



**Safety
Net (UK)**

Annual Report

April 2019 – March 2020



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SAFETY NET (UK)

A Charitable Incorporated Organisation

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS OF THE CHARITY, ITS TRUSTEES AND ADVISERS

For period ending 31 March 2019

Trustees

Mr C J Armstrong, Chairman – Appointed 16 January 2017

Ms C J Green – Appointed 16 January 2017

Ms L Vance – Appointed 16 January 2017

Ms G Martlew – Appointed 16 January 2017

Dr A Spurgeon-Dickson - Appointed 1 April 2019; Resigned – 3 January 2020

Chief Officer

Lesley Storey – Appointed 1 November 2018; resigned 31 December 2019

Jo Birch - Interim from 1 January 2020

Registered Charity Number

1164998

Registered Company Number

CE005945

Registered Office

1 Fisher Street, Carlisle, Cumbria, CA3 8RR

Accountants

Armstrong Watson Audit Limited, Fairview House,

Victoria Place, Carlisle, Cumbria, CA1 1HP

Banking

Cumberland Building Society, 38 Fisher Street, Carlisle, Cumbria, CA3 8RQ

Solicitors

Burnetts, Victoria House, Wavell Drive, Carlisle, Cumbria, CA1 2ST

CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT FOR THE PERIOD APRIL 2019 – MARCH 2020



Chris Armstrong MBE - Chairman

This year began with great promise – a new, highly-experienced Chief Officer, a firm base and a desire to expand the services of Safety Net to an ever-growing list of victims of rape, exploitation and sexual and domestic abuse. We had nearly 900 new and existing clients through the service, a 12% increase on the previous year and 100% increase over the last 5 years. Our outcomes for the year were extremely positive, with over 70% of clients who engage improving at exit from the service. This is all credit to our experienced and committed team. We implemented our schools work across 6 schools in the west of the county and increased capacity to meet demand. We have most of our funding in place for 2020/21.

Sadly, with the onset of Covid-19 and the departure of the new Chief Executive after one year in December 2019, Safety Net finds itself in

an uncertain environment, in common with almost every other small charity and organisation. This necessitated the appointment from within of an Acting Chief Officer, pending a new recruitment process. Jo Birch our acting Chief Officer has worked for Safety Net for 4 years as the Office Manager, and latterly the Operations Manager, she has an in-depth knowledge of the service and a wealth of experience. Jo is supported by experienced external support in terms of finances, development and strategy, and fundraising, providing a strong base with which to move forward.

As a result of these major changes to the organisation and a challenging financial scenario, the Trustees decided to commission an independent review of Safety Net, its structure, governance and its business model. However, before the review could start, the world was hit by the COVID-19 pandemic and all its consequences for the way businesses conduct their operations. For Safety Net, this meant staff working from home and delivering a service to clients at arms-length. Trustees and senior staff went into emergency mode and undertook actions to safeguard the organisation and the services that it provides. These included a prudent revised budget to cope with an expected reduction in income through loss of community fundraising, and a review of staff / workload balance to ensure that effective services could still be delivered. Contact was made with major funders who confirmed that, as long as the service envisaged was being offered, existing funding would remain unaffected. So, Safety Net has remained open, trying hard to meet the needs of our vulnerable client base and also working with other organisations to ensure that support is given wherever it is needed.

At the time of writing, the country is still in the grip of emergency measures. The charity sector, upon which so much depends, remains concerned about future viability, with some forecasting that half of all charities will disappear. The response to the crisis, including by the public, has been amazing, but naturally emphasis has been on funding initiatives to respond to the C-19 virus. It is important, however, that funders look beyond that to ensure that the valuable work done by charities remains available in the future.

As far as Safety Net is concerned, we continue to plan for life-after-virus while dealing with the immediate issues. As ever, to do so, we will rely on the generosity of our funders and the dedication of staff who care about others. To them all, we give our thanks.

C. J. Armstrong



1. OVERVIEW

The Trustees present their Annual Report together with the financial statements of Safety Net (UK) for the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020. The Trustees confirm that the Annual Report and financial statements of the charity comply with the current statutory requirements and the requirements of the charity's governing document.

Safety Net (UK) is a specialist organisation that supports the recovery of those affected by rape, exploitation, sexual and domestic abuse across Cumbria. We are contracted by the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) to provide sexual assault services and commissioned by Cumbria Police and Crime Commissioner (CPCC) to provide counselling support as part of the Cumbria Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC), which is called the Bridgeway. We have funding from trusts and foundations including the Big Lottery, Children in Need, The Henry Smith Charity and Lloyds Bank Foundation. Our work is underpinned by a belief that, with help, whatever has happened or is happening, victims can recover from the devastation caused by their experience and go on to lead fulfilling lives.

Fuelled by the increased local and national profile, and consequent heightened public awareness, of the incidence of sexual and domestic violence, abuse and exploitation, Safety Net (UK) has seen a 100% increase in referrals over the last 5 years. As a registered charity, we depend on grants, winning contracts and developing our community fundraising initiatives for the resources to enable us to do our work. The fact that we are successful in raising this funding in a competitive environment indicates the value that others place on Safety Net (UK) services.

We have a tried and tested model of working. We know that there is demand for our services, and that they are greatly appreciated by clients using them. We are committed to continuous improvement and are always researching new ideas and approaches, drawing on the experience of professionals locally, nationally and globally, as well as that of our own specialist workers. Our purpose is to enable Safety Net (UK) to build on its past success and further enhance its reputation so that funders and commissioners can continue to feel confident that Safety Net (UK) is an organisation that is professionally run and delivers effective help and support to those who have suffered appalling trauma.

In the last five years we have successfully recruited, trained, and embedded a core staff team to deliver our tiered model. Responsible for strategy and overseeing the work of the charity, Safety Net (UK) has four skilled and experienced Trustees, although we are currently in the process of recruiting trustees to recognised skills gaps on the Board, including business and private sector, PR and marketing. We are also wanting to include both staff and ex clients on the Board. We are in the process of restructuring based on service need and currently adapting to the post COVID- 19 world. The operational team consists of a Chief Officer, an office manager, a part-time administrator, six therapists, three integrated support workers, a volunteer coordinator, sub-contracted finance and fundraising functions as well as a well-established pool of bank staff and 14 volunteers.

The end of the 2019/20 financial year has been very challenging for everyone in terms of the pandemic. Despite the initial challenges associated with moving the whole service online over a two-week period, we feel that the current situation has driven many positive changes, many of which are here to stay.

- ✦ We have been able to improve accessibility to our most vulnerable clients, extend services to those in the most remote parts of the county and offer regular sessions to those clients with disabilities who often find it hard to get to our offices.
- ✦ Going forward we can reduce travel time, increase productivity, and reduce our office overheads.
- ✦ We can also recruit to highly specialist posts from a much wider national pool when the posts are significantly de-centralised.
- ✦ We have embedded effective communication across the teams, with daily briefings, and weekly online meetings.

We do accept that some clients will always prefer one to one work, as will some of our therapists and support staff. Some trauma therapies will also be more effective in face to face office-based sessions. For some, home is not a safe place. We also have projects in school that require a personal presence.

Over the next few months, we want to develop and plan post corona virus, building our online services, our online platforms and continue to build partnerships with other agencies across the county. We continue to work systemically, in partnership with other services, linking closely with our Bridgeway partners, (Independent Domestic Violence and Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (IDVA, ISVA) and SARC), mental health services, other health providers, the Police and Children's Social Care.

2. ACHIEVEMENTS THIS YEAR

Despite the uncertain end to this year, we have achieved a great deal in 2019/20.

