

# 2015-16

## Annual Report



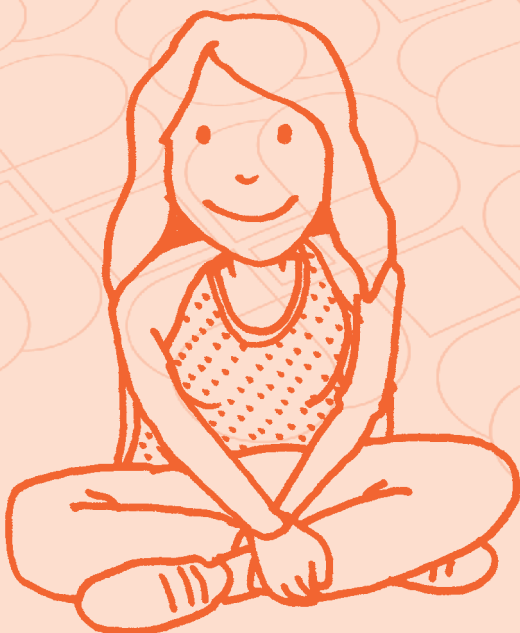
# SafeNet

*Empowering you to live free from domestic abuse*



Thank you from a refuge resident age 29, with two children age 6yrs and 4yrs: 'I'd like to thank each and every one of you for this contribution you have made to our lives. We arrived in turmoil and at every twist and turn you have been there for us. We are leaving today all changed for the better and you have all played parts in getting us here. I wish I could find the words to explain the impact our stay at SafeNet has had upon me. It's reawakened the strong, independent, loving side of me that was suppressed for too long. My children have flourished here too and are overjoyed at being able to be children again, unburdened of the weight of our old lives. I've seen a small glimpse of the effort and care that you ladies put into all that you do and it's been inspirational to me. I sincerely hope to give something back to this organisation or a similar one so that, hopefully in the future, I can make a positive impact on women's lives in the way you have on ours.

**I am eternally grateful'.**





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## Who's who at SafeNet - The Team

### SafeNet Board

Chair	Karen Ainsworth
Vice Chair	Sharon Livesey
Treasurer	Sue Mayor
Members	Jackie Davies, Rachel Horman, Julie Cooper

### SafeNet Management Team

Charity Manager and Company Secretary	Helen
Deputy Manager	Alex
Finance and Administration Manager	Gill
Children & Young People Services Manager	Karen
Team Leader Burnley	Jan
Team Leader Lancaster	Andrya
Team Leader Preston	Clare
Strategic DV Co-ordinator	Louise
Finance & Administration Assistants	Elaine & Jo

### Refuge Support Workers

Abigail, Agustina, Claire Louise, Clare, Farah, Gillian, Grace, Havana, Helen, Hev, Humma, Jessi, Joanna, Julia, Kausar, Kerry, Khalsoon, Lauren, Lindsay, Lisa, Louise, Lucy, Lynn, Maia, Mandie, Maria, Michaela, Nadia, Nasreen, Rabia, Robin, Rosemary, Sarah, Sarah, Shaista, Sophie, Susan, Tamyla, Uzma A, Uzma R, Verlie, Yvonne.

### Children's Support Workers

Amanda, Avril, Collette, Debi, Ellen, Kate, Lauren, Jessica, Ruth, Sharon

### IDVAs & Outreach Support Workers

Wendy, Beth, Mo, Shahida & Shakeela

### Housekeeper & Cleaners

Linda, Sheila, Susan & Khajida

### We are proud to see our team being trained and developing new skills:

- Two Team Leaders completed the Women's Aid Federation of England Domestic Abuse Prevention course (WADE DAPA).
- Four staff completed the 'Power to Change' group work programme training, and a further four staff completed the 'Recovery Toolkit' programme training to deliver group work to victims and survivors.

All staff attended a range of training sessions in Health & Safety, Manual Handling, Safeguarding for Adults and Children, LGBTBI Awareness, Suicide Assist First Aid, Passionate About Customers, and Personal Safety.



# Governance Report 2015 - 2016

## A word from the Chair

Looking back over the 2015-16 year, I am proud to be involved with such an innovative and positive organisation. I have reported previously about the ongoing challenges regarding changes to funding; however, despite those continuing challenges, SafeNet is bucking the trend and we are not only delivering our core refuge services, we (with our partners at Calico) are also in the process of building and developing a pioneering 'Recovery Refuge' for women and children with multiple and complex needs. I will be able to report on this next year.

As a board, we agreed five years ago that we would remain optimistic despite the austerity climate. This decision has paid off as we have been able to expand our geographical base across the North by successfully securing new contracts. The reason we actively seek to secure new domestic abuse contracts is so that we can help and support as many survivors and their families as possible.

Doing more of the same is also important, as we can never fully meet the demand for our services. Our safe-houses provide a different type of accommodation and that means we can support some families that would never be able to live in a communal refuge facility.

I would like to thank our patrons, John and Penny Clough for their involvement and contribution not only to SafeNet, but to also raising awareness on a national platform about the need for domestic abuse services. I know it has made a significant difference and that SafeNet has directly benefitted from their campaigning.

Board Members are very mindful of the responsibility we have to ensure that funding is used appropriately and that decisions about new opportunities are made in the best interests of SafeNet. Accountability and responsibility are serious matters and I want to ensure that SafeNet continues to grow and thrive, delivering excellent services, being the best we can be, and empowering anyone using our services to live free from domestic abuse.

It goes without saying that none of this would be possible without the continued hard work and commitment from everyone involved, whether paid or voluntary – thank you.

**Karen**



## A word from our Patrons John & Penny Clough MBE

### Hello to all those involved with SafeNet

When we were invited to be Patrons of SafeNet, we were unsure whether to accept. It is an honour to be asked, but quickly came the thoughts of responsibility, what is the role, and are we good enough to fulfil the role? What is certain is that the care, support and safety of domestic abuse victims is close to our hearts.

SafeNet has given us as patrons a much greater understanding of the essential support services we provide as an organisation. Sadly, the other side of the coin is the awareness that there are victims we cannot yet help, and of course the financial restraints that put pressure on SafeNet, and what we can do in the future.

We are doing our best to raise awareness regarding future funding of refuges in Lancashire. Every MP has been contacted and questions have been raised in Parliament regarding Lancashire County Council's future funding arrangements for victims of domestic abuse. It's an ongoing situation, but we have support from some MPs and the local media outlets, including That's Lancashire and 2BR. It is our aim to ensure that LCC are taking the provisions of funding for domestic abuse refuges seriously, as we feel the cuts to refuge services are a tragedy in itself.

All we can do is promote recognition of abuse, prevent abuse, and support victims and those making the move to escape abuse to get their lives back and to be able to live in safety, free from abuse - and this drives us in what we do.

Sometimes we succeed in promoting change, sometimes we don't, but we will not give up trying. To all of you, in your role within SafeNet, you matter. We admire your dedication and commitment because you certainly are making a positive difference to victims' lives.

So as Patrons, we **thank you** for your time, effort, and care. SafeNet, you are the difference to people's lives.

