



2026

 CWRC

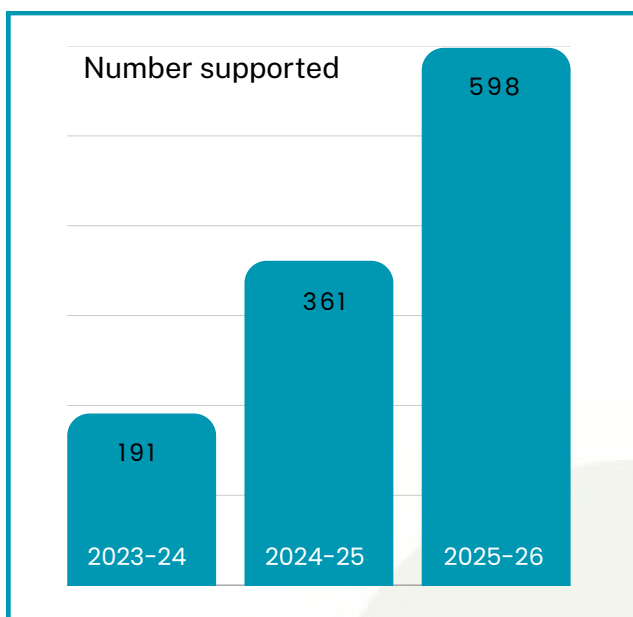
ANNUAL REPORT

CWRC Impact Report 2025-26

INTRODUCTION

This year brought both growth and change for CWRC. We supported more women than ever before, with referrals coming from mental health services, social care and other statutory agencies. The issues women faced were rarely simple: domestic abuse, poor mental health, poverty, housing insecurity, isolation, often in combination.

We also continued to work alongside women in contact with the criminal justice system, and refugees and asylum-seeking women rebuilding their lives in the local community.



598

women supported

57%

supported across two or more areas of need

238

referrals made to CWRC

313

attended groups at CWRC

The year also brought a difficult decision. Funding pressures meant we had to close our Peterborough centre at the end of 2025-26, after 13 years as part of CWRC. It was a significant loss, and we are deeply sad to see it close. Even so, we have continued providing trauma-informed, gender-specific support to women across Cambridgeshire, and we remain committed to doing so.

None of this would be possible without our staff, volunteers, funders and partners, and above all, the women who are part of the CWRC community.

Thank you.

HOW WE WORK

Women often come to CWRC with one pressing issue, but many are dealing with several things at once. Our support is flexible by design, and women can move between practical help, recovery programmes and wellbeing activities depending on what they need.

Group activities play a central role by reducing isolation, building confidence and creating connections with other women.

Our support encompasses three interconnected areas: Safety & Recovery, Advice & Advocacy and Wellbeing & Connection.

“Through the Freedom Programme, individual guidance, group support and unwavering encouragement, CWRC creates a safe and nurturing space where women can rediscover their strength”

Feedback from a participant

Routes into CWRC

- domestic abuse groups
- self-referral
- crisis support
- wellbeing activities
- creative activities
- external referrals

Holistic support

- advice and advocacy
- group programmes
- counselling
- practical support
- peer connection
- health & wellbeing

Outcomes

- increased safety
- greater stability
- reduced isolation
- improved wellbeing
- confidence
- social connection



SAFETY & RECOVERY

CWRC is not solely a domestic abuse service, but it remains a significant part of our work.

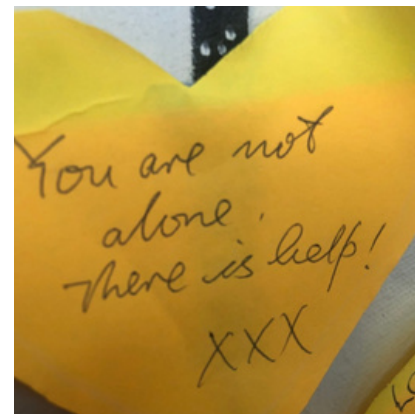
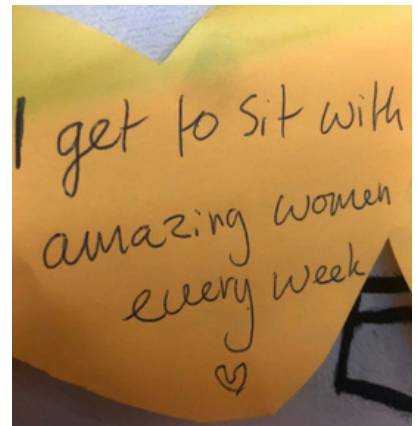
We deliver the Freedom Programme, a 12-week course for survivors. We continued to provide this service during a period when the work was unfunded, reflecting both the level of need and our commitment to maintaining this service. In September, we secured 12 months of funding from the Evelyn Trust to continue this vital work.

We also introduced the Domestic Abuse Recovery Toolkit, a follow-on programme. Through these two services, women could access up to six months of group support focused on safety, confidence and understanding the impact of abuse.

Domestic abuse casework increased by 61% as women sought support for related issues including housing instability, poverty, isolation and social care involvement. Where possible, we refer women to specialist domestic abuse services, although many remain beyond capacity.

