

Marylebone
Project



Annual Review

Portman House Trust
Year Ended 31 March 2023

www.maryleboneproject.org.uk



At a glance – Stats for 2022/2023

 = 100%


success rate of women who have moved out maintaining their tenancy + accommodation for the 6th consecutive year

 = 12

women secured employment

 = 68

women resettled into independent accommodation (target of 50)

 = 134

women enrolled on educational courses

 = 5

women becoming project representatives

 = 50

or more different types of activities offered with over 5,000 individual general activity sessions attended

 = 20

women have participated in social enterprise

 = 57


women attended a variety of specialist courses

 = 73

learners enrolled on the Community Learning Courses

 = 41

women volunteered (internally + externally)

 = 60%

of Sanctuary service users are attending our Meaningful Activity Programme

Winners of The Homeless Link Award for Excellence in Supported Housing

We were thrilled to have received an award from Homeless Link, for Excellence in Supported Housing 2023. It's a testament to the dedication of our incredible staff, who wholeheartedly support the women at our project, as well as to the women we support, who battle so hard every day to overcome homelessness.



Rick Henderson, CEO of Homeless Link shared that:

“this award recognises organisations going above and beyond to make a difference.”

We were proud to be among the five organisations out of 200 applicants recognised for their remarkable work. We stood out by offering something transformational to individuals facing trauma and extreme life difficulties, and by sharing powerful stories of triumph over adversity.

“Homelessness is only temporary. Going through challenges can give you strength - don't let anybody tell you no. There's no 'no' in this world.”

- Grace, Ex-resident



Thank you so much to Rick Henderson and Kate Alaway from Homeless Link for presenting us with our sparkling trophy! As Sue Way, our Senior Manager put it, it was “a day of celebration, joy, recognition, and most importantly, thanksgiving.”



Semhar's story

Semhar was recommended to the Marylebone Project by a friend. She was residing in a night shelter at the time but needed a safe space to spend her days. Semhar started coming to the Sanctuary, sometimes covering the distance between the night shelter and the Project on foot, which could take nearly two hours.

Semhar's Support Worker encouraged her to join the classes and activities in the Project. Semhar was unemployed and not taking part in any education or training at the time, but was keen to develop her knowledge and skills. She joined the sewing beginners' group as she wanted to learn how to use the sewing machine, developing some new skills. She has also combated social isolation by meeting a new group of women who she now attends other activities with.

Semhar is now attending our internal ICT Beginners course and is learning to type on the computer for the very first time. Semhar is now accommodated in one of the residential beds within the Project and is looking forward to engaging with other classes and activities to help build her skills for employment and independent living.



Hiwet's story

Hiwet first came to the UK in 2006, immigrating from overseas having previously completed a series of courses in Floristry and Cooking, as well as working for a time in a hotel kitchen.

Hiwet spent a number of years rough sleeping in Westminster, having had to leave her previous accommodations due to safety concerns of domestic violence and overcrowding. Hiwet started attending the Sanctuary where she disclosed that she was suffering from PTSD, depression, and anxiety due to being a victim of the 2017 London Terror Attack. Hiwet was admitted to an emergency bed at the Project and then moved into a resettlement bed.

Hiwet has consistently engaged with the Project and was incredibly interested in volunteering in the Munch Kitchen and regularly worked with the Catering Co-ordinator to assist with events, gain her food hygiene certificate, and gain valuable skills in the kitchen.

Hiwet attended an open day at a local five-star hotel with the Education and Employment Team to pursue open roles in catering and cooking at the hotel. Hiwet began working at this five-star hotel through a partnership between the hotel's employability team and the Project.

Hiwet became somewhat of a peer leader at the Project; engaging in a variety of activities and has completed a Health and Safety Level 2 course and Childcare Level 2 course. Hiwet has recently moved into an independent living accommodation in the private rented sector, having been assisted by the Rent Deposit Scheme and Starter Pack Scheme.





Welcome and thank you

I have been leading the Marylebone Project team for the past eight years and it continues to be a privilege to be part of a team that works so tirelessly to empower women to rebuild their lives.

This past year saw a return to a more normal pattern of work in supporting our residents and service users, following the latest Government guidance on encouraging that we all need to live with COVID-19 and return to a more normal way of life. We did not lose sight of the need to continue to focus on the safety of all; remembering that many of our women suffer generally from vulnerable health of illnesses, ill health and life-threatening issues.

