



## Annual Report 2013-14



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## Resident's poem

From one of our creative writing sessions at the Refuge

Leaving everything I've ever known,  
And all the stuff that I own,  
I felt small, all alone,  
Every bit of confidence blown.

Given hope, given safety,  
In the hope that someday maybe,  
I will be free from the person who mistreated me,  
Well as free as any woman can be.

I was given keys to a room,  
Given chores and shown the broom,  
Trusted thus, took me from the mood,  
Of the pain and impending doom.

Given a space to make sense of it all,  
Well really all I did was grow and grow,  
From the quivering washed out wreck,  
Changed to a lady now top spec!

The transformation was shaped ,  
And this is the bit, just so first rate,  
Not by my best mate,  
It was through SafeNet's delegates,  
They've changed my world and made me safe,  
They brought the sunshine back into my life,  
Without this help, I'd have no goals in sight.

# Governance Report

## A word from the Chair

SafeNet continues to grow and develop in spite of the significant planned cuts to core Supporting People funding. Uncertain funding streams have been a way of life for SafeNet since the organisation was established over 30 years ago, and we have always been successful in securing the future of essential services. I don't say essential services lightly – what SafeNet provides are life saving services.

We are working with key partners to make sure SafeNet is well placed to win tenders and explore new funding stream. The demise of Supporting People will not be the demise of SafeNet.

We have strong and committed staff and trustees who are willing to take up new opportunities when they are presented in a pro-active way to influence and shape future services. It will be challenging and I expect there will be setbacks and disappointments along the way. However, everyone involved in SafeNet is working together to secure its future.

Please take some time to read through our latest annual report – the poems and stories from women and children can articulate the essential nature of what we do far better than I can.

**Karen Ainsworth**  
Chair of the SafeNet Management Committee

Resident story in a poem:

*I'm shrugging off the decaying shroud that became my life,  
Slowly, carefully, unfurl my wings and embrace the light.*

*The past becomes a distorted withered memory,  
As I look inside trying to find the real me,  
A task too great to go through alone.  
When pain is all you know, you need to be shown,  
How to trust, love, give and receive,  
How to look at yourself and believe.*

*To put away the guilt and blame,  
Realise that you are more than a name,  
Unburden yourself, grieve, there's no shame.  
Know that you have reached safety,  
Then later maybe,  
When you're finally heard and you know you're not crazy,  
You have solid choices, and your life ain't a maybe.*

# SafeNet – the Team

## MANAGEMENT BOARD:

**Karen Ainsworth**  
Chair

**Sharon Livesey**  
Vice Chair (from November 2012 – previously vacant)

**Sue Mayor**  
Treasurer

**Julie Cooper**  
**Jackie Davies**  
**Rachel Horman**

## MANAGERS:

**Helen**  
Charity Manager and Company Secretary

**Alex**  
Assistant Manager External Services and Development

**Karen**  
Assistant Manager - Children, Young People and Volunteers

**Jan**  
Team Leader, Burnley

**Dianne & Diane**  
Finance and Administration Co-ordinators

**Andrya**  
Team Leader, Lancaster

## REFUGE SUPPORT WORKERS:

Afsha, Amanda, Angela, Aqsa, Ayesha, Charlene, Claire Louise, Clare, Collette, Diane, Donna, Farzana, Havana, Helen, Hev, Jean, Jessi, Jessica, Joanne, Joanna S, Joanna Y, Jodie, Kasim, Katie, Kayla, Lauren, Lindsay, Linsey Mandie, Maria, Marta, Maritsa, Mo, Nadia, Nasreen, Natalie, Odette, Rachel, Rimsha, Rosemary, Rukhsana, Sarah, Sharon, Susan C, Susan W, Uzma A, Uzma R, Victoria, Yvonne, Zahida, Zenab.

## OUTREACH SUPPORT WORKERS:

Mo, Shahida & Wendy

## CHILDREN'S SUPPORT WORKERS:

Amber, Avril, Ellen & Shaista

## INDEPENDENT DV ADVISORS (IDVA):

Beth and Jacqui

## DV CO-ORDINATOR:

Louise

## HOUSING MANAGEMENT SUPPORT:

**Elaine & Jo**  
Finance Assistants

**Linda**  
Housekeeper

**Ruth & Susan**  
Cleaners



# A word from the Charity Manager

**Refuge Resident Comment:** "Thank you is hardly enough... I was a shell when I came in here - now I feel empowered ... If it was not for this Refuge, I would not be here now, and that really scares me, but I am... and I am ready for the new chapter in my life."

Here at SafeNet Domestic Abuse Service, we support victims and survivors, keep them safe and prevent serious harm and homicide. The majority are women and children assessed as high or very high risk of further abuse and, with our help, they move towards a life free from violence and abuse.

We strive each day to: make a real difference in our communities; to intervene and reduce the damage that abuse creates in families; and to interrupt the repeat of destructive patterns played out in homes as a result of inequality, across our locality, regions and the UK.

To keep those victims and survivors safe this year, we have temporarily accommodated 160 women in our safe, emergency Refuge accommodation, 130 (33% of those referred) in Burnley and 30 (16% of those referred) in Lancaster. Many of those women were assessed as being at high risk of serious harm or homicide and, when they escaped, they brought their children with them to safety - 195 babies, children and young people, which brings our total victims and survivors accommodated to 355 over this 12 month period.

These residents arrived in distress, many traumatised and without hope or confidence. We are here to support their recovery, to advocate on their behalf when they are not able, and to help build back their confidence and encourage resilience as they move on towards healthier, safer futures. Some of them have kindly written their stories for us to share, and you will find their words throughout this report in comments, stories and poems which far more eloquently illustrate their experiences, the journey they are on, and how they feel about our support service, than I can.

On a more sober note, we were unable to accommodate a further 363 families referred to our Refuge services in the east and north of Lancashire, mostly due to lack of space, but also due to those referred having complex needs which we are unable to meet in a communal Refuge environment,

such as alcohol and drug dependency, leading to chaotic and unsafe behaviours, higher levels of mental ill health, or those with records for violence, arson or criminal behaviours. The need for specialist Refuge provision for victims/survivors with complex needs is our highest priority for future service development. In addition, we are starting to look at developing a Refuge facility specifically for male victims and survivors of domestic abuse.

We are rightly proud of our achievements, which are many, and are the result of our staff, volunteers, management board, stakeholders, and supporters' efforts to create a caring and loving response to violent abusive relationships, home environments, and the barriers faced by victims and survivors.

I am pleased to report that we have had a progressive and positive year, in which we chose 'SafeNet Domestic Abuse Service' as the new name for our organisation. We continue to grow and extend our services and, at the beginning of this year, we took action to increase our management capacity in order to meet our aspirations, and to provide the necessary management support for growth and on-going initiatives.

Key developments we identified in our Growth Strategy include supporting the on-going development of the new Lancaster Refuge, increasing the number of our dispersed unit 'safe houses', the new drop-in support service at Centenary Way, and completing a feasibility study for a complex needs Refuge project. Partnership with Calico led to the harmonisation of policy and procedure within the group, attendance at regular internal and strategic meetings, contributions to accreditations, group HR initiatives, and tender processes. Some key achievements include:

**Lancaster Refuge:** Successfully established and providing well received services to women and children in the north of Lancashire. This year, we increased management capacity at Lancaster, increasing the Team Leader role to a full-time post. We secured funding to support children and young people living at the Lancaster Refuge.