Regards

John and Penny Clough.

## A word from the Charity Manager

We are always inspired by the stories of the survivors we support as they take momentous decisions to change their lives, to release themselves from fear and trauma and face the new fear of starting again - that's truly brave. Many do not know how they will survive practically, financially, emotionally, and yet they do, and they rebuild themselves and their family - sometimes this takes them the rest of their lives. The vast majority of our refuge residents and those who we support in our local communities are women and children - however, we are seeing more male victims coming forward to access support because of abuse they are suffering at home.

SafeNet have worked hard this year to keep victims and survivors of domestic abuse safe across Lancashire and beyond, to support them on their journey and to help meet their practical and emotional needs. The energy and commitment of refuge workers, volunteers, social work placement students, volunteer board members, patrons, colleagues across The Calico Group, supporters and funders is truly outstanding, and I continue to feel very proud of what we are achieving each and every day.

The last 12 months have seen some major changes in Government legislation with the introduction of the new offence of controlling or coercive behaviour within domestic abuse and, whilst this is still in its infancy, we expect this will have a serious impact regarding the conviction and sentencing of perpetrators of domestic abuse.

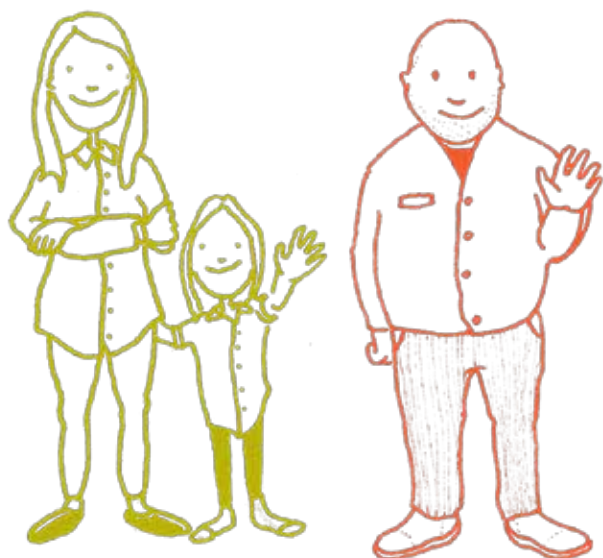
As always, funding continues to be difficult. We have diversified our efforts to gain funding both for existing support services and to create new services to meet emerging priorities. Whilst the funding environment remains problematic, we have been active, influencing funding bodies to replace funding lost in cuts and sourcing new funds. We are fortunate to have benefitted from the generosity of our supporters, who donate gifts in kind and essential resources for our residents and clients.

The year ahead is exciting for us, as we celebrate our 40th anniversary. We've come a long way since our beginning and it is with mixed feelings that I say that there is a constantly increasing demand for our services. It is good to be able to offer an increasing number of options in order to help victims and survivors move into safer and healthier futures.

We are particularly excited by our newest project for a 'Recovery Refuge', which is currently being built and will open a welcoming door specifically to the most vulnerable at the highest risk, those who need safe refuge and who have highly complex needs.

Finally, thank you for supporting the work we do - you help us to go one step further every day.

**Helen**  
**SafeNet's Charity Manager**



# REVIEW OF 2015 - 2016

## Key Issues and Developments

### Core Funding for Refuge Services - Lancashire County Council (LCC) Supporting People

**April 2015** - Awarded the third and final year funding for the Lancaster Refuge, which is now funded until March 2017.

**November 2015** - Major concerns were raised as LCC proposed to save £65m over the next two years, including the cessation of the Supporting People Funds across Lancashire by the end of March 2017. This effectively signalled the end of statutory funding, and put the refuge services at risk.

### Funding - Department for Communities & Local Government (DCLG)/Home Office £10m Funding for UK Refuge Services

**April 2015** - DCLG / Home Office funds awarded to Lancashire SP contract holders on the condition that we created additional bed spaces, and employed specialist staff as agreed across the county by all refuge providers.

**August 2015** - The fund was distributed and allowed us to recruit new specialist staff in areas such as, resettlement & aftercare, complex needs, BME women and children, and children and young people. The £257,500 awarded was split, £87,500 to Burnley, £87,000 to Preston, and £83,000 to Lancaster. Caution was taken as this is a temporary one-year-only fund with no long term commitment.

### Funding - SafeNet Children's Services

**April 2015** - Funding reduced in Yr. 2 for the 'Early Support Service' (ESS) for children and young people in the community.

**October 2015** - Continued contracting and funding difficulties with the ESS meant that SafeNet supplemented this whilst carrying out a service review.

**December 2015** - Sustaining the ESS became a concern due to further funding challenges. We reviewed the ESS and continued to subsidise it despite further funding reductions.

Children in Need funding remains consistent whilst all other sources of funding are reducing.

### Funding - Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)

**April 2015** - PCC Fund awarded SafeNet £56,148.65 of Ministry of Justice (MOJ) Grant for investment in our refuge facilities in Burnley and Lancaster.

### Extending SafeNet's Remit to include Women and Children in Crisis

**January 2016** - We proposed to extend our Charitable Objectives to include other groups of women and children in crisis. This will allow us to help more people with a wider variety of services.





## Tendering for Domestic Abuse Services: Refuge & Community Based

**June 2015** - We retained the SP contract to deliver Refuge Services in Burnley.

**June 2015** - We were awarded the SP contract for Preston - new service began on the 6th July 2015.

**July 2015** - We began delivery of refuge services in Preston, integrating the newly transferred staff team and working to harmonise work systems, share protocols, policies and procedures. We worked closely with refuge residents to establish customer-centred services for present and future refuge residents.

**January 2016** - In order to better utilise our Preston facility, we introduced a communal accommodation model from 15 self-contained flats, to shared flats which can now offer accommodation for up to 25.

**March 2016** - We submitted a tender to Blackpool BC to deliver Blackpool's Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) and Children's Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (CIDVA) services.

## Restructuring SafeNet services

**December 2015** - In preparation for the SP funding cuts, SafeNet proposed to restructure refuge services to create a basic support model and reduce staffing. At the same time, we supported future development and growth with the recruitment of two new part-time staff members, a Volunteer & Work Experience Co-ordinator and a Funding & Resource Co-ordinator. This recognised the importance of maximising our income and resources, and creating effective volunteer contributions.

**March 2016** - Stage one of SafeNet's re-structure, reduced the Management Team from seven to five posts. We lost both the Children & Young People's Manager post and the Team Leader post in Preston, which reduced our management capacity.

## Increasing Safehouses

**June 2015** - Work started to establish a pilot safe-house in Lancaster.

**September 2015** - Fourth safe-house launched in Burnley.

**March 2016** - Additional safe-houses in Burnley, bringing the number in operation up to six.

## SafeNet Recovery Refuge

**June 2015** - A development working group was established to progress the Recovery Refuge for women and children with complex needs.

**August 2015** - We submitted an application to the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) for the 'Homelessness for Change' Fund for capital costs for the new Recovery Refuge.