We also became aware of the growing need from our residents and service users to provide them with the full range of support of face-to-face contact, group activities, wider support activities, and progression to move on to independent living. This is especially important for those women who have reached a crisis point in their life due to experiencing domestic abuse, mental health issues and/or substance abuse issues etc.

The Sanctuary remains a 24/7 service for women in crisis and continues to see an overall changing clientele with some women moving on into independence and new women accessing the support. Due to this ever-changing picture of women accessing the Sanctuary and the needs they present, we continue to conduct regular reviews, ensuring that the service provided meets the needs of this specific rough

sleeping group and we monitor the use of the Sanctuary space so that it continues to be the best service that it can be for the women it serves.

The Resettlement Team continue to support all women who have moved into independent living for a period of three months and then the women can contact the Project for any further support they may need. Every year we set ourselves a challenge to support as many women as possible and this year we resettled 68 women into independent accommodation, beating our newly set target of 50 women.

One of the biggest challenges we have faced this year has been recruitment and retention of staff. We have had numerous front-line staff leave and have struggled to recruit to fill these positions. Whilst it has been acknowledged that staff retention and recruitment within the wider health and social care sector has been difficult, it resulted in us needing to use a greater number of agency workers, which comes at an increased cost. Great efforts have been made over the year, to reduce our use and dependency on agency workers and to recruit permanent staff and I am pleased to say that, towards the end of this reporting period (March 2023), a number of permanent staff have been recruited and plans are in place for all vacancies to be recruited to in the coming year.

Despite the challenges and changes that we have experienced this year, the remaining permanent staff team continue to be committed in offering their skills and specialist support to address the variety of challenges and demands so that the women's lives can be transformed. No matter how big or how small, all achievements have an impact on the lives of the women we serve so all are valued in the wider work that we do and are helping us to shape the future.

Please continue to journey with us so that we can continue to provide safety for our women and develop our services to make more positive changes and transform more women's lives.



This year
we resettled
68 women into
independent
accommodation

Sue Way,
Church Army Senior Homeless Manager



Review of operations

The Marylebone Project comprises three hostels with a total of 112 beds, The Sanctuary 24/7 centre and a social enterprise for women experiencing homelessness. Portman House is owned by Portman House Trust (PHT), Bradbury House and Elgood House are leased from Church Army and the Sanctuary 24/7 centre is situated within Bradbury House.

The project operates a three-year strategic plan with Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) reviewed regularly by the Board. The PHT Board oversees the work of the project on behalf of Church Army, who is the sole Trustee.

Our Mission is to empower women to end their homelessness and live their lives to the full.

This is worked out through four themes across all aspects of the project:

- ♥ **Hospitality** – that all are welcomed into an inclusive, safe, and secure environment
- ♥ **Empowerment** – equipping women to make informed choices regarding their own circumstances
- ♥ **Resettlement** – in partnership with the women encouraging and supporting them towards independent living
- ♥ **Spirituality** – that each person is loved.

The next section shows The Marylebone's Project Impact against Objectives for 2022 – 2023. We use these as a tool to determine the effectiveness of our service, developing strategies by measuring the extent to which our objectives are being met. Throughout the year we have worked towards tracking our progress towards these objectives, with our team working exceptionally hard to get the best results for our service users.





Objective 1

To continue to develop a holistic service giving the opportunity for the service users to make the best possible positive life-changing decisions.

We have three apartments covering the residential bed spaces. Support Services, which operate the 25 complex needs beds and 5 bed spaces for women with no recourse to public funds commissioned by the council's Supporting People, 78 resettlement services beds and 4 emergency beds.

Overall, the project provided nearly 39,000 beds this year offering shelter, hope, safety and support to women who would otherwise have to remain on the streets or in situations detrimental to their well-being. In addition, The Sanctuary has continued to receive visits from women who are rough sleeping.

Throughout the reporting period we had 535 women visit The Sanctuary, 353 of whom were first time visitors who accessed the various services provided including food, toiletries, clothing, showering and laundry facilities.

Support Services

This unit has 30 beds and a higher ratio of workers to residents due to the complexity of the issues the women face. These women display chaotic and challenging behaviours because of complex needs, multiple disadvantages, continued drug and alcohol abuse, mental health problems and those who are fleeing domestic abuse and trafficking.

The agreement with Westminster Council for us to support 25 women with identified



Nearly 39,000 bed nights were available this year offering shelter, hope, safety and support to women

complex needs and 5 women with no recourse to public funds, enables us to work in partnership to the strategic aims of Westminster Council for women in the greatest of need.