**Dispersed 'Safe Houses':** A second property was established in April 2013, and there are plans to grow this aspect of our accommodation into a larger project, adding a third property next year.

**SafeNet Operating in the Community:** In May this year, we re-located our community-based services to a new office and walk-in workspaces at Centenary Court by Burnley Bus Station. This major development allows victims and survivors direct access to support services, including Independent Domestic Violence Services for those assessed at a high risk of homicide or serious harm, and Outreach and Helpline support for those at medium risk.

**Increasing our Management Capacity:** We have created a new role for the Deputy Manager as Deputy/External Services & Development Manager; created a new full-time 'Team Leader' Post for Burnley; increased the 'Team Leader' post at the Lancaster Refuge to 37 hours; and increased the 'Housekeeper' post at the Burnley Refuge to accommodate the additional workload of the two dispersed 'safe houses'.

**Proposal to Develop a Complex Needs Refuge:** The feasibility study evidenced a need for specialist services for those with dual or multiple needs. Work was completed - however, commitment to fund staffing for the project has not yet been secured and options are being considered.

## 100 Best Companies

Analysis shows that SafeNet scores were higher than the average on all 8 factors and were the highest overall scores, with 6 out of the 8 factors scoring over 6 points on the scale of 1-7. There were some fantastic scores, and the highest score was for 'My Company', which was up 6% on last year. Results show that staff love working for SafeNet, are proud to work for it, and believe that the service they offer makes a difference.



**Resident Comment:** "I didn't want to leave my home, even though it was a nightmare being there. I was just so broke, I clung to anything familiar. It was like I had no energy to choose anything different. I couldn't see a way out."

## A poem written by ex-resident 2014

Thank you to all the staff at the Refuge for listening to me, especially my key worker:

What do I do? How do I end what I'm going through?  
Phone in hand, ring it ring it!!  
Was this number worth a try?  
Ring it ring it, I scream out loud,  
What will I say? What will they say?  
A soothing voice answers the phone,  
I'm listening I'm listening, I hear her say!  
The overwhelming dreaded fear,  
Will he return? Will he hear?  
I grab some stuff to run away.  
Don't lose this number, I hear me say!  
I run and run,  
I'm free I'm free,  
Someone promises to listen to me!

**Resident Comment:** "The Refuge isn't an easy place to be. There are many families here, each with their own stories and problems... but there is always someone to listen, talk to or a shoulder to cry on... and sometimes we laugh, which is something I haven't done for what seems like such a long time..."

# Domestic Violence – the Local, Regional and National Picture

## Lancashire

- There were **28,977** calls for help to Lancashire Constabulary for domestic abuse incidents in this period. **26%** of these were crimed, with **66%** of those being assaults, **10%** criminal damage, and **10%** stalking and harassment.

**In 49% (14,361) of the domestic abuse incidents reported to the police, a child was recorded to be living in the household.**

- There were **3,028** high risk cases reviewed by Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs), and **3,799** children were living in households where a MARAC took place.
- **79** domestic abuse offenders started the Building Better Relationships programmes with Lancashire Probation Trust, with **31** completing the programme within the period.
- The Crown Prosecution Service prosecuted **4,349** people for domestic abuse related crime, with **79%** of cases having successful outcomes. The number of those successfully prosecuted is higher than last year and higher than the national average success rate of **73%**.
- **4,995** children were referred to Lancashire County Council's Care Connect team for domestic abuse related issues (Apr 13 - Jan 14).

## Burnley

- There were **2,153** domestic abuse incidents reported to the police in Burnley.

**45% (967) of those incidents reported children living in the household.**

Burnley's Domestic Abuse Strategy 2012-15 has successfully provided the strategic framework and delivery plan for all agencies to work together to effectively reduce domestic abuse and violence in Burnley, and increase the safety of families in the community.

## Pennine Lancs Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)

A MARAC is a meeting where information is shared on domestic abuse victims assessed as being at the highest risk of serious harm and homicide. Representatives from the police, probation, health, child protection, housing practitioners, Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs), and other specialists from the statutory and voluntary sectors meet and discuss the risks to the family. The primary focus of the MARAC is to safeguard the adult victim, and any children living in the household, by drawing up a co-ordinated action plan designed to reduce and manage the identified risk.

The Pennine MARAC is held twice a month and, in 2013, a total of **436** high risk cases were discussed, which is a **27%** increase on the number of cases the previous year, and included **551** children who were living in those households. Burnley SafeNet IDVA service plays a vital role within the MARAC process. The IDVAs attend the MARAC on behalf of the victims, share relevant information, bring the victims' views to the meeting, and ensure the risk management plan is implemented.

## Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHR)

DHRs were established on a statutory basis in 2011, which creates a requirement for local areas to undertake a multi-agency review following a domestic violence homicide. In Lancashire, there have been **11** domestic violence murders where a review was undertaken in Lancashire, four of which were in east Lancashire.

The purpose of a DHR is to: establish what lessons are to be learned; apply these lessons and improve service responses for all domestic violence victims and their children; and prevent future domestic violence homicide.





# How SafeNet can Help?

SafeNet PROTECTS victims and survivors of domestic violence and abuse through the PROVISION of safe Refuge and support services, and PROMOTES the PREVENTION of further harm through various initiatives, including work to build safe and healthy relationships and promote equality. We offer expert practitioner knowledge and deliver a range of specialist services, including:

- Refuge – a safe and confidential place to stay for women and children escaping abuse.
- Safe houses as move-on properties and for more complex needs, including families with teenage/young men survivors.
- 1:1 support and 'freedom programme' group work.
- 1:1 support and group work in schools for children and young people.
- Helpline/outreach support and advocacy in the community.
- Support navigating the criminal justice system for those at highest risk of serious harm and homicide from Burnley's IDVA Service.
- Specialist support: for those from ethnic minority origins, including bi-lingual support and cultural and faith support; for those with additional health needs; and for male survivors.
- Group activities – finding your voice, sewing group, pamper evenings and cultural celebrations.



# Refuge: a Safe Place to Stay

**Resident Comment: "I have absolutely loved getting my confidence back. It's all thanks to the staff and some of the other ladies I have shared with. It has taught me a lot being in here compared to living in a hostel. I honestly feel confident enough to do this for once in my life. I have the freedom to do what I want and live a very happy future in the long run! I can't thank you all enough!"**

This year, our Refuge Support Services in Burnley and Lancaster delivered vital, life changing services in a safe environment to 355 women and children.

When families are living in abuse, it touches every aspect of their lives. Those who are able to escape to Refuge accommodation benefit immensely from the secure environment, which empowers them to rebuild their lives and supports their recovery.

Each family can stay for up to six months and plan their future. They will work closely with a support worker and progress their support plan each week. Support workers work with agencies, such as housing, benefits, and police. Residents participate in weekly house meetings and regular service consultations, and contribute to practical housing tasks. They have been consulted about policies and procedures, and have been involved in making decisions which affect them.

Local agencies attended monthly meetings to give talks about how to access their services. Residents said they felt much better informed as a result.

