Anawim is a collaborative project of these two organisations:

The Sisters of Our Lady of Charity are an international congregation founded in France in the seventeenth century by St John Eudes, a priest who was very concerned for the plight of women trapped in prostitution. Their mission was to enable the women to retake their place in society through teaching life skills and a trade to earn a living. They live their mission collaborating with others who work on behalf of women who are marginalised in our society. Anawim is one expression of that collaboration.

“It’s a well known saying that “actions speak louder than words.” The staff of Anawim put words into action through their belief in the rights of the women they strive to help realise their potential, and in so doing, enabling them to become the people God created them to be”. SISTER JOSEPHINE COLLIER

Father Hudson’s Society is a Regional Social Care not-for-profit voluntary agency originating from the Catholic Church’s concern for children in need and their families over a hundred years ago. It has developed and grown and provides fostering, origins and adoption support, services for older people and adults who have profound disabilities and collaborative Community projects of which Anawim is one.

“This report shows a level of dedication and commitment to helping vulnerable women that is impressive and, importantly, effective in changing lives for the better. That commitment has at its root the Christian ethos of Love for one another that is shared by the two charities who collaborate to realise Anawim. Staff, volunteers, funders, partners and members of the management board combine to achieve the wonderful work described in these pages and we give thanks for their dedication. It is a privilege to be associated with it in some small way.”

TIM BRADFORD / Chair of Anawim Management Board, CEO Father Hudson’s Society

“WOMEN’S BREAKOUT IS THE NATIONAL ORGANISATION THAT BRINGS TOGETHER AND REPRESENTS THE COLLECTIVE VOICE OF SOME FIFTY PROJECTS THAT WORK, AS DOES ANAWIM, WITH WOMEN WITH COMPLEX VULNERABILITIES. GOOD COMMUNICATIONS, AND THE PRESENTATION OF WOMEN’S STORIES, IS CENTRAL TO OUR MISSION, AND ANAWIM CONTRIBUDES EFFECTIVELY THROUGH BOTH THE IMPACT OF THEIR WORK AND THE KNOWLEDGEABLE INPUT OF THEIR PROJECT DIRECTOR ON OUR BOARD, AND IN LEADING WORKSHOPS AND FORUMS.”

JACKIE RUSSELL
DIRECTOR WOMEN’S BREAKOUT
www.womensbreakout.org.uk
Anawim is a Women’s Centre based in Birmingham that provides an extensive range of interventions to women across the city, working both from our Centre in Balsall Heath and in the wider community. All the women have multiple and complex needs, which may include past and current offending, prostitution and drug and alcohol abuse. Most are experiencing the effects of social deprivation, domestic violence and difficulties with housing - many are in temporary accommodation or homeless and/or have mental and physical health issues (often involving self-harm and risk of suicide).

The majority of the women are on benefits, many with high levels of debt and arrears, and have poor prospects of employment due to low educational attainment. A significant number have been through the care system and those with children typically struggle with a variety of parenting issues. Their children may be subject to a safeguarding plan or have been taken into care.

Anawim provides a full Family Support Service and operates a crèche on site staffed by qualified child care workers. All the women, whether formally referred or contacted on outreach, are offered family support including developmental help for their children in the crèche and home visits.

The Family Support Service facilitates our work providing Alternatives to Custody – Specified Activity Orders, Community Payback and the Mental Health Treatment Requirement - by enabling women with children to attend activities at the Centre while their children receive care including support and help with numeracy and literacy in the crèche.

Our Prison and Outreach team supports women in the community, such as in hostels and on the streets, and in prison. We work with women who are serving sentences of imprisonment and on release, providing extensive support with resettlement across a range of needs.

We are currently developing a mentoring programme and continue to expand and augment the work that we do in response to the needs of the most vulnerable in our society.
It has been two years since our last Report and they have been busy and productive ones. As always we are grateful for all the help and support we have received from our funders, as well as to all those who show an interest in and enthusiasm for our work. Earlier this year I gave evidence to the Parliamentary Justice Committee as part of their investigation into women offenders and welcomed the chance to promote deeper understanding of the issues facing women in the criminal justice system as well as of those that affect all vulnerable women and their children.

For this reason, in our 2013 Report, which we have called our Impact Report, we have tried to do something a bit different in the hope of conveying a fuller appreciation of the lives of the women who we work with and the obstacles encountered by them and their case workers when trying to change their lives. This understanding is all the more important now that we are operating in an atmosphere of change and budgetary restrictions - it is simply vital to know what works and how best to deliver it alongside a stringent cost-benefit analysis that takes into the account the medium and long term costs of no, or inadequate, intervention. In a society that is increasingly pluralistic and diverse many people do not encounter the sort of social problems that we deal with on a day to day basis, yet if progress is to be achieved it is important that as many members of the wider community as possible understand how to combat social disadvantage and resulting criminality in a way that benefits us all.

Unless we take a broad and long-term approach to investment in services we risk spending far more than necessary. The women Anawim has traditionally supported otherwise cost the local authority, prison system, police, hospitals, Social Services, GPs and housing providers significant proportions of their budgets. Just in this last year alone we have case worked 412 women. Between them they had 518 children. Nearly half - 252 - of these did not live with them, 145 having been placed in local authority care at an estimated cost of £200,000 per child, a staggering total cost of £29 million. 107 were being cared for by family or friends at little cost to the state but often huge cost to those families. Through our family and parenting support 33 of these children have been successfully returned to their mothers, some through our Re-Unite Programme, saving the Local Authority £6,600,000. Many are or have been on safeguarding plans and with our support have increased contact, developed better relationships or come to terms with the reality of adoption. 72 have been removed from their safeguarding plans and deemed safe.

The original Ministry of Justice contract funded Anawim directly and facilitated work with women outside the criminal justice system who could be classified as ‘at risk’ of committing offences in order to prevent offending and thus keep costs down. In 2012 the funding strategy was changed and the work is now commissioned by the Probation Service, who naturally are only prepared to fund women who are currently on court orders. This means we no longer have funding to provide preventative interventions to women at risk of offending or, if already offending, who have not yet been arrested or who are not yet in the criminal justice system. So in effect they have to commit a crime in order to access the support we can offer.

We receive no funding from Social Services, Community Safety, Adult Services, Children’s Services or Health (apart from the pilot currently) yet we are active partners in many safeguarding plans, and are even ordered by the courts to offer support.
The police also refer women to us and many women we have supported have moved on into stable accommodation and exited sex work and crime. For the last 26 years Anawim has been in a position to take referrals of women from organisations across Birmingham thanks to funds raised through a mixed economy of grants and contracts, gifts and donations from individuals and churches. However, in addition to the changes in Ministry of Justice funding described above, this year we are experiencing the deepest cuts in funding since the 1980s. Grant making trusts are receiving high levels of requests as statutory funders have pulled back – and individual philanthropists cannot fill these gaps. For the first time in history we are having to turn away referrals of women from some sources, such as Social Services. We are very concerned, not just for the fate of the individual women and their families, but about the potential implications of this course for the local community.

Our 1% reoffending rate last year compares favourably with the record for women undertaking their community sentence with Probation alone which stands at around 8%, and for women leaving HMP Foston Hall after having served equivalent short sentences of less than 12 months which stands at 63%. A community sentence at Anawim costs around £1,500 - £2,000. With Probation alone the costs are around £8,000, and a prison place is up to £50,000. The maths are not hard to do – we are excellent value for money. The partnership with Probation has proved successful and we have been grateful to have the wonderful co-located Probation staff supervising the caseload of women. Their commitment has been key to our very low re-offending rate. The Probation Trust has been so supportive of our approach, believing in us, sharing information and working hard alongside us to raise awareness with sentencers and recommending us in pre-sentence reports.

When we were chosen to pilot the MoJ’s alternatives to custody in 2009 we started reporting outcomes along the nine criminal justice pathways. We have structured this report around those pathways, including case studies relating to each. The case studies highlight, in the context of real lives, the cost savings our service has made. As women are so often the bedrock in families, when a mother turns her life around the impact on her family and ultimately the wider community is enormous. As is clear from the figures one child out of the care system can save a local authority many thousands. One woman off benefits and in employment doesn’t just save the cost of those benefits but could change that whole intergenerational line, raising aspirations and motivations. Last year more than 27 women gained employment with our help. Our partnership with Midland Heart (Housing and Care Organisation) has helped us to safely house and settle 30 women into properties with their own secure tenancies. The support we have given has meant they have not needed a Supported People funded worker, and Midland Heart has testified that they have experienced no problems with these women.

We have collected the case studies in a variety of ways - interviews with the women, interviews with the case workers and ‘fictionalised’ or ‘composite’ stories based on real cases and situations familiar to us. Names have been changed, but in every case study in which a woman’s name is used their stories have been transcribed word for word, so every word is true.

JOY DOAL, MBE / Project Director

Joy Doal was awarded the MBE in 2011 for services to vulnerable women.
ALTERNATIVES

SARAH GALLAGHER / Service Manager: “There’s a perception that a community sentence is a softer option for offenders who ought to go to prison. But for women with the sort of problems that most of our clients have, to attend the Centre for a specified number of days per week so they can face up to and deal with these problems is actually very difficult. In many ways prison allows them to put things off, it’s a kind of escape, an unreal world. What they often struggle with is being forced to confront the issues that led to the offending in the first place – and at Anawim they are expected to deal with those issues in the here and now, not put them off for another day. They can’t move on until they accept that problems they might have been inclined to blame others for are their own responsibility. And then they have to start making better choices in the context of a community that is constantly challenging them, in many cases pulling them in the wrong direction”.

MANDY TAYLOR / Criminal Justice and Mental Health Worker: “Anawim fosters a positive, non-judgemental environment where women feel supported and empowered. But that doesn’t mean we don’t challenge negative behaviour and attitudes – if promoting change is at the core of what you do, you have to encourage clients to examine their own behaviour, their own motives, the choices they make. They may tell you they have no problems in a particular area of their life but when you delve a bit deeper, the truth is that the problems are so profound they can’t even acknowledge they exist. Dealing with that involves lots of intensive one to one work, asking the right questions, promoting insight. Alternatively, a woman might tell you that the problems are all down to someone else, a family member or a partner for example. So you have to unpick that with her, point out that although the other person’s behaviour might be wrong, she might need to question whether her own reaction was part of the problem. You might have a woman sent here for assaulting a neighbour, and she tells you it was all the neighbour’s fault, he/she provoked the fight – so you have to talk to the client about her reaction to the provocation, try and get her to understand she had choices, and that the choices she made were self-destructive. We often refer clients to Anger Management to learn to deal with negative emotions, which we find is very effective”.

AMANDA HIGGINS / Prison & Outreach Worker: “In the end, whether a woman carries out her sentence in the prison or in the community, it is in the community that new habits and better ways of living need to develop. Almost everyone comes out of prison determined not to re-offend, but it is very difficult to develop the strategies that amount, in practice, to rehabilitation, in an institutional environment miles away from where the women live and who they live with. During a community order women are challenged to address their issues there and then, face up to practical problems and deal with them. In prison many practical issues are out of sight and out of mind – but those issues will face them all at once when they leave prison. A huge pile of practical problems can overwhelm their resolve completely”.

Interview with Carol, 28/3/2013
“I thanked the court for giving me the chance and sending me to Anawim because they had the choice of sending me down or sending me here and they said, they actually said at the court that they could see that I was vulnerable and needed help. I couldn’t even stand in the dock I was shaking and couldn’t stop crying or nothing and as they could see that I needed help they was giving me this chance at Anawim. If I had gone to prison it wouldn’t have helped as the social workers told me that if I was actually sentenced I wouldn’t have had my children back they would go into long term fostering and adoption”. ([external evaluation])
GINA STOKES / Team Leader Prison & Outreach:
“Another issue you have to take into account is self-esteem. Prison damages self-esteem whereas during community orders at Anawim we work very hard to raise self-esteem and promote self-worth. If a woman doesn’t care about herself, or her own life, she is going to find it completely impossible to improve it, certainly to sustain that improvement. I think a lot of people wonder: how can people let their lives get in such a mess? The answer is that they think so little of themselves that they find it hard to care about their own lives or what happens to them. If you can change that, the whole outlook is transformed. If you don’t change it, any improvements are likely to be short-lived”.