- ✦ We have secured funding for most of our planned services for 2020/21. We have a good mix of funding with ongoing contracts with the MOJ and CPCC, which represent around 50% of our total funding. The remaining 50% is made up from grants from trusts and foundations and our community fundraising element (5-10%). Although our plan for the coming year was to continue to develop and expand our community funding stream, it is unlikely this will happen in the wake of the coronavirus.
- ✦ Safety Net has a tried and tested delivery model and over five years' worth of outcome and referral data which demonstrates improvements in trauma, health and wellbeing, safety and other outcomes. We have very positive exit evaluations, backed up by case studies and support plans.
- ✦ Over the last five years, improvements in health and wellbeing have consistently averaged 70-77%. In 2019/20, 71% of engaged clients showed improvements in health and wellbeing scores.
- ✦ We know clients are entering the service with high scores, indicating symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), however 67% of clients at review or exit are showing significant improvements in their symptoms of trauma.
- ✦ Last year, 756 clients engaged with the service across the four tiers of support; in the last five years 3,285 individuals have been through the service.
- ✦ Over the last two years we have piloted and implemented a successful project in West Cumbrian schools, providing support, therapy, training, and development for peer mentors across six secondary schools. We supported over 190 CYP in schools last year and delivered over 900 face-to-face or group sessions.
- ✦ We have a new website, providing another format that we can use to deliver tools and resources to those who need them and increase our reach within our local and wider communities. We are continuing to develop a much more visible online presence.
- ✦ We have delivered specialist training, via two large events, to around 300 professionals this year;
 - ❖ Coercion and Control
 - ❖ Psycho-Sexual Presentations as a result of sexual trauma.

- ✦ We have also delivered a range of smaller training sessions to other professionals working across our communities.
- ✦ Since becoming a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) in 2017 we have been able to develop our community fundraising. In 2018/19 and 2019/20 we had 20 runners taking part in the Great North Run, we have also had members of the community organising and participating in treks, walks and swimathons to raise funds for Safety Net. Our community fundraising and training allows us to raise much needed unrestricted funding, which enables us to be innovative and develop new services based on the needs identified by our clients.

Excerpt from our new website

The screenshot shows the Safety Net website homepage. At the top, there is a navigation menu with links for Home, Get Help, About Us, Support Us, Professionals, News & Social Media, and Contact. A 'Click to leave this site' link is also visible. The main content area features a large teal banner with the text 'Find the best support for your recovery'. Below this banner are three colored boxes representing different support services: a green box for 'Support for men', an orange box for 'Support for women', and a yellow box for 'Support for children & young people'. Each box contains a brief description of the support and a 'Read More' button.

SAFETY NET

We're here for Cumbria



We listen

Our specialist team will listen, and work with you to find the support that is right for you.



We empower

We help you to feel like you again; confident, safe and secure.



We support

We work alongside you, offering support at all stages of your journey.

3. OUR VISION AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 Our Vision

Our vision is to achieve communities free of rape, exploitation, sexual and domestic abuse.

3.2 Our Objective / Mission Statement

To support the recovery of those affected by rape, exploitation, sexual and domestic abuse across North and West Cumbria.

To achieve our Vision and Mission Statement, we have six main delivery outcomes that we seek to achieve and a range of indicators to measure the benefits we are bringing to people's lives.

3.3 Our Delivery Outcomes

- ✚ To deliver high quality services - through effective governance, service delivery, data and outcome management.
- ✚ To reduce risk & risk-taking behaviours - we work in partnership with other professionals to provide wrap around services that maximize safety and reduce risk and risk-taking behaviours.
- ✚ To reduce the symptoms of trauma - including depression, anxiety, PTSD symptoms.
- ✚ To improve emotional resilience - by improving self-care and coping strategies, strengthening relationships and encouraging social engagement.
- ✚ To facilitate increased access to services and support and improved ability to cope with practical tasks - that support recovery including family support, criminal justice and family court, employment, training, education, housing and finances.
- ✚ To prevent abuse and increase awareness of the impact of sexual and domestic abuse -through education and training and our work in schools.

3.4 Strategies for achieving objectives, our values

- ✚ We provide a specialist service that works within an ethical framework.
- ✚ We deliver trauma-informed quality, safe and client centred services.
- ✚ We ensure that all clients, staff and volunteers are respected, valued and their voices heard.
- ✚ We drive change and prevent future abuse through influencing, awareness-raising and education.
- ✚ We build safety and stronger support through partnership working.
- ✚ We create, facilitate and support innovative service delivery.
- ✚ We aim to develop a culture where we listen, learn and adapt to change.
- ✚ We provide a place where people choose to work.



4. OUR WORK

4.1 Our Provision

Safety Net (UK) provides a tiered service provision based on a risk and needs-led assessment. Clients can enter the service at different stages, leave and return at a later stage when they feel ready to do so. We focus on a trauma-informed and holistic recovery approach to working with individuals or whole families, in partnership with other professionals and community groups, to improve wellbeing and quality of life. Our holistic/whole family approach to working is based on best practice evidence from pilot work conducted in 2014/15, and national research conducted by the NSPCC, Letting the Future, in 2016. All our work takes place in psychologically-informed environments, designed to put our clients at ease. We are an organisational member of British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) and work within the BACP ethical framework. Therapists are accredited to BACP or equivalent and we are also members of The Survivors Trust, a national sexual abuse umbrella organisation.

4.2 Our model of working / activities for achieving our objectives

Since May 2015 we have embedded our model and core services, which include:

- ✦ Tier 1 – Short term interventions information, advice, advocacy and helpline. Providing one-off drop-in sessions, advice around court procedures, family court advice and support, pre-trial advice, multi-agency support, arranging early help and signposting to other services, and liaising with other services. (0-3 sessions.)
- ✦ Tier 2 – Integrated support provides short-term safety and stabilisation work to young people/adults who have significant emotional and practical needs that make accessing therapeutic recovery support services difficult or impossible. We work in our outreach buildings across the county, community buildings and schools. (12 weekly 1 hour sessions on average.)
- ✦ Tier 3 – Trauma-focussed counselling, therapeutic support and group work for adults, children and young people (CYP) and families. The duration of this support is adjusted according to clients' needs. (20-25 sessions on average.)
- ✦ Tier 4 – Recovery Community – to support integration back into the community, building social networks and relationships. We run emotional resilience groups facilitated by experienced practitioners, and we have a specific men's group. We have a range of volunteering opportunities from supporting with arts and craft group, administration, befriending and supporting with community fundraising and training events. We run art and craft groups linked to the wider community networks, managed by our volunteers, many of whom have been clients.
- ✦ Training, education and awareness raising – Increased awareness of the psychological and emotional impact of domestic violence and sexual abuse through education and training, not only for our own staff but also those of other organisations.

4.3 Our clients

In 2019/20 we had 319 children and young people and 567 adults accessing our service, a total of 886 clients. The children, young people and adults we work with have experienced significant trauma, which can have a profound and long-lasting impact on every aspect of their lives, including:

child sexual abuse; exploitation; on-line abuse; rape; sexual violence; domestic violence and abuse.

They come to our service displaying distressing symptoms as a result of the trauma. This can lead to: nightmares and flashbacks; poor attainment and attendance at school ; missing from school and home; bed wetting; behavioural problems; self-harm behaviours; risk taking; depression, anxiety and PTSD; poor attainment at work; substance and alcohol misuse; difficult family and peer relationships.

Cumbria is a geographically large county but has a population of less than half a million, mainly living in communities round the outskirts of the Lake District National Park. It is a county of contrasts, economically and socially, with areas of high deprivation as well as relative affluence. Transport links are challenging!