When it's time to move on, we support residents' choices. Our most important outcome is to help them manage their future as safely as possible. We create a safety plan to help with pre-planning skills.

Our support team have attended several training courses, including Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults, Front-line British Sign Language, and Universal Credit Training.

## A Few Statistics

### Burnley

This year, there were 339 referrals for Refuge accommodation in Burnley – we accommodated 130. 35% of referrals were inappropriate for communal Refuge accommodation, mainly due to their additional complex needs, which we're unable to meet. In addition to 130 women, 154 children stayed at Burnley Refuge – a total of 284 residents.

Of the 284 residents, 104 (42 women and 62 children) were of minority ethnic origins.

57% (88) of children were aged 0-5 years, 28% (44) were aged 6-10 years, and the remaining 15% (21) were aged 11-15 years old.

40% (137) of referrals were for women who didn't have children, 43% (147) for women with children, and the remaining 17% (55) for women who were without their children.

43% (147) of women referred had identified mental health needs on referral, 23% (78) had alcohol or drug dependency issues, and 11% were on probation or had a conviction. Most residents have low incomes or are in poverty. 68% (89) were receiving benefits on admission – a further 23% (30) applied on arrival, resulting in 91% of residents claiming benefits. 7% of residents were in employment, with the remaining 2% not entitled to benefits or with income unknown. Many residents are in debt, often due to financial abuse by the perpetrator.

### Lancaster

This year, there were 184 referrals for Refuge accommodation in Lancaster – we accommodated 30.

25.5% of referrals were inappropriate for communal Refuge accommodation.

In addition to 30 women, 41 children stayed at the Refuge – a total of 71 residents.

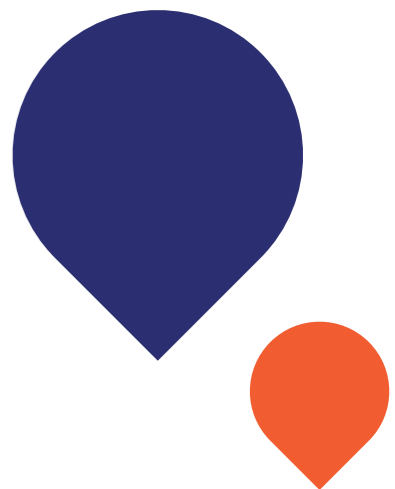
Of the 71 residents, 14 (3 women and 11 children) were of minority ethnic origins.

48% (20) of children were aged 0-5 years, 34% (14) were aged 6-10 years, and the remaining 18% (7) were aged 11-15 years old.

33% (10) of all referrals made were for women who didn't have children, 33% (10) for women with children and the remaining 33% (10) for women who were without their children.

39% (73) of women referred had identified mental health needs on referral, 33% (61) had alcohol or drug dependency issues, and 13% (24) were on probation or had a conviction. 86% of residents claim benefits – 73% (22) were receiving benefits on admission, with a further 13% (4) applying on arrival. No residents were in employment, and the remaining were not entitled to benefits or were income unknown. Again, this shows that most clients have low incomes or are in poverty. Many are also in debt, often due to financial abuse by the perpetrator.

**"I have absolutely loved getting my confidence back. It's all thanks to the staff and some of the other ladies I have shared with."**



*Resident story:*

I lived with my ex for 23 years. I'm not saying it was all bad, but the last six years have been the worst of my life, so I left and moved to the Refuge. For the first few days, I was crying all the time and there was always somebody to talk to. This was a godsend – for the first time in my life, I felt I wasn't being judged. With the help of the support staff, I came to realise it was not normal.

After a few weeks, I attended the Freedom Programme which I found very useful. I could have sworn the women who wrote the book knew me! The staff also helped with my children, who were removed from my care, and my court case. They really did help me through the bad times – always there to listen to what I had to say.

When my children visited, the staff allowed me and my girls to have the playroom to ourselves for the hour a week I got to see them. My children loved coming to see me – they had all sorts of different activities to do, which my children loved. When it was time for them to go home, the staff were there to help me when I was heartbroken.

If you needed outside support, like solicitors or counselling, that was all sorted out by the staff. I returned to my ex-partner about six times but, each time I left and returned to the Refuge, I was never refused because they had the space to take. At times, I felt guilty about returning and then coming back, but the staff understand that, if you're not ready to leave your partner for good, they'll be there if you need them in the future.

The last time I left the Refuge was about three years ago but, for most of that time, I had to fight to stay alive. I returned to the Refuge a couple of months ago and they have helped me so much with counselling and making a housing application. I also decided to go to the police this time to press charges against him, and the support staff came with me to make the statement. Although they weren't allowed in the room, they were there with a shoulder to cry on after it was over.

If I haven't moved on by the time it gets to court, they will be there to help me through it. When I do finally resettle in my own home, they help sort out furniture and things and, in my case, outside agencies will be put in place to help me to move on, to be happy and have an abuse-free life. I have got a long way to go but, with support from the Refuge, I will have a happy life with my children and grandchild. You can get the happy life you deserve in such a short time. I've never been happier and that's all down to the help I received at the Refuge. The job they do is absolutely fantastic and helped save my life.

**“For the first few days, I was crying all the time and there was always somebody to talk to.”**



## Funds Raised by Satisfied Clients

One of our clients felt that the help she received was so life changing that she wanted to 'give something back' and she decided to fundraise for our service. She organised a sponsored Zip Wire by herself and a couple of her work colleagues. The funds they raised were doubled when her employer matched them pound for pound, resulting in over £1,000 being raised for community-based services. We used these funds to train two staff to facilitate the Recovery Toolkit. The Recovery Toolkit is a 12 week programme designed to help individuals to deal with the psychological

distress caused by living in abuse. The aim of the programme is to help them develop positive lifestyle coping strategies. The programme focusses on raising self-esteem, improving self-image, and recognising the impact living with abuse has on families. The long term aim of the programme is to help families to stay safe and free from abuse. We plan to offer the Recovery Toolkit in early 2015, in partnership with local children's centres.



## Safe Houses in the Community

This year, we opened our second safe house, a two bedroomed, fully furnished house complete with additional security measures to keep residents as safe as possible. Close to our first safe house, and to one of our Refuges, the proximity permits increased safety measures whilst allowing the residents to continue to access daily support on-site at the Refuge and attend therapeutic, group work or play/activity sessions.

Most of the safe house residents are families moving on from their temporary stay at the Refuge, who are ready for the next stage of more independent living but still need support. Moving into the safe house helps develop independent living skills and confidence to resettlement in the community. Support workers help the safe house residents, supporting them to manage all aspects of daily living skills in order to gain appropriate experience of how to sustain a tenancy, before being permanently re-housed.

We can also offer safe house accommodation to those who can't stay in a communal environment due to their complex needs, or because there are male children/teenagers within the family group over 16 years of age. Refuges can sometimes struggle to accommodate larger families too, and the safe house provides more living space for them, enabling Mum to manage her family's daily living needs more effectively, lessening the impact on the busy communal environment.

In 2013-14, 22 families stayed in our safe house accommodation with 37 children, making 59 women and children in total. (Two of those families also had a teenage boy aged over 16 years.)

