Communities Rising Year 2 Report 2022 – 2023

Featuring the RISE logo - the word Rise, freedom from abuse and violence is written below. The R in Rise is made to look like a person with a hand on their hip and their other arm in the air. It's pink, and the I, S and E are orange.

Also featuring the Community Fund logo - the national lottery logo is next to the word's Community Fund - it's a white, smiley faced hand with its fingers crossed.

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# Introduction for Screen Reader Users

This report was created on Canva. We have made this version of the report so that you are able to access it with your screen reader. If you come across any formatting issues or problems, please let us know so that we can make the changes. You can email us at communities@riseuk.org.uk to let us know. The report on Canva is 50 pages long and features the bright colours of the RISE brand - hot pink, orange, coral, purple and blue. The report is split into the four sections of the Communities Rising project and their associated colours. Act Up is purple, Connect Up is red, Skill Up is green and Speak Up is blue. The pages often have decorative elements in the background, such as swirled lines, arrows or leaves. Poignant bits of information such as statistics are also highlighted in larger font in colourful circles that draw your attention. We have described all photos and images included throughout the report as well as any graphics designed by our team.

## Contents

A contents page with a list of the topics covered in the report. There are colour coded headings according to which part of the project they sit within. At the bottom of the page there is a note with an asterisk reading, ‘names have been changed throughout this report to protect the confidentiality and privacy of our community members’, followed by a picture of a closed padlock. The headings are as follows:

A Reminder of Our Mission

Project Manager Introduction

Key Year 2 Statistics

Act Up

Connect Up

Community Connectors

The Circle

Research

Women Rise Rooted

Skill Up

Assertive Outreach Worker

Community Outreach Worker - Black and Minoritised Communities

Community Outreach Worker - Older Women and Disabled Women

Drop-In

Speak Up

Community Ambassador Programme

Concluding Year 2

Community Lunch Feedback

Thank You

## Summary of the Four Sections of Communities Rising

A coral background with 4 coloured hexagons. At the top, a pink banner reads Communities Rising - aims to mobilise the voices, skills, actions and networks of survivors & communities to build sustainable change around VAWG from prevention to recovery. A purple hexagon reads Act Up - build and consolidate social activism to make change happen. A red hexagon reads Connect Up - (Re)-connect women with themselves and with each other to identify their gifts, strengths and stories. A green hexagon reads Skill Up - Building capacity through trust, skills and knowledge, empowering survivors, professionals & communities to better support those affected by domestic abuse and lastly, a blue hexagon reads Speak Up - Amplify voices of communities to play an active role in ending Domestic Abuse/Violence Against Women and Girls (DA/VAWG) through conversations, learning and raising awareness.

## A Reminder of Our Mission

A coral background with white writing. In the bottom right hand corner there is an image of four hands, each holding another person’s wrist, making a diamond shape.

Communities Rising (CR) began in September 2021. It was launched at the Communities Rising Conference, which celebrated the ending of the Big Lottery Community Engagement and Building Project (BLCP) and the beginning of the CR project, entrusted to carry out the communities' vision.

## Overarching Principles

1. Community-led, Community-focused, Community-building
2. Building trust and capacity, creating sustainability for survivors, communities and partners
3. Strengths-based, solution-focused, needs-led, trauma informed and holistic
4. Redefining and rebalancing the relationship between professionals and survivor
5. Voices of women in the centre, especially those in margins
6. Reconnection and Recovery
7. Feminist participatory approach