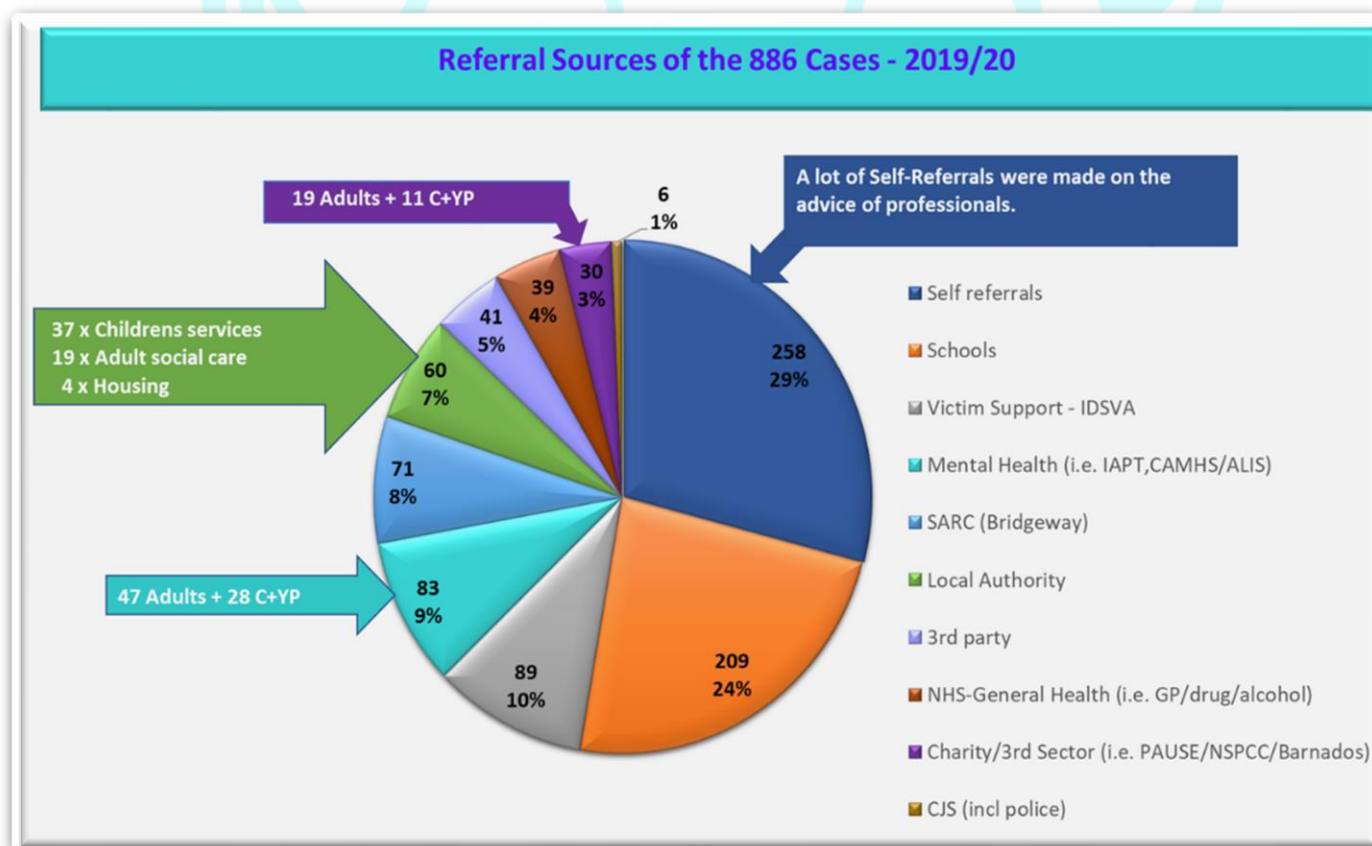
Many of the people we work with live in areas of significant deprivation and/or rural isolation. This puts additional barriers in place when accessing services, and we work hard to ensure we reduce these barriers wherever possible.

Our needs-led service allows people to access support at different stages – they can leave and come back when they need further support. We recognise the journey to recovery from trauma can be a bumpy one, and our service is responsive enough to support that. We don't take a 'one-size fits all' approach, we tailor our interventions to meet individuals' needs. Because we work across both domestic and sexual violence and abuse, we can support people who have experienced different (often inter-related) forms of abuse.

We have excellent partnerships with local crisis services, including the Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) and statutorily funded criminal justice-focused advocacy services IDVA and ISVA.

Many adults are survivors of childhood abuse, and some of those we work with are still living in abusive situations. In these cases, our focus is on practical support, risk assessment and safety planning. Some adults present with very complex needs, including significant mental health and substance misuse problems.

Safety Net (UK) work therapeutically with children aged three upwards. Referrals come in from parents and carers, schools, doctors, CAMHS, The Bridgeway, Children's Services, and Barnardo's. Safety Net (UK) has trained therapists specifically to work with children and young people. We also will work holistically with the family, and/or school as part of multi-agency support to improve the outcomes for the child. The therapeutic support uses different models that best suit the individual. In the beginning, the work is focused on ensuring the relationship is built to allow the child or young person to feel comfortable, safe and contained.



5. HOW HAVE WE INVOLVED PEOPLE FROM OUR COMMUNITY IN THE WORK WE DO?

5.1 Groups

As part of our integrated tiered approach to service provision we offer Tier 4 - Recovery community work, which involves supporting clients to integrate back into the community, building social networks and relationships. Last year we ran an emotional resilience group facilitated by experienced practitioners. We also have the only male specific group to support survivors of childhood sexual abuse in Cumbria. They meet monthly and is facilitated by one of our therapists and one of our volunteers.

5.2 Fundraising

Last year Safety Net had 19 runners in the Great North Run and had 20 runners planning to run this year (6 of which were staff or volunteers). We also had members of the community organising and participating in treks, walks and swimathons to raise funds for Safety Net.

5.3 Volunteers

Safety Net has a volunteer coordinator and 14 volunteers who have all completed the Safety Net Volunteer induction training. 9 of the 14 were once clients. A further 4 individuals have expressed an interest in becoming volunteers. All volunteers have also completed Cumbria County Council's online Safeguarding Level 1 training. We have supported one of our volunteers to access ISVA training. Our volunteer coordinator keeps the volunteers up to date with training opportunities and service updates. The volunteers are integral to the organisation, and support the service in several ways, including:

