



EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS FOR WOMEN WITH COMPLEX NEEDS AND THE RECRUITMENT & RETENTION OF FRONTLINE WORKERS

An International Specialised Skills Institute Fellowship.

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1. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Fellow would like to thank the following individuals and organisations who generously gave their time and their expertise to assist, advise and guide her throughout her Jobs Victoria Fellowship.

Awarding Body – International Specialised Skills Institute (ISS Institute)

The ISS Institute plays a pivotal role in creating value and opportunity, encouraging new thinking and early adoption of ideas and practice by investing in individuals.

The overarching aim of the ISS Institute is to support the development of a “Smarter Australia”. The Institute does this via the provision of Fellowships that provide the opportunity for Australians to undertake international skills development and applied research that will have a positive impact on Australian industry and the broader community.

The International Specialised Skills Institute was founded 28 years ago, by Sir James Gobbo AC, CVO, QC, and former Governor of Victoria, who had a vision of building a community of industry specialists who would lead the up-skilling of the Australian workforce. The Fellowship Program builds shared learning, leadership and innovation across the broad range of industry sectors worked with. Fellows are supported to disseminate learning's and ideas, facilitate change and advocate for best practice through the sharing of their Fellowship learning's with peers, colleagues, government, industry and community.

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The Fellow would like to thank Jobs Victoria for providing funding for this Fellowship through the Jobs Victoria Innovation Fund.

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Personal Acknowledgements

- » JVEN – Jobs Victoria Employment Network
- » MCSW – McAuley Community Services for Women
- » ANAWIM - Birmingham
- » SKILLS FOR CARE - UK
- » DR SUSIE BALDESTON – University of Birmingham
- » ACH – Ashley Community Housing – Bristol
- » SISTERS OF MERCY – Handsworth Convent, Birmingham
- » YCC - Yarraville Community Centre - Reconnect Program

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Victorian Government formed The Royal Commission into Family Violence (RCFV) in February 2015 and subsequently published a Summary of Recommendations in March 2016.

Within the RCFV's Summary of Recommendations was a list of 'system limitations'; one of the identified obstacles limiting the effective implementation of laws, policies, and programs was:

"The range of services a victim might need at different times, including at points of crisis and beyond, are not as well coordinated as they should be, particularly when these services are located in different systems—for example, the health and justice systems. Gaining access to support can be difficult for victims, and service responses remain inconsistent and hard to navigate".

The RCFV also recognised women whose lives had been shattered as a result of the sustained FV experience in their relationships who still have the capacity to live a full and productive life through the support of not only other family members and friends, but through the effective services of an integrated community support network.

This understanding of a woman's capacity reiterated not only to the woman as a client, but the workers assisting the woman, to believe that with peer support, women are able to become empowered to lead fulfilling, violence free lives and create hope for the future.

NFP Community Women's Services continue to prove that they work more effectively and efficiently within an integrated organisation - a 'One-Stop-Shop' with a holistic case management approach.

Women's support services have been in operation for decades, assisting women and their children to flee Family Violence. But, the overwhelming demand for support for women with complex needs, comes at a high price for organisations. There is limited funding to cover the costs of key support staff, job insecurity and the recruitment and retention of peer support workers, who play a pivotal role in the effective and efficient case management of positive outcomes. Government funded positions for key staff is critical if we are to achieve sustainable change in the lives of these women.

Since the RCFV an increase in media coverage has improved public awareness of this issue. Women's support services are being inundated with increasing numbers of calls for help and Family Violence awareness campaigns are bringing more women to the community's attention. Women are also recognising violence in life no longer must be tolerated and that they have a right to have their voices heard.

For the frontline workers tackling the influx of 'the call for help', there is an overwhelming frustration of the 'over servicing' of a woman dealing with not only FV but the associated complexities that come with it. Various unconnected support services are activated for the woman who has presented with a FV situation. This can often cause more trauma and anxiety to meet the variety of appointments at different services and explaining personal details repeatedly. Because these appointments are often in multiple locations this alone can quite often constrain or limit the woman attending, as the financial cost can add to the already high levels of stress.

Women currently being case managed within the system are most likely dealing with numerous services, which has proven to be another barrier. It is now time

to start emphasising the importance of 101 case management, that is strong, consistent and streamlined.

Case management of women who are at risk of homelessness, fleeing domestic violence, living with mental health and complex needs issues, or in many cases, all the above. Now more than ever we, need the Governments backing for Integrated (one-stop-shop) women's support organisations to assist them from trauma and crisis, through to sustainable employment and financial independence.

3. FELLOWSHIP BACKGROUND

Fellowship Context

The Fellow, Lorraine Thomson, works with McAuley Community Services for Women's Employment Program as an Employment Case Manager. McAuley Works is an intensive employment program that assists women who have experienced family violence, homelessness or mental health issues to find and maintain employment.

What has clearly presented to the Fellow is that women who are referred from various women's organisations consistently come with a portfolio of: trauma related complex needs, are unskilled and unqualified, with limited work experience often not having held a position of employment for quite some time.