JOY DOAL: “Over the past two years 205 women have undertaken Specified Activity Requirements at Anawim as part of their sentence. All of these women have been offered support with education, training, employment and substance misuse and referral to a wide range of agencies as needed. An individualised package of specialist support delivered by skilled workers and designed to address the causes of offending behaviour, with emphasis on building self-esteem, independence and a sense of responsibility, underpins our very low re-offending rate. We continue to develop new ideas and ways of working so that our performance continues to improve”.

Example: Outcomes for Offenders with Long Criminal Records on Issha Barrs’ caseload

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>No. of Previous Offences</th>
<th>Reduction in Offending</th>
<th>Cessation of Offending</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JI</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AS</td>
<td>25 - 6 custodial</td>
<td>YES - 1 offence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LS</td>
<td>27 - 5 custodial</td>
<td>1 breach of order</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NR</td>
<td>20 - 5 custodial</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Proven success for women offenders.
Re-offending rate for women who successfully completed their orders in 2012.

1%
MANDY TAYLOR / Criminal Justice & Mental Health Worker: “Some women are sent to Anawim on court orders to undertake Unpaid Work. Julie was sent to Anawim to do 150 hours unpaid work. She was allowed to undertake some courses as part of her order. This is her story.”

“ANAWIM HAS A CRUCIAL ROLE TO PLAY IN DELIVERING ALTERNATIVES TO CUSTODY FOR WOMEN OFFENDERS AND GAINING PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN THEIR EFFECTIVENESS. THEIR OUTSTANDING WORK SUPPORTING MANY OF THE MOST COMPLEX WOMEN IN OUR CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM IS TO BE APPLAUDED. PERSONALLY, I THINK ANAWIM SHOULD BE BOTTLED AND REPLICATED!”

ROMA HOOPER / MAKE JUSTICE WORK
www.makejusticework.org.uk

JULIE’S STORY:

I am 35 years old and have 4 children. I grew up with my Nan from a baby. My Mom was around but never looked after me. My Nan showed me a lot of love and had always been there for me. I am the eldest of three. My siblings always lived with me but my Mom never took interest in me. This didn’t bother me until I got older when I would feel like I was not her child and wondered what was wrong with me. When I was 12 my Nan said she was going back to Jamaica to live. We didn’t believe this until she started packing. We then knew she was going back to live which turned my life upside down because she was the only one to show me love.

I started acting out, missing school, staying out till late. The day she went I was so upset. I felt abandoned. I stayed with my Uncle.

My Mom would come round now and then but she wasn’t interested in me. I started to run away from home when I met a girl from a similar background to me so we went on the run together, staying in empty houses, shoplifting food and clothes. This went on for about a month or two. We were out late one night didn’t know the time and knocked on the door of a flat. The police answered as there had been a break in earlier that day and because we wouldn’t give our details we were put in separate care homes. We never lost touch and would run from our care homes, get drunk, ride the buses and smoke weed.

When I was about 14 I met my first love and got pregnant. I was happy but scared. I thought I now have someone to love who will love me back. I had to move from the Children’s Home into a mother and baby unit. I was alright for a while but still very young. I would go to see my siblings and leave my daughter with my siblings and my Mom. I got in a lot of trouble. I got my first property but my properties never lasted long- there were always people coming round and partying, trashing my house so I would have to move from place to place. I then met my second child’s Dad. He had his own place. It all happened so fast.

I moved in and got pregnant. It was all good at first then he started to beat me up. He knew I had
nowhere to go with my child so he had this over me but he was a good Dad. I couldn’t take any more of the abuse and ran away with my daughter. I was staying here and there mixing with the wrong people. I got into class A drugs and shoplifting to fund my habit. This went on for a few years, then I got my first jail sentence. I was so scared but never showed my feelings. I got out but was back within the next few months. My kids were with my family. I lost myself and could see no way out.

Years went on and I met my fourth baby’s father. He is Polish and we got on well from the start. He was a friend of my cousin so I knew he was ok. By this time I had my own flat but never moved in until I started going out with him. There was a light at the end of the tunnel. I could see it but not reach it yet. I got pregnant but I was still using Class A drugs.

My partner didn’t use drugs so this made me more determined to get clean. I booked my first appointment with a drug service as I did not want to be pregnant and on drugs. I was put on a methadone script but it was not enough so I had to get away to sort my life so I went to rehab to stabilise my methadone as you can’t just come off it when pregnant.

I got clean but when I came out of rehab I went back to the same area. This was a big mistake for me because of all the bad memories so I started using drugs again. This caused a strain on my relationship. Social Services got involved and wanted to take my daughter. I couldn’t let this happen as I would lose my head knowing my daughter was in care so my partner’s parents came over from Poland and we decided that my daughter would go to Poland until I sorted my life out. It was very hard.

Because my daughter had gone my benefits changed and there was a gap in benefits. It was my daughter’s birthday but I never had the money to buy her anything so I went shoplifting and got caught. Looking back this was the best thing that could happen to me. I was sent to the Anawim Centre to do my Court Order. There were courses you could do so I signed up for Maths and English and then I signed up for a Crisis programme which helps people get back into work. I did a two week work experience placement at Cadburys, and employability skills. I always knew that was not my life, the drugs, living everywhere. I am now in a better place thanks to Anawim and Crisis. I went to Fircroft College and have done a mentoring course and drug awareness course and will be doing a counselling course and the ‘Introduction to Mental Health’ course soon.

I want to give something back to say thanks to all who have helped me get to where I am today. I am at college doing a business skills and administration course and I achieved a permanent post at Cadbury’s in January which is my first employment in 35 years. Thing are looking good. I have not yet reached the light but not far to go.

“I WANT TO GIVE SOMETHING BACK TO SAY THANKS TO ALL WHO HAVE HELPED ME GET TO WHERE I AM TODAY...”
It’s a Friday afternoon in November, grey and cold. The perfect weather, in fact, for curling up in your warm, comfortable sitting room with a cup of tea and watching the television as it gets dark outside.

The problem is, you haven’t got a sitting room, warm or otherwise, because you haven’t got a home at all. You’ve been sleeping on a friend’s sofa for the last few nights but you can’t stay there any longer - her boyfriend is coming over and he doesn’t want you there. You know some people in a house a short bus ride away but you don’t want to go there - they’re into drugs and you’ve been trying so hard to put that lifestyle behind you since coming out of prison three weeks ago. It’s what got you into trouble in the first place. You haven’t got money for the bus fare anyway, because your benefits aren’t sorted yet.

You know you need to get organised but it all feels overwhelming - all you want is to see your two children. Five months is such a long time without them, they should be living with you, their mother - you know that, but how can they when you have no place to go?
“It’s hard for most of us to imagine what a day must feel like when you have nowhere to sleep that night. But many of the women we work with are in that position when we meet them. And often, if they do have somewhere to go, it’s somewhere undesirable and unsafe”.

JOY DOAL / Project Director

“Women need permanent accommodation if they are going to deal with their other issues effectively. It is difficult if not impossible to rebuild a life, deal with any health or substance abuse issues, sort out finances, recover self-esteem and move towards productive activity such as training and employment without a home”.

AMANDA HIGGINS / Prison and Outreach Worker

GINA STOKES / Team Leader Prison & Outreach on finding emergency accommodation: “If it is before 4pm we take women with nowhere to spend the night to the nearest neighbourhood office (you need a drop-in office - there are four in the city - Small Heath, Kings Heath, Newtown and Erdington). I take clients in the project car or my own and wait with them, which may take hours and will include filling in various forms.

If it’s after 5pm I ring the Out-of-Hours duty team of Birmingham City Council. They don’t answer the phone - you have to leave a message (name, date of birth, circumstances) and then they ring back although we never know when this will be - it could be ten minutes to an hour later or longer. In those cases, we never know when we’ll be able to leave work and go home. We just have to wait.

Someone from the Duty Team will ring back and carry out a telephone interview with the client, ring off and then ring back to let us know if she fits the criteria. If yes, she is told where to go, which will be a B&B or a City Hostel. If no, I ring all the hostels in the area, looking for a space. Hostels require a form to be filled out online and a formal referral. The place could be anywhere in the city but most are on the Hagley Road, part of the local red light district, so the locality exposes vulnerable clients to an environment they are trying to get away from, or trying hard not to fall into.

We provide a food parcel, basic toiletries and try to find pyjamas and some bedding from among our donations. In practice it may take all day to secure emergency accommodation for a woman, yet because of its temporary and often unsuitable nature, we will immediately start working on securing a better and more settled option, as well as supporting her to deal with her other needs.

Often we find emergency, then temporary or several different temporary locations before we find the client permanent accommodation. At this stage our work with the woman is only just beginning”.

“A SETTLED PLACE TO LIVE IS A PREREQUISITE FOR WOMEN TO ORGANISE AND GET ON WITH OTHER ASPECTS OF THEIR LIVES…”
Adrienne grew up in a household blighted by her step-father’s violence towards her mother, disruption which caused her to be in and out of care for most of her childhood. She ran away from home and played truant from school, so she did not achieve academically.

She met her first husband when she was still very young and they had two daughters. Her husband began emotionally abusing her, repeating the pattern with which Adrienne was familiar from childhood. Eventually she had a mental breakdown and left the home, unable to take her daughters with her. She lived and worked in a hotel and did volunteer work. She met a man, Mark, with whom she formed a relationship.

However, Adrienne reacted to her traumatic past and associated mental health problems by drinking too much, a problem shared by her new partner. She became pregnant with her son Jack. After he was born she tried hard to be a good mother, keeping a lovely home (she was always something of an obsessive when it came to cleaning) and looking after her son, but her drinking escalated to the point that she realised the environment was not safe for him. She took Jack to live with her mother when he was 4 months old.

Adrienne’s mental health had always been fragile - now she struggled with the bleak fact that she was unable to mother any of her three children. Her relationship with Mark descended into arguments and anger. One night, drunk and alone in her flat, Adrienne set the curtains alight. Immediately realising what she had done she called the Fire Brigade and admitted she had started the fire, which, by that time, she had also extinguished. She was charged with arson. Her desperate and dangerous cry for help resulted in her first conviction for a criminal offence and a sentence of five years imprisonment, reduced on appeal to eighteen months.

Gina met Adrienne in prison, visiting her regularly to help her prepare for release and resettlement. Adrienne wanted to live with and look after her son on release but there were significant obstacles. She had been convicted of a very serious criminal offence, her relationship with her mother, Jack’s main carer, was difficult, she had suffered from a drink problem and, on a practical level, she had nowhere to live.

A common obstacle facing women separated from their children in prison is that accommodation offered to single women on release will be shared or one bedroom only, yet in order to have children returned a mother needs the appropriate number of rooms. A program called Re-Unite has been developed to deal with this ‘catch 22 situation’.
Provided a woman meets the criteria for the Re-Unite program (in particular that she is considered a fit mother), a local housing association (Midland Heart in Birmingham) will offer her accommodation suitable for her whole family to facilitate the children’s return.

Working within the Re-Unite program, Gina liaised with Social Services to ascertain that Jack could live with Adrienne under appropriate circumstances. Understanding Adrienne’s complex relationship with her mother, Gina contacted her to build bridges between mother and daughter and to promote Adrienne’s relationship with Jack, now three.