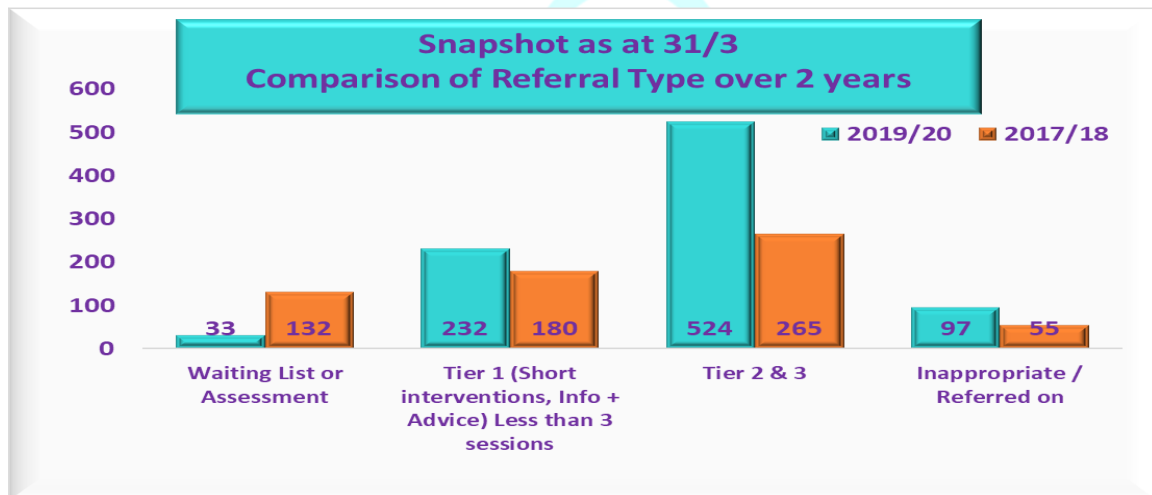
- ✦ Managing and running the coffee and crafts group (soon to become an online coffee and chat group). Our art and craft groups are linked to wider community networks, and are managed and run by our volunteers, many of whom have been clients. The group meets fortnightly and has usually 8-10 attendees.
- ✦ Helping to facilitate the men's group, a monthly group with usually 8 participants.
- ✦ As befrienders – we have 5 volunteers who are completing befriending training, and who will provide social contact and some practical advice and support for those who have been through services.
- ✦ Office support – with newsletters, social media, and administration.
- ✦ Walk leaders – although on hold now, some of our volunteers are training to be walk leaders and potentially run leaders.
- ✦ Community fundraising – supporting with fundraising events and training events.



6. THE DIFFERENCES WE HAVE MADE

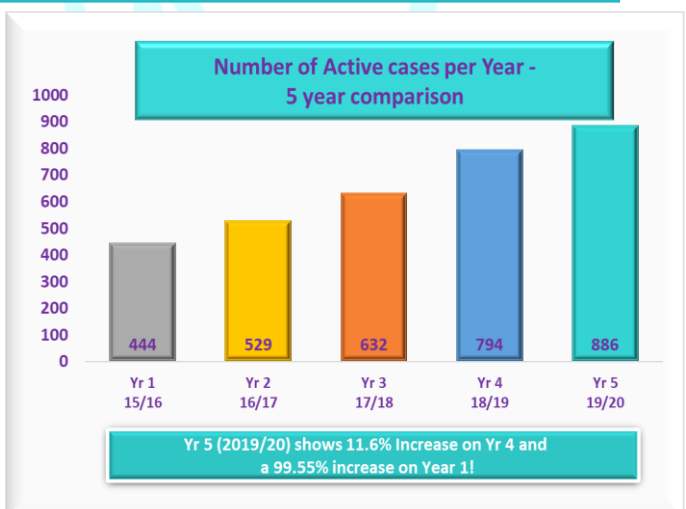
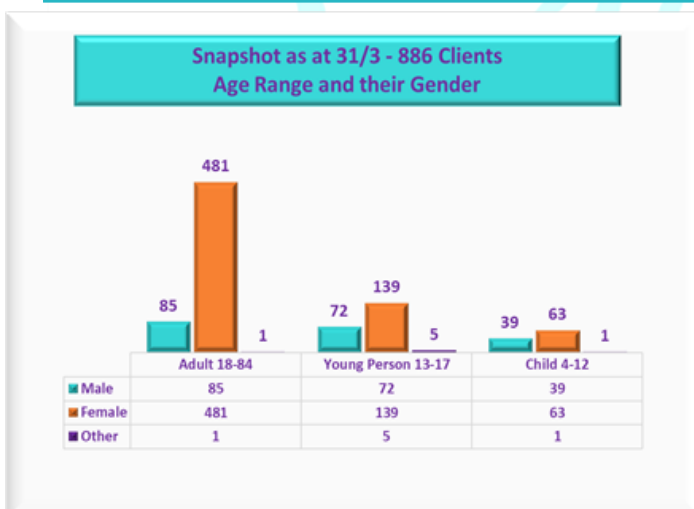
6.1 Referral data

- ✚ 886 (794 last year) new and existing clients in the service – a 12% increase on last year and a 100% increase over the last five years.
- ✚ Last year Safety net had 886 clients through the service. Of these 756 engaged with the service – 232 with Tier 1: advice and advocacy (139 adults and 93 CYP); 388 in Tiers 2 & 3: recovery support and therapy (239 adults, 149 CYP). Clients can enter the service at different stages, leave, and return at a later stage when they feel ready to do so. The remaining 130, were on waiting lists or at assessment stage.



We continue to have a high proportion of men accessing services, compared with the national average of 8%, and an increase from 20-22 % this year.

97% of referrals were White British, which reflects the demographic of the county (Cumbria is 96% White British.)

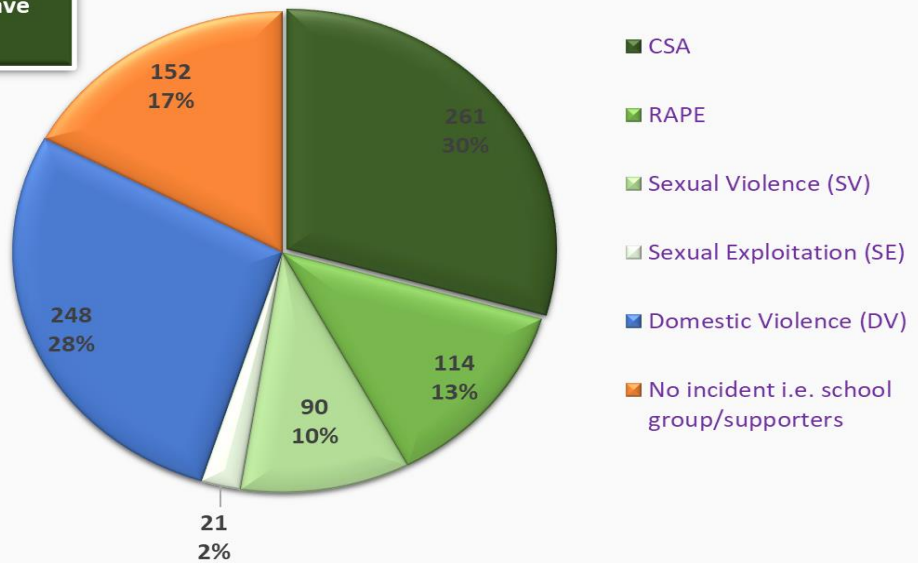


Presenting Incident - 886 cases

108 Cases presenting with CSA/Rape/SE/SV also have elements of DV

74 Cases presenting with DV also have elements of CSA/Rape/SE/SV

22 Cases had a Stalking element



6.2 Outcome data

We have a robust outcomes measurement and collect information on a range of indicators under each outcome. These are supported by case studies and testimonials from clients. This is the data summary, which is very positive. Stability or no change is considered to be a positive outcome, as the levels of trauma at entry are very high for most of our clients. There are many reasons why some clients get worse these include court proceedings, lack of support at home and a range of mental and physical health issues.

