



BLACKBURNE  
HOUSE

*Steve Morgan*  
FOUNDATION

# SOCIAL IMPACT REPORT 2020-22

39 Years Inspiring Women

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Andrea Rushton,  
CEO

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# MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO: ANDREA RUSHTON

Throughout 2020 – 2021 and into 2022, it has been a difficult period for everyone and it seems more so for women. They have been the workers, the homeschoolers and the carers to their families and in their communities. A tough balance to maintain and as a consequence it has affected their own sense of progression, achievement and mental health.

We have, since our inception in 1983 built our products and services around the needs of our client group. We noticed a shift during this period and scaled up and co-created our counselling & wellness provision to increase the support we could offer, so where possible we could mitigate the pressures on mental health, increases in domestic abuse and provide funds when a woman experienced financial crises.

We were able to adapt our approach remotely to reduce isolation, for women to remain connected and to ensure women didn't fall into more serious mental health decline.

Consequently, and with the support of The Steve Morgan Foundation we have achieved something we had aspiration to do for many years, which was to provide interventions when women were at their most vulnerable and then see real and lasting change in them improving their life chances.

A huge thank you to you all as the service continues to grow and reach the most in need.

The following report captures some of what I have touched upon and we would like to extend our thanks to The Connectives for their dedication and support in producing this report.

To finish with this...Helping one person might not change the whole world, but it could change the world for one person.....we hear this from our client's time and again.



# WELCOME

Welcome to Blackburne House's Social Impact report for 2020/2021. This report captures the social impact created through the services and activities delivered by Blackburne House in the Liverpool City Region.

2019-2021 has been characterised by the global COVID-19 pandemic. It has affected every nation and has changed the way that we all live our daily lives.

It has presented enormous challenges in terms of self-isolation, social distancing and protection for the most vulnerable groups in our societies.

As a result of this schools, businesses, local authorities and a whole host of other day to day activity providers have had to adapt their services to try and meet public need whilst also protecting their staff and customers.

In order to understand our impact and see how it fits with our values, we commissioned The Connectives to complete a full impact analysis of our services and activities during 2020-2021, which enables us to identify the value we are delivering to our beneficiaries and society as a whole.

The following services are included as part of this evaluation:



# METHODOLOGY OVERVIEW

We have undertaken the Social Audit Network process of social accounting as a method of social impact assessment and carried out a process of qualitative and quantitative data collection in order to assess whether the Blackburne House and its services have had an impact on the lives of learners, customers and, staff.

Such data was gathered from 1-2-1 interviews, case studies and surveys. The report also utilises Social Return on Investment methodology introducing financial proxies to enumerate the social value derived from the subsidiaries activity. These approaches were selected because we believe that in combination these methods:

- Capture quantitative and qualitative data to provide narrative and economic measures appealing to a mixed audience
- Hear the voice of the person served and the partners in delivery
- Consider the materiality of evidence – what matters most when considering the impact of each subsidiary
- Have credibility in a crowded market place - secured from international recognition of the Social Audit Network accreditation
- Be based upon clear and transparent principle

## Key Findings

The report demonstrates through the voice of the key stakeholder groups (clients, strategic and delivery staff) that positive social impact has been created within the scope of the key objectives, with the majority of individuals reporting positive experiences and resultant life changes.

The counselling and wellness programme has successfully established itself in an area of critical need filling the gaps in statutory services. The service has reached thousands of women across Liverpool and built an excellent track record with a 97% customer satisfaction rate and a 7% 'did not attend' (DNA) rate. In comparison to another local service Talk Liverpool, that has a DNA rate of 27%, we can demonstrate that we engage, retain and support those that are the hardest to reach and provide a service and staff that are reflective of the community we are embedded in.

# ABOUT BLACKBURNE HOUSE

Blackburne House, formerly the Women's Technology and Education Centre (WTEC), was established in 1983 with the aim of progressing women from disadvantaged backgrounds into employment within technical professions – an area in which, at the time, women were significantly under-represented.

The organisation grew quickly and considerably and, in 1991, moved into new premises in Liverpool's famous Georgian Quarter. More than £4m was raised in order to breathe new life back into Blackburne House and the beautiful, Grade II-listed building became our new home.