Gina liaised with Probation, organised temporary accommodation for Adrienne on release, Crowley House Bail hostel, and helped her address her drink problem by arranging for attendance at Timbers (a therapeutic residential rehabilitation centre for women with substance abuse issues). In Timbers women are drug tested every day and accompanied to the toilet. Adrienne spent six months there, also attending the Anawim Centre, while Jack came to the crèche.

An application was made to Midland Heart for a two bed property and Adrienne moved into a beautiful newly-refurbished home in Small Heath. Gina liaised with Jack’s solicitor and the court social worker and arranged for Jack to have regular visits. She dealt with financial issues by securing JSA and organised for a community care grant so that Adrienne could furnish her home, as well as contacting the Boy’s Brigade to find beds and sofas. She encouraged Adrienne to spend quality time with Jack, such as taking him to Dodford Farm for a weekend to help re-establish their relationship. The time that Jack spent in the crèche enabled staff to observe him and write a report for the family court.

Jack went back to live with Adrienne just after Christmas 2012 and is doing well. Adrienne’s relationship with her mother has improved and they meet regularly. She also maintains a positive relationship with Jack’s father, Mark, who like Adrienne, is abstinent from alcohol.

Adrienne’s story was told by Gina Stokes / Team Leader Prison & Outreach

Angela Sankey / Acting Service Manager: “As well as dealing with the practical side of organising accommodation, we also provide intensive one to one support concerning all issues relating to accommodation such as anti-social behaviour with neighbours, budgeting for rent, repairs and managing children. The courses we offer support this work. There isn’t much point working so hard to find someone a home if they are not going to be able to sustain it.”

Joy Doal: “Last year we had over 100 women with an accommodation need. We found accommodation for 37 women who were homeless, 31 moved from unsafe into safe accommodation (unsafe may mean, for example, domestic violence) and 52 moved into settled (i.e. long term) accommodation.

We also work hard to ensure all of our clients have the budgeting and other skills to maintain their accommodation. A settled place to live is a prerequisite for women to organise and get on with other aspects of their lives, such as parenting and finding a job”.
When you were a child you dreamt of being a nurse. You loved the idea of looking after people - you got lots of practice looking after your Mum. When you were twelve you had to go and live with your Gran, and move schools. At the old school you had extra help with English but that all stopped in your new school. You were embarrassed to admit in front of strangers that you couldn’t read. You started hating your lessons, got in with the wrong crowd and were excluded when you were fifteen. You didn’t take any exams, you didn’t care because you wouldn’t have passed them anyway and you were having fun hanging around the local shopping centre with your boyfriend. He used to nick things, you knew it was wrong but then you started doing it too. It’s not as if you’d ever be able to buy them, so why not? When you were in prison they said you couldn’t read and write very well, but you must get a job when you were released. But who’s going to employ you, with a criminal record and no qualifications, when an 11 year old can read and write better than you can? It’s hopeless.
“Many female offenders have had a poor experience of education and have low skill levels and few qualifications. These and other issues feed into low self-esteem and poor motivation. At Anawim we aim to change negative or fearful attitudes to education - if the women are not confident enough to attend the academic courses that we offer straight away, such as English and Maths, we encourage them to attend group sessions in subjects such as arts and crafts. This is why it’s important for us to offer a wide range of courses, from the therapeutic to the academic and then accredited and work-related, to cater for the different stages the women are at, and so they can progress gradually and achieve at their own pace”.

JOY DOAL / Project Director

Rachel’s Story

Rachel had always worked and paid her own way. She met her husband at work and they continued to work together after the wedding. However, they had not been married long when he started abusing her which caused her to suffer from rising levels of anxiety. She continued to work alongside him for a while but eventually lost her job. This was when things really began to get out of control. She desperately tried to maintain the lifestyle that she was used to having worked all her life but simply wasn’t able to do so. In the midst of financial problems she committed benefit fraud and was sentenced to a Statutory Supervision Order for 18 months.

By this time Rachel’s confidence had evaporated. She lost her home, left her marriage and moved in with her parents, but her former husband continued to harass her. The police flagged her parent’s house but her husband continued to loiter outside regularly. He would hide around a corner to prevent Rachel taking photographs to prove his harassment. He was so determined to intimidate her that he would make noises that were identifiably him while remaining out of sight. He had retained a key to Rachel’s car and gained access to it, interfering with the electrics. By the time the police came, he was always gone. A non-molestation order was in force but the harassment was hard to prove, forcing Rachel’s family to pay for CCTV to keep her ex-husband away from the house.

When Rachel was first referred to Anawim with a 40 day Specified Activity Requirement and 18 month Statutory Supervision Order she was very anxious, with extremely low self-esteem and no confidence. I referred her to Birmingham Settlement (our on-site service) for financial support and advice, and she also undertook a number of courses at the centre to fulfil her Specified Activity Requirement. These included art (to help deal with anxiety), a MIND well-being course (to help with mental health and physical health problems), the Domestic Violence course (to gain insight and coping strategies) and the Employability Course (to prepare for future employment) all as part of her designated SAR days.

With Birmingham Settlement, Rachel developed a payment plan for repaying her debts. She accessed her local Community Mental Health Team for support with her mental health issues. She also engaged with Anawim’s counselling service and continues to see a counsellor here. Her mental health is now stable and she lives in a secure home, fully aware of the warning signs for any domestic abuse in future relationships.

Rachel attended ‘Get Ready’ events (preparing for work - CV writing and mock interviews). She continued to come to Anawim after successfully completing her SAR and her confidence has improved to the point that she attained part time employment with Birmingham MIND. She is so happy to have regained her independence alongside a set of skills that will help her to avoid the kind of problems that brought her to Anawim in the first place.

Rachel’s story was told by

JULIA MURPHY / Criminal Justice & Mental Health Case Worker
JOY DOAL: “At Anawim our goal is to help women achieve full independence, meaning independence from others who might exploit their vulnerability as well as financial independence, meaning employment. For most of the women the biggest barrier to gaining employment is a lack of confidence – the longer the women are out of work the more their confidence tends to deteriorate, a situation made worse by other issues that arise from unemployment such as financial problems and, sometimes, offending. In practice we have to try and put that process into reverse, by untangling the problems that have built up and helping them rebuild their confidence.

We encourage them to overcome the very considerable obstacle presented by having a criminal record, so they can believe employment is a real option. It is not an easy process and we are very proud of those women who have gained employment, as well as those who have moved towards work-readiness through courses and training”.

“AT ANAWIM OUR GOAL IS TO HELP WOMEN ACHIEVE FULL INDEPENDENCE...”

INTERVIEW WITH GEORGIA: “I find it hard to get a job, obviously because I’ve got a criminal record from when I was younger and the only thing that I’ve found from doing this that I wanted to go in to was support work, like helping people. But I think since I’ve been here, I’ve been on, they’ve put me on mentoring courses, you know I’ve done a course on domestic violence and it’s just, it’s helped me sort out a career path”. (University research)
Voluntary work in a café for most mornings during the week.
Voluntary work and training with the Lateef Project.
Sustained employment with support despite conviction.
Bar work – Part time.
M&S - Part time.
MIND - Part time.
Carillion - Full time.
Volunteering Women’s Aid shop.
Placement in a school serving food twice a week for three weeks.
Volunteer placement cleaning in a centre near cricket ground for 2 months, is hoping to change to catering soon.
With confidence her business is growing from strength to strength.
Birmingham Settlement confirmed she can work 16 hours without affecting her benefits, so employment retained.
Volunteering for a Holistic Therapy organisation.
Part time employment in retail.
Placement at Cadbury’s, part time at Big John’s then full time at M&S.
Gained confidence to return to work.
Volunteered at a charity shop, cleaning job, waitress in café, bar work.
Placement which led to full time employment at M&S.
Started own business initiative after doing hair extensions and renting a room at a beauty salon.
Temporary Christmas employment at T K MAXX.
Has an interview for volunteering with Midland Heart.
Finished cookery training – just started adult teaching certificate.
Full time in solicitor’s office.
Completed employability skills, did 2 week placement at Cadbury’s. Now in permanent employment with Cadbury’s despite conviction.
Did work placement at Macdonald’s. Now in full-time employment despite conviction.
Increase in confidence and ability to handle stress. Returned to work and recently promoted despite conviction.
Working for an agency part time despite conviction.
Volunteer post gained with SOVA.

**Employment Situation - Current**

**Joy Doal:** “During this last year we judged that 115 of the women had increased their capacity to work (via courses and training). 29 became involved in volunteering or mentoring work and 27 gained employment. We see this as a huge achievement in this client group.”

115 women had increased their capacity to work

29 became involved in mentoring/volunteering

27 gained employment

- CM: On ESA through depression and unable to work. Increase in confidence and ability to handle stress. Returned to work and recently promoted despite conviction.
- SM: Depressed and unable to work. Working for an agency part time despite conviction.
- NF: Unemployed and lacking in confidence. Volunteer post gained with SOVA.
You’ve been feeling tired all the time and you don’t know why. Some days you can hardly get out of bed. You burst into tears more and more easily and lately you’ve found yourself thinking about ending it all, which really scares you. You’ve lost weight because you don’t feel like eating much which might be why you’re so tired but you’re not sure. You’ve thought about going to see a doctor but you’re not registered with one - you’ve moved round the city so much since leaving home at sixteen that there never seemed much point. It’s not as if you’re really ill - and you don’t want the doctor to notice the cuts on your arms and think you’re crazy like your Dad was. He had schizophrenia and died in hospital when you were ten. Your Mum was always sad after that, it was hard to be around her. Sometimes you drink too much to blot it all out, although you know it’s making you feel worse and worse.

JOY DOAL: “Issues with mental health are so prevalent with our clients that we have set up a pilot project with funding from the Department of Health and can now take women on Mental Health Treatment Requirements, further extending our alternatives to custody. If we can identify these conditions early enough and create a sustained pathway into services for these women, not only are their own lives and those of their families transformed, but the huge expense of treating a condition that has become chronic and entrenched is avoided.

The expense to society of untreated medical conditions can be very high, especially if the consequences are higher offending rates and having children taken into care.”
Many of the women who are referred to us are not registered with a GP or accessing appropriate health services. They may not see themselves as unwell, or may not attribute the problems they’re having to mental health issues. One of the risks is self-medicating with drink and drugs, causing even more chaos in their lives, including the risk of offending. Another risk is that the mental health problem will become increasingly chronic.

IN MANY CASES IT IS HAVING SOMEONE TO OFFER REASSURANCE AND SUPPORT THAT MAKES THE DIFFERENCE...”
“WE TRY AND REASSURE THE WOMEN BECAUSE COMING TO ANAWIM CAN BE DAUNTING AS THEY DON’T KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT...”

ISSHA BARR / Mental Health Case Worker on how the Mental Health Treatment Requirement works in practice:
“Some of our clients know something is wrong with their mental health but they don’t know where to turn. If a woman is referred on a Court Order, Probation and the Court may have concerns about the woman’s mental health but they need further investigation to be undertaken by a qualified practitioner before making recommendations.

We organise for our Mental Health Practitioner (MHP) to assess women prior to sentencing, so the Court Probation Officer can recommend that women with mental health problems are given a Mental Health Treatment Requirement. The court will then sentence the woman to either a Community Order or a Suspended Sentence Order with a Specified Activity Requirement and a Mental Health Treatment Requirement at Anawim. I will then meet her for a first assessment. Women in this situation often arrive tearful and extremely anxious, having felt intimidated by the Court process. I try to get to know each client and her life experiences, what has brought her to where she is today and endeavour to build up trust, as most of our clients do not trust anyone.

We try and reassure the women because coming to Anawim can be daunting as they don’t know what to expect. If we have a diagnosis, either from a Mental Health Team or from our practitioner at Court, they will make recommendations. These might be for example, to engage in one to one support with Sue (our MHP), to attend for anger management, to have acupuncture or receive advice on sleep hygiene. If the woman has no access to services, I will arrange GP registration by finding the nearest GP to her address, go with her to the practice and ask about their registration process.