**March 2016** - Planning permission for the new Recovery Refuge granted on 23rd March 2016, ground preparation work began.

## Safer Together Consortia - Lancashire DV Services Working Together

**August 2015** - Safer Together Consortia agreed to create a new separate consortia organisation for Lancashire DV agencies - implications for SafeNet explored.

**March 2016** - The Safer Together consortia established itself as a legal company, which SafeNet did not join. However, working relationships continue to be strong, positive and supportive in relation to the joint contracts we hold to deliver community-based DV services across Lancashire.

## Winter Floods in Lancashire

**December 2015** - The Lancaster Refuge was affected by the winter floods which caused a power cut leading to an evacuation of the refuge premises - all residents were temporarily re-housed at Preston Refuge for a couple of days.

## SafeNet Board Development

**March 2016** - SafeNet invited John & Penny Clough to become SafeNet Patrons, and they began to work on our behalf, campaigning and lobbying to 'Save Refuge Services' across Lancashire.

## Domestic Abuse: The local, regional and national picture, April 2015 - March 2016

### Lancashire Headlines

Safer Lancashire Domestic Abuse Data - April 2015 - March 2016

There were

# 24,140

contacts (referrals) to Lancashire Constabulary regarding domestic abuse, including **16,921** calls to the Police requesting response to domestic abuse incidents.

# 8,842

of these reported domestic abuse incidents were classed as crimes, which is 37% of all contacts with Lancashire Constabulary. 70% of those were assaults, 10% criminal damage (excluding vehicles) and 11% harassment.

There were

# 2,895

high-risk domestic abuse cases reviewed by Lancashire Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs), with **3,306** children living in those high-risk households. 27% of those were repeat cases.

# 3,855

children were referred to Lancashire County Council's Care Connect team at Children's Social Care for domestic abuse related issues.

Lancashire Crown Prosecution Service prosecuted

# 3,461

people for domestic abuse offences, with 77% of cases having successful outcomes.

# 44

domestic abuse offenders started the Building Better Relationships programmes with Lancashire Probation Trust, with **33** completing the programme within the period.

### Police Data from each of the SafeNet Localities

District	Calls to the Police	Contacts (referrals) to the Police	Rate per 100 population	% Crimed
Burnley	1,234	1,824	20.88	39.1%
Lancaster	1,450	2,074	14.58	44.2%
Preston	1,916	1,025	19.01	38.2%

**NB:** Calls are police incidents that are recorded on the police control centre database that have a domestic abuse qualifier. Contacts are the total calls to the Police about domestic abuse incidents, plus additional referrals recorded on Protecting Vulnerable People (PVP) database.

### High-risk domestic abuse cases reviewed by Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs)

MARAC	No. of high risk cases heard	Number of children in the household
Pennine (Burnley, Pendle & Rossendale)	543	633
Lancaster	295	275
Preston	365	481



## National Update

### New Coercive Control Legislation

In December 2015, a new offence of controlling or coercive behaviour in an intimate or family relationship was created under Section 76 of the Serious Crime Act.

This new offence means that victims who experience the type of behaviour that stops short of physical violence, but amounts to extreme psychological and emotional abuse, can bring their perpetrators to justice.

Controlling or coercive behaviour does not relate to a single incident, it is a purposeful pattern of behaviour which takes place over time, in order for one individual to exert power, control or coercion over another.

This new offence focuses responsibility and accountability on the perpetrator who has chosen to carry out these behaviours.

*"Not only is coercive control the most common context in which [women] are abused, it is also the most dangerous."*

Evan Stark (2007), *Coercive Control. How Men Entrap Women in Personal Life*. New York: Oxford University Press.

## Domestic Abuse

The local, regional and national picture  
April 2015 - March 2016

There were approximately **1,374** referrals to refuges across Lancashire in 15/16.

Of those, approximately **1,030 clients** did not receive a service.

Out of that figure, **200 households** were unable to access the service due to their complex needs, mental health problems, substance misuse problems and dual diagnosis.

**390 households** were unable to access the refuge as the provision was full.

**330 households** either found alternative accommodation, didn't want the service, or didn't supply the required information.

**30 households** were still being assessed or on a waiting list.

**80 households** were unable to access the service due to range of reasons (room size, location, no recourse to public funds, not fleeing DA).

## 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 - move-on properties for more complex needs, including male victims or those with very high needs, which cannot be supported in a communal setting.
- 1:1 support and group work, including 'Freedom Programme' and 'Power to Change'.
- Specialist age appropriate support for children & young people (CYP).
- IDVA Service - navigating the criminal justice system for those at the highest risk of serious harm and homicide.
- Community helpline/outreach support and advocacy in the community.
- 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.

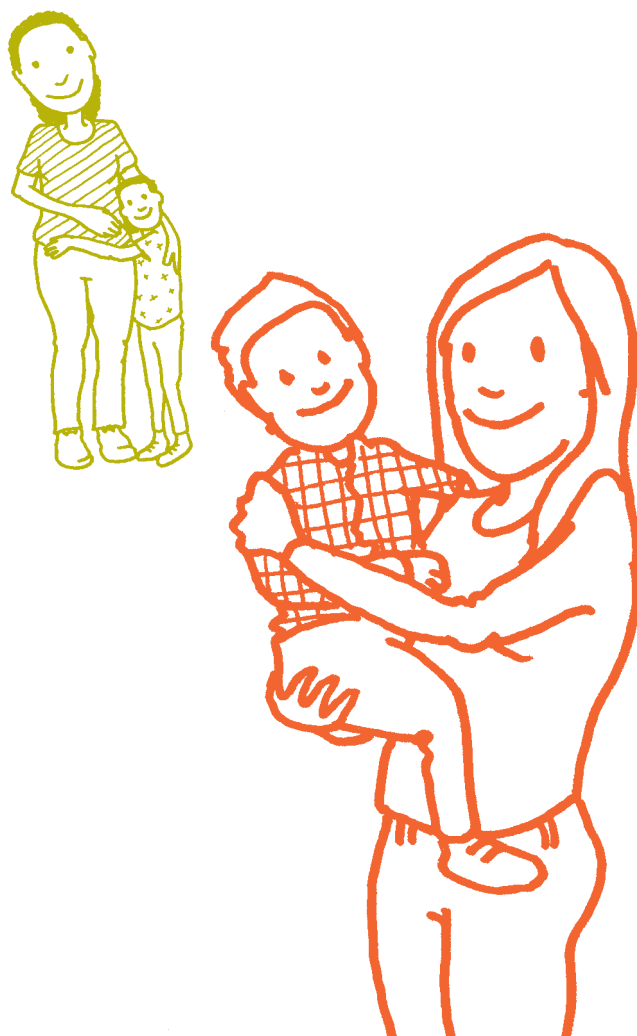
### Feedback from a student social worker on placement:

'It is a challenging and busy environment but I have never felt more supported. I was welcomed into the organisation by everyone and all members of the team were happy to help. SafeNet is a wonderful organisation and has provided me with the confidence, knowledge and skills to support individuals in any future role I undertake. During my final 100 day social work placement at SafeNet, I was able to continually develop my knowledge and skills of all aspects of social work practice. It was the perfect placement to develop as a professional and it shaped my values and beliefs to be able to effectively support vulnerable women and children'.