A very high percentage of the women being referred are not fluent in English, may have a diagnosed mental illness or a learning disability. Added to these existing barriers is the fact that most of these women are living in accommodation not located in proximity of many employment opportunities and in a locality that has limited available transport. All while dealing with the critical situation of staying safe until the violent situation they have been living in has de-escalated from critical to minimal risk.

This Fellowship has offered an opportunity to visit and observe best practice models with similar women's integrated organisations, refugee and asylum seeker resettlement programs, and community workforce support services. Although the Fellow visited many services, three (3) key organisations were chosen to review in-depth as they demonstrate best practice and were able to clearly and effectively sum up what works well and demonstrate proven outcomes. All three

organisations highlighted the threats associated with the disbandment of such services due to funding and the privatisation of community support services, which must be acknowledged as this creates another barrier or layer of difficulty. Overall, this Fellowship provided further understanding of the complexities of re-engagement of women who experience barriers.

The Fellows' current position primarily involves 'outreach', she attends one-on-one meetings with women who have been referred by Women's Services in and around the State of Victoria. Currently the McAuley Works Employment Program has approximately 180 referred women on the books, with two Outreach Employment Case Managers assisting these women to obtain sustainable employment and financial independence.

Aims of the Fellowship

The aim of this Fellowship was to explore best practice and innovation in the UK. What are some of the women's services delivering to support women who have been affected by family violence, mental health, homelessness, incarceration and other significant barriers to finding and sustaining employment?

The main enquiry streams that the Fellow originally aimed to apply to the Fellowship included;

- » How does the UK support job seekers facing barriers to obtain and sustain employment?
- » How does the UK approach the ever-increasing numbers of women going to

prison for petty crimes, and stop the door opening wider when working with the complexities of women at risk?

- » How do women's services effectively educate society by using evidence based, real life commentary?
- » How do UK women's services support a woman to change the downward trajectory of a life ordained by circumstance?
- » How does the UK identify and work together with women's organisations to reduce the risk of a woman with complex needs avoid future long-term labour exclusion and lead a positive and constructive life to the one she may know no different from?

The Fellow, based on both experience and research believe the answer lies in Prevention, Early Intervention, and Long-Term Recovery - continuous media exposure, school educational programs, recruitment and retention of frontline community service workers, but most of all - the implementation, of a specialised FV Peer Support Workforce and the recruitment of qualified Peer Support Workers.

Australian Context:

In Australia, Women's services primarily are there to assist a woman and her child/children into safe accommodation and provide counselling. However, in most cases time allocated to case workers is quite limited and often leading to a 'case closing' referral to the McAuley Community Services for Women's Employment Program. Mc Auley Outreach Employment Case Workers are working at the "coalface" assisting women who often have not even considered the possibility of obtaining paid work.

The Employment Support Case Workers who support women from external agencies are quite often confronted with women still in crisis. The majority of referred women present with multiple barriers and it takes time to build a trusting relationship. Often, other support networks and agencies must be engaged as part of this process.



Time constraints to achieve the expected outcomes for the women i.e. obtain sustainable employment can create additional pressure for both the client and the worker. At present there are only three (3) government funded positions for Outreach Employment Case Workers for the whole of Victoria. Since the funding was received for the three (3) year MCSW Employment Program (2017 – 2020), MCSW has worked with a cohort of women in critical mode, from different multi-cultural, non-English speaking backgrounds, many who have mental health issues and / or have experienced family violence and homelessness and successfully supported them from crisis to sustainable employment with the additional outcome of ‘breaking the cycle’.

The addition of Volunteer Peer Support Workers and Mentors would mean that agencies could offer added value and more effectively emphasise to the importance of Employment Programs and ultimately employment and the associated benefits including social inclusion.

Lack of funding and job insecurity impacts the retention of key staff and overall staff morale. The recruitment of frontline workers with limited life skills and qualifications could potentially be addressed if these applicants were to flow into roles as volunteer peer support worker and mentors and gain experience.

Integrated (One-Stop-Shops) Women’s Support Services with a holistic 101 case management approach for the ‘individual woman’, should be the fundamental goal and would ensure that community service organisations can effectively and successfully implement The Royal Commission’s conclusions and recommendations.

The Commission’s conclusions from the Royal Commission into Family Violence: Report and recommendations were as follows:

“There is no comparison between the response today and that of 2000. We can point to the failures today—and there are many. However, the failures

of the system should not be confused with lack of progress. We have come a long way from women self-referring, women not reporting to police, from police not drawing the dots between family violence and crime and domestic murder. I acknowledge how far we have come since those dark days. The days of an isolated women’s service response are gone”.¹

“Victoria has been at the forefront of family violence policy development and reform in Australia for the past 15 years and has been influential in propelling reforms in other Australian and international jurisdictions. This work has been driven by and has built on decades of grassroots work and advocacy by the women’s movement. Significant elements of the Victorian response to family violence remain sound. However, there are serious limitations in the existing approach. We are not responding adequately to the scale and impact of the harm caused by family violence”.

In the three years since the RCFV made its’ recommendations there has been improvements. Investment of an unprecedented amount of over \$2.7 billion has driven these changes and the work towards a Victoria, free from Family Violence.