We remain extremely grateful to our health partners and external specialists who continue to work with us in providing the women with the best level of specialist support available, and who help us to respond to the women's needs and in developing move-on plans for them.

Resettlement

This unit has 78 beds with a lower ratio of workers to residents due to these women being further along their journey towards independent living.

Due to the complexity of the women's needs within Support Services, 45 of the women who were resettled this year were from the resettlement service with some accessing the private rented sector. These moves enabled some women to move from support services to resettlement as a step-down transition towards independent living. Moving into the private rented sector

We provide 112 bedrooms including our 4 emergency beds managed by The Sanctuary



is not always viewed as a positive step by the women due to the historical difficulties of rogue landlords and unsuitable accommodation but the resettlement team continues to work hard to dispel these myths, developing partnerships with reputable landlords, identifying more affordable accommodation and greater choice for the women.



Objective 2

To develop the resettlement programme with a target of 50 women resettled into the next stage of independent living, together with a target of 95% maintaining their tenancies for at least a year.

We have successfully resettled 68 women this year into independent living, above our agreed target of 50 that was set last year.

The resettlement team continues to explore the private rented sector and is building relationships with a small number of private landlords who understand the issues the women face and are willing to work with them. Similarly, the resettlement team continue to foster relationships with housing associations to maximise the future potential move on accommodation for our women.

The real success story remains in 100% of those who we have been resettled maintaining their move on accommodation for the past 6 years. This has exceeded the target of 95% year on year and we put this down to not only to the women's determination to succeed, but the overall package delivered through the project of support, skills training, training, after care provided by the resettlement team and the Rent Deposit Scheme.

Our Resettlement Workers now support all women who have moved into independent living for a period of three months and then the women can contact the Project for any further support they may need. This provides consistency of support and the reassurance that there is someone available to help in times of further need or crisis.



Our Resettlement Workers support women for three months after move-on



Objective 3

To maximise the occupancy of the hostel, maintaining void levels under 5%.

A lot of work has been done over the past few years to reduce our void levels and keep them at the required 5% target, although the last year saw a 10% average void level. Whilst a 10% void level is within the service level agreement with Westminster Supporting People and is impacted upon Westminster Supporting People authorising women to access the bed spaces, we continue to work with the Council in void reduction and have looked at renegotiating the terms of the service level agreement so that void rooms can be filled via the resettlement waiting list after a set period of inoccupancy.

Support services continue to work very closely with the housekeeping and maintenance teams to make vacant rooms ready and available as soon as possible. In addition, a more robust room checking/inspection system has continued to identify life skills areas of the residents that need support to minimise the damage and maintenance required for the rooms and/or identify the proposed length of time needed for more in depth maintenance work when the room is to become vacant.

Support services and resettlement have also continued with the more responsive systems to access referrals for vacant rooms, assess potential residents as soon as possible and arrange move ins with minimal delay. This has required greater partnership working with external referral agencies, not only in identifying women to access our services but having these women available for assessments.

We will continue to build on the measures already in place to increase our occupancy level across both support services and resettlement so that the 5% void target can be achieved and maintained in the coming year.

Support service teams are continuing to use responsive systems to fill vacant rooms





Objective 4

To continue to develop the work of the social enterprise with increased business of at least a further 25% and an increase of 10% in the number of women participating in the programme.

The Social Enterprise Administrator has focussed on contacting previous customers of Space and aiming marketing and promotion towards potential new customers, as well as working towards the target of having one space room booking per week. This target has been achieved for every week of the year, with many weeks exceeding this target with all rooms being booked for whole weeks.

Due to the success of space bookings, the target was increased mid-point to having one space room booking per day and this has also been achieved and exceeded with some space users booking rooms on a long-term block booking basis, thereby guaranteeing regular revenue.

Munch has continued throughout the reporting period, responding to requests from external customers and providing a service to the women at the Project.

20 women
have participated
in our social
enterprises of
Space and
Munch

This includes:

-  **Grazing boxes and Munch Lunch Treats** – Our carefully selected grazing produce is beautifully presented in our biodegradable and recyclable boxes & platters prepared with the help of our service users and are perfect for all occasions
-  **Catering Course** – Our catering course is the perfect introduction to Catering and discusses in detail, the critical aspects of catering & hospitality, equipping the women to develop their career goals and aspirations
-  **Baker Street Market** – Munch in Marylebone held their first Market stall at Baker Market, selling their delicious cakes and signature biscuits.