Last year's data shows that adults reported improvements / or stability in:

- ✚ Health and wellbeing (71%)
- ✚ Symptoms of trauma (67%), (no change 27%)
- ✚ Emotional resilience / wellbeing /coping /self-care (69%), (no change 22%)
- ✚ Family and relationships (61%), (no change 27%)
- ✚ Work (53%),(no change 34%)
- ✚ Parenting/looking after children (60%), (no change 27%)
- ✚ Personal safety (79%)

Similarly, children and young people reported improvements in:

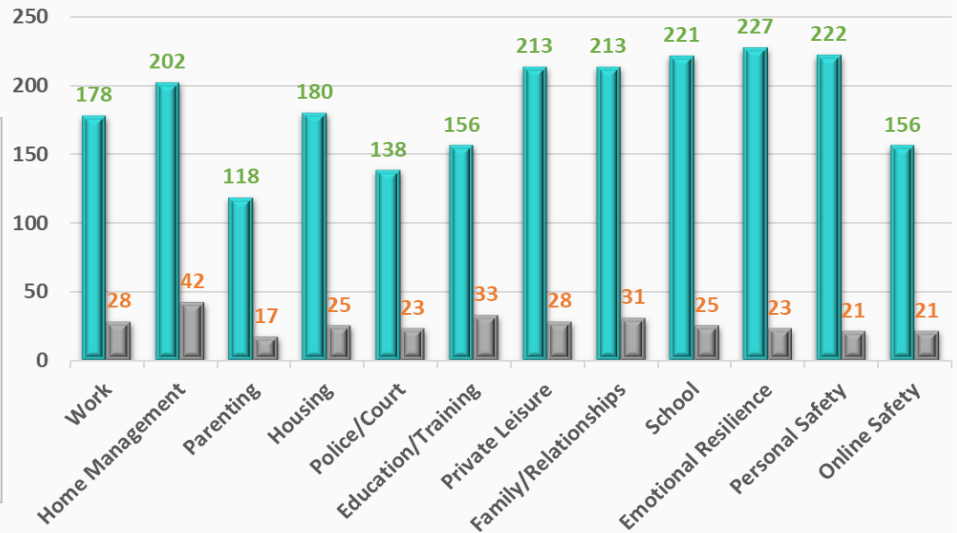
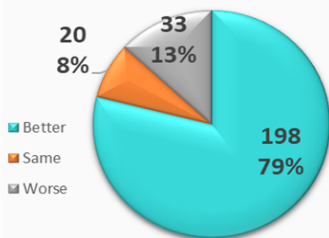
- ✚ Health /symptoms of trauma (71%), (no change 20%)
- ✚ Emotional resilience /coping and self-care (85%)
- ✚ General well-being (85%)
- ✚ Family / interpersonal relationships (81%)
- ✚ Friends /socially (48%), (no change 34%)
- ✚ School (50%), (no change 28%)
- ✚ Safety (79%)

2019/20 - Intake / Exit Outcomes - Adults
251 with a Review score against their Initial score -
shown if applicable to their circumstances

■ Better or Same

■ Worse

All responses considered

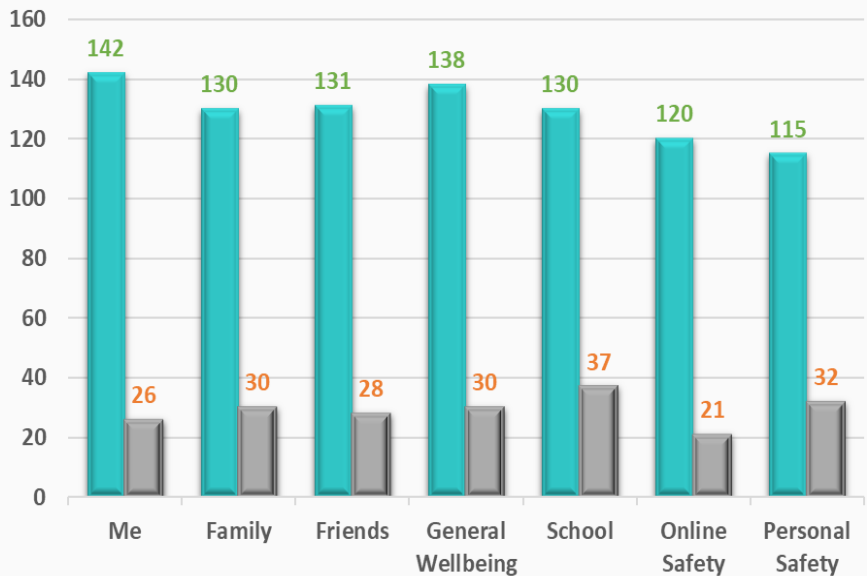
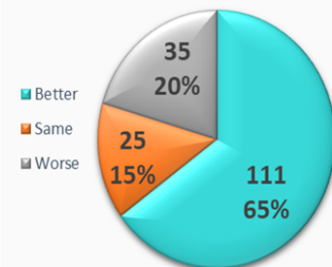


2019/20 - Intake / Exit Outcomes - CYP
171 with a Review score against their Initial score -
shown if applicable to their circumstances

■ Better/same

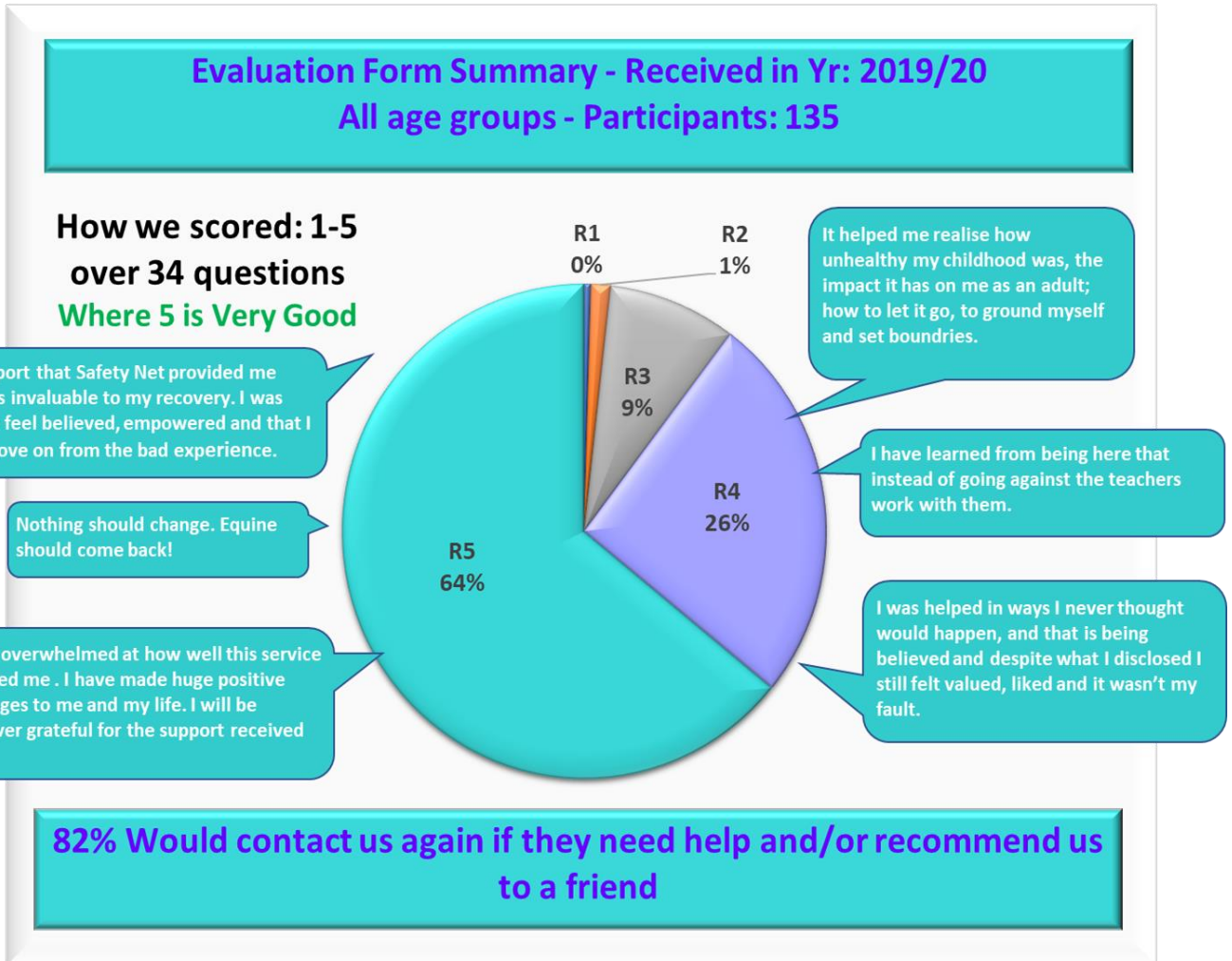
■ Worse

All responses considered



6.3 What do our clients have to say?

" I think it's near impossible to put my gratitude in to words, you've changed my life in supporting me to move on; It's now been over a year since my mental health has spiraled - it's so weird to be able to have some control over my thoughts and emotions. This is possibly the first year in my life I've felt human. Thank you so much ** xx" (Adult female)