This joint venture with our Calico partners has been very successful, and we have purchased a third safe house, which will open in before Christmas 2014.

*Resident Comment:* "I was worried about moving out. I still needed some help and wasn't quite ready to be on my own... Staying close by in one of the safe houses for a few months longer was just what I needed and I'm feeling much stronger and ready for my own place."

*Comment from a resident moving on:* "I feel a lot better now! You gave me time to clear my head. I feel safe leaving, knowing that I have support from you when I leave!"

**"I'm feeling much stronger and ready for my own place."**

*Resident story:*

One summer's day, I met this man in Blackpool. I never thought that anyone would look at me because of my age, and other relationships in my past were bad. The first three weeks were great – we went for walks down the beach. Then one day, we were having a drink with friends and he pulled me aside and said I was flirting with the other men and, if I didn't stop it, I would be sorry. I said that he was wrong, but I got a slap in the face anyway.

I was so shocked because I thought he loved me. Then he started going in moods. If I said I didn't want sex, he said I was a frigid old cow and it was his right to take it. He used to cook all the meals and was drugging my food with Valium. I was always sleepy. He used to call me names and say I was fat and old, then try and make a joke about it.

Then I would wake up in the middle of the night and would be tied to the bed and he would be raping me. I would try to scream and he would put something in my mouth and say "shut up, you bitch – you know you want it". He used to do this to me daily.

I was so scared to tell anyone and didn't think anybody would believe me because everyone thought that he was so nice. I just wanted the world to swallow me up and take away this pain.

Every day got worse. None of my friends were allowed to see me. He would only let me eat after he had been fed first, then drugged my food, tied me to the bed and raped me over and over. I was so scared – he said if I told anyone, he would kill me.



## Refuge Service for Lancaster, Morecambe and District

Our Lancaster Refuge opened in April 2013 and quickly filled up with families needing a place of safety. 30 adults and 30 children in need of safe emergency accommodation have lived with us temporarily between April 2013 and March 2014, with over 70% of them successfully moving into a new home away from danger. Of those who returned to their previous home, all of them know that they can return to the Refuge if they are in danger - all were better equipped to stay as safe as they are able, and are fully informed of which services they can gain help from in the future.

The support work team welcome people to the Refuge, offering information and support as women make choices about their lives moving forward, gaining confidence away from the abuse. Thanks to the support of local groups, there are welcome packs for each woman, and the local food banks have ensured we have food to offer residents who arrive with very little and limited, if any, money.

The Duchy of Lancaster has funded a part time support worker for children and young people, who provides specialist age-appropriate support. As well as the one-to-one work, the support worker provides a crèche so that women can attend the Freedom Programme, which is held on-site. A trip to the pantomime in December was arranged, which the children really enjoyed, with lots of booing of baddies.

Women residing at the Refuge have contributed their feedback and suggestions about ways that the Refuge can be improved and, as a result, support workers have facilitated group sessions, including cooking on a budget, as well as fun and creative events, such as a sewing of "Sock Monkeys" workshop.

Many Lancaster and District services are referring women into our Refuge service, including police, health visitors/ midwives/doctors, local authority officers, housing providers, etc. SafeNet staff work closely with different services to co-ordinate a wide range of support to meet residents' needs. Health and wellbeing agencies and charities that can offer support to women attend our weekly house meetings to promote their services, giving residents more choice and control in their futures.

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### *Resident poem*

I don't where anything is,  
Where it all goes, who I'll miss.  
I'm about as confused as can be,  
My head is as useful as a brick at sea.

This was my state of mind,  
The likes of which I have put behind.  
Thanks for showing me the line,  
How to tap my feet and dance in time.

That's a problem if you see,  
What the abuse had done to me,  
You have helped me find a diamond in me.

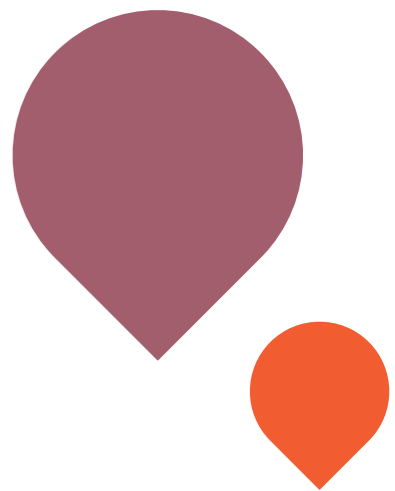
Putting my dreams like the arts, music and guitar,  
Into perspective, a goal not too far,  
Giving me something realistically me,  
Showing me I am really free.

Like a child with its first steps,  
Sometimes I trip, fall then maybe fret.  
You are there, lest I forget,  
The braveness showed when we first met.

Getting out was the first step!

---

### **SafeNet co-ordinate a wide range of support to meet residents' needs.**





# The Freedom Programme

'The Freedom Programme' provides a group work setting for victims/survivors of abuse who wish to explore their experience and create a safer abuse-free future for themselves and their families.

We deliver the 12 week rolling programme each week on-site at the Refuge, and also in various community settings. It is an open group, facilitated by experienced domestic violence practitioners, and women can join the group at any point to share experiences, develop safe responses and ways of thinking and behaving that will protect themselves and their children from future harm, and increase their ability to take control of their lives.

The programme is designed to help women understand the beliefs held by perpetrators and delivers immense benefits to residents, many of whom struggled to make sense of what has happened to them. The feedback we get from residents is extremely positive and the course is very well attended.

This year, 95 women have completed the programme at the Refuge, and 33 of those were women from minority ethnic backgrounds, with bi-lingual workers supporting their additional language needs.

*Resident comments about 'Freedom Programme':*

**FP Groupwork comment 1:** 'Freedom Programme is the highlight of the week for me and I am always looking forward to the programme. I attend because I don't want to stop feeling the way I feel after each session, because I feel empowered, strong, liberated.'

**FP Groupwork comment 2:** 'In the Refuge, I attended the Freedom Programme and it was very interesting but, after a while, I thought that everything that was said about abusive men didn't apply to my husband - he is different and he will change. I went back to him, but things never changed. I came back to the Refuge and I recognised in my husband's behaviour everything I have learned in the Freedom Programme. Since then, I never looked back. I've got my life back - a life free from abuse and violence.'

**FP Groupwork comment 3:** 'The Freedom Programme stirred a lot of things in me today, brought back a lot of horrible memories. It didn't upset me because the Freedom Programme taught me that it wasn't my fault and has given me a better understanding that, no matter what I would have done, it wouldn't have changed the way he behaved toward me.'

**FP Groupwork comment 4:** 'I am moving out of the Refuge with my little girls. I am going back to what I know after six months in the Refuge, but I will never forget what you have done for us. I am stronger. The Freedom Programme will stay with me forever.'

**'Freedom Programme is the highlight of the week for me and I am always looking forward to the programme...'**





# Support Services for Children and Young People

*Comments from children at the Refuge*

Child, 6:  
"How long can we stay here? Are the doors locked?"

Young person, 14:  
"It's not easy leaving home, losing your friends, changing schools. I wish none of it happened but it did, so I'm making the best of it, though sometimes I feel really angry and upset."

Child, 8:  
"I love it here! Can I just stay here 'til I'm grown?"