Documents are always necessary, such as a passport or driving licence, and many women do not have these in which case Sue will liaise through the Primary Care Trust and find out if alternatives could be used, such as a signed photograph or letter. A lot of the women encounter prejudice because GPs may not want to take them on if they have a combination of mental health and substance misuse issues. In that case I will support a client in challenging the decision by going through the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS), or Sue can make representations as she is an NHS employee. Our partnership with the NHS is a huge asset. With this joined up approach we can achieve so much more”.

LEONA’S STORY:

Leona is 38. She had a daughter when she was just 17, the product of an abusive relationship which lasted for some years. Her long history of offending including thefts and burglary goes back to that time, mainly to feed a crack and heroin habit, which in turn was almost certainly self-medication for depression. Leona had three more babies, causing her to be in and out of mother and baby assessment units where she was unsuccessful. Two children are with their father and the other two are living with aunts.

In 2010 she was viciously attacked by her new partner since which time she has suffered from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, a diagnosis made in prison. Soon after her release, and receiving no support with her mental health issues, Leona was convicted of being in possession of a knife, which she had planned to use to harm the man who had attacked her. She was given a Specified Activity Requirement although a Mental Health Treatment Requirement would have been more suitable. She had 24 previous convictions and had always breached orders or received custodial sentences.

In practice, every week working with Leona is different because she is so chaotic. When she first came she was living in the property where she had been attacked and was suffering flashbacks, so I have organised temporary accommodation for her...”
with Midland Heart Housing Association, before she moves into more permanent accommodation. She is on the Anger Management course (Understanding and Reducing Angry feelings) and is learning to deal with challenges in a more positive manner. She admits this is helping her and has received praise from the tutors.

Leona was not registered with a GP and her local GP has refused registration, initially without reason and then citing full lists. She is prescribed a lot of medication. Initially when her prescriptions expired we tried to get it from her previous GP, meaning that there were times when it ran out.

She got much worse during these periods, so is now temporarily under the Health Exchange (an organisation that provides medical help for homeless people) whilst we continue to challenge the GP’s surgery. She needs medication not only for the PTSD but also to help her to sleep.

We can only hope that with our support Leona will receive the interventions she needs. She is an example of many women who have fallen through the net of services.

ISSHA BARR, on her client, Leona

SARAH GALLAGHER / Service Manager
“Where mental health issues arise from social factors such as past or current abuse, social isolation and low self-esteem, women are encouraged to participate in courses that promote emotional awareness and well-being such as Love Yourself, Stress and Assertion and Self-Esteem and Confidence. Combined with one to one support these courses make a big contribution to overcoming the sort of mental health problems that can escalate into severe depression and anxiety disorders – improved confidence and self-esteem is usually a prerequisite for the woman taking a more positive path in all areas of her life”.

SARAH TAYLOR / Family Support Worker:
“Some women suffered from substandard parenting or were in care in their own childhoods, meaning that they didn’t learn the basics about how to look after themselves – such as knowing which foods are good for you, how to cook a nutritious meal and the need for fresh air and exercise.

If their lifestyles are chaotic, and particularly if they are substance abusers, this can take a really terrible toll on their health. We encourage them to eat well, run nutrition and cookery classes and make appointments with GPs, dentists, health visitors and midwives if required”.

ISSHA BARR, on her work with women in crisis:
“Some women present in crisis. Recently I had a client who wanted to throw herself out of a bedroom window in her hostel. She was extremely intoxicated – I sat with her for a long time, talking through her thoughts of suicide, trying to understand what triggered this episode. She was under a Community Mental Health Team (the Zinnia Centre) so I decided she should be taken there for an assessment and support. I have to risk assess this client every time she attends because her condition varies so much – on this occasion the risks were such that two of our workers were required to accompany her.

She was assessed by a duty worker and a psychiatrist who said they could not complete the assessment because of her level of intoxication. We have been unable to get her current dual diagnosis - post natal depression with psychotic elements and alcoholism – updated because MHS say she has to deal with her alcoholism first. We are trying to get her into a detox facility. We have made a referral into a facility that do a 30 day detox, Aquarius having refused her because of lack of motivation and engagement. This client cannot sustain group work so she comes in to see her Probation Officer for supervision, a case worker for one to one support and our MHP for risk assessment and further support. It is necessary to take her to all her appointments, text her to remind her and often physically go out to find her. Her initial offence, cruelty / neglect of a child involved leaving her baby alone in a buggy when she had had too much to drink – the baby has now been taken into care.

Self-medication with alcohol has caused her poor parenting, her offence and the loss of her child yet we are struggling to update her mental health diagnosis and achieve appropriate treatment due to her alcohol use – a vicious circle that we are working hard to break”.

ISSHA BARR, on her client, Leona
JOY DOAL / Project Director: "Research has shown that rehabilitation is most effective where users and previous users are offered on-going support and activities – it is vital that women are offered an alternative lifestyle to replace the culture of drug-taking”.

“IT IS VITAL THAT WOMEN ARE OFFERED AN ALTERNATIVE LIFESTYLE TO REPLACE THE CULTURE OF DRUG-TAKING…”

Interview with Helen, 28/03/2013
“When I was 17 I was a drug abuser and I was on Class A substances that were heroin and crack cocaine. There used to be the Safe project here and I used to collect my prescribed methadone here to stop me taking the heroin and other drugs. It took me some time to get off the drugs and that is how I started coming to Anawim for 3 days per week”. (*external evaluation)

NETTY MILES / Criminal Justice Case Worker:
“There is a full programme of activities at the Centre including a variety of courses which help to keep the women busy and active. It is also very important that the women build up new social networks with friends who are not users. Intensive one to one support is usually crucial – it gives the women someone to turn to during the inevitable times of weakness, helps them build up strategies to deal with temptation, but more than anything, it demonstrates to them that someone cares about their life and what they do with it, even in circumstances when they find it hard to care about their life themselves”.
I was one of seven kids, living with my Mum and Dad. My Mum left for another man - she was a twin and her sister was with his brother. It sent Dad mad and he went into a mental hospital. For a while we all lived with my Mum and her sister but then my Mum started not coming back home. I was around 9 or 10 then, living in a flat with my brothers and sisters. That was when I started going off the rails - it was around then I started using cannabis.

I had one sister and one brother who were older than me, but we all knew we weren’t old enough to be there on our own. We were terrified of going into a children’s home so we didn’t go to school, in case we were found out. Then one day my younger brother crept out and went to school - he was hungry and wanted a school dinner. Social Services came and took my brothers and sisters to a home, but I ran away. I knew where my Mum lived so I went there and lived with her and her boyfriend.

Then my Mum asked me to do things with him - she used to pay me £3.00 to let him have sex with me. After a while he started passing me around to his friends. By that time I was around 12 - 13. It went on all my teenage years - I got pregnant when I was 15. I was worried that Mum’s boyfriend was the father but he wasn’t. I had a boyfriend by then so when my daughter was born I thought she was his - I suppose I wanted her to be. Years later they both had a DNA test and he isn’t the father.

My drug use got worse after someone gave me some cough medicine which had Fezadol in it on a street corner. It’s banned now. Then I started smoking crack and heroin. I kept my day use under control enough, so I could bring up my kids. But I always needed extra money so I shoplifted, usually for food for them. They never went without, but over the years I got 64 convictions for shoplifting. The drugs made me brave enough to do it - I never took anything from small shops or people I knew, just big ones.

Last time I got 18 months’ Probation and a SAR - 30 days at Anawim - for shoplifting food from Sainsbury’s. At first I thought Anawim was like any other place, but people here care. Netty is my worker and she got me to do meditation. I used to take no notice of the instructions and peek at other people. Then I started trying it out and it helped me - it made me stop and think. I like it that there are nuns here, because of all the good they’ve done. When I used to work on the street nuns used to come and give us cups of soup. It gives you something - you know they care - and you can start to put your trust in other people.

I went on the DV course here and we talked about drugs, which helped, but what helped the most was one to one support from Netty. She referred me to Swanswell for methadone and to Tash (Birmingham Settlement) to get my benefits sorted. She helped me find somewhere else to live and now I’m moving to a new Midland Heart property. I’ve been off heroin now, and methadone, for 4/5 months. I was very ill for a month - I’ve been using heroin for 30 years and the longest I’d been off it before this was 4/5 days. My family are very proud - I’m a lot more relaxed than I used to be and I’ve been putting on weight. I came here because I had to - in the past I always re-offended during my sentence, re-offended on bail, as soon as I came out of prison. I’ve been to prison 3 times. This time I haven’t re-offended at all. I saw someone using drugs in a phone box the other day, and I didn’t even want any. Sentencing me to come here was a Godsend”.

TANZEEM CHAUDHRY / Criminal Justice Case Worker: “At Anawim we work closely with agencies such as Swanswell, Addaction, the A-team and local community drug teams, referring the women to the agency most appropriate for them, and then following up, making sure they attend and liaising with their substance abuse worker. In many cases it is a joint effort with the agencies who work on-site at Anawim and elsewhere. Most women with substance abuse issues are disorganised and their attendance is very unpredictable, particularly at first.

We have to do a lot of work following up, finding them if they fail to come in, helping them if they relapse, encouraging them to keep going. And that’s before we even start on the practical issues - substance abuse puts lives into chaos, so there will be a lot of work to do in many areas. If we don’t deal with these successfully the women are more likely to become de-motivated and relapse, creating yet another vicious circle that we have to try and break into”.

In her own words...
It shouldn’t be that hard to imagine getting into a bit of debt, as most of us have had money worries at some time in our lives, been tempted not to open the post or put off paying a bill. But if you don’t have a job, or your income doesn’t meet your expenses, and something else goes wrong in your life that distracts you, it can all spiral out of control very quickly. You take out a short term, high interest loan and start getting demands for amounts of money greater than you’ve ever dreamt of having. Bailiffs are threatening to take the few possessions you have, you don’t understand the process or what powers they have, and you stop believing the situation can ever be rectified. The more you avoid it, the worse it gets, you can’t even bring yourself to think about it anymore.

ANGELA SANKEY / Acting Service Manager: “A significant proportion of the offences that the women on Orders have committed are financially motivated, so addressing financial issues is a priority in preventing re-offending. Having Tash, from Birmingham Settlement, working on site two days a week means that the women receive vital financial advice and support”.

GINA GRAHAM / Prison and Outreach Case Worker: “Many of our clients with debts find it difficult to face up to their financial issues. They come to the Centre with bags of unopened post. It’s common for them to get trapped by what appears to be a quick fix – applying for expensive loans and then having to pay high interest rates out of benefits, leaving them almost nothing to live on”.

FINANCE, BENEFIT & DEBT
ECLiability for debts will also be checked and any necessary
and store cards and catalogues.

deal with any non-priority debts such as unsecured loans, credit
emergency issues area dealt with, the client is invited back to
especially at possession and eviction hearings.  Once the
lot of intensive case work and negotiation with agencies such
Priority debts have to be dealt with first such as rent/mortgage,
financial hardship due to loss of benefits or loss of employment.