245

women supported with domestic abuse-related issues up **61%** on the previous year



“I feel less alone by being with others who have been through similar and understand me”

Wellbeing scores increased by 76% following completion of the Freedom Programme

Measured using CWRC's adapted wellbeing tool, based on SWEMWBS

ADVICE & ADVOCACY

CWRC provides practical advice and advocacy to help women understand their rights, navigate complex systems and access the support they need. We work alongside women to achieve safer, more stable lives.

This year we supported women with housing, benefits, financial hardship, education and employment, as well as helping refugees and women seeking asylum access services and settle into their communities.

Our Free Shop provided free clothing, toiletries and period products for women experiencing financial hardship, while also reducing textile waste through reuse.

We also distributed 40 food bank vouchers and supported women to access hardship grants, furniture, school uniforms and other essential items through partners including Cambridge Aid.

“Thank you so much for the clothes for me and my girls. Being a single parent and unemployed has been very difficult. Coming to the centre and getting back into employment has given me back my confidence”

84%

of women agreed that ‘CWRC helped me feel I had more control over my life’

31

women supported to prevent or relieve homelessness

395kg

of clothing distributed through our Free Shop

£8,224

in hardship grants and emergency funds distributed to women and families in need



WELLBEING & CONNECTION

CWRC provides safe, welcoming spaces where women can connect, build confidence and improve their wellbeing.

This year women accessed counselling, somatic yoga, art, sewing, crochet, ESOL and English language conversation groups.

We also launched our own library with titles covering mental health, wellbeing, women's rights, parenting and maternity.

Women from CWRC were invited by Murray Edwards College to collaborate with a textile artist. Over a series of workshops they created a quilt exploring the theme of rest, which was displayed in the 'Sleepers' exhibition alongside works by Tracey Emin and Helen Cammouk.

Women consistently told us that groups helped them feel less isolated, more confident and more connected. Many described CWRC simply as a place where they felt safe and understood.

313

women attended a group session

53

received therapeutic support



118

took part in creative health activities



WOMEN'S STORIES

These stories are drawn from the real experiences of women supported by CWRC. Names and details have been changed.

Anna's story

Anna was referred to CWRC by the police after fleeing domestic abuse. She had been placed in a B&B with her children and was facing housing instability, financial hardship and the ongoing impact of trauma. She had little support around her and was struggling to know where to turn.

CWRC advocated to help secure safer temporary housing and supported her with benefits, practical essentials and later furnishing her permanent home.

She attended the Freedom Programme and a course of counselling, and later joined creative health groups where she built friendships and began to feel less alone.

Over time, Anna became more settled and confident. She eventually became a volunteer at CWRC, supporting other women going through similar experiences.

Amina's story

Amina was a single mother of two young children. She found herself struggling with financial hardship, childcare barriers and delays to her benefits. She needed both immediate help and longer-term support to increase her income.

CWRC provided one-to-one support to help her claim child benefit, access funded childcare and manage essential costs. During the most acute periods, she also received food bank vouchers and employment support including job searching and employer engagement.

Her child benefit was successfully processed with backdated payments, easing pressure on the family's finances. She secured funded childcare and found an after-school job. Through a combination of crisis support and practical advocacy, Amina was able to stabilise the family and reduce their experience of poverty.

"The course helped me to feel so much more in control of my life and I've met some incredible and inspiring women"
Domestic Abuse Recovery Toolkit participant

VOLUNTEERING

Volunteers are central to what we do at CWRC, over the year, they helped create welcoming spaces for women and provided practical support across the centre, from facilitating groups to tending plants and sorting stock for the Free Shop.

Some volunteers have previously received support from CWRC themselves and bring valuable lived experience, empathy and a strong sense of connection to their roles. Others come from the wider local community, including individuals, businesses and local groups, who recognise the importance of our work and generously give their time and support.

“Volunteering with CWRC has been a really positive and comforting experience. It gives me the chance to give back to a centre that has supported me, while learning new skills and staying connected to things I enjoy, like fashion, styling the free shop, and using my finance experience to help where I can”

“I met so many amazing women while supporting their English language learning”

“Volunteering at CWRC has increased my confidence and really helped my mental wellbeing. It is a wonderful place for women, especially women who have experienced trauma. The staff are safe and welcoming to all.”

21

Volunteers

446

volunteering hours



LOOKING AHEAD

Demand for CWRC's services continues to grow, and we go into the coming year with both ambition and realism about the pressures we face.

We are excited to be moving to new premises in Cambridge, a larger, more suitable space for support, groups and community activities. The move will give us a stronger long-term base and an improved environment for everyone using our centre.

We are also working to expand our volunteering programme and are on track for Advice Quality Standard (AQS) accreditation – both signs of a growing, strengthening organisation.

At the same time, funding pressures both locally and throughout the wider women's sector remain real. More women are coming to us, and they need more from us. Sustainable funding and community support are vital to ensuring we can keep doing this work.

SUPPORT OUR WORK

CWRC relies on the generosity of individuals, funders and businesses to provide services to hundreds of women across Cambridge and surrounding areas.

Regular donations of any size help us plan and sustain our services. Please consider becoming a regular giver at www.cwrc.org.uk/donate-to-cwrc, or scan the QR code.



THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS & PARTNERS

A huge thank you to all who donated to CWRC over the last year. Your generosity and support make a direct impact on women's lives. Every contribution helps keep our services running.

Thank you for being part of the CWRC community.