Today, Blackburne House is a vibrant and thriving organisation and one of the country's leading education centres for women. Over the years, they have established a number of successful social enterprises that succeed in supporting their educational aims and provide tangible examples of how new markets can be used to serve local communities.



EMPOWERING WOMEN THROUGH EDUCATION



BLACKBURNE HOUSE



# OUR VISION AND VALUES

The vision of Blackburne House is to educate and upskill women so that they can pursue professions in every sector and at every level – including maintenance, logistics and technology, where women are still typically under-represented.

We aspire to give confidence to the women we work with so that they can go on to live independent lives, believe in their dreams and achieve their ambitions. We want to inspire our women to believe that anything is possible.

We want to instil a culture of empathy and understanding; of inclusion and acceptance. We want to overcome prejudice, discrimination and adversity and create a positive and holistic environment where women can share, learn and grow.

At Blackburne House, we have a core set of values that is ingrained into everything that we do. Those values are integral to our organisation, helping to define our long-term aims and objectives and influence the way we work.



INSPIRATION

EQUALITY

TRANSFORMATION

INDEPENDENCE

SOCIAL VALUE



# OUR CUSTOMERS

Our customers come from many different backgrounds and circumstances - it's a uniqueness that we're hugely proud of, and we celebrate the diversity of our people within Blackburne House. Every person is treated with the same respect, given the same level of support and offered the same opportunities.

We are committed to inspiring the women we work with at Blackburne House; raising aspirations is built into our education and development programmes and always reflected in our teaching, working and the services we provide.



"Blackburne House has been my home since I came to this country"

"There shouldn't be a woman in Liverpool who hasn't heard of Blackburne House"



# OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

## INPUTS



Relationships with staff, customers, clients and networks



Non-financial support like technical assistance, information & resources



Flexible funding

## ACTIVITIES



Providing wellness support services such as counselling & mindfulness sessions



Accredited educational courses and programmes



Providing assistance with financial support services

## IMMEDIATE OUTCOMES



Women of Liverpool have increased access to free Mental Health services



Women have access to funding or financial support to access the services



Local women have access to programmes and training to learn new skills, increasing their employability, gaining confidence

## IMPACTS



Women will be safe and enjoy a high quality of life



Women will have equal opportunities



Woman will have increased independence and be more financially secure

## LONG-TERM OUTCOMES



Women feel more confident and have the tools to manage their mental health



Women will have increased access to employment opportunities in Liverpool



Women have more sustainable access to education

# COUNSELLING & WELLNESS PROGRAMME

Counselling and wellness programme is a newly formed programme that started at the beginning of the global pandemic.

Blackburne House recognised and responded to the increased demand in support for women and the decline in mental health following the impact of COVID-19 and the national lockdowns.

The programme offers these services free of charge with the aim to plug the gaps of the statutory services that are often hard to access or have long waitlists. The rapid growth of the service has emphasised the fact that these services are essential to the women of Liverpool.

It aims to support the most vulnerable women in the local community at what is now an extremely critical time. A further aim of this project is to be able to offer a complete wraparound service and link into our educational sector by training our counsellors in-house to create a sustainable and quality workforce.



# WHAT IS THE OFFER?

Once we receive a referral, we undertake an initial triage process to identify the level of support that is required dependent on the presenting issues at that moment in time. Once that assessment is complete, they will be offered a session plan suited to their needs. The table below shows the various plans that we offer.

Triage Tier	Session Plan
Tier 1 - Initial Assessment	Initial 1:1 assessment
Tier 1 - Moderate referral 1:1s	6 x 1:1 sessions per woman
Tier 2 - Moderate referral Group Wellness Sessions	4 x Group Therapy Sessions - 10 women per session
Tier 2 - Moderate referral Group Counselling Sessions	6 x Group Therapy Sessions - 10 women per session
Tier 2- Acceptance & Commitment Therapy	8 x Groups ACT Sessions – 12 women per session
Tier 3 - Intensive support 1:1s	15 x 1:1 Sessions per woman

For our wellness group sessions, we offer four core sessions:

- Session one: **Introduction to mindfulness**
- Session two: **Confidence, Self-esteem and Resilience**
- Session three: **Communicating Mindfully**
- Session four: **What now?**

We also offer targeted mindfulness sessions:



Mindful Eating



Managing Stress & Anxiety Mindfully



Sleep & Insomnia

# OUR SOCIAL IMPACT

## Wellness



**£1:£56.98**

**SOCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT**

# WHAT DO OUR COUNSELLORS SAY?

The counsellors and wellness coaches that were engaged during the stakeholder consultation gave great feedback from their experience of Blackburne House as an employer.