Our catering course is the perfect introduction to Catering and discusses in detail, the critical aspects of catering & hospitality



Our carefully selected grazing produce is beautifully presented in our biodegradable and recyclable boxes & platters



Munch in Marylebone held their first Market stall at Baker Market, selling their delicious cakes and signature biscuits



Objective 5

To build on the success of the Women into Work programme and assist a further 30 women to find work and at least 40 to find placements.

12 women secured employment during this reporting period, which is well below the target of 30. Whilst this may be fewer than in previous years, it is a reflection on the impact that the pandemic has had on our wider work and society as a whole, regarding work placements and employment opportunities, and the complexity of the needs of the women presenting to us, who are not yet ready to engage in formal learning, volunteering and/or employment.

Despite the low number of women securing employment, we have seen an increase in the number of women attending the Women-into-Work programme, with this being 199 for the reporting period. Additionally, we have seen an increase in the number of women attending the pre-employability activities; 2,462 individual general activity sessions being delivered, 57 women attending a variety of specialist courses, 41 women volunteering both internally and externally,



We have seen an increase in the number of women attending the pre-employability activities with 2,462 individual general activity sessions being delivered

134 women enrolling on educational courses and 5 women becoming Project Representatives in areas of Safeguarding, Equality and Diversity, assessment and Support Planning, Health and Safety and Psychologically Informed Environments.

These figures support the practice that all the activities delivered at the Project enable women from all areas of the Project, of all ages, abilities, and status to get involved, gain confidence, enhance their skills and employability and most importantly begin to make the changes necessary to live a more fulfilled life. They also support the client centred work approach of the longer-term support of assisting women to become work ready and follow the stepping stones to skills development and employment live a more fulfilled life.

We have developed a number of partnerships that are starting to bear fruit in relation to volunteering, work placement and employment opportunities. Towards the end of the reporting period, we were seeing a general increase in attendance and access to these opportunities.

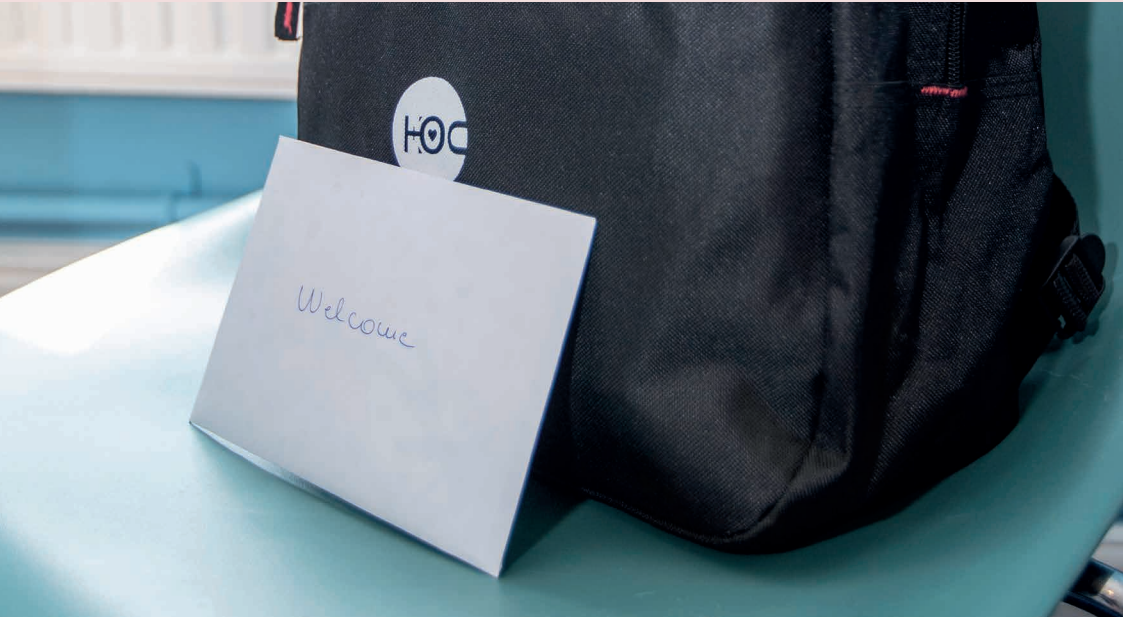
We continue to build on our current partnerships and look forward to developing further opportunities in the coming year.