## Children and young people living temporarily at one of our safe Refuges

This year, 54% of Refuge residents were children, many of whom were assessed as 'at risk' by Children's Social Services, and some of whom were subject to Child Protection Plans.

552 children were referred to the Refuges in Burnley and Lancaster. Of those, we were able to accommodate 183, with 142 living temporarily in Burnley and 41 in Lancaster.

There were 133 children of minority ethnic origins – 73 of those (44%) were homed temporarily at the Refuge.

Overall, those 73 children represent 37% of all those in our Refuges, which is a very high number in comparison to the overall population in those areas.

The Children's Support team have continued to work one-to-one with children and young people in the Refuge, helping them to rebuild their confidence and sense of self.

In addition to one-to-one support, the team also deliver small group work and play, after-school and homework sessions, and facilitate children's house meetings.

Support typically includes age-appropriate activities and interventions to explore each child's experiences and equip them with ways of dealing with them in a safe space.

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*Comments from Resident Satisfaction Survey:*

**"The children's workers were a godsend!"**

**"I can't thank you enough, but I will try, from the bottom of my heart, for helping my children overcome their problems and ease their grief. We are recovering as a family."**

**"The children had the best time on our day trip – a whole new experience for them! Thank you for special days."**

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## Working with children and young people in schools and in our communities

We have further developed our work in local Burnley schools. Our SafeNet Schools Project workers have delivered group work in eight schools in the area, dealing with issues such as 'Keeping Safe' and 'Teenage Relationship Abuse'.

We have also worked therapeutically with individual children in a Burnley primary school, who have support needs due to living in abuse, which is affecting their ability to learn.

This year, we started to deliver community-based support services in Burnley and Lancaster through Lancashire County Council's Early Support Service to children of school age and their mothers. This helps keep children safe and contributes to the de-escalation of abuse at home.

We continue to meet the needs of children of all ages in Burnley and Lancaster, despite turbulent economic and political circumstances. There continues to be an increasing need for domestic abuse services which directly work with and address the problems caused for children who live with the effects of domestic violence.

Many children are involved in child protection processes, and we work closely with Children's Social Services to advocate for them and meet their needs. We work with the Common Assessment Framework and are the 'Lead Professional' where appropriate.

We continue to support families when they leave the Refuge to resettlement in the community. This is a time of heightened risk for families, and we work to ensure they remain safe and free from abuse.

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*School children's feedback from healthy relationships sessions:*

**Girl, 12: "I learned a lot about abuse and ways people can manipulate you."**

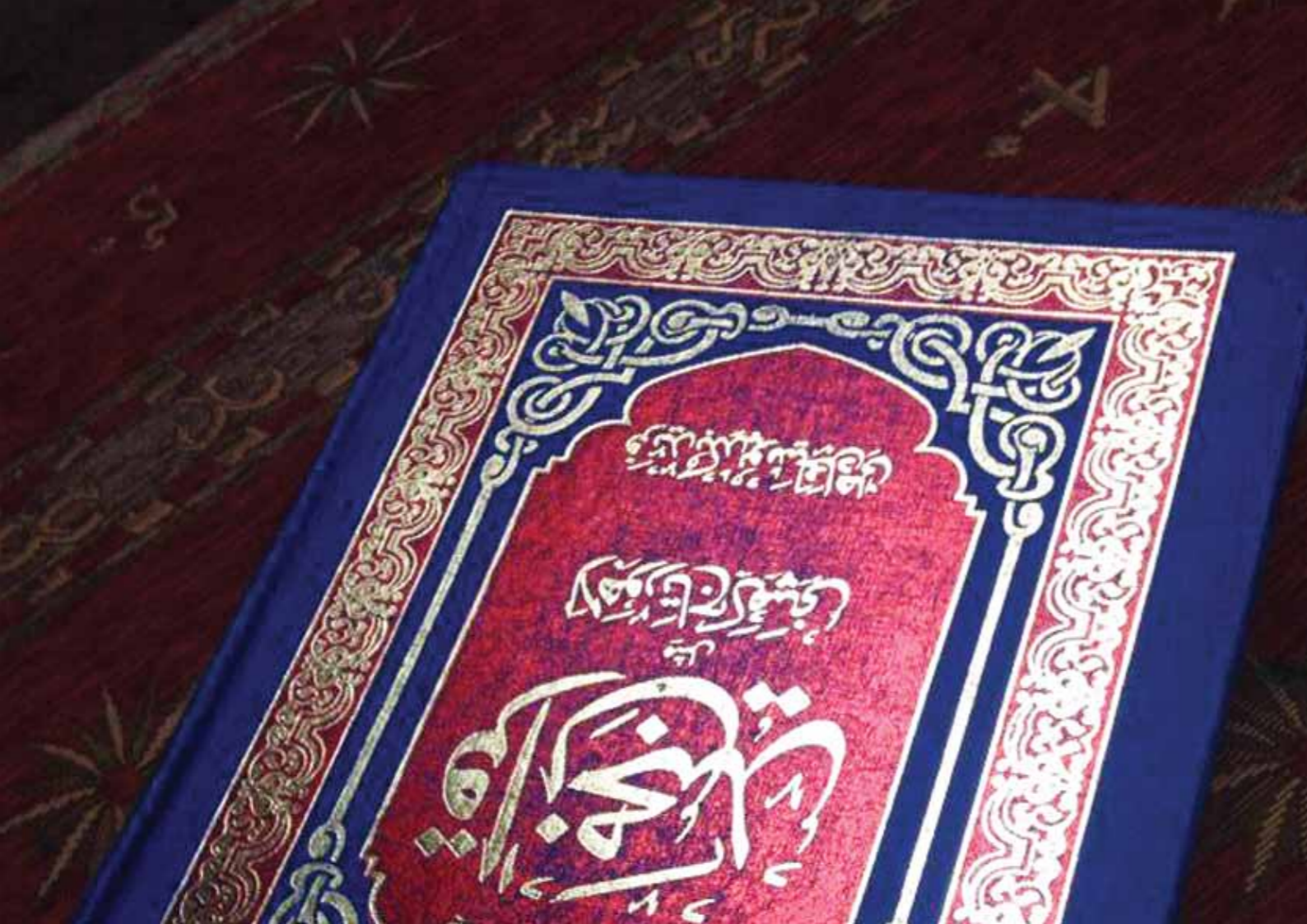
**Girl, 13: "I am surprised to see the support available to victims and how they are manipulated. People think that, if you've already had sex once, it's okay to do it again without consent. Many people do not know that they are being abused."**

## Agency feedback:

**Blessed Trinity RC College: "Thank you so much for all your hard work yesterday. I had really positive feedback from the pupils about your presentations. I hope we can repeat this next year!"**

**Rose School: "Just a great big thank you from all here at the Rose School for all your work and dedication."**

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# Specialist Support for Black and Ethnic Minority (BME) Women

We work with high numbers of women from minority ethnic backgrounds. This year, 73 families (45%) were of minority ethnic origins, mainly Pakistani or Bangladeshi families. We also had residents from other places, including India, China, Thailand, Africa, Poland, Ireland, and from the travelling community.

Our specialist services were delivered by experienced, bilingual practitioners who understand the language and discrimination barriers faced by ethnic minority women and children.