I feel like I now have a future. I'm not just existing anymore. I've come to appreciate life even the hard times have taught me something. I feel safe again. Thank you very much for this opportunity, it has been the best thing I've ever done (Adult female)

I am in a much better place, emotionally and that is due to safety net.


(Adult male)

Absolutely fabulous experience. I feel like it has helped me so very much and improved my confidence. It helped me to become less anxious and improved my mindset.

(Young female)




6.4 Sue's story



Sue is 29 and was referred to us from a local charity who provide support for mothers who struggle with anxiety, low mood, and post-natal issues such as Post Natal Depression. Sue had recently disclosed to a support worker an allegation of rape, as part of an abusive relationship with her recently ex-partner. She had also experienced a near fatal car accident with her baby, which had led to separation anxiety. Sue presented with high trauma and wellbeing scores, she was suffering from flashbacks, nightmares, general anxiety, poor sleep and little to no self-care. Sue's anxiety was also affecting her older daughter, who was displaying challenging behaviour. Due to having to facilitate contact between the children and their father, Sue had to maintain some form of contact with her abuser on a daily basis; this left her feeling anxious and as if the abusive relationship had never ended.

We worked with Sue to gain a felt sense of safety; using a combination of psycho education, somatic techniques used to emotionally regulate, and building an understanding of what Sue's body was telling her about how she was feeling at any given time. We discussed common dynamics of domestic abuse, we also looked at trauma bonding, this work helped to re-enforce that the problem wasn't "her", and the more she was able to understand the dynamic between her and her ex, the more she felt able to stick to her boundaries and see through the coercion. We also completed work on parenting and increasing 1:1 time with her older daughter resulted in positive changes in her behaviour and in the family dynamic.

Throughout her time with Safety Net Sue began to regain her self-worth, her self-care improved alongside her confidence. Her trauma symptoms reduced with scores reducing from 57 to 33 on the trauma scales, her levels of anxiety reduced, and wellbeing improved which was shown in a reduction of her wellbeing scores from 35 to 18. Sue was ok to end our work after a total of 24 sessions of therapy. At point of closure, she had moved from being supported by the local charity mentioned earlier, to becoming an ambassador, supporting others. Halfway through support, Sue was discharged from her Community Psychiatric Nurse due to the progress she had made, and at point of closure there were no onward referrals needed.



6.5 Our education and training work

Delivered training

In June 2019 we hosted Silva Neves, a renowned, experienced, and accredited psychotherapist specialising in psychosexual and relationship therapy, who delivered two days of specialist training on "Psycho-Sexual Presentations as a result of Sexual Trauma". The training was aimed at counsellors, psychotherapists, relationship counsellors, mental health professionals, GPs, nurses and midwives, and sexual health professionals. Over two days, fifty people developed their skills in this growing specialism.

In March 2020 we held a continuing professional development event around coercion and control. One hundred and thirty people attended from different agencies across Cumbria and beyond.

This year we have delivered training to around two hundred people professionals covering the signs of sexual and domestic abuse, the neuroscience of trauma, safeguarding practice and support, online safety and grooming, and high-risk domestic violence Multi- Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) training.

We have also attended smaller and more diverse community-based groups and agencies to talk about what we do. Groups have included various Women's Institutes, Soroptimists and Happy Mums' groups.



6.6 Our schools work

We started developing our schools work in 2017/18 in a school where over one hundred of its pupils were subject to safeguarding plans, many in relation to experiences of violence and abuse. Other students were at significant risk of child sexual exploitation (CSE), with several having been subjected to sexual abuse in one form or another. Staff were particularly worried about the risk of self-harm and suicide ideation. This year we have rolled out our very successful work to another five schools, working with safeguarding leads and children's services to support the most vulnerable CYP.

In 2019/20 we provided support, therapy, training and have started to implement a peer mentoring programme across six secondary schools in West Cumbria. We supported over 190 CYP in schools last year and delivered over 900 face-to-face or group sessions. Around 890 students have benefited from assembly/group sessions across schools. Most of the CYP were aged between 11-13, with 25% 13-17. There is a good mix of both male and female referrals – 58% female, 40% male, 2% transgender. Of the young people engaged with our services, 77% have improved or stayed the same in terms of health and wellbeing. 65% improved in terms of resilience.

Few CYP at assessment identified domestic abuse at home or CSE as an issue, but these issues were often present or identified as sessions were completed. Presenting issues were primarily low self-esteem, body issues, anxiety, low mood, family relationship breakdown, anger and aggression.