Despite the low number of women securing employment, we have seen an increase in the number of women attending the Women-into-Work programme



Objective 6



To continue to develop the work of The Sanctuary as a resource for women who are rough sleeping or in poor housing and maintain the range of programmes available to them.






The Sanctuary has four emergency beds, and, at the start of the reporting period, there was a 75%-90% occupancy rate for the emergency beds. This has risen to an average of 92.8% occupancy at the end of the reporting period, which can be attributed to the Sanctuary assessing women who have been rough sleeping and being able to offer them short term emergency accommodation until a more permanent option is secured. We have maintained the occupancy time to a minimum of 56 days to coincide with the payment structures on Universal Credit and the Homeless Reduction Act.

The project depends on donations to support the work of the Sanctuary 24-7 centre, in the form of both financial (through donations) and in kind (through gifts) and we are truly grateful to our supporters for their generosity, especially during the last year.

Staffing at the project

Having a centre that is open 24/7 requires a substantial number of staff and we have needed to increase our staff team to accommodate this change in our service.

Our staff team now consists of:

-  A Centre Manager
-  A Centre Team Leader
-  Two Education, Employment and Training Workers
-  A Service User Involvement Officer
-  Nine Sanctuary Advice Workers, 1 of which is an Independent Domestic Violence Adviser (IDVA).





Activities and workshops

Between April 2022 and March 2023, we delivered in excess of 50 different activities, workshops, courses events etc in areas of Education, Employment, Training, therapeutic skills, health and wellbeing, creativity, social and involvement.

This is a huge achievement when faced with the recruitment challenges and ever-increasing complexity of the needs of the women presenting to our service, and is an absolute tribute to the staff that we employ who live out the Project's mission.

Workplace

- 💖 Selfridges has delivered CV writing and public speaking workshops
- 💖 A new volunteer has been recruited to run a CV writing workshop and Business Mentoring support
- 💖 The Baker Street Quarter has offered us the opportunity to hold our Women-into-Work sessions within the board rooms and meeting spaces of corporate local businesses - This will provide service users with the experience of being in this type of environment and will also help us to build more potential partnerships
- 💖 Facilitating employability courses builds service users' confidence, self-esteem, community participation, preparing them to access further education and/or finding job opportunities
- 💖 **Partnership with AIM** - This organisation specialises in finding training and employment opportunities for those who want to reach their full potential. We currently offer Level 2 Accredited Maths, English and Business Administration
- 💖 **Interview panel** - Eight Service users have volunteered on our staff interview panels.





Educational

- ♥ We have also been able to fund specialist educational courses for our service users – One service user has completed a level 1 phlebotomy course and started level 2 in September 2022, five women have signed up to level 2 hair and beauty courses
- ♥ Westminster Adult Education Service (WAES) – 73 learners enrolled on the Community Learning Courses for the academic year starting in September 2022, exceeding the target of 68
- ♥ 20 women – Attended Horse Therapy sessions at a farm in Guildford
- ♥ 19 women – Attended Voice expressions/singing sessions.

Creative classes

♥ Photography Project Workshop

– During January and February 2023, 14 service users participated in a collaboration between the Church Army and Mental Fight Club. Through the course of this project, participants worked with professional photographer, Marysa Dowling, to create images based on the theme "challenging perceptions of homelessness"

♥ Train the trainer – Following this workshop, the following service user led sessions are taking place:

- Bunting creating
- Creative writing
- Book Club
- T-Shirt design


♥ Boxercise

♥ Running Club

♥ Body-scrub workshop – Learning how to make a body scrub using natural ingredients

♥ Sewing

♥ Knitting



Arts and crafts are stationed in the reception area which women can help themselves to at any time

Mental health provision

Due to an increase in the mental health needs of women presenting to our service, we have created a psychologically informed specific action plan of response, which includes:

- ♥ **Arts and crafts** – Are stationed in the reception area, women can help themselves to the art supplies at any time, women report that this has been beneficial to them as they feel relaxed while creating art
- ♥ **Stress relief corner** – A section of our quiet room is now dedicated to stress relief, here you can find stress balls, books and pamphlets about wellbeing and a list of our therapeutic services to sign up to
- ♥ **Relaxing ambience** – Essential Oils Diffuser and music in receptions help with lifting moods and relaxing the service users
- ♥ **Health connections** – Linking service users in with their GPs and referrals to the Westminster Mental Health Team if we are granted consent
- ♥ **Counselling** – Service users can sign up for counselling sessions with our in-house counselling practitioner
- ♥ **Drop-in volunteers** – Can be available to speak with service users and take on a befriending role
- ♥ **Day excursions** – We have arranged trips to Brighton, Broadstairs Beach and Kew Gardens for our women
- ♥ **Volunteering in Space** – Three service users have volunteered within Space helping to set up the meeting rooms, greet visitors, show them to the room and offer hospitality. This is part of the Customer Service course as it offers the service users an opportunity to improve their confidence and communication skills.