THE money advice process is similar to a holistic counselling
Birmingham Settlement:

Examples of Work done by Anawim working with Birmingham Settlement:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLIENT</th>
<th>ISSUE</th>
<th>ACTION TAKEN / OUTCOMES ACHIEVED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GL</td>
<td>Eviction warrant issued - client to lose home with 48 hours.</td>
<td>Emergency application made to County Court. New hearing granted and representation given. New rent arrears payment agreed. Homelessness prevented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FC</td>
<td>Fuel supply (gas &amp; electric) due to be disconnected.</td>
<td>Emergency negotiations undertaken with utility company and 28 day hold agreed. Fuel arrears cleared by means of application to fuel trust fund and affordable payment plan set up.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JG</td>
<td>Client had arrest warrant issued by Magistrates court due to default on fine.</td>
<td>Represented at Magistrates court and deductions from benefits order negotiated. Committal prevented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KD</td>
<td>Bailiffs had entered client’s property to collect for council tax arrears and wanted to seize goods.</td>
<td>Emergency negotiations done with local authority and bailiffs. Bailiffs agreed to take no further action after repayment plan agreed. Seizure of client’s goods avoided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VC</td>
<td>Client’s available income being taken up by excessive bank charges.</td>
<td>Financial literacy advice given plus assistance in setting up “safe” bank a/c.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CL</td>
<td>Client’s benefits had stopped following assessment that had stated she was “fit for work” despite serious physical and mental health issues.</td>
<td>Guidance given through review and appeal process. Representation at Tribunal Appeal allowed, benefits reinstated. Lump sum payment/backdated award of £3,000.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Furthermore, income is maximised through the application to charitable trusts for assistance with bills and the provision of white goods. Applications to trusts such as the Severn Trent Trust Fund have increased since the abolition of the DWP Social Fund in April 2013 (as part of the welfare reform). Also, where clients attend with no access to funds of any kind, food bank vouchers can be provided and B’ham Settlement works closely with the George Fentham Charity to provide emergency shopping vouchers. After the client’s financial situation is stabilised as much as possible, she is encouraged to return for additional financial capability advice - examples of this are advice on budgeting, shopping around for better fuel / phone / internet / mobile tariffs, awareness regarding interest charges when shopping around for credit, basic consumer advice. Clients are also encouraged to join credit unions as there provide the facility for low interest loans in addition to savings schemes”.

Interview with Jill

“They’ve got a lady that comes in from Birmingham Settlement so I met with her when I first started and we looked at my budget, we looked at money coming in and going out. I started a repayment scheme paying the money back, I worked out a budget with her ’cause I was on job seekers originally but obviously coming off that now so I’ve got £71 a week. But if I needed housing or anything else she would have set that up for me.

She helped me draft a letter to explain the reason why I’d claimed the benefit I shouldn’t have and then I asked if I could make a £25 a week repayment but then I had some money from my granddad as well. So she’s helped me take that out of the trust fund that that was in and paid that back so they’ve had a lump sum of that back”. (*university research)

JOY DOAL / Project Director

“The cycle of debt creates an obvious risk of offending and re-offending - some clients admit that unless they can resolve their financial problems they will have to shoplift or return to sex work. In addition recent changes to the benefits system have created problems for many clients. It is very difficult for women to move in a positive direction without addressing money management – once their financial situation is stabilised it is easier for them to consider options for paid employment”.

NATASHA RAMROUS MIMA (Cert) / Senior Debt and Benefits Adviser - Vulnerable Adults, Reaching Out Project, Birmingham Settlement:

“The money advice process is similar to a holistic counselling process as it requires the adviser to establish a good rapport with the client very quickly and searching questions have to be asked. Many clients present in a state of crisis and severe financial hardship due to loss of benefits or loss of employment. Priority debts have to be dealt with first such as rent/mortgage, council tax, magistrates’ court fines and fuel. This can take a lot of intensive case work and negotiation with agencies such as landlords and bailiffs. Court representation is also provided, especially at possession and eviction hearings. Once the emergency issues area dealt with, the client is invited back to deal with any non-priority debts such as unsecured loans, credit and store cards and catalogues.

Liability for debts will also be checked and any necessary complaints and/or challenges made to creditors. In addition to debt advice, the provision of specialist benefits advice is essential for clients. A full benefits check is completed for every client and assistance is given to claim any benefit clients are entitled to, including disability benefits. Many clients attend having had their benefits stopped and are assisted through the review and appeal process. Representation is offered at both First and Upper Tribunals, which requires a high level of specialist knowledge.

Furthermore, income is maximised through the application to charitable trusts for assistance with bills and the provision of white goods. Applications to trusts such as the Severn Trent Trust Fund have increased since the abolition of the DWP Social Fund in April 2013 (as part of the welfare reform). Also, where clients attend with no access to funds of any kind, food bank vouchers can be provided and B’ham Settlement works closely with the George Fentham Charity to provide emergency shopping vouchers. After the client’s financial situation is stabilised as much as possible, she is encouraged to return for additional financial capability advice - examples of this are advice on budgeting, shopping around for better fuel / phone / internet / mobile tariffs, awareness regarding interest charges when shopping around for credit, basic consumer advice. Clients are also encouraged to join credit unions as there provide the facility for low interest loans in addition to savings schemes”.

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JOY DOAL / Project Director: “Our Family Support Service has grown and developed in response to need – the parenting needs of the mothers and the developmental needs of the children. The service we offer is very flexible and can adapt to the requirements of the family concerned. Mothers and children receive support and child care on site and assistance on home visits, as well as referrals to other agencies that can offer support and help dealing with Social Services, solicitors, the courts and school.

The aim is to promote a safe and secure family unit in which children feel loved and can thrive. If we want to break the cycle of intergenerational social deprivation, anti-social behaviour and crime, highly specialised early intervention like this is the key”.
“HELPING TO KEEP FAMILIES TOGETHER IS ONE OF THE MOST REWARDING ASPECTS OF THE WORK...”

SARAH TAYLOR / Family Support Worker:

“When a woman is referred for family support I spend time with her one to one to establish what her needs are and how her needs and lifestyle affect how she parents her children. For instance a woman suffering domestic violence is classed as not being able to safeguard her children from emotional and possible physical harm. If domestic violence is an issue I refer to an organisation such as Women’s Aid and contact the appropriate agencies (Social Services, the Police and solicitors) to ensure that all safety measures are in place.

As regards the children I discuss issues such as welfare and schooling. If they are under 5 I arrange attendance at the crèche so our staff can assess and monitor them. If they are older but not attending school (although have a school place) I contact the school to find out what the problems may be and to work with the school to rectify them. If there is no school place I contact the LEA to find one in the local area. I also contact agencies such as the Boy’s Brigade to ensure the children are receiving activities and support during weekends, holidays and evenings.

“The benefits of the work ripple outwards to the wider family and community. One woman had two children taken into care and adopted due to domestic violence. Her parents disowned her. Then she got pregnant again. The baby was likely to go into care but we got the mother into a mother and baby unit with support through Social Services. This and her attendance at Anawim enabled her to keep the child. Her parents came back on board so the family is back together including links to her sister, nephews and nieces.

“The impact of our work is very varied. For one woman, whose children had been on a safeguarding plan, taking part in the domestic violence course and obtaining a certificate played a major part in her having her children removed from the plan by showing she was able to identify and avoid risky adults and so protect her children from emotional abuse.

Another client wanted to end her relationship with an abusive partner but wasn’t able to obtain accommodation for herself and the children so had to leave her children with her abusive partner. We networked with Social Services and provided support, enabling her to obtain a property and furniture so she could have the children living with her immediately without having them change or miss school, which was very important to her.

I had a client who was living in a hostel after a dispute with a landlord. I assisted her in obtaining a property through Midland Heart enabling her to apply for custody of her two nieces who were living in foster care. Helping to keep families together is one of the most rewarding aspects of the work.

A large proportion of our children are living in poverty – meaning that they are lacking nutritious food, appropriate school uniform and normal educational experiences such as days out and holidays. We provide good food to children coming to the crèche, food bank vouchers, and make referrals to organisations such as those who provide free holidays. We organise and finance trips to the seaside, farms, local parks and other places of interest that the children would otherwise never encounter. We are trying to broaden their horizons and create memories and experiences with their families. These are positive and therefore raise their self-esteem. We are trying to show them a new path and motivate them to aspire to positive and productive lives in the future. Without the sort of experiences we give them they would not know what the possibilities are. When we went to the beach last year some of the children had never seen the sea – they didn’t even understand the concept of it.

Our aim is to enable the women to expand their understanding of what it means to be a parent. Many of the women who come to the Centre look after their children to the best of their ability and knowledge - they feed them, dress them and take care of them. But because their own experience of childhood did not involve the sort of developmental input that many of us take for granted - reading stories to their children, playing games with them, taking them on outings, even if it’s just to the park on the way home from school - these things get missed out.

We try to promote a real enjoyment and pride in being a parent which helps to create stronger and more sustaining relationships both for the mothers and the next generation. Many of the benefits of this work will be seen in the longer term as the children grow up – but we get glimpses now – the pleasure of children experiencing positive feedback and approval from their mothers and the self-esteem that brings”.

22
“PROMOTING A HAPPY, POSITIVE HOME ENVIRONMENT IS VERY IMPORTANT...”

KRIS VALLELY / Child Care Worker
“The impact of our work is often indirect. For example, we helped one mother obtain a secure home – now one of her children has passed his 11 plus and is going to King Edward’s School. This would not have been possible if they were still living in bed and breakfast accommodation. Another woman uses the crèche twice a week so she can have supervised contact with her child – without this they might lose contact altogether, with long term consequences for both”.

SIMONE MERCHANT / Child Care Worker:
“The crèche caters for children aged under 5. We help the children with literacy and numeracy so they don’t fall behind and are prepared for school. We also promote healthy nutrition – sadly over the past couple of years we have observed higher rates of malnutrition and obesity from a poor diet and lack of exercise. We try and educate mothers about the benefits of fresh fruit and vegetables and how to prepare healthy meals, as well as budgeting so they can afford them. We also offer practical help. One mother did not have a cooker so we arranged for one to enable her to cook for the children at home. We have an outdoor play area at the crèche which we use whenever the weather is good. We know that when people develop good eating and exercise habits in childhood these are likely to last a lifetime”.

ANGELA SANKEY / Acting Service Manager, on the benefits of home visits:
“Home visits give staff an insight into family life. They can identify any dangers and needs. For instance a child may have a lot of toys but are not allowed to make a mess and actually use them. Staff will take toys with them to help show children how to play, and educate parents on the importance of creative activities. Promoting a happy, positive home environment is very important. Home visits also help with attendance as children get to know us and are less likely to get upset when left in the crèche. This in turn will help prepare them for a good experience at school”.  

“Just this last year alone we have case worked 412 women. Between them they had 518 children. Nearly half – (252) of these did not live with them. 145 were in local authority care at an estimated cost of £200,000 per child, a staggering total cost of £29 million.

107 were being cared for by family or friends at little cost to the state, but often huge cost to those families. Through our family and support service 33 of these children have been successfully returned to their mothers, some through our Re-Unite Programme, thus saving the Local Authority £6,600,000. Many are or have been on safeguarding plans and with our support have increased contact, developed better relationships or come to terms with the reality of adoption. 72 have been removed from their safeguarding plans and deemed safe.”