To date the Government has implemented 120 of the 227 recommendations from the RCFV Report, with an emphasis on the need for outcome-orientated action. This has been achieved through the implementation of The Family Violence Outcomes Framework which was developed in consultation with the FV delivery sector, victim survivors and community members. It clearly outlines Victoria’s priorities in preventing and responding to family violence, why these priorities matter, and what constitutes success. The role of and the need to support and recognise the vital work undertaken by Peer Support Workers is part of this picture. Currently Peer Support Workers within Women’s Support Organisations are engaged on a voluntary basis. This needs to change in order to more effectively capitalise on this important part of the system.

The Family Violence Outcomes Framework is embedded into the 10 year **Ending**

Family Violence: Victoria's Plan for Change and the associated **Family Violence Rolling Action Plan 2017-2020** to ensure that they are on the right track to deliver the necessary outcomes through the reformed Family Violence reform system.

The **Three Years On** Report provides a summary of the key achievements as at 2018, organised under the four domains of the Family Violence Outcomes Framework, and provides a 'snapshot' of what the Victorian Government has achieved in the last three years in working towards a Victoria free from family violence.

The FV Reform Policy and governance landscape points out the following four outcome framework domains:

1. FV Outcomes Framework: Domain 1: Family Violence and Gender Inequality are not tolerated
2. FV Outcomes Framework: Domain 2: Victim, Survivors, vulnerable children and families, are safe and supported to recover and thrive
3. FV Outcomes Framework: Domain 3: Perpetrators are held to account, engaged and connected
4. FV Outcomes Framework: Domain 4: preventing and responding to family violence is systemic and enduring

RESPECT VICTORIA was established which is an independent statutory authority that will lead the state's prevention efforts in changing the attitudes, social norms and culture that results in family violence and violence against women. <https://www.respectvictoria.vic.gov.au/>

DHELK DJA: Safe Our Way – Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families (2018-2028) is a community-led Aboriginal agreement which underpins approaches to ensure that aboriginal people, families and communities are living free from family violence. <https://dhhs.vic.gov.au/publications/strong-culture-strong-peoples-strong-families-10-year-plan>

THE ORANGE DOOR has commenced across five pilot areas. It provides victim survivors an integrated practice team of specialist family violence, perpetrator and family services working together to improve safety, reduce risk, and connect to services. <https://orangedoor.vic.gov.au/>

THE CENTRAL INFORMATION POINT currently being established to allow frontline workers to access timely, consolidated and up-to-date information to make more information assessments of family violence risk and identify safety needs. <https://w.www.vic.gov.au/familyviolence/family-safety-victoria/the-central-information-point.html>

The Governments response to family violence has also been improved with:

- » more safe and stable accommodation
- » specialist support and legal services in courts
- » new family violence investigation units
- » restorative justice options for victim survivors.¹

Fellow's Biography

The Fellow works with women surviving family violence, are at risk of homelessness, or are living with mental health, to obtain sustainable employment and be financially independent. The Fellow works individually with each woman to ensure that she

1 Ref: <https://w.www.vic.gov.au/familyviolence/royal-commission-report/three-years-on-from-the-royal-commission-into-family-violence.html#B>

is offered the support required to assist her in reaching her goals, whether that be through education programs or straight into employment.

For most of her career the Fellow has predominantly worked within the Corporate world of Oil & Gas, both on and offshore in Recruitment, Human Resources and Employee Relations.

The Fellow has also worked alongside DELWP, previously known as the DSE (Department of Sustainability & Environment), employing and managing key emergency ground support staff during the 2006/2007 and 2009/2010 Victorian State Emergency bushfires. During these years, the Fellow was the Recruitment Manager for a Labour Hire company, building it up from a desk and one filing cabinet to an organisation that employed a base team of 10 women. The Fellow spent two years living in the remote WA Outback where she was offered a raw insight into the complexities of Family Violence within Indigenous communities.

The Fellow kicked off her corporate career in the multimedia industry (television, radio and newspaper), whilst studying a Diploma of Business back in the 1980's. During this time, she was a single parent, at risk of homelessness and surviving the trauma of family violence. Through the Fellow's lived experience, she continues to advocate for employment programs supporting women with complex needs and the recruitment and retention of frontline workers. The Fellow believes the recognition of 'lived experience' and effective succession planning is what is needed to create an effective and proactive Peer Support Workforce.



Abbreviations / Acronyms / Definitions

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACH	Ashley Community Housing
ANROWS	Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety
CQC	Care Quality Commission
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
FV	Family Violence
GP	General Practitioner
HOB – PCT	Heart of Birmingham – Primary Care Trust
IDVA	Independent Domestic Violence Advisor
MCSW	McAuley Community Services for Women
MH	Mental Health
NFP	Not for Profit
NMDS-SC	National Minimum Data Set for Social Care
PRT	Prison Reform Trust
RCFV	Royal Commission into Family Violence
RTO	Registered Training Organisation
WDF	Workforce Development Funding

4. FELLOWSHIP LEARNINGS

The Fellow visited the following key organisations and their associated collaborating services. The purpose of these visits was to incorporate input and observations of best practice from these organisations.

