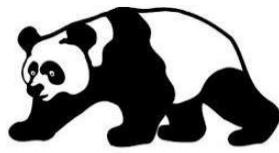


# Oldham Women's Network Foundation Group

## IMPACT REPORT 2024-25

Domestic Abuse Prevention, Support and Recovery



WFCDP



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## 1. Foreword

We extend our sincere thanks to the Oldham Domestic Abuse Partnership for its continued investment and support in preventing domestic abuse and supporting recovery across Oldham. This sustained funding has enabled the Oldham Women's Foundation Group to maintain and strengthen vital, community-based services for women, children and families affected by abuse.

We would also like to acknowledge, with deep respect, the women and survivors who have trusted us with their lived experiences. Their courage, insight and willingness to engage, co-design and provide honest feedback have directly shaped our services and strengthened our collective response. Survivor voice remains central to our work.

We are grateful to Action Together and our partners across the Oldham Women's Network for their collaboration, shared learning and advocacy. These partnerships have enabled us to influence local strategy, strengthen the voluntary sector's voice, and contribute meaningfully to system-wide responses to domestic abuse.

As we move forward, we remain committed to deepening these partnerships, amplifying lived experience, and continuing to work collectively to create safer futures for women and families across Oldham.

## 2. Introduction

The Oldham Women's Foundation Group is a coalition of five women-led organisations rooted in Oldham: Reel Education Empowering Lives (REEL) CIC, Peaceful Minds CIC, Werneth and Freehold Community Development Project (WFCDP), Support and Action for Women's Network (SAWN), and UK Education & Faith Foundation (UKeff).

Together, we deliver culturally competent, trauma-informed prevention, support and recovery services for women, children and families affected by domestic abuse. This report has been co-produced to demonstrate the reach, depth and impact of our collective work across Oldham's voluntary sector. Our work is supported by Action Together and funded by the Oldham Domestic Abuse Partnership.

Domestic abuse is not a short-term crisis. Its impacts are long-lasting and often compounded by mental health needs, poverty, immigration status, language barriers and systemic inequality. Our collective approach recognises these intersections and responds with flexibility, cultural sensitivity and long-term commitment.

We work to reduce harm, prevent escalation, and ensure that individuals affected by abuse receive timely, trusted and appropriate support. We also challenge stigma, disrupt harmful norms, and create safer spaces for disclosure, recognising that prevention, early intervention and survivor-led design are essential to sustainable change.

### 3. Prevention

An estimated 2.4 million adults aged 16 and over experienced domestic abuse in the last year, representing around 5% of the population. Prevention therefore remains a critical priority.

As a Foundation Group of women-led services embedded within local communities, we deliver a wide range of preventative interventions designed to reduce harm, increase awareness, and strengthen protective factors for women and families.

Our prevention work includes personalised one-to-one support, culturally sensitive group sessions, and education addressing hidden and taboo forms of abuse. We provide multilingual support in over 25 languages and dialects, removing barriers to access and enabling women to engage safely in ways that reflect their cultural and religious contexts.

We deliver training on domestic abuse dynamics, including coercive control, power and control, online and technology-facilitated abuse, and legal rights within the UK. This includes training delivered in community languages such as Urdu, alongside culturally specific sessions exploring safeguarding, law and social norms.

Digital abuse continues to rise alongside increased reliance on smartphones and connected devices. We actively support women to understand online risks, build digital confidence and regain autonomy. Through our partnership with The Good Things Foundation, registered digital skills centres within our group provide training in digital inclusion and online safety.

Peer-led support groups, community awareness campaigns (including 16 Days of Action and White Ribbon), parenting programmes and family interventions further strengthen prevention by reducing isolation, promoting healthy relationships and building community-based resilience.

### 4. Support

*“No-one actually believed how bad it was. People just told me to leave, like it was easy. You believed me, listened, and helped me take the steps. I eventually escaped. Best thing I ever did.” – Service User*

Access to timely, trusted support is essential when someone is ready to seek help. We recognise the many barriers that prevent disclosure, including shame, stigma, complex referral pathways, long waiting lists, and fear of statutory services. These barriers are often intensified for marginalised communities.