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NEEDS</th>
<th>INTERVENTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACCOMMODATION: In hostel due to domestic violence - needed permanent property</td>
<td>Supported with bidding and applications. Taken to view two properties. Helped secure furniture and belongings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDUCATION: No previous qualifications.</td>
<td>Attend Maths, English and employment course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELATIONSHIP: Long term controlling relationship with domestic abuse. Family breakdown. No friends.</td>
<td>Referral to Woman’s Aid. Attendance on DV Awareness course, Mind course and Confidence and Self-esteem courses. One to one support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHILDREN: In care due to DV and neglect.</td>
<td>Supported at all meetings. Enrolled on parenting course. Sent off relevant reports. Tied work plan into outcomes needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMOTIONAL: So fearful had to attend with sister. Unable to look at caseworker. No confidence.</td>
<td>Enrolled in art course until more confident. Joined groups by 2nd week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OFFENDING: Outstanding court case for neglect of children.</td>
<td>Provided support - SAR recommended</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUTCOMES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACCOMMODATION: Living in a two bed property provided by the Council near to school and family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDUCATION: Certificates in Maths and English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELATIONSHIPS: In secure relationship with new partner. Good bond with other family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHILDREN: Returned to mother and removed from Child Protection Plan. No further concerns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OFFENDING: Recommendation for SAR accepted - 60 hours. Custody avoided.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

33 children have been successfully returned to their mothers

Local Authority Saving = £6,600,000
You can’t remember back to before you felt angry all the time. You knew it was your fault when your parents split up, your Mum even said so. You were bullied at school and that was your fault too. There was something wrong with you but you didn’t know what. You felt blamed for everything, it was all down to you. Not any more though, you’ve changed all that. If anyone has a go – they’re for it. When your neighbour complained about you, she got a brick through her window. You got arrested, and the police officer got a mouthful too. The WPC said the only person you were hurting was yourself, but you know you’re going to be hurt anyway, so rather hurt yourself than let anyone else do it! You expect bad stuff to keep on happening to you, but you’re ready to fight back. You don’t want to believe that life could be better because disappointment is too hard to bear. You don’t control anything in your life, it’s up to others and what they do. And you don’t trust any one, expect them to be good to you. They never have been, so why now?
SHAZIA’S STORY:

Coming to Anawim has been my saviour, when I first came here I was angry, emotionally hurt, at my wits end. With the help of my support worker (my Guardian Angel) Netty and Sister Enda I am a changed person. I'm happy, in control of my emotions, and can see a positive ending. I had a few issues in my life that really needed addressing and I wasn't getting any help anywhere.

I’ve had one to one counselling which really helped me see things from better views. Without Netty and Anawim I’d most certainly still be angry which was affecting my day to day life, it was having a negative effect on my 13 year old son, at school he was suffering. Netty supported me on this issue too, which was a big help, as now I’m more secure in myself and less angry, my son has improved greatly at school. Anawim has helped me with money issues, helping me manage, budget and handle my money better. I’ve come to Anawim on a few occasions quite upset and angry and always leave feeling positive.

I’ve attended a few classes at Anawim and gained some positivity from most of them, the teenager awareness class was very helpful. I’m sure the others are helpful but I didn’t think they suited me, and this was easy to discuss with my support worker and she helped me pick ones which I thought I’d gain from.

I’ve lost count of how many times I’ve been able to use the phone to call housing, Job Centre, npower and again without the help of Anawim I wouldn’t have been able to call these organisations and deal with issues that could have a negative effect on my life. I’m a young mother of three beautiful boys but at times I’ve felt like giving up. I can say without Anawim and Netty I’d not be in such a positive place.

SARAH GALLAGHER / Service Manager:

“Working to change attitudes and thinking can be easy to overlook, but fundamentally it is the most important part of our work. You can offer a woman as much practical support as is available but negative attitudes and self-destructive thinking will prevent her from taking advantage of it, or undermine her progress in the longer term.

It is often very hard work to change negative attitudes, particularly where they have become an entrenched habit – it takes a lot of intensive one to one work, requiring staff to challenge, encourage, support and consistently promote a better, more positive approach. Overwhelmingly the women report that strong relationships with case workers, and the feeling that they are cared for, are crucial in building trust and helping attitudes to change”.

ENDA GORMAN / Lead Counsellor, on Anawim’s Counselling Service

“Through counselling we give women the opportunity to explore and discover their true selves. This entails addressing their feelings in relation to childhood issues and the many experiences that have affected their lives within the confidentiality of the counselling situation”.

Interview with Alice:

‘When you’re negative you’ve just got to, you’ve got to think why and like it’s, you’ve got to – I think it’s made me realise the moments in time they’ll pass, you know, but as in before like, I think when I was getting depressed I was going ‘oh my God I can’t cope’ and I think I just made myself worse. But now I try and work through it as best I can and try and look at different ways I can go about things’. (“university research)
CARMEL’S STORY:

Since coming to Anawim it has helped me a lot. There has never been any confrontation in the Centre and the atmosphere is always nice. Shirley and Netty have been the most inspirational and encouraged me and made me feel like a special person especially on my down days. English has helped me too particularly. The most helpful course has been Heal Your Life. It tells you a lot of stuff to empower and love yourself. Each day I read little quotes (affirmations) of what I have learnt. The Beauty (course) tutor pushes me and helps and encourages me. She is brilliant. The Court selected the best place for me. People used to put me down all the time – I was in a dark place now I have been “pulled up to the light”. I am more confident, before I was shy and didn’t want to open up. Things in the past made me feel not worthy, like I’m nothing. I have started to believe the positive things people are saying to me. I didn’t believe in myself. I do now”.

In her own words...

LYNN GODSALL / Centre Manager
“We aim to offer a range of courses, some of which promote self-esteem directly (Love Yourself, Heal Your Life), others which encourage social interaction and self-confidence (Arts, Hair and Beauty, Jewellery-Making) or health (exercise classes, cooking, acupuncture, massage) as well as those which support self-esteem through more academic achievements (English, Maths, other accredited courses). We then encourage women to move on to external courses if appropriate. Once they’ve gained their confidence the sky’s the limit, the changes can be amazing”.

NETTY MILES / Criminal Justice Support Worker, on the Heal Your Life Course:
“Heal Your Life” is a transformational workshop originally created by best-selling author Louise L. Hay (You Can Heal Your Life). It is designed to discover the mindset that has limited success in all areas of life. It focusses on issues such as: uncovering negative messages, addressing willingness to change, forgiveness, changing thoughts (a daily plan), relationships, work and success, prosperity and health. It teaches the women to begin liking themselves which sadly most of them don’t know how to do.

Women are encouraged to buy the book, ‘You Can Heal Your Life’ - the course complements the one to one work that we do with the women and it provides an introduction to self-help and self-improvement literature of which most of them are unaware. The message, in essence, is that we are all responsible for our own lives and only we can change them. It is incredibly empowering for the women, many of whom feel that they lack control over their lives, to encounter this philosophy and engage with it – having the opportunity to deliver this course is wonderful”.

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JOY DOAL:
“Case studies, especially those written by the women, demonstrate how emotional and practical issues interlock and feed into each other. Practical problems drain emotional health, poor self-esteem and bad decision-making cause practical problems. This is why we need a holistic approach in practice – because without it one aspect of life undermines another, creating cycles that it’s hard for the women to escape from”.

Interview with Marie
“I just think it’s a fantastic place, I really do. And I think it’s a shame that they struggle for funding. I really do because I know they’ve turned my life around and while I’ve been here and people that have come and gone and you see the change in them. And it’s positive, it’s all positive. And I don’t think the staff get recognised for what they do, they really don’t and I’m just glad I’m really fortunate that I got sent here. Very fortunate.

I can’t thank the guy that did the pre-sentencing report enough really although I did say (name), my probation officer, knows him and when I got sent to here I just sent him a card just to say thank you because luckily he’s picked up on something and I did get sent here. And I thank my lucky stars. I really do. I think it’s a wonderful place”. (university research)

“THE MESSAGE, IN ESSENCE, IS THAT WE ARE ALL RESPONSIBLE FOR OUR OWN LIVES AND ONLY WE CAN CHANGE THEM...”

Examples of the Feedback Form from the Heal Your Life Course:

How did you feel about the course when you started it? Did you know what to expect?
JN. I felt nervous, I did not know what to expect.
DP. Not really, found it a bit uncomfortable at first as it was bringing emotions to the surface.

Do you feel your attitude or the way you do things has changed since doing this course?
JN. Yes for sure the course has made me see things different.
DP. Yes, very much so, being kinder to myself is the best thing I could have been taught.

What has helped the most?
JN. Being told certain things, like letting go, forgiveness, telling yourself that you love you.
DP. Learning to be positive and to think of myself a lot more than I would of beforehand.
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, RAPE & ABUSE

Rick was 26 and incredibly good-looking. Only 20, you couldn’t believe it when he asked you out. You’d only known him for a few days when he told you he loved you - he even told you your friends weren’t good enough for you and he always wanted to know where you were and what you were doing. The first time he was mean to you, you were shocked, but he was sorry and you forgave him. It happened more and more but you knew it was partly your fault. It was hard to talk to anyone - he didn’t let you go out without him and listened to your phone calls. He lost his temper easily and threatened you - then he hit you and the violence got worse and worse. You looked in the mirror one day and hardly recognised your face. You looked so exhausted and drawn. You left Rick but you felt so depressed, you knew no-one else would ever want you, the only way of feeling any better was to go back to him, though you knew, in your heart, it would all happen again.

“One in three women experiences some sort of domestic abuse in their lives. For the women who attend Anawim it is the majority – as the number of times it features in the case studies in this report show. The Corston Report noted that women’s sexual and violent victimisation can play a part in the onset and persistence of offending, and it’s important to remember that abuse can occur within any domestic context – brothers, sons, mothers in law as well as boyfriends and husbands”.

JOY DOAL / Project Director

Interview with Wendy, 19/04/2013:
"It was like my dad’s friends who tried to touch me and things like that. A friend of the family he was touching me since about 3 years old. I don’t think like I had a childhood. I have been around domestic violence. I have seen my dad do so much to my mum it is unbelievable. I remember a time when we were in the kitchen and my mum asked him to leave but he said I just want one last hug then I will go then he hit her and blood hit me in the face and all over my night clothes all over the floor I was screaming”.
(© external evaluation)
Interview with Emma, 11/06/2012:
“I did a DV course at Anawim that opened my eyes and made me realise that it wasn’t my fault. He was older than me and he used to drink as well. He used to take all my money off me and just sleep with all my friends that I realised wasn’t friends. He would tell his family stuff saying things I wasn’t doing and set them against me as well. I had to learn the hard way my family couldn’t stand him but the more they told me to leave the more I would stay”. (+ external evaluation)

Interview with Katie, 11/04/2013:
“I have been with my partner for 4 years he has been hitting me and stabbed me twice. But they arrested me for hitting him! I called the police twice and they never arrested him. Even the judge couldn’t understand why they had locked me up because of the history of domestic abuse I had from him. I was struggling cause of not just the physical abuse but the mental as well yet they locked me up for hitting him on the arm with a vase. He had a centimetre cut and they locked me away”. (+ external evaluation)

TANZEEM CHAUDHRY / Criminal Justice Case Worker:
“Abuse can be financial as well as emotional. Several of my clients who have been given SARs for benefit fraud have been told by male family members to sign forms without a full understanding of what they are signing. Women of South Asian descent with little English or understanding of the system are particularly vulnerable to this. I organise for them to attend ESOL classes to improve their understanding of English, and attend group work with other women to become more assertive and confident in the future. This is the best way to reduce the likelihood of re-offending”.

Interview with Catherine, 28/3/2013
I was in a 15 year abusive relationship and had 6 kids with him and I finally plucked up the courage to chuck him out. I tried to stay together to be a proper family I tried. But he started then getting violent towards the children and that is when I thought no – enough is enough you can do whatever you want to me but when you start touching the kids thats when I thought I have got to do it. I said to him one day that I’d had enough and I couldn’t believe he just went OK and the next day he’d packed his bag and walked out as simple as that!

I sat there after thinking how simple was that and why didn’t I do this before but you know what I mean. I did live in fear for a long time after is he watching me following me – it was constant fear for a while. (+ external evaluation)

CLAI RE POTTER / Centre Manager: “Domestic abuse is so prevalent - many of the women accept it as normal, especially those who have grown up with it in their own families, or been subjected to it by a family member. It wrecks women’s sense of self-worth, which in turn undermines their ability to escape it. They think it’s their fault and blame themselves. They may fail to recognise the behaviour as abuse at all where it’s psychological rather than physically violent. That’s why our domestic violence course is so important – to help women identify the issues and find good strategies to deal with them. At the same time we are able to make the women aware of support they can get and make a follow up.

