted these stakeholders on their experience of Aspiring Futures.

Staff consultation

In 2023 staff consultation 86% of staff were satisfied with the levels of communication within Aspiring Futures. There was a similar level of satisfaction in relation to workplace happiness with contributory factors being the nature of the work and positive interactions with both colleagues and clients.

86%
of staff were satisfied
with the levels of
communication within
Aspiring Futures

*"I can talk to
my manager
about any
issues."*

*"I enjoy
working with
my colleagues
and clients."*

*"I feel happy
I am doing
a rewarding
job."*

We are proud to be working with Wolverhampton City Council, Wolverhampton College, Access to Business, ASAN, NHS Integrated Care Board, Recovery College, Refugee and Migrant Centre, National Lottery Community Fund.



Strategic partners consultation

Stakeholders recognised the value of working with Aspiring Futures, which has carved out a niche in supporting those groups who would otherwise not be served. The dedication and commitment of Aspiring Futures staff was recognised. The complementary nature of the services provided was also noted.

“No other provider in Wolverhampton offers the same specialist and dedicated services for the target group that Aspiring Futures supports. Their success is clearly demonstrated and the recognition they achieved in winning a Queen’s Award for Voluntary Service clearly demonstrates the impact of their work.”

“Extensive service offered to support BAME communities and women across health and wellbeing, education and social support needs.”

“Good working partnership with the college over a number of years.”

“Aspiring Futures provide a vital service in supporting those that otherwise would have no dedicated and specialist support. Their work greatly complements and aligns with services that are provided from their other local voluntary sector partners.”

“I wouldn’t be the person I am now – who I am extremely proud of – if I hadn’t joined this group. I was very much alone and very much lost before Feel Good Friday. Please don’t take my air and oxygen away. Feel Good Friday, my lifeline, my saviour.”





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