ANAWIM – Birmingham



The Austere ANAWIM Building

ANAWIM comes from the Aramaic word (ah-nah-weem) meaning the poorest, the outcast, the persecuted - those with no voice.

A '101' Holistic Case Management Women's' Organisation assisting women and their children, especially those women vulnerable to exploitation, including prostitution. Leading the cause of this incredibly effective organisation is CEO - Joy Doal and her team of frontline workers.

ANAWIM's Prison Support & Outreach Support Worker and Personality Disorder Pathway Coordinator, has worked alongside some of the most vulnerable women in custody in both HMP Drake Hall & Foston Hall covering any support needs the women may have, the major need for most women is emotional support. But practical support is also offered and includes housing issues, money/debt problems, family issues, mental health, drug & alcohol misuse, issues within prison and court/parole hearings.



Prison Support & Outreach Support Worker and Personality Disorder Pathway Coordinator – Debbie Hickman, Middle – Lorraine Thomson, Right – ANAWIM CEO – Joy Doal

ANAWIM advocates for the support of women and the pivotal need for the type of work outlined above. ANAWIM have an insatiable passion to collectively drive the important message of their Prison Support and Mental Health Support programs to be both acknowledged and retained.

The organisation summarised the key challenges faced, including:

- » Lack of funding – which has negative impacts on staff welfare and ultimately staff retention
- » Motivational Issues - support for the women in prison
- » Housing on Release – a major issue which can result in re-offending and short-term sentencing issues
- » Multiple Complex Needs - ongoing education and support services
- » Privatisation of Probation Services - e.g. lack of experienced Mental Health workers.

ANAWIM work collaboratively with The Prison Reform Trust to ensure that the voices of the women are heard at a National level. The Prison Reform Trusts' Engagement Team are an informative conduit, who represent the voices and rights of women in the prison system.

The Prison Reform Trusts' Prisoner Engagement Team have been successful in building agencies to assist organisations to navigate compliance and build suitable policies. It must be noted that the Head of the Prisoner Engagement Team comes with 'lived experience' as an ex-offender, who understands the vitalness of this service and works tirelessly to support women both on the inside and out.

PRISON REFORM TRUST

The Prison Reform Trust (PRT) is a registered charity that works to create a just, human and effective penal system. The organisation was established in 1981, in London, by a small group of prison reform campaigners who were advocating for community punishments rather than traditional prison sentencing as 48% of women are reconvicted within one year of leaving prison and this rises to 61% for sentences of less than 12 months and 78% for women who have served more than 11 previous custodial sentences.²

Working with ANAWIM - Head of Prisoner Engagement - Paula Harriott

Paula was previously Head of Involvement at Revolving Doors Agency 2015-2017 and Head of Programmes at User Voice 2010-2015 where she led the development of service user involvement in prison and probation, as well as forensic mental health services. She is a steering group member of Agenda, the coalition that seeks to support women and girls at risk and is a passionate advocate for highlighting the inequalities that affect vulnerable people in the criminal justice system. She is also a trustee of the Community Chaplaincy.

Paula's passion for working with excluded members of the community stems from personal experiences as a prisoner from 2004-2012. Her personal experiences and associated research – The Experience of Being a Female Prisoner Listener, a qualitative study submitted as part of a post graduate diploma in integrative psychotherapy, and The Health Needs of Women Offenders in Resettlement, commissioned by HOB PCT (Heart of Birmingham Primary Care Trust) – sharpened her commitment to raising awareness of the issues faced by prisoners and to campaign and proactively deliver services which support both prisoners and ex-

offenders to progress personally and strategically past the stigma of imprisonment and multiple exclusion.



Women in Prison Women are a minority within the criminal justice system, accounting for around 15% of the probation caseload and less than 5% of the prison population. The drivers to their offending differ significantly from men's and they often have more complex needs.

Please refer to the link to connect and support: <http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/whoweare>

Left: Head of Prisoner Engagement - Paula Harriott and Lorraine Thomson

ANAWIM - Service Management for the IDVA (Independent Domestic Violence Advisor)

The Service Manager currently manages the staff and co-ordinates the work of the two early intervention 'New Chance', and 'Liaison & Diversion' Teams.

Some of the other teams the Service Manager manages are - Floating Support, Money Advice Case Workers, MH Team Support Workers, Women's Involvement Worker, Service User Involvement, Enabling Environments, Mentors, Ardenleigh Transitions (Course Tutors), Early Interventions.

Although the Service Manager is one of many support workers in ANAWIM's organisation, her workload suggests that staff are over-stretched and working in a fragile and insecure environment.

In 2017 ANAWIM had to make a financial decision to cut back on providing alternatives to custody, disband some of their mental health team and cope with losing their Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (at a time where DV and MH cases were most prevalent).



ANAWIM Service Manager – Sarah Gallagher and Lorraine Thomson

ANAWIM's CEO and the team of workers continue to stay resilient against such strains by supporting each other – not one person the Fellow met appeared more important than the next. The team at ANAWIM work as a united front and pass these qualities on to the women they case manage (most of the women being walk ins). The Fellow believes this to be a testimonial to ANAWIM's quality of care and support.