Interview with Caroline, 26/01/2012:
Caroline did not trust anyone. After months of one to one sessions she felt able to disclose the extremely painful experiences her father had inflicted on her. Again and again she said, “I am telling the truth, I would never lie about something like this” because, like many abuse victims, she really feels that no-one believes her. Her father repeatedly assured her that no-one would believe her and that he would kill himself if she told anyone.

She feared breaking up the family and her father going to prison. As the truth emerged to her mother and other family members, she felt blamed, shame, embarrassment and guilt. She had confused feelings of loyalty, feeling sorry for the man of whom she had lived in fear - fear of him coming into her bedroom at night, into the bathroom when she was in the shower. For years she felt isolated, for years he never left her alone. A year into working with Caroline, her self-esteem and confidence has really grown. She has started counselling with RSVP. No longer living with her father, she appreciates feeling safe in her own home. She and I talked to the police and her father was arrested. She can take the matter further if and when she is ready, but it must be her decision. She says she feels her life has been saved by Anawim. I am hopeful that one day she wakes up and really does like herself and acknowledges her own inner strength. I’m not sure a lot of us could have got through what she has.

Caroline’s story was told by her caseworker.
Your mum was sent to prison when you were 10 and you went to live in a children’s home. She came to visit when she got out - she said she would come and get you back, but she never did. You felt down, lonely, bad about yourself, but you kept going. When you were fifteen you met a 26 year old man who said you were beautiful. Then he said he loved you. No-one loved you, not even your Mum. It was amazing! He was amazing! When he first offered you drugs you said no, but he kept saying how fantastic you’d feel, that he wanted you both to do them together. Then he said it would make him happy if you’d sleep with one of his friends, and then more of them. Six months later you were sex-working on the streets and buying your drugs from him. You can’t afford the drugs without the sex work or face the horrors of sex work, even the memories of it, without the drugs. You are trapped.
“Outreach – interacting with women who work on the streets at night – has been a priority for us since the earliest days of Anawim. Through Outreach we hope to befriend the women and offer them useful information that may be of help to them”.

How does Outreach work? With the support of a group of volunteers, we meet at Anawim on Mary Street between ten and eleven o’clock on a Tuesday evening – this being the evening we set aside for Outreach. On meeting we spend a few minutes focusing on what we are about to undertake, asking God’s protection for ourselves and the women and that we will be sensitive to the women’s situation on the street. Then there are practical matters to be organised: tea, coffee, chocolate bars, sweets and cigarettes – a cigarette is often what a woman asks for when feeling stressed. Cards with important contact details for the women are prepared with phone numbers of the Homeless Team, Drug Workers, Women’s Aid, and Anawim etc. Once ready, we work in pairs for about two hours. We drive around the areas of Edgbaston, Bearwood, Handsworth and Small Heath; there are certain roads in these districts which are known to the women and which are frequented by the ‘punters’.

We drive slowly, scouting for women who are usually walking to avoid being noticed by the police. These days, only the odd one or two might stand on a street corner – mostly they keep moving and work alone. In the past, two or three women would group together; this gave them a little safety as one would take the registration of the car the other woman had gone in to make sure she returned within a reasonable time.

If we see a woman walking on the street we have to decide if she is a woman involved in prostitution or just a woman on her way home or whatever. When we stop there may only be time for a quick “hello”, but as far as possible we check to see if we can help her in any way or, if it is our first time meeting the woman, give her one of our cards. If she is not under pressure for drug money she might have time to get in the car and have a chat, a hot drink or a snack. At this point we share with the woman whatever facts we have on ‘Ugly Mugs’, which is information shared by women regarding men who have attacked them on the streets. We try to alert the women to the danger they might face from these men. In these short encounters so much depends on how sober or ‘with it’ the woman is at the time. Although meeting two or three women is rare today it is something we value as, on these occasions, the women interact with each other and even encourage one another to come to the Centre. The women who know us will assure the new ones saying, “Oh, it’s the nuns, they’re all right!”

No two nights are ever the same, either in the number of women we meet or the areas they are working in. Often having met a woman one night we may not see her again for weeks or months. At the end of the night’s Outreach it is important that we spend some time debriefing. This is necessary as often a woman will have shared some of her life experiences with us that are disturbing and distressing. At the end of the evening we phone to check that each of us has arrived home safely.”
Enda met Tania on the streets ten years ago. She was a street worker on crack and heroin or, as she said, anything she could get her hands on. She was around 33. She had quite a happy childhood but her Mum died when she was 21, her sister turned to alcohol and the family fell apart. Tania was using drugs and started street working to fund her drug habit.

Tania also had a daughter who lived with her. Tania looked after her physically but admitted she emotionally neglected her because of her drug use. Her daughter was taken into care aged 6 for emotional neglect. She was in long term foster care and Tania maintained contact with her, such as at birthday parties.

Tania was met initially by the Outreach Team. She got into shared accommodation and she used to attend the house (that Anawim had) in Handsworth quite regularly - she would come in for a chat, use the phone, have a bath, but mainly for emotional support. We would have long periods not seeing her but the Outreach Team kept in contact with her on the streets. We supported her into the SAFE Project (a specialist NHS service for sex workers). We then got her into the YMCA when the house she lived in closed down, where she stayed for quite a while.

We lost contact with her for a few months. She had found a housing association flat in Moseley but she was still working and using. She had a new boyfriend, was not working so much but was still using drugs. Then in November 2011 she discovered she was pregnant. Now 42 she was shocked but very pleased. In January 2012 Social Services became involved - due to her history and current situation it was unlikely that she would be able to keep her baby. I was contacted as part of a support team to go to a Social Services Core group (Child Protection Meeting) regarding the unborn child, which included a worker from the SAFE project.

It was decided that Tania would be closely monitored and allocated a midwife who specialises in substance misuse. It was agreed that she would probably not be able to keep the baby - she would have to stop working, stop using and prove to them that she could do this. She stopped using immediately (apart from the methadone) and it was decided that she would be tested by SAFE regularly. She reduced her methadone and remained on a low dose of Subutex. An example of effective multi-agency working, each agency was allocated a day to monitor her - I went to her home every Friday.

Tania’s family were very supportive - encouraged, I think, by the intensive help that she was receiving. The plan was for her to live with her niece, Jade, when she had the baby. Jade would monitor her situation at home. When Tania’s baby, called Tom, was born she was not allowed to be unsupervised with him - she was subject to 24/7 monitoring. I was giving emotional and practical support, making sure
Interview with Helen, 28/03/2013
“I was working on the streets as well as going into cars. I started on the streets and when I met that girl she put me on the streets first then I went up to a house and then to a sauna. I was in all the saunas. I have had a gun put to my head and been robbed in a sauna. On the streets nothing ever happened to me. I have had customers strangling me for no reason. When you see men after living this life you just look at them and think disgusting even if he is an angel sent down from heaven and he is a man but you are just going to think he is a man, disgusting, and walk the other way. I have no confidence in men whatsoever I have no trust in them. I have very big trust issues with men which is understandable I suppose”. (external evaluation)

Interview with May, 28/3/13
“I used to do escorting to fund my drug habit – this was a horrible time absolutely horrible and I was caught by the police managing a sauna went to court and got a big fine this is now on my criminal record for life. I got into the escort business through an older woman; she was a lot older than me at the time. She was 30 I was 17 I had just had my daughter who got taken off me when she was 1.5 years old due to my chaotic life style and that is how I got into the business and that girl hit me pushed me around and made me do things I didn’t want to do made me get properties in my name – I was very gullible at the time and she certainly has it now”. (external evaluation)
COMMUNITY OUTREACH & PRISON IN-REACH

JOY DOAL: “Our community outreach and prison work, which is funded by the Lottery, reaches women who would otherwise receive no support at all. They are at risk of offending and of developing a myriad of health problems but have low access to services and few skills for dealing with statutory agencies. Many really don’t understand how the system works. These women are often very chaotic and need large amounts of sustained long-term input. The work is labour-intensive because the workers have to travel around Birmingham to meet the women, take them to appointments and find them when they don’t attend. The prison work is vital if women are to turn their lives around on release. It is now widely understood that ex-prisoners need help with resettlement. Anawim have been doing it for years”.

AMANDA HIGGINS / Prison and Outreach Worker
“I used to work for the police doing arrest referral work, so if someone tested positive in the cell block they had to talk to us. If they required assessment we would refer to the DIP team or undertake regular meetings and support. I wanted to come and work at Anawim because I thought I could do more to help, and it is a specialist job working only with women. It is holistic and we can achieve so much more. I work in the community with women with multiple and complex needs – they are not required to come to us but do because of the relationships built up and the trust that exists between us.

Community outreach is intensive and time consuming but very rewarding because we are reaching women who are not reached by anyone else. Many of the women I deal with on Community Outreach are older and their problems have become very entrenched. It’s obviously easier if we meet women when they are younger and try to steer them on to the right path”.

AMANDA HIGGINS, on her client Judy:
“Judy, who is 38, said she was either going to kill herself or come here – that was the choice she thought she had. She came here and from there we have sorted out her money including rent arrears, referring her to Birmingham Settlement. She couldn’t go home because of fear of violence, so she was sofa surfing, staying with users. We accommodated her in the Erdington house, provided to us by a private landlord, gave her food parcels, clothes, a bus pass, and collected her from hospital.

She is much more stable now. She is doing courses to occupy her time and eating better. She can’t read or write so she can’t sort her bills out alone. I help her with shopping and budgeting. She is street working less, but still puts herself at risk. I have helped to get furniture, toiletries, clothes and am dealing with her medical issues. There is a lot of work involved – she is here nearly every morning. She is trying to build a more positive future – without Anawim she wouldn’t have had anyone to help her at all”. 
I met Rachel in Drake Hall prison, referred by her Offender Manager in the prison. It was her first offence. She was in for importation of illegal drugs for 5 years.

Rachel was 27 years old. She had one son of 8 who was living with her mother and she had just discovered that she was pregnant. She had split up with her partner, her son’s father, due to emotional abuse. She had her baby daughter in prison in the mother and baby unit and kept her baby with her until she was 9 months old, when she went to live with her natural father. Rachel had regular contact with the children whilst in prison.

When I first met her she was suffering quite badly with depression because she was worrying how she was going to get her family back together when she got out. We discussed the Re-Unite programme. I explained it to her and she signed the agreement (meaning she was agreeing to be supported by Anawim through the Re-Unite programme and Midland Heart for a year). She had been doing a lot of courses in prison because she was keen to get employment on release.

I referred her to Women Acting In Today’s Society - WAITS (a safe house for women) and they accepted her which meant that she could come out of prison early on tag. She had served 3 years. I met her at the prison gates and took her to her first probation appointment and then on to WAITS where she would be staying until we could find longer term accommodation. She stayed with WAITS for a few months and I visited her there. Fortunately she was able to see her son while at WAITS and take him to school and she was spending weekends with her daughter at the grandmother’s home.

Rachel’s case is a good example of multi-agency working. WAITS worked with her on DV issues, I liaised with Probation and talked to her about her offending behaviour. I also liaised with Social Services as her daughter was under guardianship of the father and he was being quite difficult about Rachel’s contact.

I negotiated with Midland Heart for a 3 bedroomed property. Rachel’s mother was not very well and she needed to care for her, and I discovered there were some new properties being built on her mother’s road. I was told all the houses had been allocated but I met with senior staff at Midland Heart and explained the situation, which led to Rachel being given a new three bedroomed house in the same road as her mother. She came out of prison in February last year and had moved in to the new property by October, a very quick turnaround. She now has full time care of her son and daughter (who has regular contact with her father).