Women-into-Work

- ♥ **'A Conversation with Nandi'** – where six service users participated in a holistic activity that supports the women to explore values and thoughts and feelings on work.
- ♥ **Department of Work and Transport Volunteering Day** – Eight service users attended the event that focused on Careers in Civil Service.

- ♥ **Interview skills workshop** – Seven service users attended the interview skills workshop that was delivered by two volunteers from Barclays
- ♥ **KPH Construction visit** – Six service users went on this visit to learn about what a career in construction might look like
- ♥ **Christmas Jobs application workshop with BEIS volunteers** – Five women attended. Two service users sent job applications and were later invited for an interview at the LEON restaurants
- ♥ **Job Interview workshop by Barclays volunteers** – Seven service users attended and found the workshop insightful. One woman applied for a job after attending this workshop.

Health support services

- ♥ **Monthly Nurse Clinics** – A nurse from Great Chapel Street Surgery is attending the Sanctuary once a Month, delivering 1:1 and group sessions with service users. A number of service users have physical health conditions that are caused by sleeping on the streets, so this service has been extremely valuable
- ♥ **Sexual Health Drop in** – Has been attended by many service users.

Feedback from Service Users:

“The singing lessons were amazing, I felt sad before attending, the teacher really encouraged me to express myself and just be me. I cried when she played her music it was so beautiful, I hope we can do more like this”.

“Thanks for a fab day with Horse Therapy.”

“I love coming to the Munch cooking sessions, every week, I feel like I am learning something different, and my confidence is growing it’s just fantastic”.

“I started volunteering with Space, I have been setting up the rooms and meeting and greeting the customers, I really enjoy it and I am looking forward to starting my work experience at the Hyatt Hotel”.

“My favourite part was working really hard together with other women and with the Marylebone Project, having an exhibition together, that our hard work led us somewhere at the end.”

Plans for the coming year

2023-2024

1. Recruitment and retention of staff

The plan is to continue with the planned recruitment programme and secure permanent contracted staff and reduce the cost and dependency on agency workers

2. Centre/Sanctuary 24 hours, 7 days opening

The main plan for the coming year is for the Centre to continue to be a 24-hour, 7 day a week safe haven for women seeking safety, sanctuary, support, assistance etc. There will be a focus on generating funding for future sustainability, developing further partnerships within the homelessness sector and working with the local authority

3. Social Enterprise

The plan is to continue to work towards the financial and business targets set for sustainability, business growth and to develop a wider employment skills programme for women to gain employability skills in hospitality as well as catering. The Social Enterprise Steering Group will continue to monitor the agreed developments of Space and Munch

4. Volunteers

The plan is to develop a wider volunteer base to include both corporate and individual and women volunteering in the variety of activities that are available

5. Business Skills Course

The next step is to continue to work with corporate volunteers to provide in-depth specialist courses and 1:1 sessions for our women with specific help around creating a business plan plus entrepreneurial opportunities

6. Nutrition and Food Hygiene

The plan is to continue providing various opportunities for women to engage in nutrition and food hygiene sessions

7. Hospitality

The plan is to utilise the Social Enterprise business of Space and Munch to deliver hospitality training and work in partnership with the various hotels for work placements, volunteering opportunities and employment opportunities in the hospitality sector

8. Employment, Education and Training and Meaningful Activities

We aim to continue to deliver a wide-ranging series of work related and meaningful activities so that all women have the opportunity to participate in activities and work towards a positive independent future

9. Westminster Adult Education Service (WAES)

To continue working with WAES to deliver core classes of Shine, which is our self-esteem and confidence building session, ICT beginners and intermediate, Sewing beginners and intermediate, English for Speakers of Other languages (ESOL), Childcare, Customer Services.



To receive a full copy of the annual report and accounts for 31 March 2023 please contact James Marlow on 020 3833 1729 or email james.marlow@churcharmy.org



Proudly produced by Collaborations Ltd, a company of fundraising professionals contracted by Church Army to raise funding for The Marylebone Project