All of the women were already aware of Blackburne House before being employed by them, from either the reputation of the college or through a more direct connection from attending a course at the college. Each reported the deep respect they have for Blackburne House and what Blackburne House does in service of the women of Liverpool. One counsellor has a vision for Blackburne House to be a central hub for mental health services to the women of Liverpool.

The counsellors reflected on the last 12 months since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and the significant impact on the mental health of many of the women that had accessed the service. The counsellors reported that the women had re-evaluated their life and their priorities, leading to increased levels of engagement during the sessions and an increased motivation to make the significant changes to their lives.

Aware that this is a very new service, the counsellors understood it is still a learning curve for all involved in the delivery of the service.

We're able to reach some of the most vulnerable women in the city

BH don't put barriers and hurdles in the way to access counselling.

Loved the BH ethos about getting women into education and the workplace. Fits with personal values.

We're giving opportunities to women that have slipped through the net with other services

The service is already amazing but has the opportunity to be absolutely brilliant.

# WHAT DO OUR CLIENTS SAY?

We engaged with women who had undertaken or were undertaking our counselling service. Seven women were happy to have a 1-2-1 conversation about their experience. Due to the sensitive nature of those calls they were completely anonymous and no additional data apart from their names was collected. Alongside these calls, Blackburne House were already collecting data via online survey forms.

All of the women that participated in the conversation gave great feedback about their experience with the service they had received at Blackburne House. The presenting issues varied between the women, this meant that the number sessions accessed was different for each woman.

Overall, every woman had indicated they had made some positive changes in their life and they had all built trusting relationships with their counsellors.

Although all of the counselling sessions were not able to happen face-to-face because of the restrictions around COVID-19, none of the women reported that this was too much of a barrier and that as the sessions went by this wasn't an issue at all.

Many of the women were open about their presenting issues, these varied from generalised anxiety to anxiety resulting from being in abusive relationships. Some of the women viewed this as a final intervention after trying to access other statutory services in the past and they reported this intervention as being critical in dealing with their anxiety.



# WHAT DO OUR CLIENTS SAY?

It's enabled me to get out of a really dark place and I now have the tools to deal with things in the future.

It's helped me deal with other issues in my life, not just the issues that were present in the discussion.

I would wake up everyday and not know how I'd get to the end of the day, I felt like I was losing my mind but I no longer feel that way and those thoughts are no longer in my head when I wake up.

I'm prepared now for a better future, I have a better vision for my future

It's kept me in work which in turn is better for the economy.

It's been a lifeline for me, I don't know where I would be without this service

I think it will ultimately prevent ill health. By offering these services you are saving resources in the future as you already have the tools to use in the future.

# STORIES

A woman in her 30's had a history of sexual abuse. She was separated from her children due to incidents in the past involving her alcohol dependency and has been unable to talk to family about her feelings. She completed 15 sessions and her goal was to cope with the separation from her children and to cope more positively with her feelings of loss.

"I recognise something has changed, I can see the early warning signs and I am taking action to break the cycle of anxiety/anger/sadness and then shutting myself away and drinking. I have had several relapses in our time together but have learnt a lot about myself and the resources I have that help me and I am beginning to talk about how I am feeling so things don't blow up. Best parts are being able to talk to someone who is a stranger, it was much better than I expected! Even in my darkest times I could talk to you without feeling embarrassed. I have plans for the future that feel real. I am not mixing with certain friends and I am taking control. I have a crisis plan in place, so I remind myself about what helps me stay balanced and OK."

A woman in her 20's who has been on long term medication for depression and anxiety. Her anxiety is so bad she feels unable to leave her home. She finds it difficult to connect with her own feelings and emotions and feels frozen mentally. She completed 12 sessions and her goal was to find herself and reconnect with her emotions.

"I notice I feel a range of emotions not just fear and anxiety. I look back over the last 4 months and can see a real shift in my thinking. It's not just black and white anymore it is much more nuanced. I have made real connections with people, I talk to colleagues, I even have superficial conversations! My relationship with my parents is more open and honest and I feel so much better. I have even spoken to my partner about the sexual assault that happened to me and I feel closer to him. I feel hopeful about the future and I have not felt this in such a long time."