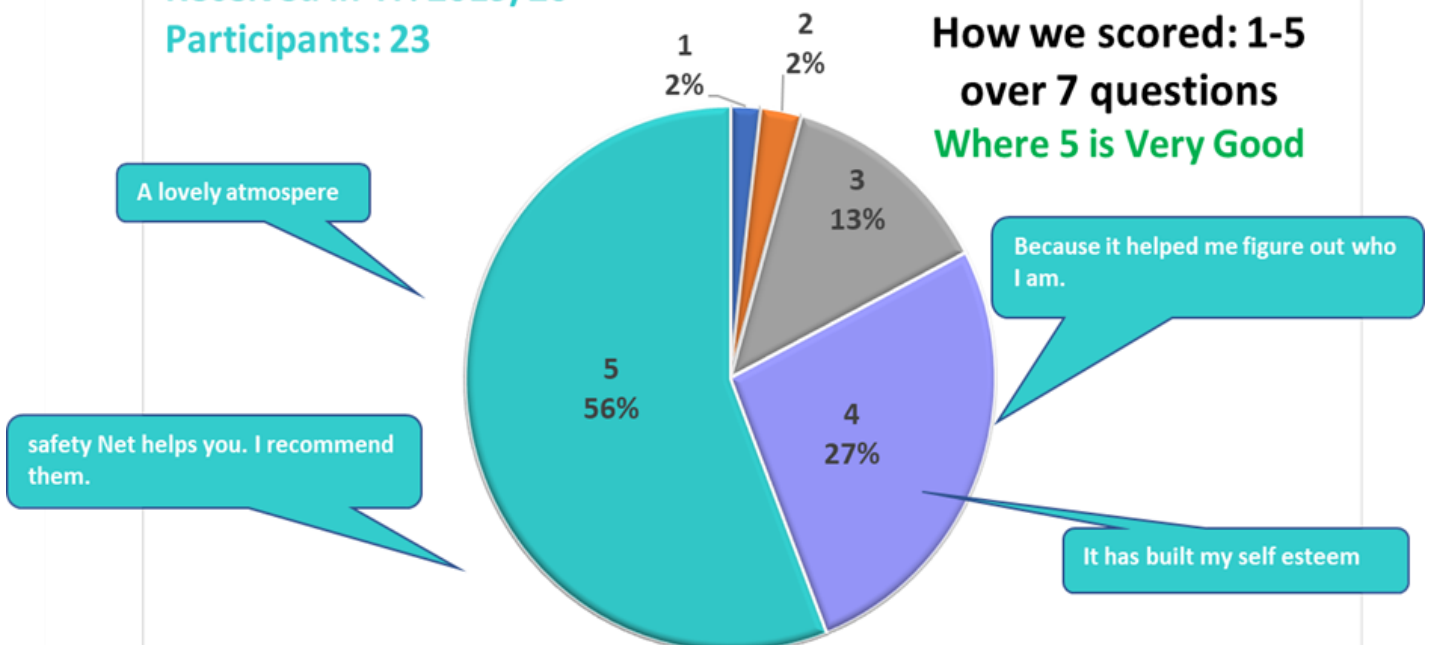
6.7 John's Story

John was referred through school for support around his anxieties at school and home, he had lived with domestic abuse – John's attendance was being affected and home life was also difficult. Work was completed in sessions with John and his mum. Support has focused on coping strategies, how to manage and identify emotions. John enjoyed IT and was always on his phone, we used technology to assist in sessions and introduced apps to support with relaxation. We completed sessions around confidence and self-care to assist John's ability to cope. John completed ten sessions and his wellbeing improved with scores reducing from 20 overall to 10. By using the strategies he had learnt John's sleep improved, as did his self-esteem and his ability to manage his emotions and anxiety.

What the young people in our school groups had to say

Evaluation Form Summary - School Groups
Received in Yr: 2019/20
Participants: 23

How we scored: 1-5
over 7 questions
Where 5 is Very Good



18 out of 23 would recommend us to a friend!



7. STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

7.1 Constitution

The charity existed as Safety Net Advice and Support Centre for thirteen years but changed status from an unincorporated association to become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation on 16 January 2017. This new entity, Safety Net (UK), has a legal identity and the ability to conduct business in its own name. The Trustees and senior management team regularly review the charity's governance, and its policies and procedures, on a rolling programme.

7.2 Method of appointment or election of Trustees

Safety Net (UK) has a balanced board of four Trustees who have a range of relevant skills and experience. The strategic management and oversight of the charity is the responsibility of the Trustees, who are elected or co-opted by the Trustee Board. Existing Trustees have identified there are skills gaps in the following areas: social media and marketing, business development and planning. Furthermore, the Trustees have identified diversification of the demographics of the Board as an area for significant development. Plans are in place to promote the Board and recruit volunteers through a selection process with Cumbria CVS.

7.3 Policies adopted for the induction and training of Trustees

Safety Net (UK) has an agreed staff and Trustee induction policy and checklist and provide induction training and ongoing staff/Trustee development days. We have a staff/Trustee policy handbook which is updated on a rolling basis. The charity has an annual strategy day, and biannual staff/Trustee training sessions.

7.4 Pay policy for senior staff

Salaries are competitive with other charities in Cumbria.

7.5 Organisational structure and decision-making

The strategic management and oversight of the charity is the responsibility of the Trustees. Safety Net (UK)'s senior management team consists of a Chief Officer, two senior therapists and an office manager. Each Trustee has responsibility for a defined area of Safety Net (UK)'s activity and is available to senior management for consultation and advice. The Chief Officer and office manager attend Board meetings.

7.6 Delivering public benefit

Safety Net (UK)'s objectives and activities fully reflect the purposes the charity was set up to further. There is an inherent public benefit in raising public awareness of the extent of rape, sexual assault and all forms of abuse against children, women and men, so they feel able to talk about their experiences, seek help and access appropriate support.

The Trustees have referred to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit when reviewing the charity's aims and objectives and comply with this guidance.

7.7 Risk management

The following have been identified by Safety Net (UK) Trustees as the key risks facing the organisation. Our full risk assessment is reviewed at every meeting.

Risk:	Managed by:
Loss of significant funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisation works hard to develop and maintain a diverse funding mix. • Energy is put into developing our community fund-raising capacity. • Our reporting to existing funders and commissioners is of a high standard. • Senior staff are well-networked and scan the horizon regularly for forthcoming changes to current funding streams.
Loss of key staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety Net (UK) invests in its staff team, providing training and opportunities for professional and career development. • We have an excellent support and supervision structure. • We have excellent levels of staff retention – we seek to ensure Safety Net (UK) is a good place to work.
Competition from other providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are uniquely positioned working as we do with all genders and ages, across all forms of violence and abuse. • We have a flexible delivery model and are always over-subscribed. We work in a field where there is no shortage of need.
Damage to reputation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have comprehensive policies and procedures which are live documents, supporting and structuring our day-to-day work. • We have an experienced and knowledgeable Board who know the organisation well and take an active governance role.


8. OUR FUTURE PLANS

Working in partnership

We have excellent working relationships with statutory and voluntary sector partners across the county and we have developed clear referral pathways with both mental health providers and children's services. We work in partnership to ensure that sexual violence and abuse remains a priority on the strategic agenda in Cumbria. We are jointly commissioned by the Police and Crime Commissioner and health services to provide the counselling services for the Cumbria Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC), which responds to the needs of recent victims of rape and sexual assault. The SARC acts as a single point of access for victims of sexual assault and is the source of a high proportion of our referrals. We work closely with The Birchall Trust, who provide therapeutic interventions for victims of sexual violence and abuse in south Cumbria and have worked in partnership with them on the counselling contract for over three years. This relationship will continue as we move into the delivery of the new contract for the OPCC.

Our staff hold key strategic positions: our Chief Officer is a member of the Sexual and Domestic Violence Strategic and Operational Group and a key member of the Rape Scrutiny Panel, ensuring victims whose cases are 'no further actioned' are scrutinised from a robust multi-agency perspective; our CYP staff attend the Children and Young People reference group. Members of staff attend the Cumbria Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC), practitioners' forums and champions' networks.

Continuing our Longitudinal study



As part of the original Lottery Grant we wanted to undertake a longitudinal study to see if recovery was sustained post leaving the service. In the first year of our longitudinal study 24 services users who had been in service in 2016/17 & 2017/18 were contacted by an independent researcher. The findings were extremely encouraging with sustained recovery for all except one of these clients. The same researcher had been commissioned to continue with the study in June this year. This has been temporarily stalled but we will pick this work up once Covid-19 restrictions are eased.

Maintaining and developing our current staff team

We have a dedicated and experienced staff team; we are committed to their ongoing professional development and training. In 2019/20, two of our support staff qualified as therapists and another has picked up additional responsibilities by implementing and managing the schools project. We will continue to support internal staff training and CPD by implementing a full training programme and by supporting individual training requests based on our annual appraisal process.

Training

We want to develop both our internal and external training. We want to continue to evaluate and embed our delivery model and develop the training manual and resources to support our recovery programme. We also want to develop our external training programmes around trauma, to deliver at least two external trauma-focused training sessions per year and continue to offer bespoke training packages to partner organisations across the county. We want to run a CPD event on elder abuse and more trauma workshops and programmes.

Consolidating our model

We plan to manage increased referrals by greater provision of core trauma-informed services and the introduction of more peer-led groups. We will continue to review the model and develop the resources to support our work.

Developing the recovery community – peer mentoring/befriending

We aim to carry on building a recovery community linked with local services and community groups, using our volunteer pool, many of whom are former clients, to run art and craft groups and other social and support groups linked to the wider community.