The Fellow received a sincere and honest audience with the women of ANAWIM and believes this was thanks to the shared passion for ensuring that we all work together on a united, global front.

ANAWIM's Social Inclusion and Employment Support Worker

ANAWIM's Social Inclusion and Employment Support Worker, is a 'hands-on' lived experienced case worker for women who want to turn their lives around and focus on becoming more financially independent.

The Social Inclusion & Support Worker is a shining example of what and who



a 'lived experience' peer support worker can bring to the table. The current Social Inclusion & Support Worker initially commenced her work with ANAWIM as a client and through the support of the team of workers was succession planned into becoming an equally supportive worker of the organisation and other women. Her role includes assisting and coordinating employment ready programs, training and education, volunteers and mentoring programs for the women. The Social Inclusion & Support Workers' lived experience shines through to the women she works with, they witness her passion to strive forward and stay positive and commitment to advocating for other women and ANAWIM.

ANAWIM Social Inclusion & Support Worker – Rebecca Noble and YACC Reconnect Program Coordinator – Bettina Twyman

The Fellows Key Observations and Identified Themes

- » ANAWIM's contribution to supporting women to avoid re-offending and their focus on independent living with responsible choices particularly the Prison Support & Outreach Support Worker and Personality Disorder Pathway Program. This program is proving that it assists with the reduction of numbers of women returning to the prison system. It collaborates and advocates in partnership with the Prison Reform Trust, and Social Policy Researchers at The University of Birmingham to present at Parliamentary hearings.
- » Continuous advocacy for women's voices to be heard – from the inside and out.

Campaigning rigorously on social network with the support of various groups – in particular, The Prison Reform Trust, and The University of Birmingham's Social School of Sociology's Research Fellow - Dr Susie Balderston.

- » Educating women to access relevant and suitable services to support their individual journeys to create an independent and positive life.
- » Assisting women to explore and develop skills to generate income through social enterprise. Offering opportunities to gain employability skills, including communication and team working.
- » Services such as ANAWIM and their holistic, bespoke '101 case management' are currently operating without secure funding which can cause negative organisational impact including insecurities within the team. Issues include:
 - » recruitment and retention of staff,
 - » Inability to offer employment training programs for women with lived experience to become peer support workers,
 - » takes focus away from core business activity e.g. eats into time that should be dedicated to supporting women into employment
- » The privatisation of social services which has led to the erosion in the quality of care and loss of experienced personnel. Women requiring support are attracted to more suitable and nurturing 'open door' women's services, such as ANAWIM for additional case management. The irony being that ANAWIM lost funding during the privatisation process.
- » Bespoke post-release transitional programs for women – in-house and outreach.

The Fellow had the good fortune of being invited to the table to chat with some of the women. Every Friday women come to the centre to meet up for a community 'shared' lunch. The beauty of this meeting was watching how the women interacted and supported each other in a non-judgemental and secure setting. All were quite curious about Australia and the women we work with.



Sister Marie and Lorraine Thomson



Researchers from University of Birmingham – L: Joanna Long and M: Dr. Susie Balderston along with Lorraine Thomson

Although the two nominated women organising lunch were busy they were kept part of the conversations going around the room. Lots of laughs and updates on each of the women's week were shared over a lovingly prepared meal. Sister Marie from the Sisters of Mercy was also present to assist with the cutting of the cakes and offering of support.

The potential delivery of an academically recognised skilled FV Peer Support Workforce here in Australia was something the women rallied around as a point of positive discussion, future hope and implementation.

Sister Marie welcomed the Fellow and extended an invitation to visit the last convent founded by Catherine McAuley's, St. Marys in Handsworth, Birmingham. This still accommodates 'aging' Sisters of Mercy today.

ANAWIM SUMMARY:

The importance of leadership is illustrated by Joy's driving force and passion for 'all the women' and a level and style of service which creates a safe, nurturing and respectful environment both for the women who visit and ANAWIM's frontline workers. Recruitment and Retention of key staff is paramount in keeping up the effectiveness and successful outcomes for the women and the organisation.

Despite ANAWIM's effectiveness and proven success, they feel vulnerable to financial pressures. Year to year contracts promote staffing instability and as mentioned above, the privatisation of community support services increases the work load on ANAWIM.



- » National Minimum Data Set
- » Workforce Development Funding
- » Learning & Development
- » Birmingham University Guest Speaker – Rolling Out the Local Digital and Data Support for Care Employers.

CQC – Making Inspection Count - the Care Quality Commission (CQC) is an independent regulator that registers health and adult social care service providers in England and inspects whether standards are being met. All GP practices in England must be registered with the Commission.

National Minimum Data Set - the NMDS-SC (National Minimum Data Set for Social Care), is a web-based system that gathers information about the adult social care workforce. Employers from all areas of the sector including the independent and statutory sector can register and update their information. The NMDS-SC is collected online.

Skills for Care and government bodies use this anonymised information about the workforce to inform government policy and funding. The NMDS-SC also assists local authorities to develop a greater knowledge of the workforce and service providers in local areas.