A woman in 30's, had 3 miscarriages and a traumatic delivery during the lock down. She was struggling to cope with a new baby and being isolated away from family and friends. She was anxious she could not connect with her baby. She wouldn't leave the house and was unable to sleep. She completed 12 sessions and her goal was to cope with her anxiety and connect with her baby.

"I have had 3 walks out with my baby, and it is getting easier each time. I am doing more, going to shops, I play with my baby and I feel a connection with him. I am thinking back to how proud I am of what I have done. I looked after my baby and myself and I was able to run my house. I know I still have problems with my husband, but I have the strength to talk to him now."



# SOCIAL PRESCRIBING

The term social prescribing has been in use in the UK for a number of years to describe an all-round personal care approach to health and wellbeing. Patients are put in touch with a “social prescriber”, more commonly called link worker, whose role is to support patients in unpicking often complex issues affecting their health and wellbeing.

Blackburne House receive referrals from primary health to work with women who are experiencing mental health issues. It's clear from our engagement with these link workers that we are filling a gap in statutory mental health services due to the increasing demand for mental health support following the Covid-19 pandemic.



"The service provided by Blackburne House has been an invaluable avenue of support for patients who we have referred from our social prescribing service. With the Covid-19 pandemic, primary care has seen a significant increase in cases related to mental health. The access to support for our patients has been in a considerable short amount of time. With patients being seen by counsellors and starting their counselling sessions within a matter of weeks. Adapting to the challenges the pandemic has brought, the service has provided support online and by phone, ensuring to tackle any barriers to engaging.

The counselling provision has not only supported a number of women with reducing stress, anxiety & depression but the additional offer of Mindfulness courses and Mindfulness for self-esteem, mindful eating, healthy anxiety has been a great tool and source of support to women with low confidence and conditions such as Fibromyalgia and chronic pain.

The service has meant a great to deal to my team and I, as it have given us the opportunity for women to not only to be supported with their mental health but also by connecting with Blackburn House's social activities and education service. From this women have gone on to drastically improve their lives. Not only improving their mental health, but physical and social health too. We highly recommend the quality of this provision. If the services were expanded it would certainly be utilised by our community."

-Wellbeing Link Worker & Social Prescribing Team Leader, Central Liverpool Primary Care Network



# LINK WORKER TESTIMONIALS

"What I think has been amazing about your service is your ability to respond to Covid in developing and planning bespoke sessions which were tailored to ladies who are experiencing Covid Health Anxiety. For me it is a relief to know you have opportunities to apply for further funding as your service is very much needed. You have been providing virtual sessions, so you have been active and impactful in the area for some time and we wish you were able to scale up your provision to meet the ongoing need"

"Additional counselling sessions are offered if needed. For many this is needed as they begin to unpick issues and experiences that have never been addressed. Counsellors take a holistic approach and Counsellors have contacted me to discuss further support that may be needed and we have worked together to ensure further services are built around the client. Your approach and process is very warm and reassuring. Clients are contacted within a few days of the referral made and process explained which includes the waiting list timescales. All clients are offered alternative services while waiting. Counsellors are all qualified with considerable life experiences

"I am a Macmillan Community Navigator and part of wider Social Prescribing team, my role is to support newly diagnosed cancer patients and their families. Blackburne house has been a valuable resource for us to access mental and emotional health as support services are difficult to access as demand has increased and services are stretched, we have been lucky enough to have the support of Blackburne house with a prompt, efficient and quality service. The feedback from patients has been amazing they have really valued the service and it has been beneficial for their coping mechanisms and to face what lies ahead, to quote one patient ' the service has revolutionised my life'. Response from referrals has been very prompt and waiting times minimal, which is a blessing for some of my ladies who are going through a traumatic and life changing experience."



# BLACKBURNE HOUSE

## GET IN TOUCH

For more information contact the Blackburne House team on:

Email: [wellness@blackburnehouse.co.uk](mailto:wellness@blackburnehouse.co.uk)

Website: [www.blackburnehouse.co.uk/wellness](http://www.blackburnehouse.co.uk/wellness)