## Communal Refuges: a safe place to stay

When families are living in abuse, it touches every aspect of their lives and the effects can be devastating. This year, SafeNet's Refuge Support Services in Burnley, Preston and Lancaster delivered vital, life changing services in a safe environment to hundreds of women and children, who were previously living in violent and unsafe homes. They benefit immensely from a safe, secure and non-judgemental environment which empowers them to rebuild their lives and supports their recovery.

Each family admitted to the refuge is in crisis and escaping abuse. They can stay for up to six months and plan their future. During their stay, they will work closely with an allocated support worker and progress their support plan with a weekly key working session. Each Support Worker works closely with agencies on subjects such as housing, benefits, police, solicitors, health, other refuges and supported housing projects. We organise our refuge home in a communal way and residents participate in weekly house meetings and regular service consultations which have been well attended. Residents contribute to practical housing tasks too, and everyone's contributions, however big or small, are valued. Residents have been consulted about our policies and procedures, and have been involved in making decisions which affect them.





Local agencies visit often, attending residents' monthly house meetings to give talks about how to access their services, distributing information and free gifts.

When it is time to move on, SafeNet supports residents' choices, whether it is to resettle locally or out of the area, or to return to their previous home, which may include reconciliation with the perpetrator. Our most important outcome, whatever a woman chooses to do, is to help them manage the future they choose as safely as possible. We create a safety plan to equip victims and survivors with knowledge and skills, which will help them to stay safe.

**Residents' feedback:** "Before coming here, I had heard a lot of rumours about refuge life and was worried about staying here but, after living here, I have realised I was worrying for nothing. I've been through domestic abuse and slowly I am becoming my normal self again. It's the best place for women with nowhere to go in the difficult times; it's a safe place to start a new and independent life with the help welcoming staff. They were kind and caring and gave great advice, helped me to see it wasn't my fault. I would say to any women who goes into refuge to do their courses. I did 'Power to Change' and I highly recommend you do it too. I have realised that it's not my fault that I suffered the abuse and, since I have done it, I feel so much better about myself. Refuge is here to help any woman who is going through abuse. So please seek the help that you deserve. If it was not for the staff at SafeNet, I don't think I would be the person I am today."

## SafeNet in Burnley

### Safe-houses in the community

#### 2015 - 2016

This year, we were able to open more safe-house facilities in Burnley in partnership with Calico Homes, doubling our number from three to six safe-house properties. This means we can now accommodate more families who can't access the communal refuge due to having older male children or complex needs, or who are not ready to move on without continued support. In the last year, we were able to accommodate 28 families in our safe houses, including two male victims. One was a child aged 16+ with his family, and the second was accommodated as part of a married couple escaping extended family violence. We intend to continue increasing our provisions in Burnley and we are now working to develop a new safe-house in Lancaster. Many of these families would have been unable to access safe accommodation elsewhere. This alternative type of accommodation support allows SafeNet to reach more families in need and respond flexibly, providing a level of support that reflects the needs of the families at each stage in their recovery.

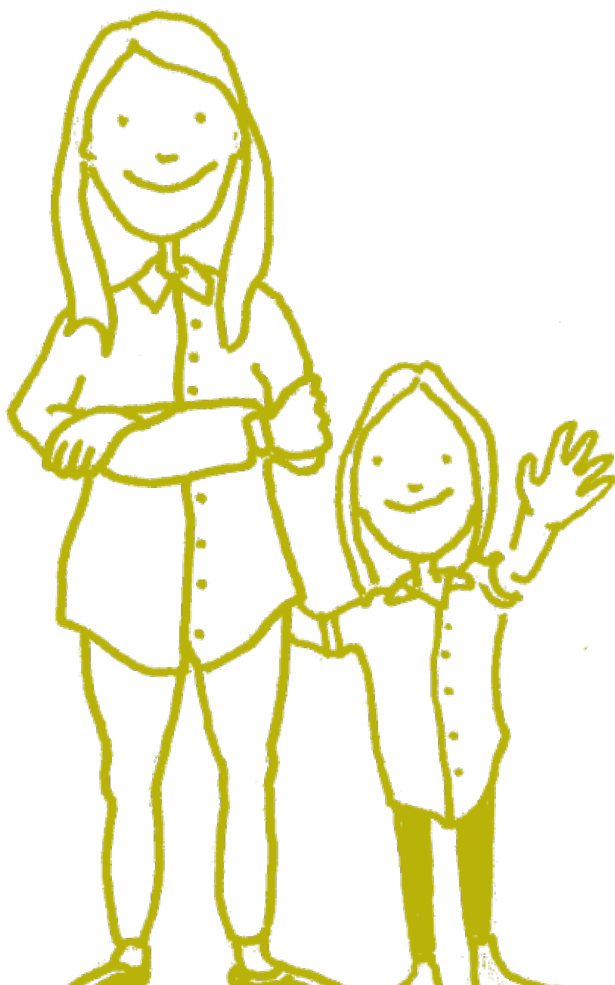


## Burnley Refuge Accommodation

This year, we had 306 referrals for refuge accommodation in Burnley and 120 of those referred were admitted to the refuge. Nine of the women had 'no resource to public funds' (NRPF) and we were able to arrange funding for five of them via the Home Office Domestic Violence Concession. The other four were supported financially by Children's Social Care. With the support of Rochdale Law Centre, one resident who stayed at the Burnley Refuge for two years has finally won her appeal to remain in this country and is in the process of resettling in her own property. At times, it seemed the chance of a successful appeal seemed quite slim - this was a major success and has literally saved her life.

Some of the families we have worked with stayed in our safehouses, and we have included in this report the story of one couple escaping abuse from the male's family. He had a brain injury induced coma and, whilst in hospital, staff became aware of the domestic abuse suffered by him and his wife. We worked closely with the hospital and occupational health to provide a safe place for this couple, he was eventually discharged to one of our safe-houses, and we went onto successfully rehouse them.

We have made some really good links through Food Share and receive substantial daily donations of bread, groceries and other items from Sainsbury's, Tesco's and Marks and Spencers. This donated food makes a real difference to our residents.



## Safe accommodation for a married couple from the BME community - a couple's story

My husband had a very serious medical condition and was hospitalised for several months. During this period, my mother-in-law and brother-in-law became very abusive and controlling. I was not allowed to leave the house and visit my husband until he regained consciousness and asked to see me.

Over time, my husband and I developed a good relationship with staff on the ward. Some of them witnessed the abuse I received from my in-laws and, because of the abuse, they were banned from the hospital. The Sister on the ward told me that they could find a safe place for me to stay and they referred me to the refuge in Burnley. I had no idea what a refuge was, or how they could help us. I was concerned because the refuge is for women and children but my husband would also need somewhere to stay when he was discharged.

A Support Worker from the refuge came to the hospital and explained what a refuge was and how it could help. She was bi-lingual and could speak to us in Urdu, she put our minds at rest and answered all the questions we had.