In January this year Rachel did two weeks’ work experience at a solicitors’ office in the city centre. On the day she left she was seen crying outside the office because she did not want to stop working there, and was told there was a job going in the next door office. She applied for it and I was able to supply her with a character reference based on my work with her, as she had no references. She was employed working in reception and administration. Her tag was removed in August. She is now working full-time relying on her mother for some child care and her son is at school down the road. She needs little intervention but under the Re-Unite agreement I have to keep regular contact with her for 12 months.

Rachel has done extremely well. She lacked confidence but this has really improved. She was someone who thought she couldn’t do things but has found out that she can. My role is to provide one to one support at home which offers her someone outside of the family who she can talk to. She rings if there is a problem with bills which she doesn’t understand. In this case everything fell into place once Rachel had a suitable home close to her mother, who she can help care for and who in turn can look after the children while Rachel works. All of these factors maximise the chances of Rachel achieving full independence and maintaining it”.

Rachel’s story was told by GINA STOKES

www.re-unite.org.uk
JOY DOAL: “Over the past 18 months our case workers have visited more than 200 women in prison, providing 524 support sessions within the prisons and a total of 792 support sessions to women following release. Case workers have made numerous referrals to housing associations, Birmingham Settlement, rehabilitation facilities and other agencies in order to connect the women to services and help them to resettle in the community. This is in addition to the constant emotional and other practical support that they offer to the women in every area of their lives. The benefits of this work are profound and reach many of the most disadvantaged families in our society. We are determined to build on it in the coming years”.

GINA STOKES / Team Leader Prison & Outreach, answers the question:

What do you do when you go into the prison?
“We find out support needs. A lot of the work involves contacting and liaising with all the other agencies, speaking to solicitors, family, probation officer, social workers and mental health workers. We are trying to bring everything together - trying to get everything to fall into place. We represent something different from other people, from the statutory agencies that come into prison. Officers will often say ‘you got a lot more out of her than she ever tells us’. This gives us more insight into support needs and how to address them. Then we can make an exit plan. We have been doing prison resettlement for years. The big issue is the lack of direct access accommodation - if women are not categorised as needing rehab or supported housing there is nowhere suitable. Most of the temporary housing is in areas where there is a lot of negative behaviour which is not helpful. The women’s hostels often have women in them who are using drink and drugs which is not a safe environment”.

Interview with Belinda, 28/03.2013
“Whilst being in prison the worker from Anawim was there and she was supporting me with housing and other needs that I had at the time because I was quite emotionally distressed as well with going to prison and with everything else I had to deal with before I went to prison”. (* external evaluation)

QUOTE FROM JULIET LYON CBE
DIRECTOR PRISON REFORM TRUST
www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk

“IF YOU WANT TO KNOW WHAT WORKS TO CUT CRIME AND REDUCE OFFENDING BY WOMEN, COMPARE THE LIMITATIONS OF THE REGIME IN MOST WOMEN’S PRISONS WITH THE SCOPE AND SENSE OF PURPOSE AT ANAWIM. COMPARE THE HOPELESSNESS AND DEPENDENCE YOU FIND AMONGST WOMEN IN PRISON WITH THE PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY ENGENDERED BY ANAWIM THAT ENABLES WOMEN TO CARE FOR THEIR CHILDREN, FIND SAFE HOUSING, BREAK ADDICTIONS, LEARN NEW SKILLS AND TURN THEIR LIVES AROUND. AND THINK HOW MANY WASTED LIVES COULD BE AVOIDED, AND HOW MUCH TAXPAYERS’ MONEY SAVED, BY REDUCING WOMEN’S IMPRISONMENT AND INVESTING INSTEAD IN COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS TO CRIME”.

200 women visited in prison
524 support sessions within prison
792 support sessions following release
VOLUNTEERING & MENTORING

ANGELA ALVES / Volunteer Co-Ordinator, describes Anawim’s mentoring programme: “Our mentoring programme comes as an extension of the holistic support Anawim already provides. It is a volunteer programme which aims to give the women who are finishing their case managed period with Anawim, on completion of their order, the chance to have a caring hand to help them regain independence by finding meaningful activities and working towards employment. The mentors can also work alongside case workers to encourage positive engagement and to carry out extra support.

As the Volunteer Co-ordinator, I am in charge of the mentoring programme and manage volunteer mentors so case workers make referrals to me initially. Once a mentor is matched to a mentee, a 3 way meeting is organised between the mentor, the mentee and the case worker to define what area the mentee would like to work on during the length of the mentoring relationship. An action plan with set objectives is drawn up. The relationship will then revolve around achieving these objectives. A mentoring relationship is set up for a 3 month period which can be renewed if needs be. Mentors and mentees will meet on a weekly basis. Mentors have regular supervision sessions with the Volunteer Co-ordinator to discuss the development of the relationship. At the end of the relationship the mentee will leave as a mentor:

Volunteer Mentor Saheeda describes her experience as a mentor: “At the beginning the client was anxious. She cancelled the first meeting and made excuses not to come to the second meeting. The rapport finally developed and we slowly built a trusting relationship. After the 4th or 5th meeting she started to talk openly and honestly about her past, her current difficulties and her struggle to trust people. She has low self-esteem and lack of motivation due to life circumstances. Right at the beginning of the mentoring relationship we agreed that culturally-based counselling would be a real benefit for her so I referred her to a service that provides telephone counselling. It is on regular basis and at a time and date chosen by the client. She found the sessions extremely helpful as she is able to talk to someone about her feelings and express her anger in a controlled manner. This assisted greatly with improving her confidence and self-esteem and she could then start to set goals for her future.

Gradually through the 12 weeks we worked towards achieving the objective we set up. Attending a course was what she aspired to do. She and I researched the relevant courses and suitable colleges offering women-only classes. We went to the chosen college to look at the building and registered for a course. She also joined the local library and took out books relating to the subject she wants to study.

It was crucial that her mentor was non-judgemental and listened to what she had to say in order to make the relationship work on a practical level and to help her to overcome her own barriers. Overall, she found the experience beneficial and worthwhile. Her confidence grew as the weeks went by. She is now waiting to hear from the college about a start date for her course.

As for me, at times it was hard to listen to her stories but it was important to remain objective and non-judgemental and I could clearly see how she benefited from having someone she could trust and talk to. Mentoring was a very rewarding experience. I also learnt quite a few things about the services that are available i.e. educational facilities for women only. My life experience was useful in working out problems and addressing them in a constructive manner, and helped to prevent me from being overwhelmed by her pain”.

We use different tools to measure the impact of the service. The completion of the action plan and achievement of the preset objectives is an important part of assessing outcomes. Feedback forms are given to the mentee after 6 weeks and at the end of mentoring relationship, providing the mentee with the opportunity to comment on the service she receives.

A mentoring monitoring form is used at the start and at the end of the relationship to monitor the improvement (or ‘distance travelled’) of the mentee in key areas of her life. We work towards outcomes that maximise the likelihood that mentees will sustain independence and on-going achievement into the future.”
Anawim has over a quarter of a century of experience working with vulnerable women. We have been in the forefront of developing new ways of working and will always embrace innovation and fresh ideas. At the same time our approach is underpinned by the ethos and expertise that we have nurtured over the years we have devoted to this work.

We hope that the mixture of case studies, women’s stories and case worker contributions in this Impact Report have provided some insight into the lives of the women who we work with, the range and nature of interventions that they need, and what can be achieved by an individually-tailored and holistic package of support delivered by skilled workers.

The case studies demonstrate how the issues facing women interlock and interact with each other - all of the women we work with have multiple and complex needs and their stories could have been reported under many of the pathways, if not all of them. This is what a ‘holistic approach’ means in practice – dealing with all issues at once or in close succession in order that any outstanding problems do not ‘trip the woman up’ and undermine her achievements. If you try to deal with emotional issues without addressing practical obstacles, those obstacles are likely to drain and depress, negating positive progress. Similarly if you address practical issues but fail to promote mental health, self-esteem and self-worth, self-destructive tendencies can re-emerge and prevent the maintenance of practical progress.

Rehabilitation is necessarily different in every case, depending on the woman’s needs and her own ability and motivation to deal with them. It must be individualised, it must deal with whatever issues are presented and it requires experienced workers who know how to tailor their approach according to the capabilities and attitudes of the woman concerned. Helping people to change any of their habits is difficult – addressing poor habits derived from damaged childhoods and compounded by self-destructive decision-making is an enormous challenge.

As the report also shows, case workers need an unfailingly positive attitude and approach to deliver this type of service. They have to make numerous judgements about which interventions will work best for each woman and be prepared to adapt their action plan if it isn’t working. They have to be resilient enough to absorb the setbacks, the hours of work that seem wasted when a woman regresses, and deal with the negativity and anger that some of the women show towards them. Workers help to achieve inspirational transformations but also experience disappointments when, in some cases and after much effort, they are forced to accept that a woman to whom many hours has been devoted was not ready to move on. Then you read a case study such as Tania’s and realise that, sometimes, even the women who seem to be failing to progress and remain entrenched in self-destructive patterns for years can turn their lives around.

Workers sometimes go home in the evening worrying about a woman who has threatened to harm herself, returned to an abusive partner or has just failed to attend with no word as to her welfare. Sometimes we have to ask the police to carry out ‘safe and well checks’ – it is touching to see the relief on the workers’ faces when they discover, as is usually the case, that the woman concerned is fine. Good supervision of staff is essential and clinical supervision must be factored in to avoid burn out, stress and high sickness levels. I know, because I have been a case worker, how very draining the work can be.

Yet we never forget that the hardest work of all, the most painful and challenging journey, is undertaken by the women
themselves. Changing deep root habits and patterns is so extraordinarily difficult and takes so much persistence, so much determination and so much sustained strength.

We are delighted that Anawim, alongside Probation, achieved a re-offending rate of under 1% for women who completed their Specified Activity Requirement over the past year. This is a real affirmation of our approach and of the hard work and skill of our team. I want to thank them and our partners so much for their dedication and perseverance, often in the face of situations that, to most people, would look hopeless. I know that for all of them, success is its own reward.

All of the work, by our partners, the women and the workers, combines to create this reality of transforming lives – the struggles, the ups and downs, the tiny changes that build towards a new future. The triumphs are hard fought for and hard won. We are so grateful to the funders whose vision and farsightedness enables our work. We believe it will be their contributions that will make true transformation across our communities a reality for generations to come.

JOY DOAL, MBE / Project Director

“FOR MANY WOMEN OFFENDERS, THOSE AT RISK OF OFFENDING, OR THOSE WHOSE LIVES ARE IN CHAOS, A COMMON FEATURE OF THEIR LIVES IS TO BE TALKED AT RATHER THAN LISTENED TO. HOWEVER, WHEN YOU LEARN OF THE REALITY OF THEIR LIVES AND THE HARDSHIPS AND HEARTACHES THEY HAVE ENDURED, YOU REALISE THAT THEY ARE ADMIRABLE SURVIVORS RATHER THAN HOPELESS MISFITS. I HOPE AND BELIEVE THAT THIS REPORT WILL ENABLE THE PROCESS OF UNDERSTANDING AND ADMIRATION”.

RT HON BARONESS JEAN CORSTON *

ATTRIBUTES
* These are drawn from in-depth interviews with women service users. This exercise formed part of the evaluation of the partnership between Midland Heart and Anawim which is one of the major objectives of the EU project From Street to Home: Investigating how an integrated approach to housing provision and social support can reduce the threat of violence against women, funded by the European Commission Directorate General for Justice, DAPHNE programme [1]. The content of this report reflects only the views of Anawim, one of the project partners. The European Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained herein.
† Desistance & Reintegration: Experiences of a Women’s Community Centre - 2013 - Dr Sarah Pemberton (Birmingham City University) and Dr Sam King (University of Leicester).
If you would like to receive a copy of the research, email Sarah on Sarah.Pemberton@bcu.ac.uk