Women who were not born in the UK can face enormous difficulties getting help when they are subject to domestic violence. Highly vulnerable, these women have very few choices, if any. Those with an insecure immigration status have no access to public funds. They can't be supported by the welfare system and, consequently, have no rights, no money, and nowhere to live. We're able to help a small number in this situation, working in partnership with a Home Office government funded scheme, which will fund some emergency support if certain criteria are met.

Forced marriage, which is now a criminal matter, continues to be a major issue, and we are using Forced Marriage Protection Orders to protect young women from being taken abroad.

## Case Study:

Samia's in-laws and her ex-husband had been controlling and abusive towards her throughout her marriage. She was not allowed to speak to anybody, go out of the house, or have friends. She suffered from physical and emotional abuse from her mother-in-law, brother-in-law and ex-husband.

Samia's husband threatened her with deportation, until finally he called the police and alleged domestic violence toward him, and reported that she was 'an illegal immigrant'. She was arrested without any proof, and was incarcerated at a holding centre for a month. She was finally released only when she proved that she wasn't here illegally.

Samia's time in prison was a harrowing experience. She said she was bullied and harassed and faced a lot of racism. She was devastated to be taken away from her children and to not know if or when she would see them again. Her children's teacher informed SafeNet that, while she was incarcerated, the children had been told by their dad that their mum had run away and left them.

When she was released from prison, she initially stayed at the specialist BME Refuge in Blackburn until she came to stay with SafeNet to be nearer her children. Samia has completed the freedom programme, which she said has made her a lot stronger, and more determined to see justice done and to get her children back. She's scared of her ex-husband and her in-laws – she was constantly fearful of what they may do. She's working closely with SafeNet, the courts, and other agencies, and is determined to have her children back with her and safe from any potential harm.

## Forced Marriage is a Crime

Forced marriage is where one or both people don't or can't consent to marriage, or where pressure of abuse is used. It's been a crime since June 2012, which is now starting to have an impact. However, many cases are still not reported. Pressure can be placed on people to marry against their will, including threats, violence, or financial abuse. The Forced Marriage Unit works jointly with the Home Office and the Foreign Commonwealth Office to provide support.

A major difficulty for many BME victims is having no recourse to public funds. This affects anyone with an insecure immigration status, who have no entitlement to benefits, asylum support, or public housing. Unfortunately, as most Refugees rely on women receiving housing benefit to cover costs, they may be forced to turn away victims with no recourse to public funds. If this is a problem, here are some solutions:

- Work to secure 'indefinite leave to remain', achieving entitlement to stay in the UK and access to support through welfare benefits, etc.
- Gain support and advice from the National Asylum Support Service.
- If you're a victim of domestic violence and have no recourse to public funds, there are some exceptions. Local authorities do have statutory power under the Children's Act 1989 to ensure that children 'in need' are adequately fed, housed and cared for. Some may use this provision to pay for you to stay with your children, but others may simply take the children into local authority care. Local authorities also have power under Section 21 of the National Assistance Act 1948 to assist victims of domestic violence, but only those subject to immigration controls if they are particularly vulnerable. This is subject to discretion.

Women who have been brought to the UK and forced to marry can be subject to abuse from their family, who have coerced them to marry against their will, as well as from the person they have been forced to marry. If the woman escapes, she's unlikely to have support from her family, who may think she's brought shame on the family.

As such, she is on her own and at serious risk of further harm if she were to return to her country of origin. This is why it's vital for services to do all they can to support women's safety and help them escape to a life free from abuse.



# Specialist Support for those with Additional Health Needs

Domestic abuse is extremely damaging to mental and physical health, and it is no exaggeration to say that all residents arrive at the Refuge in distress, with poor mental health and often in trauma. The state of their mental health varies greatly, ranging from mild depression to severe and on-going mental illness.

This year, 262 of the 339 women referred for Refuge in Burnley, and 158 of the 184 women referred in Lancaster, had additional health needs. The largest number had mental ill-health and/or dependencies on alcohol and drugs. Women living in abusive environments tell us that they use drugs and alcohol as a means of self-medicating the pain of their lives and to relieve the abuse they are experiencing. Some drift into addiction, and some are forced to use alcohol and drugs.

## Resident Poem about heroin addiction:

### Regrets

I have sat and cried for the way I have felt  
I have questioned God for the cards I've been dealt  
I have wept for the person I was last year  
I have prayed for the mist in my eyes to be cleared  
I have wanted to die and not given a damn  
I have done things I shouldn't and tried every scam.

The thirst for heroin is no longer within  
I've made my choice and I won't let it win  
It's always there in the back of my brain  
Desperately trying to drive me insane  
Patiently waiting for any old flaw  
Hoping its grasp will soon be restored  
Tempting me back with a voice in my head  
Hoping its appetite will soon be fed.

I sit and think of the morals I've lost  
The way I desired it, whatever the cost  
The people I've cheated, the friends I have hurt  
The strangers I've robbed and treated like dirt  
I did it for heroin; I did it for 'need'  
It was nothing but selfish and all done for greed  
I sit and I weep for the person I've been  
And thank God that today I am finally clean.

We support women with any dependency issues who use drugs and alcohol, and we also work with women at risk due to sex working or high-risk behaviour, and women who self harm or are suicidal. Each resident had an individual care package tailored to meet her specific health needs and catering for the major emotional impact of the abuse suffered.

We advocate on behalf of residents, gaining appropriate medical/clinical attention and on-going support with the recovery journey. We are increasing the proportion of women seen by health care professionals and who are provided with improved healthcare.

We host on-site weekly and monthly clinics with local health agencies in order to offer women and children the best health care advice, including the following: health visitor, midwife clinic, Community Mental Health Team/Healthy Minds Burnley drop-in-service. We have excellent engagement with the Community Mental Health Team, Minor Ailment Scheme, and our designated GP Surgery for GP appointments, Community Dental Surgery treatments and the Well Woman Clinic.

We support partnership work by inviting guest speakers to our House Meetings for continued information sharing, and provide health information literature for both staff and residents. Through this work, we have supported residents with information and treatment advice, and to better manage long term health conditions, as well as addressing areas of concern like self-medicating, healthy eating, sensible drinking and giving up smoking.

Providing this additional health support optimises our residents' wellbeing, encourages empowerment, and helps residents manage long term health problems and improve their quality of life, supporting them in maintaining good physical and mental health as they move towards stability and safety.

## Agency Feedback

### Sue Roscow, Community Sexual Health Development Lead for Pendle and Ribble Valley

"I would like to acknowledge SafeNet's enthusiasm and commitment to supporting the sexual health agenda by raising awareness of positive sexual health and healthy relationships, free of violence and coercion, and supporting us in signposting clients and service users to contraception and sexual health services. The Health Support Worker has been a great advocate of good positive relationships and has an energy and passion for helping us drive our work forward."

### Donna Welch, Community Sexual Health Team

"It is always a great pleasure to work with SafeNet knowing that you are very committed to the sexual health work that we are passionate about. The links between our work and that of the Women's Refuge and domestic violence services lies at the heart of a lot of the sexual health training and messages that we need to get out to service users. The Health Support Worker is our designated sexual health champion for the service and regularly attends meetings and workshops to develop her awareness of sexual health matters, linking into her work supporting victims of domestic violence. Her unquenchable enthusiasm and passion for her work and sexual health means we have been able to develop a 'Nurse in a Box' support system, and regular sexual health information drop-ins for the residents at the Refuge. Support Staff are always on hand to offer support, information, advice and a smile for any situation."