I was not entitled to any welfare assistance as I am originally from Pakistan - however, I was able to move into the refuge with no funds and the BME Support Worker applied for a grant from a charity, which meant I could purchase a bus pass to visit my husband in hospital and other essentials. The refuge Support Workers arranged food parcels and gave me donations of clothes and household items, and at last I felt safe.

Several weeks later, when my husband was discharged, SafeNet made arrangements for him to join me in one of SafeNet's safe-houses. The Support Workers helped us apply for welfare assistance so we could support ourselves and start to make a safer independent life together away from my husband's family. Without SafeNet's support, I dread to think where we would be now. The support we have been given has allowed me to focus on my husband's recovery and build a future together free from abuse! We are expecting our first child, who will be born in three months.

## Safe-houses / Resettling residents from the refuge

SafeNet supports families as they re-settle from refuge into our communities, co-ordinating planned resettlement packages and, for some families, transferring them and their support service into one of our many safe-houses, where they can live for an agreed period of time in preparation for full independent living.

We also work closely with various local authorities and housing associations throughout the country to arrange appropriate housing, tenancy support and furniture packages for those resettling permanently in their own homes or in different locations.

An essential part of the resettlement support plan is arranging appropriate wellbeing and tenancy support for when the refuge support ends. This helps maintain a successful tenancy and ensures that those newly settled do not feel isolated in the community. SafeNet's Re-settlement Worker works closely with Calico's Floating Support, Community Restart, Lancashire County Council Wellbeing Service and tenancy support teams in various housing associations in order to achieve excellent resettlement outcomes.



### Quote from Clive Hart – Tenancy Support Officer – Your Housing Group

"I worked with SafeNet to rehouse an Asian lady who had been subjected to domestic abuse. The Resettlement Officer worked closely with our Housing Officer during the sign-up of the tenancy, which ran smoothly. I was informed of the move in good time and was kept informed by the Resettlement Officer when the move-in was delayed due to a further incident. The Resettlement Officer dealt with the housing benefit implications of this, ensuring that rent was paid and our tenant did not start her tenancy with arrears. On the day our tenant moved in, I met the Resettlement Officer at the property where we were able to complete a comprehensive handover. Over the following months, I was able to assist with setting up utility bills, dealing with council tax issues, registering with a GP, and placing children into school. I was also able to assist with integrating our customer into the wider community. This has resulted in our customer sustaining her tenancy, living in a stable household with contacts in the local community, and with her children settled and happy in full time education. The Resettlement Officer continued to contribute throughout this process, keeping me updated with any relevant information and assisting with issues beyond my remit. The success of this case is testament to the effectiveness of the Resettlement Officer and also to her commitment to delivering an ongoing quality service."

## Group work at SafeNet

We deliver group work to survivors of domestic and sexual violence and abuse in the refuges and in the community. Survivors work together in a safe, friendly, and non-judgemental environment to support each other to change their lives for the better, based on principles of building self-esteem and empowerment. Whilst our group work sessions are for women only, we have adapted the materials to work with male victims on a 1:1 basis where this is helpful.

'The Freedom Programme' and the 'Power to Change' increase survivors' understanding of the dynamics of abusive relationships by working through the weekly activities. By sharing their experiences with other women, feelings of shame, guilt and loneliness diminish.

### The Freedom Programme:

Most women who have experienced domestic abuse have no idea how widespread it is, and many who attend the Freedom Programme have never talked to anyone about the violence and abuse they have experienced. The group work setting for victims/survivors of abuse allows them to talk about their experience with others, to make sense of what has happened and to look at how they can create a safer, abuse-free future for themselves and their family. The Freedom Programme runs each week on a rolling programme, with 12 sessions in a complete programme.

This year, **160 women** attended SafeNet Freedom Programmes, and **63** of those attending were women of minority ethnic origins. (We were able to provide bi-lingual groupworkers to assist where English was spoken as a second language.)

### The aims of the course are to help women:

- understand the beliefs of abusive men
- learn to recognise and have better understanding of domestic abuse and sexual violence
- recognise the impact on their lives
- understand how they can keep themselves and their children safe.

### Power to Change:

The Power to Change group work programme runs once a week over approximately three months. 21 women completed the course this year.

### The aims of the course are:

- to change patterns of the behaviour learned within abusive relationships
- to raise awareness of basic rights to safety and self direction
- to build self esteem, self determination and empowerment
- to draw strength, and benefit from interaction with other survivors of abuse.

### Participants' feedback and comments:

"At times, I struggle to express myself due to language barrier. I have enjoyed attending the freedom programme and look forward to it every week."

"I am very grateful for these groups as I went to court in April and I was so emotional, the court had to give me a break. As I was walking back into court, I said to myself to remember 'Power to Change' and 'Freedom Programme' and I felt I conquered the rest of the hearing as I felt the support of our group-worker on my shoulder."

"I got upset but I felt better after a good cry. The group made me strong even if I did cry, as it made me realise that what he did to me was wrong."

"Some of the sessions were upsetting but it made me recognise what I wasn't aware of."

"At first, I was shy, but they helped me come out of my shell."

"Very useful - understanding the different ways abuse affects you and to understand the risk I am really at. Handouts and resources - beautiful colours. We need more time. Our group worker is fantastic."

"I feel significantly better - I feel this way because I can talk to everyone in here where I didn't used to. I have learnt a lot since I have been attending the course. I am happy with the way things are going in the programme."

"I have gained enormous strength from participating in this group. I enjoy the discussions we have. Our group-worker helps me understand why I feel so bad."





## Support for complex needs, health and wellbeing

This year, we provided extra health support to 163 victims and survivors. Women are often at crisis point when they come to the refuge and some present complex mental health issues, suicide and self-harming behaviours, drug and alcohol dependencies, medication dependency, and sexual and reproductive health issues, as well as physical, emotional and sexual abuse issues. A high proportion are vulnerable and traumatised by their past experiences.

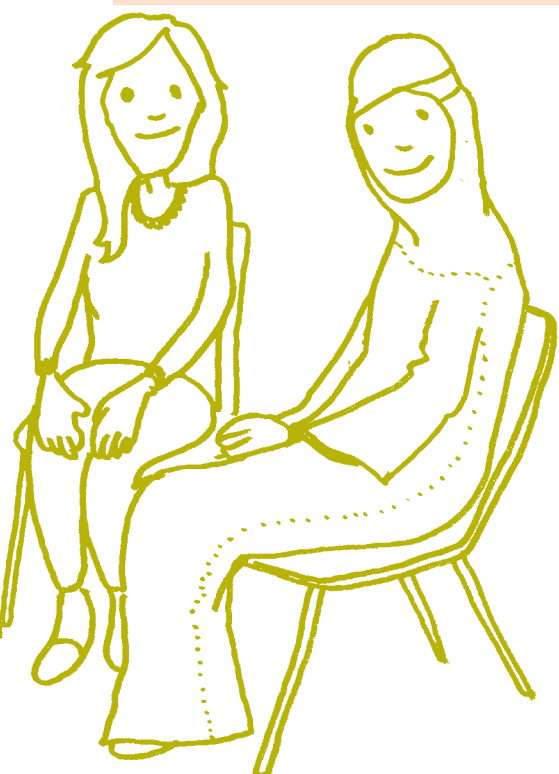
In addition to our direct support, we are able to signpost and refer into specialist health services and programmes. We work in partnership with local health services, such as Community Mental Health Crisis Team, GP surgeries, midwives, health visitors, counselors, dental surgeries, the Emotional Wellbeing Team, hospitals and A&E to offer women and children the best health services available. We provide information about local services and invite agencies to speak at our residents' house meetings each month.