Introducing more group programmes

We intend to introduce more group work, initially one group per week (10 clients), which would allow us to increase capacity and reduce waiting lists, while maintaining quality and remaining within our agreed recovery framework.

Service capacity

We are unable to predict the impact of the pandemic on referral numbers. Our priority is to maintain our current staffing levels and continue with plans to increase our capacity by developing group work and the use of specially trained peer mentors/befrienders from our volunteer pool.

Working in schools

We intend to develop our model, and roll this out across schools in Cumbria once our schools are re-opened.

Developing volunteers and peer mentoring

We want to offer peer mentor training and volunteer opportunities. The aim is for volunteers to run the drop-in sessions, and support befriending, community fundraising and other community work. We currently have 14 specially trained volunteers, and plan to build this pool.



Developing online presence, social media and remote working

We have learnt a great deal from the pandemic – some very positive ways of working have emerged, especially when working across such a huge county. Staff can stay connected across the county working from outreach offices and they can offer sessions by telephone or video to clients living in the most remote parts of Cumbria where travel and public transport are infrequent. We will continue to learn from our experience and build this into future planning and projects to enhance the services we can deliver and the reach into our communities. We intend to use our experience of working remotely, using IT solutions, to see how we can best support the more isolated and harder to reach communities, including older people, remote Cumbrian villages, and the travelling and LGBTQ communities.

9. OUR CHALLENGES

Coronavirus

We start 2020/21 with a great deal of uncertainty – we do not know what the demand for services will look like, we have no ideas if funding for our schools' work will continue in its current form. These are challenging times. We want to consolidate and plan.

Funding pressures

Direct funding at present is primarily Covid 19 related, and it is difficult to plan ahead with many Trusts and foundations currently closing normal funding routes. We have identified our financial needs over the next three years for our current practice. Safety Net (UK) has secured funding for around 70-80% of its core activity for 2020-21, with continuation funding from the PCC and MOJ for 2021-22. We do have challenges ahead to overcome in that our 5-year Lottery grant has ended and we are coming to the end of three-year grants from: Henry Smith, Children in Need and Lloyds Trust. We will be discussing proposals with these funders in the coming months.

Staff changes/difficulty in recruiting specialist staff

Staffing levels increased last year by around 10% in order to cover projects across our schools. Last year we lost our Chief Officer and a senior Children and Young Persons Practitioner. The service still does not have the capacity to meet demand. There remains a real skills shortage across Cumbria, and it is often difficult to recruit for specialist posts. Offering remote working will make it much easier for us to recruit to specialist posts. We will also continue to support training for our own staff; two support staff have completed therapy training this year, and we have supported staff to complete IDVA and ISVA training and Safe Lives Managers training.

Increasing complexity of cases

As austerity has impacted on mainstream front-line services, we have seen an increase in the complexity of client needs, including mental health, drug, alcohol and practical needs around housing, benefits and employment. This has led to an increase in the numbers of clients calling for advice and support and wanting drop-in and one-off sessions.

Political change and changing agendas

We will continue to build partnerships with partners across the county. We already work very closely with the Birchall Trust to whom we subcontract services commissioned by the CPCC for the south of the county. We have a member of staff based in the West Cumbria Women's Centre. We are members of the Survivors Trust and support Safe Lives and Women's Aid to ensure funding for this sector remains high on the political agenda.



10. INVESTMENT POLICY

Safety Net (UK) holds all funding in two accounts with the Cumberland Building Society and relies on a mixture of grants, contracts and local fundraising for income.

11. FINANCIAL REVIEW

11.1 Going concern

After making appropriate enquiries, the Trustees have a reasonable expectation that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. For this reason, they continue to adopt the going concern basis in preparing the financial statements. Further details regarding the adoption of the going concern basis can be found in the Accounting Policies.

11.2 Funding

We have a good mix of funding with ongoing contracts with the MOJ and CPCC, which represent around 40% of our total funding. The remaining 60% is made up from grants from trusts and foundations and our community fundraising element (5%-10%). Although our plan for the coming year was to continue to develop and expand our community funding stream, it is unlikely this will happen in the wake of the coronavirus.

We have an agreed three-year business plan and budget. We are the commissioned providers of sexual assault counselling services in North and West Cumbria. Despite the issues associated with the COVID 19 pandemic we have ongoing current contracts with the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cumbria and with the Ministry of Justice. We have received additional funding from the MOJ, Cumbria Community Foundation and the CPCC to support additional costs associated with the COVID 19 pandemic. We have a mix of grant funding from National Lottery and Frances C. Scott Trust, Garfield Weston Foundation, Lloyds Bank Foundation, The Henry Smith Charity and Children in Need. Our current activity will continue. The charity has 85% of funding in place for 2020-21 based on current level of activity.

11.3 Reserves policy

Our reserve policy is to retain unrestricted reserves balances of no less than 25% of the total operating costs for the year. The policy is reviewed annually.

11.4 Public Benefit

The Trustees have considered the guidance issued by the Charity Commission in respect of public benefit and believe that the operations and activities of the charity comply with this guidance.



14. TRUSTEES' BIOGRAPHIES

All Trustees are community members, not clients, but they have insight and experience in relevant fields.

Chris Armstrong – Chairman

Chris is a solicitor with over forty years' experience at a senior level in the Criminal Justice System, in the courts service, and in probation, with particular interests in sentencing, the support of victims and the rehabilitation of offenders. Chris was appointed MBE by HM The Queen in the New Year's Honour List 2019 for services to the criminal justice system and to the community in Cumbria. As well as Safety Net (UK), Chris is a Trustee of Cumbria Victims Charitable Trust, and of Beginning Again, a new charity dealing with the rehabilitation of ex-offenders. Chris leads on governance issues.

Linda Vance – Vice-Chair

Linda has over forty years' experience working in the legal sector. She was the Divisional Crown Prosecutor for North Cumbria and the Violence against Women lead for Cumbria and has lectured on this. She was the area lead on Child Abuse and the Internet, also training CPS lawyers in Cumbria and Lancashire on the Sexual Offences Act 2003 before they could handle rape and sexual abuse cases. Linda is a past Public Governor for the Cumbria partnership NHS Trust, working on child services groups and serious case reviews, and is now a Non-Executive Director of Cumbria Health on Call (CHOC), a social enterprise set up to provide out of hours primary care for the people of Cumbria.. She is also an independent member of the Police and Crime Commissioner's scrutiny panel for Cumbria. Her encompassing knowledge brings great depth to our service. Linda is the staff lead on the Board of Trustees.

Carol Green

Qualified social worker, with over thirty years' experience, Carol is also a certified play therapist and has been a child protection officer within the NSPCC. Carol brings great insight and understanding, having worked in the field, and is the safeguarding lead on the Board of Trustees.

Georgina Martlew

Georgina worked as a public sector auditor for over thirty-five years. Now retired, she is an instructor with Riding for the Disabled, and treasurer of two other local charities. Georgina is the treasurer of the Board of Trustees.



15. TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES STATEMENT

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- ✚ select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- ✚ observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- ✚ make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- ✚ prepare the financial statements on the 'going concern' basis, unless it is inappropriate to presume the charity will continue in operation.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charity's transactions, and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity, and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008, and the provisions of the trust deed. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and, hence, for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

This report was approved by the Trustees.

Date approved:

and signed on their behalf by:

Mr C J Armstrong,
Chairman of Safety Net (UK) Trustees

SAFETY NET (UK)
(A Charitable Incorporated Organisation)

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT
FOR PERIOD ENDING 31 MARCH 2020

To be inserted here