Organisations can input into NMDS-SC and update their organisational and staff details as frequently as they wish. The more up to date the information is within the system, the more accurate and timelier the reports produced by the system are. Completion of the NMDS-SC is not mandatory, and all data submitted is done voluntarily by employers.³

Workforce Development Funding - available to support training of existing and new workers in areas of shortages. The WDF is funding from the Department of

SKILLS FOR CARE – Birmingham

Skills for Care supports over 150 networks for registered managers, covering every local authority area in England. They are chaired and led by registered managers for registered managers. These Networks offer peer support and access to experts, best practice and information.



Along with meeting with some of the Skills for Care Team, the Fellow attended a Skills for Care Roadshow in Birmingham to observe how this organisation captures and implements the following:

- » CQC – Making Inspection Count

Health and Social Care which is disbursed by Skills for Care. It's a limited financial resource which funds professional development and educational programmes for those employed in social care in England.⁴



Learning and Development – Support and guidance in apprenticeships, Regulation qualifications framework and tips on developing your workforce.

Skills for Care offer 'work based' apprenticeships which are a valuable investment for community service support organisations.

- Quality outcomes are verifiable through robust assessment.
- Staff are better trained and more committed, leading to higher retention rates and lower staff turnover reducing the cost of recruitment to the organisation.

- Participation in apprenticeships helps identify candidates ready for promotion and assists managers' in succession planning.

Roll Out of Data Driven Innovation Opportunities for the Department of Health and Social Care Employers and Employees:

The Big Data Corridor Programme Team (funded by the ERFD - European Regional Development Fund), are currently assisting both the employer and employee within the Health & Social Services to get a 'grip' on data within their organisations. The Big Data Corridor Project Team is offering organisations, a unique opportunity to exploit the benefits of growth through Big Data, and become part of the £241 billion growth Tech UK is predicting by 2020.

Present at the Skills for Care Roadshow in Birmingham was Guest Speaker – Mr Xavier Schmoor of Birmingham University to 'roll out' the "Local Digital and Data Support for Care Employers - Data Collection".

The Big Data Corridor team work with the Health and Social Services teams to focus on how data science can be used to benefit the provisions of health and social care. This work includes the implementation of 'ready reference database information and statistics' for the National Minimum Data Set for Social Care, Care Quality Commission, Workforce Development Funding, and Learning & Development Training :

- » Client Cohort
- » Outcomes
- » Demonstrated impact of working with clients through time
- » Safety for the Frontline Workers



These point examples can be used to evidence the time/quality of service given to not only the client, but also the organisations and their team of employees.

Guest speaker from Birmingham University talking about a local digital and data support project that is currently being rolled out for Birmingham care employers.

The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), is a fund allocated by the European Union. Its purpose is to transfer money from richer regions (not countries), and invest it in the infrastructure and services of underdeveloped regions. This allows those regions to start attracting private sector investments and create jobs on their own.⁵

From 2014 to 2020 – part of the scope of work has been tasked to promote regional development. The ERDF contributes towards financing the measures of:

Objective convergence

- » Modernising and diversifying economic structures
- » Creating sustainable jobs
- » Stimulating economic growth
- » Attention to urban, remote, mountainous, sparsely populated, and the outermost regions

Regional competitiveness and employment

- » Innovation and knowledge economy (e.g., research and technological development, innovation and entrepreneurship, financial engineering)
- » Environment and risk prevention (e.g., cleaning up polluted areas, energy efficiency, clean urban public transport, risk prevention plans)
- » Access to transport and telecommunications

Territorial cooperation

- » Cross-border economic, social, and environmental activities
- » Transnational cooperation, including bilateral cooperation between maritime regions
- » Inter-regional cooperation, including networking and exchange of experiences between regional and local authorities

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Regional_Development_Fund#/media/File:European_union_erdf_map_en.png



ACH – Bristol



ACH are the leading provider of refugee resettlement services in the UK and are specialists in labour market and social integration. ACH offer various programmes and opportunities to suit business needs. ACH are currently working in partnership with Starbucks and Co-op, running bespoke courses to fill staff vacancies.

ACH is part of the Refugee Employment Network, its vision is that; every refugee in the UK is able to access appropriate and fulfilling paid employment or self-employment. Himilo Training starts with assessing the clients to make sure they are put onto the correct career path. Himilo provides short, vocational training courses in Bristol and the West Midlands to upskill clients.

Himilo Training delivers employability/work ready programmes for local businesses and national corporates and is the go-to partner for local employers looking to diversify their workforce, reduce recruitment costs and address skills shortages.

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Regional_Development_Fund#/media/File:European_union_erdf_map_en.png



L-R: David Jepson (Himilo Director), Lydia Samuel (Entrepreneurship Facilitator), Richard Thickpenny (Business Development Manager), and Julia Palmer (Career Advisor and Employment Manager)



Some of the ACH hard at work in the hub.....

ACH also have strong strategic partnerships with local authorities, government agencies, and education providers looking to access traditionally 'hard to reach' groups. ACH co-design and co-create programmes with real experience and requirements, and deliver quality training tailored to the needs of specific target groups.