We aim to improve overall wellbeing and quality of life, and reduce the need for our residents to access medical services for non-medical conditions.

"I have found the whole programme useful. It has enabled me to understand that I can overcome obstacles and develop skills to build a future for myself. I am more positive now."

"The risk assessment highlighted the dangers of the relationship. It's good to be able to take something home to read over again. Could be longer - an extra hour. Brilliant group of girls, our groupwork is ace."

"I'm feeling stronger. I understand more and more why it happened with me."



## Complex Needs Recovery Refuge Report

An increasing issue in recent years for statutory and voluntary services across Lancashire is the rising number of women presenting as escaping domestic abuse but also having an additional complex need, such as substance misuse (drugs or alcohol), high level mental health issues or previous offending behaviour.

For many years, SafeNet have been unable to accommodate women / children with higher level complex needs at our current refuge facility, due to the communal nature of the environment and the risk that complex needs families can pose in this setting. We are fully aware of many women and children who therefore remain in high risk, dangerous homes over the long term, through lack of appropriate provision. We offer support in the community - however, this is often not enough. Last year, out of 321 referrals, we were unable to accommodate 30% of those assessed, as their needs were deemed too high for refuge provision.

Since 2012, SafeNet have been working in partnership with Calico Homes to secure funding for a new innovative housing project that could accommodate women with high level complex needs. We were successful in gaining funding from the Homelessness for Change Grant towards the building cost for a new-build refuge facility which would be an extension to our existing facility in Burnley. The SafeNet Recovery Refuge is an innovative concept unlike generic refuge provision currently available.

The project will offer safe, secure accommodation for families escaping domestic abuse with additional high level complex needs, such as drugs or alcohol misuse, mental illness or offending behaviour. Women with complex needs find themselves in turmoil, with circumstances too chaotic to sustain living in generic refuge provision, and may not be able to access safe refuge due to the risk they may pose to the existing residents. They often present with a number of additional issues, have a chaotic housing history, and are at high risk of serious harm from the perpetrator. There is an upwards trend in the number of complex needs referrals for emergency safe accommodation.

Other refuges across the North West are experiencing increased requests for accommodation and are limited in the type of services they can offer due to the lack of specialist services available.

In January 2016, we gained planning permission to extend our existing building to accommodate an additional 15 families in self-contained accommodation which will meet the needs of those with more complex needs. The new Recovery Refuge is due to open in July 2017. The service offers crisis intervention for those at the highest risk of harm who have added vulnerabilities. SafeNet will be working with our partners, ACORN Recovery Projects, to deliver therapeutic group work and one-to-one interventions around recovery programmes, and specific programmes around recovery from domestic abuse.



"I'd like to thank the staff here for helping me settle in and print me maps off so I could find places ... This place here gives you confidence because you're around people who have been through the same stuff as you. Makes you realise you're not as worthless than you thought. There are people who can help you. Thank you so much."



## Community Based Services 2015 to 2016

The SafeNet community based team has provided an urgent response to 1490 reported incidents of domestic abuse across Burnley and Padiham in the year 2015-16. This is an 18% increase on the 1268 incidents in the year 2014/15. In each case, every victim was offered urgent safety planning, advice, support through the criminal justice system, practical support looking at safe housing and security, emotional support helping to recover from the abuse, and access to information and advice from supporting agencies, such as welfare rights, housing, legal and health. The team has continued to work as part of a co-ordinated community response tackling domestic abuse across Lancashire. We continue to provide drop-in services in Burnley working in partnership with The Calico Group, enabling our clients to access additional services around housing advice and tenancy support through **Calico's Floating Support** and **Neighbourhoods** teams, support to access substance misuse recovery advice with **ACORN Recovery Projects**, income and debt advice with **Calico Money Wise**, and support to access training and education through **Calico Careers**.

"As a man, I was so embarrassed admitting that I was being controlled by my partner, and I didn't want anyone to know. I didn't want them thinking I was a wimp. I could cope with the violence - I didn't think there was anything wrong with that... I sort of understood it. What I didn't see was the control... and, with each support session, I started to understand about control and realised just how much I was being manipulated and controlled by my partner through all the threats and emotional blackmail. I would honestly say to any man that is struggling to ask for help because they're embarrassed ....I wouldn't be where I am today without the support of SafeNet. I feel so much stronger and positive and I've even told a couple of friends.... They were really good about it and couldn't believe I'd not told them. They didn't think I was weak. I am starting to move on.....It still hurts some days because I still really love my partner, but I want to be in control of my own life."

## SafeNet in Preston

This year, we successfully launched our **Power to Change** programme, both in our refuges across Lancashire and in the local communities. We have supported 16 women through programmes that have been delivered in local Children's Centres and Calico. The Power to Change programme provides education and support in a group setting to women who are, or have been, in abusive relationships. The sessions are safe, supportive and inclusive. Domestic abuse, in the long run, erodes self-esteem and social skills, destroys family intimacy, damages growing children, reduces parenting skills and creates intense feelings of shame, guilt, isolation and loneliness. In stark contrast to abuse, support groups lessen isolation and establish social bonds. Sharing life stories can combat feelings of shame and guilt; women can find help and learn coping strategies, e.g. for dealing with their traumatised children, while, at the same time, they lessen their sense of inadequacy.

The SafeNet team makes a real difference to the lives of many families across Burnley and Padiham, helping them to feel safe, building on their strengths and resilience, and helping them to achieve positive outcomes.

Both men and women can experience domestic abuse - however, the highest demand for our services is still with female victims, accounting for **93%** of all our referrals. Women remain at the highest risk of violence and, according to **Women's Aid**, are far more likely than men to be killed by partners/ex-partners. "Women are more likely than men to experience multiple incidents of abuse, different types of domestic abuse (intimate partner violence, sexual assault and stalking) and in particular sexual violence." According to the **Office for National Statistics 2015**, on average, two women a week are killed by their partner or ex-partner in England and Wales.

In the last year, we have seen an increase in the number of male victims being referred to our services. We responded to 95 incidents of domestic abuse involving male victims across Burnley and Padiham, which has increased from last year's figure of 41. This year, SafeNet has been working to develop our approach in supporting male victims to ensure the support package we offer reflects the needs of male victims experiencing violence and abuse.

In July 2015, SafeNet won the contract to provide our high level of service and support in the Preston refuge. The refuge provides a safe space for women and children and, in the short time, we have increased how many people we can support, to enable us to reach more women and children every year. Since July, we have supported the 16 families and women without children living in the project at the time, along with an additional 70 women and their children.