## Project Manager Introduction

It has been a pleasure to become the new Project Manager and to join the Communities Rising team in Year 2. I would like to thank all those involved with the project. Everyone shows a huge amount of passion and commitment to the vital community work the Lottery Community Fund has allowed RISE to bring to life. This was evident in the overwhelming support we received at the community lunch, which was my highlight of the year. As we reflect on year 2 of the project, we have seen significant activities and pieces of work come to fruition. The Community Ambassador Programme has been re-written and successfully rolled out. It has been fantastic to see the Community Connectors ideas develop into amazing projects. We have seen the successful pilot of Women RISE Rooted, the nature re-connection programme, which has been able to facilitate the beginnings of the first paid Changemaker role. Our partnership work to better support women with multiple disadvantage, older women and Disabled women is going from strength to strength. We are thrilled to have recruited a new group of researchers to capture the survivor voice in year 3. We are still very much prioritising the work with Black and Minoritised communities and in the absence of the specialist worker we are being creative in our approach to keep this vital work at the centre of the project. We are delighted to have seen the successful completion of the Women of Colour Wellbeing Group (funded by ROSA), which we are excited to be further embedding into the project in year 3. A challenge in the first 2 years of the project has been securing a community hub. As is the flexible nature of the project we will continue to explore creative options to meet this need, which may take the form of a more satellite model. What is clear is the continued need for an asset based community approach, which we are seeing the direct successes of enhanced health and wellbeing, increased safety, resilience and independence of survivors of domestic abuse.

A purple box to the side holds a quote: “"This project is so great. I am out of crisis now but still need someone to hold my hand."

## Key Year 2 Stats

A coral background with 8 white boxes, each containing a statistic as follows:

42 disclosures of DA in the community

500+ capacity building sessions

115 one-to-one client sessions

9 new connectors trained

20 new ambassadors

7 new Researchers trained

51 drop-In sessions

200+ hours of satellite services

# Act Up

## Act Up Introduction

The Act Up pages are all purple. Act up focuses on galvanising and consolidating the social activism of the community. Survivors and community members need support and guidance, and a trauma-informed, nurturing network and community, to turn this spark into action.

## Our First Communities Rising Network Event

A line of three photos. The first is a large amount of plastic plant pots sat on newspaper on a table with seeds and some Communities Rising badges. The middle photo is of a projector screen with the word Shattered written on it. A group of people are watching the screen and we can just see their backs, whilst a woman at the front appears to be talking to the group. There are lamps on the tables around them. The last photo is of a woman talking to the same group but around the table with the plant pots. She looks to be giving a demonstration. Beneath these three photos from the event reads, to help develop our activism strand as part of our Communities Rising project, we held an event in October 2022 for Ambassadors, Connectors and other RISE community members to come together to network, share ideas, galvanise, get to know each other and celebrate our work together. This included a seed planting workshop which was delivered by a community connector. We also had a screening of a film, Shattered, which was donated by the filmmaker Diana Vargas based around her own experience of domestic abuse. Following the screening we hosted a discussion with attendees about the issues raised in the film.

## Changemakers

This programme will offer paid opportunities to survivors of domestic abuse. They will focus on engaging their communities in issues that ignite their passions, with the aim of opening up debate and creating a positive culture change for women affected by domestic abuse.

A previous Connector is working with us on the Changemaker Programme, this will develop the peer led focus of our Women RISE Rooted Project. Weekly supervision sessions have enabled us to walk alongside this piece of work as a pilot Changemaker project providing a space to reflect and to gage what is needed for the programme in terms of support, resources and training.

## Act Up Trailblazers

A picture of the newly developed Communities Rising Stay Involved Workbook, which is bound and covered in a variety of different shades of orange and white concentric circles and patterns.

As we move towards establishing a Changemaker programme in 2023 we have learnt that the transition from a volunteer role or a Connector project can feel like a daunting prospect.

Two of our community members felt that meaningful consultation about the Changemaker programme can only happen when participants have been given the space to reflect on their journey, community, individual assets, goals and aspirations. They have taken the lead in the development of a Stay Involved Workbook. The workbook offers a personal, strong supportive community voice to walk alongside women as they plan and take their next steps. It combines their own experiences with insights, reflective tools and activities created by our community researchers and storytellers.

## Workbook Extract

"We are Zahra\* and Lucie\* and just like you we have been on a journey through the RISE service. We took all the help that RISE offered and we needed it. We are now in a much better place, have learnt so much and want to pass this on - to you and others like you. We want to see change, we want to see others heal and grow. We cannot change what we have been through but we can be voices in the dark, showing a light and guiding others to find themselves and get their lives back. This workbook is co-created with RISE and us, real life survivors. In fact we are more than that –we are thrivers, and you can be too."