ACH was established in 2008 in Bristol by a 'lived experienced' refugee – Fuad Mahamed (CEO) and has recently celebrated its 10-year anniversary. It has collected awards and global recognition along this journey. ACH commenced by assisting refugees and other vulnerable homeless people by offering supportive accommodation, along with the training and education necessary to help them integrate into UK society

ACH's major campaign is #rethinkingrefugee which began in 2015 and was born as a reaction to the negative portrayal of refugees in the media. The aim of the #rethinkingrefugee campaign is to change the perception and see refugees as assets to local communities and employers. ACH have been showcasing the #rethinkingrefugee campaign at key events around the Bristol and West Midlands areas of the UK.

Employment Engagement and Resettlement Support Workers work together as a united front, with a holistic, personal and individualised support plan for each person in place. The ACH Team can range from initial transitioning support housing, through to sustainable employment leading to financial independence.

Julia Palmer is ACH's Careers Advice & Employment Manager, working collaboratively with employers to ensure bespoke training is delivered effectively to refugees thereby building a ready skilled workforce. Julia assists with the identification of skill gaps and works with employers, both locally and nationally to ensure vacancies are offered without prejudice to assist employers in increasing diversity within their organisations.



Back L-R: Rose Adderley, Matilda Kay, Julia Palmer, Front L-R: Lorraine Thomson and Rachel Sharp

ST. MARYS CONVENT – HANDSWORTH, BIRMINGHAM

The Fellow visited St Marys Convent. Catherine McAuley founded convents and works of mercy throughout Ireland and England back in 1827 with the opening of the first women's shelter in Baggot Street, Dublin where she would shelter homeless women and their children. Catherine McAuley's approach to assisting women and children was simply to educate and empower them to lead happy and mutually sustaining lives – where she believed the development of girls' and

women's talents is most conducive to the good of society, seeing education the centrepiece and aimed to lead by example.



During Catherine McAuley 's social work she realised the many social, economic, and political oppressions under which they struggled, and she had bitter experiences trying to find shelter for abused servant women and homeless girls who were turned down by bureaucratic institutions with little sense of the urgency of their situations. These experiences left indelible sorrow and determination in her mind and heart.

Catherine McAuley was not a 'Lady bountiful' bestowing her favours on the waifs and strays but rather an instigator of professional services that would empower those who were now powerless because of the oppressive structures imposed on them.⁶



L-R: Sister Marie, Sister Bridget, Lorraine Thomson, and Sister Noreen - Sisters of Mercy hospitality.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

Recommendations

Going forward and in line with the FV Reform Policy and governance landscape – succession planning lived experience women into recognised government supported courses is the key recommendation. This would enable a skilled Peer Support Workforce for women fleeing/surviving family violence to support the limited time available to Case Management Care Coordinators.

A recognised, accredited and remunerated Peer Support Workforce could effectively support the FV Reform Policy (and governance landscape) Domain 2: Victim survivors rebuild lives and thrive—by assisting to ensure that disruption is minimised for victim survivors, including children and young people and working to support access to safe and secure housing, finances, employment, education and recovery from trauma and ensuring this is available for as long as people need it.

Other recommendations include:

1. RTO's providing bespoke Training Programs for Outreach Peer Support Workers, where the emphasis is on both skills' development and integrated support for the students – in this case, women facing multiple barriers – eg: Skillscore model of learning and employment where students are paid to work and learn concurrently
2. State Government to assist in the introduction of a Skilled FV Peer Support Workforce – by funding training courses; thus, allowing suitable succession

planning and supporting future employment opportunities for women. This could be a – Certificate IV in FV Peer Support Work

3. A wage subsidy in line with Restart – up to \$10,000 for employees who employ Outreach Peer Support Workers
4. Access to subsidised childcare for students with lived experience studying to be a FV Peer Support Worker
5. Development of a FV Peer Support Workforce Database for Employers and Employees
6. Ensure accountability and compliance with procedures and practices for clients by workers are consistently adhered to through a regulatory database
7. Implement Peer Support Worker labour force to assist with achievement of long-term goals and job planning to support educational and employment outcomes;
8. Introduce a suite of Government funded jobs within the Women's Community Support Services Sector (Employment, Liaison and Diversion, School Engagement and Workplace Educators)

Considerations and conclusions

Not for Profit Women's Support Organisations continue to prove their worth within the ecosystem of family violence via 101 case management that assists women

and their families to transition from crisis to living financially independent lives. Assisting women and their families to make these positive choices and 'break the cycle' of intergenerational behaviour and address its destructive outcomes can be chaotic, challenging and very time consuming.

Typically, the women and their children fleeing family violence who are going through the 'process' of staying safe, often has her 'crisis bubble' exacerbated by the required interaction with and servicing from various organisations and departments. At times, the woman must attend numerous services that often pull her from 'pillar to post', whilst all working to achieve the same goal. Over servicing and impractical, time limited goal setting is not the most effective approach. Support for women and their children from a One-Stop-Shop organisation can improve the process, the outcomes and the system.