Women and children have been involved in the changing face of the refuge and we have developed regular House Meetings. There are donation nights where women get to re-build wardrobes of clothing for themselves and their children, choose items for them to take to their new home when they move on, and have fun.

In the next year, Preston services plan to replicate the successful and life-saving safe-house model, working in partnership with local housing associations.

**"Hello.** I would like to thank SafeNet for all the help and support I received. I am writing especially to thank S\*\* my Support Worker. From the very beginning, she was wonderful. She introduced me to a solicitor and even drove me to Blackburn for an appointment when I had no transportation. She offered lots of support; she always kept in touch by telephone. She got cameras outside my house and a panic alarm - both were a great comfort during troubled times. I had never heard of SafeNet, and actually stumbled across them by accident whilst in the Calico office. At first, I thought I didn't need her help, but Shahida spotted that I was actually in some sort of danger and I will always be thankful for that. She was always professional and understanding. Everyone at SafeNet does a fantastic job, and we are lucky to have their support. **Thank you xxxx."**

### **"Thank you and goodbye from a Preston Refuge resident**

I am finding my voice again and (some staff will be pleased to know, and probably smile knowingly) I am using it. I am a strong, independent woman, an active member of the 'changing the world for the better' team. I am dancing and singing again. Literally. I am able to see my friends, live my life, and not be afraid anymore. And that is the greatest gift of all. A heart that does not know fear. Mine has known plenty. Refuge helped me to realise that I can be who the hell I want. I can do whatever I want. I can go wherever I want. But more than anything, as a human, I have the right to do it all. And I will. Refuge was my second chance. Refuge staff cannot keep in contact with us when we leave them behind - that's the policy. There are good and understandable reasons for this. I was unable to say farewell to all of the staff before I left, which saddened me, for I wanted to thank and hug them all. But I would say to them thank you so very much, with all my heart. I am grateful for all you did between you, to help me put my life back together (even when I didn't like how you did it, ha ha!). I will forgive the manager for not letting me have chickens (yes, I did ask at a house meeting once if we could rescue some), and I hope that someone will look after the vegetable garden. The peppers are wrecked by the birds - is someone drying some seeds? The radishes will be ready next week!!! And the African violets need to not be left to dry out. The tomatoes are sprouting! And if you can't get someone to look after it, at least when it is overgrown, smile and wish me luck down here, won't you? Thanks for storing my stuff. I have decided that, whatever I left I didn't need, so please take it for donations night, okay? I don't want nor need it.

Thank you all for the help. The laughter. The comfort when I cried. For being understanding and helping me where you were able to. Mostly, thanks for getting me to London, near my babies, and on the next step towards my dreams. I will miss chatting with some of you very much, but I will think of you with affection, always. Big up the Refuge Crew! You're awesome, and I am happy. I would call that a refuge success story, wouldn't you? I was gonna not send love to you all, but you know this anarchist doesn't follow the rules, so yeah. LOVE to you all. Bucket loads of it!!!! Take care now. Activist."

## **SafeNet in Lancaster, Morecambe and District**

Now in its third year, the Lancaster Refuge has supported 88 women and 79 children to live safer lives, along with expanding the services provided with the help of local government funding. We were able to incorporate additional hours for children's one-to-one and group support, including much needed support with agencies and courts for mothers. Women facing additional health complications and needs were supported to access medical treatment and counselling, and many residents enjoyed the self-help groups facilitated by the Complex Needs worker. Our newly formed Resettlement team helped women moving on from refuge to find properties, furniture, and local community activities, to develop safe routines, and to emotionally prepare to form a new life free from abuse.

Our first Lancaster & District safe -house has opened, offering two more spaces for families and single women in need of safety.

The Freedom Programme, Power to Change and Recovery Toolkit courses have helped many women to develop confidence, increasing their self-esteem and helping them to move on from abuse. Our dedicated specialist children's team provides a creche to enable the women to attend.

Student social workers have been a welcome and vital part of SafeNet Lancaster & District, bringing enthusiasm, knowledge and commitment into the team.

SafeNet have enjoyed delivering training to social workers, housing departments, social work students, police, and many other agencies in the area, and have more dates lined up.



SafeNet were awarded funding by several local organisations, including: The Duchy of Lancaster, who funded a children's worker for the third year; Francis C Scott Foundation, who funded the crèches for children's work; and Galbraith Trust, who funded us to fill the safe-house with comfortable and welcoming furniture and security measures. Many local people in the community have supported the women and children by donating items such as clothing, and the Lancaster University Exodus Project has provided many items of household goods and bedding for the families we support.

## Children's Service

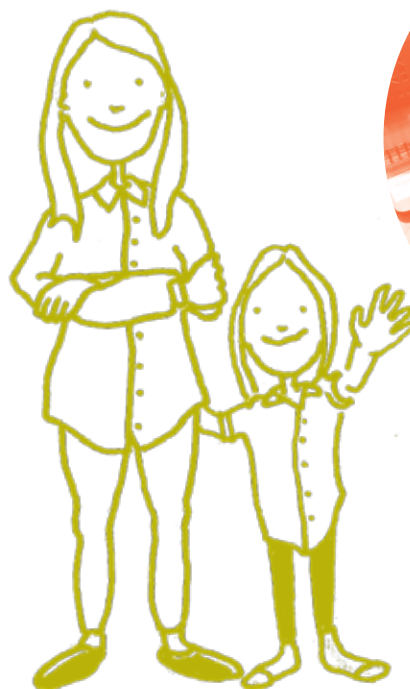
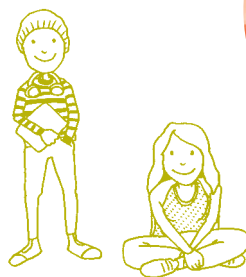
Over the past year, a total of 221 children and young people have lived in our refuges in Burnley (145), Lancaster (24), and Preston (52). There are more children referred to our services than admitted, and this figure was a total of 525 children referred over the year, 317 to Burnley, 145 to Lancaster and 63 to Preston refuges. Of the children accommodated, 43% of the resident children in Burnley were of minority ethnic origin, 8% in Lancaster, and 34% in Preston.

We have had a high proportion of children this year who have been in the Children's Social Care and Child Protection system, and this percentage is rising within the refuge year-by-year, as domestic abuse is increasingly recognised by multi-agencies.

Whilst they are in the refuge, the children's team help children to talk about their domestic abuse experiences, and the therapeutic approach helps them to thrive in the safe environment.

We have also supported children in the community, working in schools and delivering group work around 'Keeping Safe' and forming healthy relationships, as well as individual one-to-one sessions, which equip children with safer coping strategies in order to survive living in an abusive home.

Domestic abuse and Child Protection are not separate issues, and SafeNet children's work continues to work in partnership with multi-agencies to safeguard children and young people.