# Community Based Support Services: IDVA and Outreach

At the end of April 2013, SafeNet opened a new walk-in direct access office in the centre of Burnley at Calico's main offices on Centenary Court. This new development brings our services directly to the residents of Burnley, particularly to those who are in need of direct support around domestic abuse.

The community-based service combines our IDVA (Independent Domestic Abuse Advisor) service and our Outreach & Helpline service into one, offering a comprehensive package of support for victims of domestic abuse at all levels of risk. The community-based team offers a range of support interventions around increasing safety, providing advocacy and support through to support within the Criminal Justice System. In the longer term, support is offered around staying safe, emotional wellbeing and practical support through one-to-one and group sessions.

IDVA services are delivered to those assessed as being at the highest level of risk of serious harm and homicide. The level of risk is assessed through the CAADA RIC (risk indicator), which is a list of questions about the severity and type of abuse being experienced. Those assessed as 14 or above on a list of 24 risks are in the high risk category. Those victims/survivors are then supported by one of our trained IDVAs through a number of formal statutory processes which aim to protect them, carrying out multi-agency safety planning at MARACs (multi-agency risk assessment conferences), which are held locally twice a month.

In addition to the IDVA work, we deliver general support to families who are currently assessed just below the 'high risk' threshold but who are still facing significant risk. Our Outreach Support Workers provide drop-in services, offering immediate advice and support around safety, emotional support and practical help at both our town centre base and in a variety of local outreach settings, including children's centres and health settings.

In the last year, we received 292 high risk referrals for IDVA support. 191 of those referrals engaged effectively with the service. The helpline dealt with 2,734 enquiries for support for domestic abuse. Our Outreach Service provided 445 drop-in sessions to the public, offering immediate help, advice and support to enhance clients safety. We also provided our Sanctuary Scheme for 201 families, improving home security by changing locks, and fitting window locks and CCTV cameras where needed, helping them to feel safe and secure in their own homes.

## *Comments from Clients in the Community:*

**"I just want to thank you for everything you have done for me in the past nine months. I don't think I would have got through it all without you. I will always be grateful for the support and strength you gave me."**

**"Just wanted to thank you for your on-going support, advice, and time over the past few months. For a long time, I thought this was how my life was going to be, but now I'm free."**





## Volunteers

This year, we trained 15 women as volunteers at our Burnley Refuge, and a further eight at Lancaster. They contributed massively to the level of support we are able to offer victims and survivors, and they were an important part of our team. We recruited at the beginning of the year and all volunteers completed our four day induction training programme prior to becoming a volunteer worker. The programme includes: Impact of Domestic Abuse on Adults; Impact of Domestic Abuse on Children; Values, Attitudes and Listening Skills; Work Practice; and Policies and Procedures.

The volunteers work alongside paid staff and support them to deliver essential support work with both child and adult residents. Volunteers undertake a range of tasks, from support work with adults and children, to helping with practical and housework tasks and, with 20 families to support in Burnley and a further five in Lancaster, there is no shortage of help needed! We offer many opportunities for development, both personal and professional - in fact, a number of our staff team began working for SafeNet as a volunteer.



## Student Placements

SafeNet provides professional placements for Social Work students throughout the year, and one, two or three students may be on placement at any one time. They gain invaluable professional and personal development, and learn about the reality of the impact of domestic abuse on both child and adult victims' lives.

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*Comment from a student: "I was really surprised at the breadth and depth of support work carried out for each family living temporarily at the Refuge. My experience here has been invaluable. It has brought social work to life for me by helping me to connect theory to practice."*

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# Financial Review 2013-14

One contribution it's difficult to put a price on is the personal time, goods and money which SafeNet receives from its volunteers and supporters. They have helped us provide and expand valuable services to those families escaping abuse. I would like to begin this review by thanking them all.

In 2013 to 2014, SafeNet Domestic Abuse Service has maintained the growth and expansion of its services. In the Burnley area, we are providing two dispersed units and have purchased a third property. These add greatly to our capacity and flexibility. In the Lancaster District, the new Refuge has been in operation for a year. During this time, the service has learnt a lot about the logistics of operating a second distant site, which has been good experience for the future. It has also been achieved with the extensive commitment of SafeNet's own financial resources, and the hard work and commitment of its staff.

**The Children's Service:** Support of children living in the Refuge and returning to the community remains an underfunded area. SafeNet has been able to employ vital children's community support workers in 2013-2014, due to a donation from Rochdale Women's Refuge, which, sadly has been wound up. The funding from this donation will end in 2016. Happily, once more, BBC Children in Need have agreed to give us their support from 2014-18. This is a major support for this service. The outcomes of other applications are pending. Starting in 2014, SafeNet is delivering, on behalf of Lancashire County Council, a new Early Support Service for Children and Young People in both Burnley and Lancaster. This service is based in the communities and complements the IDVA services. It provides age-appropriate support to the children in these families.

**Outreach Burnley:** The DV helpline and drop-in service continued to receive funding from Lancashire County Council's Supporting People in 2013-14 and opened a new drop-in direct access office in the town centre at Calico's Centenary Court premises.

In 2013-14, SafeNet was able to continue to operate its IDVA (Independent DV Advisors) service, which supports the highest risk victims of DV through the criminal justice system via the MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference) process. The commissioning of the scope of this service has been increased to include medium risk victims. SafeNet continues to deliver this service, which is funded by Lancashire County Council.

SafeNet continued to host the Burnley Strategic DV Co-ordinator post within Burnley Borough Council's MAPs team.

SafeNet also operates as a trainer in the field of domestic abuse. Student social workers from local universities regularly undertake placements in the Refuge. DV training courses are provided at a nominal cost to other agencies. They not only provide valuable training by experienced DV practitioners, but also help raise the profile of SafeNet and its services.

I am pleased to report that, in the financial year 2013-14, SafeNet has once again ended the year with a surplus. A breakdown of the key figures is given on page 33. Copies of our audited accounts 2013-14 are available on request.