Not for Profit Women's Support Organisations offering an Integrated Service (One-Stop-Shop) and holistic 101 case management program models work with an individualised plan for the woman and her children to identify the initial crisis and complex needs and barriers, through to planning for successful outcomes. Collaboration between various 'funded' support services assists the Case Workers and the clients to achieve measured outcomes including making responsible life choices, more positive parenting, engagement in further education and training, and obtaining employment to live a sustainable, financially independent life.

Optimisation of community services supporting women with complex needs can only be achieved through the integration of the services under the one 'roof' business model to ensure the avoidance of futile duplications.

In the UK the Fellow saw first-hand, successful models of support service organisations that shared a common factor; the identification of the 'real' skills and knowledge required by workers to achieve positive outcomes for clients and what was required to maintain a stable work environment throughout the process. Effective and efficient recruitment and retention of key skilled frontline workers and

their 'lived experience' peer supports can improve the lives of women and their children, by minimising 'over servicing' issues.

Although the Royal Commission into Family Violence of Victoria was not required to determine why family violence occurs, it did however outline (by way of background), some important key factors that were evident and relevant. Some of these factors include "financial pressures, alcohol and other drugs abuse, mental illness and social and economic exclusion" – this type of complex scenario is the perfect environment to witness 'over servicing' by various support services. Integrated organisations have the potential to eradicate this added barrier, benefitting both the women and the community services sector.

Lived experience Peer Support Workers offer an opportunity to support and assist with the breadth of barriers that clients can present with. If these skills were reinforced through education and training a truly contextualised support would be created where healing and recovery can occur.

For both the sake of the women who must survive the cycles of abuse and trauma, and the viability of the services, agencies and organisations that support this process, Peer Support Workers who have lived through the social ostracism typically associated with these personal circumstances and have come through and gained financial independence by making positive and responsible life choices and gaining sustainable employment provide an option that must be explored and implemented.

Peer Support Workers operate on the foundations of the feminist theory - that the oppression of women comes from the underlying bias of a patriarchal society, and cultural hegemony (ruling through common sense), must prevail if we are to move forward and be equal, particularly within the realms of employment.

The recruitment of survivors of family violence who are considered the 'golden nuggets' of lived experience within support networks need to be offered the

same support we ask them to give others; ongoing government funding for Peer Support Workers would both acknowledge and provide the ongoing ‘succession plan’ needed to break the cycle. Paid employment and specialised training or apprenticeship opportunities are highly recommended in order to continue to achieve the positive outcomes we witness through women’s community support services. However, Volunteer Peer Support Workers warrant the same recognition as those in paid employment as they experience the same barriers and challenges; access to further training and education, childcare, travel and burn out.

Knowledge transfer of lived experiences has proven to offer a guiding light to the women who are in the ‘services cycle’; but accessing the right support services is one of the significant issues. Peer Support Workers extend the nurturing arm around the women to help show her the way to continue moving forward. Paid Case Managers are laden with heavy and complex caseloads whilst working within a limited timeframe. Without the support of Peer Support Workers and Mentors, the work of the paid Case Manager can quite often come undone, all too soon.

Women who are currently in the throes of surviving the chaos surrounding them appreciate the support on offer via the women’s support services, however, additional benefit can be gained by the belief of having a better life – this can only be offered by the inspirational lived experienced provided by Peer Support Workers.

The Fellow does and will continue to advocate for women to be provided with the skills to become financially independent and not reliant on welfare, ‘breaking the cycle’. We want mothers who can lead by example and provide positive parenting modelling to their children.

6. PERSONAL, PROFESSIONAL AND SECTORAL IMPACT

Since her research travels the Fellow has had an opportunity to expand on her advocacy of supporting women with barriers back into the workforce through understanding what the potential job prospects are available. For a woman, in particular, to become financially independent after surviving family violence is paramount in the positive forward moving of attaining a life free of violence.

The Fellow has been able to expand her advocacy for an academically recognised qualification, such as a FV Peer Support Worker, to be invested in. This would be an investment well worth the government's backing. Women with lived experience are the shining lights when it comes to knowledge of being both a victim, and a survivor. For each new woman needing support through women's organisations, there is the potential of accessing a FV Peer Support Workforce – women of experience and service access knowledge.

The Fellow gained skills in understanding succession planning for women of lived experience to enter into an academically recognised education. This would not only offer a sense of worth, but the gift of using her experience to assist in breaking down the barriers of FV survival.

Peer Support Workers for women from culturally and linguistically diverse communities are extremely vital in assisting with intersecting barriers. The arrivals of 'new Australian' women needing support services are far more impacted by lack of experienced culturally diverse support workers. This understanding of what intersecting CALD woman's barriers are, is what has impacted the Fellow the most - the lack of suitable services and their availability.

The Fellow hopes that ongoing sectoral impact will occur by providing advocacy for experienced FV Peer Support Workforce based on her Fellowship learnings. This can only be recognised as the gift that keeps on giving by assisting with the eradication of family violence, homelessness and mental health issues.

7. REFERENCES

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Published by International Specialised Skills Institute, Melbourne | www.issinstitute.org.au

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