## Financial Review 2015 - 2016

SafeNet have had a successful 2015-16 year. We have continued to expand our services by winning the contract to manage the Preston refuge. The refuge originally consisted of 15 self-contained flats - however, to make the refuge cost efficient, it is now run as a communal refuge, allowing us to admit up to 25 vulnerable women and families. Our Burnley safe-houses have increased from three at the beginning of the year to seven by the end of March 2016, increasing our revenue through additional Housing Benefit.

In August 2015, we were awarded £266,375 from DCLG (Department Community and Local Government) funds across Burnley, Lancaster and Preston for additional support in Complex Needs, Resettlement, BME and Children. Excellent staff have been retained and employees are supporting our residents through their difficult time.

Lancashire County Council are at present having to make large savings to their budget. In 2015-16, this resulted in a cut in the Supporting Funding allowance for all refuges of approximately 25%. At present, we are unsure what level of funding we will receive in the coming years, which could have a serious impact on the service we will be able to provide in the future.

We must acknowledge our many volunteers and supporters who continue to volunteer their time and money, and make it possible for our staff to make a difference with vulnerable families.

We have worked hard to raise funds for our children's services and to build links with local schools, though identifying funding for additional support for children has become increasingly difficult. Funds donated by Rochdale Women's Refuge Association when they closed have been utilised well through the SafeNet School Project, to provide direct support to children and young people in local schools, who are living with domestic abuse. However, this funding ended this year. As well as the Children In Need funding for on-site refuge children's services, SafeNet has also been awarded LCC funds to deliver an Early Support Service in Burnley and Lancaster.

We have ended the year with a deficit of £50K, due to SafeNet supporting the Early Support Service financially, which SafeNet regarded as an essential service for vulnerable children. The set-up costs of the new safe-houses in Burnley have impacted on this year's accounts. However, we should see the benefit of them in the coming year. To allow us to continue our vital service next year, efficiencies will be made and new funding streams will be sought to offset the cuts in LCC funding in 2017. A breakdown of the key figures is given opposite.

Copies of our audited accounts 2015 - 16 are available on request.

## How we've spent our money in 2015 - 16

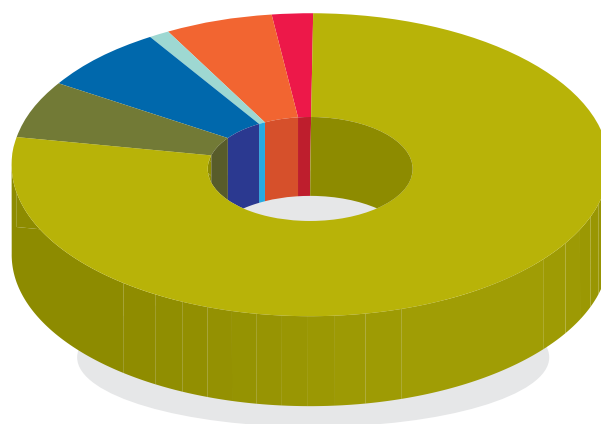
Total Revenue Income (all services)	£1,397
Total Capital Grants ( Lancaster Refuge)	£0
Total Incoming Resources	£1,397
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Total Revenue Expenditure ( all services)	£1,447
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Balance	-£50

### Analysis of Charitable Expenditure 2014-15

Expenditure on Emergency Accommodation & Support	£1,127
Expenditure on Early Support in the Community	£88
Expenditure on Children's Support	£94
Expenditure on BME Support for Ethnic Minority Families	£21
Expenditure on IDVA Work	£84
Expenditure on DV Strategic Co-ordinator	£33

## Analysis of Charitable Expenditure 2015-2016

78%	●	Expenditure on Emergency Accommodation & Support
6%	●	Expenditure on Early Support in the Community
7%	●	Expenditure on Children's Support
1%	●	Expenditure on BME support for Ethnic Minority
6%	●	Expenditure on IDVA Work
2%	●	Expenditure on DV Strategic Co-ordinator



## Thanks to our Supporters

### Organisations

55th Burnley Guides  
Bank Hall Lodge  
Barclays Bank plc  
BBC Children in Need  
BEFA  
Blue Lagoon Arcade  
BRPCVS  
Burnley Borough Council  
Burnley College  
Burnley Police 100 Club  
Burnley Women's Institute  
Copperhouse Children's Centre, Rishton  
Duchy of Lancaster  
Empowerment Charity  
Fare Share  
Healthy Lifestyles, St Peters Centre  
Julie Cooper MP  
Marks & Spencer  
Miles of Smiles, Preston  
Moorhouses Brewery  
Princes Trust, Burnley  
Red and Black Collective  
Rochdale Law Centre  
Rock FM  
Rossendale Ladies Golf Club  
Sainsbury's  
Shoebox Scheme  
Specsavers Burnley  
Staff at Brun House, Burnley  
Taywood Nursery, Burnley  
Tesco  
The Yoga Place  
Townswomen's Guild, Carnforth  
Uni-Play, Darwen  
Unison - East Lancs Health Authority  
Valueworks, Wigan  
Veterans in Communities, Haslingden

### Churches

All Saints Vicarage, Burnley  
Brunshaw Methodist Church  
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Colne  
Greenbrook Methodist Church, Burnley  
Hapton Methodist Church  
Hill Lane Baptist Church, Burnley  
Inghamite Church  
Life Church, Burnley  
Mount Zion Church  
Read United Reformed Church, Simonstone  
Rossendale Sorooptimist  
Sion Baptist Church, Burnley  
St Andrew's Church, Burnley  
St Cuthbert's, Burnley  
St John's Church, Cliviger  
St John's Church, Worsthorne  
St Leonard's, Padiham  
St Margaret's, Padiham  
St Mary's Church  
St Thomas' Church, Barrowford  
Unitarian Church, Padiham  
Wheatley Lane Baptist Church

### Schools

Blessed Trinity RC College  
Cherry Fold Primary School, Burnley  
Colden Junior & Infant School, Colden  
Hollygrove School, Burnley  
Rosegrove Infant School  
Rosegrove Nursery School  
Rosehill Primary School, Burnley  
Ryelands Primary School, Lancaster  
St Catherine's RC Primary School  
St John's RC Primary School  
St Joseph's Park Hill School  
St Mary's School, Newchurch in Pendle  
Wellfield Church School

## Part of The Calico Group

SafeNet joined The Calico Group five years ago. We have retained a level of independence and autonomy within the Group, and our specialist status as a women's organisation has been continuously supported. We are an independent charity with a dedicated Management Board, whilst at the same time benefiting from the full support of the Group, sharing common aims, values, beliefs and ethics, and supporting continued investment in services, refuge staff and stakeholders.

### Calico Enterprise Apprentice

"As part of my apprenticeship with Calico, I am able to experience how different departments work across the organisation. SafeNet has always interested me and, after attending a training session about SafeNet, I knew I wanted to complete my experience week with them. During my first day, I have found the work SafeNet do is really interesting and eye opening at the difficulties they have to deal with on a day-to-day basis. SafeNet should be really proud of the service they deliver to women as it can be life-changing."



**SafeNet**

*Empowering you to live free from domestic abuse*

[safenet.org.uk](http://safenet.org.uk)