**Sue Mayor**  
Treasurer SafeNet Board

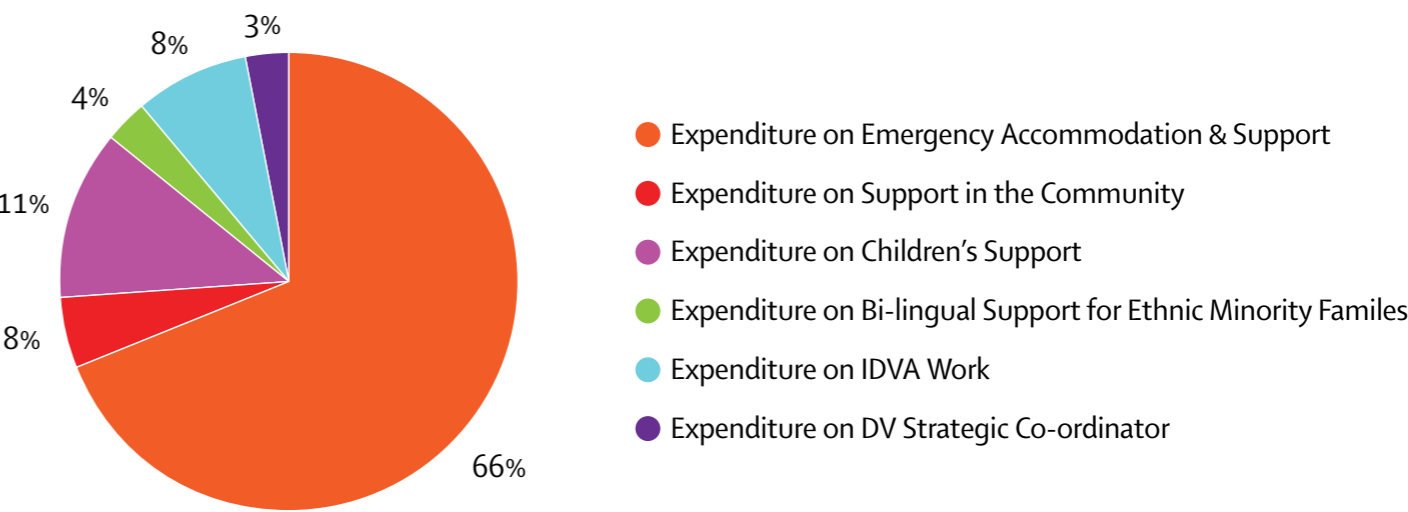
# Analysis of our Charitable Expenditure 2013-14

## Financial Summary 2013-14

	£000's
Total Revenue Income (all services)	£1,040
Total Capital Grants ( Lancaster Refuge)	£27
<b>Total Incoming Resources</b>	<b>£1,067</b>
<b>Total Revenue Expenditure ( all services)</b>	<b>£968</b>
<b>Balance</b>	<b>£99</b>

## Analysis of Charitable Expenditure 2013-14

Expenditure on Emergency Accommodation & Support	£665
Expenditure on Support in the Community	£53
Expenditure on Children's Support	£117
Expenditure on Bi-lingual Support for Ethnic Minority Families	£28
Expenditure on IDVA Work	£75
Expenditure on DV Strategic Co-ordinator	£30



# Acknowledgements and Thanks to Our Supporters

## Organisations

Accrington Bridge Club  
Accrington Victoria Hospital, Integrated Therapy Team  
Addfix Innovations, Preston  
All Saints Mothers' Union  
Blue Lagoon Arcade - Burnley  
Bolton Girl Guides Trefoil Guild  
Buckinghamshire Emergency Food Appeal  
Building Bridges  
Buoyant Upholstery, Nelson  
Burnley Ambulance Service  
Burnley Borough Council, Cllr C Bullas (Mayor's Charity Fund)  
Burnley Borough Council, Cllr F Cant (Mayor's Charity Fund)  
Burnley Borough Council, Cllr J Cunningham  
Burnley Borough Council, Democracy Team  
Burnley Borough Council, MAPS Team  
Burnley Borough Council, Payments Team  
Burnley Borough Council, Regeneration  
Burnley Borough Council, Town Hall  
Burnley Central Library  
Burnley General Hospital, Day Care Team  
Burnley Probation Service  
Calico Homes Board  
Castle View Clinic, Lancaster  
Chai Centre, Burnley  
Children & Family Health Service, The Fold, Burnley  
Complete Medical Group Worldwide, Macclesfield  
David Ross Architect  
Empowerment, Lancaster  
Filbert's Bakery, Lancaster  
Firbank Children's Centre, Lancaster  
Harrison Saw & Tool Ltd, Haslingden  
Help Direct, Calico, Burnley  
Hyndburn Homes, Accrington  
Income Support Team, Burnley  
Inner Wheel Club of Carnforth  
Inner Wheel Club of Nelson  
Inner Wheel Club of Ribblesdale  
Joseph A Jones & Co Solicitors, Lancaster  
Key 103 Manchester  
Lancashire Constabulary, Lancaster Police Station  
Lancaster Round Table  
Liberata UK Ltd, Chorley  
Lila's Hair & Beauty, Burnley

Mid Pennine Arts, Burnley  
NHS East Lancashire Primary Care Trust  
Ring Stones, Burnley  
Rosegrove Surgery, Burnley  
Rotary Club of Burnley  
Rotary Club of Carnforth  
Rotary Club of Colne  
Rotary Club of Lancaster  
Rotary Club of Nelson, Brierfield & Reedley  
Salvation Army, Burnley  
Simonstone Mothers' Union  
Sorooptimist International, Carnforth  
Springwood Nurseries & Garden Centre, Burnley  
St John's Fellowship, Fence Nr Burnley  
Supporting People, Lancashire County Council  
The Knit & Pray Group, Great Harwood  
The Oaks, Penwortham  
The Whole Eco-Village Community, Halton  
Totes Isotoner Ltd, Essex  
UNISON

## Churches

Christ the King, Burnley  
Haggate Baptist Church, Burnley  
Haggate Baptist Church, Fantastic Fridays Youth Club  
Hapton Methodist Church  
Hill Lane Baptist Church, Burnley  
Hurstwood Church  
Life Church, Burnley  
Mount Zion Church, Cliviger  
Pendle Community Church, Barrowford  
Pendle Community Church, Nelson  
Sion Baptist Church, Burnley  
Sion Church, Padiham  
St Andrews Church, Burnley  
St Cuthbert's Church, Burnley  
St Michael All Angels Church  
St Thomas's Church of England, Barrowford  
Wheatley Lane Methodist Church, Fence Nr Burnley

## Schools

Casterton Primary School, Burnley  
Greenlands Community Primary School, Preston  
Haslingden High School  
Magical Tree Nursery, Burnley  
Read United Reformed Church, Simonstone  
Rosegrove Infant's School, Burnley  
Sir John Thursby Community College  
St Catherine's Parsonage, Burnley  
St John the Baptist RC Primary School, Padiham  
St John's School, Cliviger  
St Joseph's Park Hill School, Burnley  
St Mary Magdalene's School, Burnley  
St Mary's School, Burnley  
St Mary's School, Newchurch in Pendle  
Taywood Nursery, Burnley.

And a special thanks to all those individuals who have raised money through organising events, or made donations to us directly or via Justgiving

[www.calico.org.uk/SafeNet/Donate](http://www.calico.org.uk/SafeNet/Donate)

# Donating

The best way to support SafeNet is to give regularly. It provides a reliable income, allowing us to plan in advance and budget more effectively.

What can you buy for 32p a day? You might think "not much", but a gift of 32p can provide basic essentials, like a warm drink on arrival at the Refuge for women and children who have just fled their home in fear of their lives. 32p a day – that's just £10 per month – helps us to provide life-changing opportunities, like support and training for women and children when they need it most.

Making your donations is easy through Direct Debit, which helps us keep costs to a minimum, ensuring even more of your money goes toward saving women and children.

By signing up to give to charity with Gift Aid, a donation is worth at least 28% more at no extra cost to you. To donate regularly, visit [www.justgiving.com/elwra](http://www.justgiving.com/elwra)