In response, the Oldham Women's Foundation Group provides trauma-informed, needs-led support that is flexible, culturally sensitive and responsive. In 2024, our support included:

- Immediate crisis support, including financial assistance, food, clothing and emergency provisions
- One-to-one emotional and practical support for women at all stages of their journey
- Multilingual advocacy and culturally appropriate guidance
- Support with housing, welfare benefits, immigration, education and legal processes
- Safety planning, risk assessments and safeguarding referrals
- Family and individual therapy, including reintegration support where appropriate
- Peer support groups to reduce isolation and rebuild confidence
- Practical assistance with schooling, healthcare access, banking, utilities and digital access

We work holistically, recognising that recovery is not linear and that individuals must be supported at their own pace, with dignity, choice and respect.

## 5. Recovery

Women are approximately twice as likely as men to experience domestic abuse, equating to an estimated 1.7 million women annually. Abuse erodes self-worth and often leaves lasting emotional, psychological and financial harm.

Recovery requires time, trust and stability. Our approach supports individuals to rebuild safety, identity and independence through long-term, consistent support.

We support recovery by providing personalised action plans, unlimited access to support workers, culturally sensitive counselling and therapy, family interventions, financial advocacy, skills development and pathways into education and employment. We actively reduce isolation through befriending, volunteering and peer connection.

Our recovery work recognises the wider systems that impact healing, including housing security, immigration status, mental health access and financial stability. We work collaboratively to ensure services are coordinated, responsive and centred on individual strengths rather than solely on trauma.

## 5. Challenges

Between April 2018 and March 2021, 269 women and 104 men were victims of domestic homicide. This stark reality underscores the urgency of early intervention and sustained support.

As a Foundation Group, we face ongoing challenges, including short-term funding cycles, increasing demand, limited resources, gaps in commissioned services, barriers linked to immigration status, language and digital exclusion, and insufficient local provision for perpetrators, children who harm, and women with multiple unmet needs.

Women from marginalised ethnic communities are disproportionately affected and are less likely to disclose abuse, often enduring harm for longer before seeking support. Building trust within communities remains essential.

Despite these challenges, we continue to respond flexibly, advocate persistently, and deliver support wherever possible under relevant legislation, including the Care Act, Children Act and Human Rights Act.

## 6. Our Impact and Achievements (2024)

In 2024, the Oldham Women's Foundation Group supported over 3,000 women and their families through prevention, crisis intervention and recovery.

Key achievements include:

- Over 3,000 women engaged in support services
- 77 women and 40 children supported in SAWN safe spaces
- Over 450 one-to-one counselling sessions delivered
- £10,545 provided in emergency financial support
- Over 150 women supported with food parcels
- Over 500 women provided with clothing and essential items
- Over 50 women supported into employment or volunteering
- 86 women completed accredited training
- 180 women completed safety planning
- Families supported through therapy, reintegration and recovery holidays

Our work has strengthened confidence, reduced isolation, improved mental wellbeing, rebuilt family relationships, and supported women to move from crisis to stability.

## 7. Opportunities, Gaps and Investment Needs

Sustained, long-term investment is essential to maintain and strengthen our impact. Women consistently tell us they seek support where they feel safe, understood and believed. The voluntary sector plays a critical role in meeting this need.

Priority areas include:

- Longer-term funding for stability and workforce retention
- Investment in therapeutic services for adults and children
- Strengthened referral pathways and shared standards across Oldham
- Improved access for women with no recourse to public funds
- Culturally appropriate housing and local safe spaces
- Expanded training for staff, volunteers and survivors
- Trauma-informed, healing-centred system-wide approaches

## 8. Partnership Working

Over the past twelve months, we are proud of the strong partnerships we have continued to build through the Oldham Women's Network and beyond. Our collective approach has strengthened provision, improved coordination and amplified the voice of women within local systems.

We remain committed to collaboration, shared learning and continued advocacy to ensure that women and families affected by domestic abuse in Oldham receive the support they need, when they need it.