## Social media

In 2022, we launched a Communities Rising page on Instagram. This is an important tool for us to spread information and awareness about our events we organise and attend, recommendations from our Feminist Culture Club, and vital information about the realities of Domestic Abuse. We also link this to the RISE social media channels, events and campaigns.

Two screenshots of recent Instagram posts to our @communitiesrising\_ account. The first is a photo of a group of people who have just completed the Community Ambassador Programme. There are 16 likes and the text reads, “Another two cohorts of the Community Ambassador Programme finished in July! We’re thrilled to have so many new ambassadors on board, challenging stereotypes, victim blaming and myths about domestic abuse. We’re taking a short break over the summer holidays but the programme will be back in September. Think you’d make a good ambassador or know someone who would? Follow the link in our bio and sign up now – we'd love to meet you.” The second screenshot is of two women smiling at the camera with a display board in the background. They are outside and you can see a concrete building behind them. The display board has an array of Rise merchandise and posters on it. It has had 20 likes. The text reads, “We had a wonderful day at Our City Dances Festival with @southeastdance Our what makes women strong bunting has had some new contributions, one from a fabulous 10 year old who cross stitched for the first time! Swipe to see. Where to next? If you’re running a community event, let us know, we would love to come along.”

In three colourful squares below these posts, 157 followers, 62 original posts, +22% monthly engagement.

# Connect Up

## Connect Up Introduction

The Connect Up pages are all red. Connect aims to (Re) Connect women with themselves and with each other to identify their gifts, strengths and stories so they can walk together moving from surviving into thriving.

The Community Connector and Community Researcher opportunities are two ways in which survivors can get involved in Connect Up.

A purple text box reads:

The Connector programme continues to grow and develop and is an opportunity to connect with, learn from and be inspired by other survivors and community members. The programme has been developed to support women to identify and build on their gifts and strengths, which can then be utilised to make a difference in areas identified by the women in the communities that they feel a part of.

We continue to use a variety of methods to increase awareness of and access to the Community Connector opportunity, through flyers, social media, as well as through internal communications, for example clients completing therapy and looking for new opportunities as they move through their recovery journey may be referred or signposted by the therapy team at RISE.

Interested participants are invited to an initial information session to explain more about what to expect and ask any questions they might have. We continue to offer these sessions both on zoom and in person, as we recognise that this increases accessibility for community members to attend.

## Recruitment

Colourful square boxes show the following statistics:

18 expressions of interest
2 online information sessions
2 community information sessions
9 training attendees

## Get Involved Process

Any woman who is interested in the role of Community Connector or Researcher is invited to take part in the Get Involved process.

Building on learnings from year 1, we have worked hard to develop our Get Involved process so that it better supports and articulates our understanding of the healing journey as this rarely takes a straight line. This conversation is ongoing and recognises the need for flexibility and is an opportunity to reflect on whether it is the right opportunity and at the right time.

Throughout involvement we discuss and offer a range of community opportunities and trauma informed support that the women can get involved with. At times they will decide to move in a different direction that is a better fit in terms of their interest and support needs.

Two colourful boxes show statistics:

9 research Get Involved sessions
16 connector Get Involved sessions

## Communities Rising Project Visual

A mind map style image with the words ‘Communities Rising Project’ in the centre, surrounded by colourful circles of text that highlight the key offers for people involved in the communities rising project:

Text in a white circle -
Community Ambassadors

Text in purple circles -
Community Connector programme
Community Research programme
Communities Rising volunteer

Text in orange circles -
Community events
Circle
Women of colour workshops
Staying connected
Storytelling

Text in blue circles -
RISE wide opportunities
RISE wide support

## Training

An orange text box reads In the last year we have delivered two rounds of Connector training. Group training content includes:

Understanding trauma, self-care and safety
Exploring our relationship with feminism
Identifying individual gifts and
strengths/assets
Community Mapping
Vision and Mission Building

A blue speech bubble shows a quote from a connector "This has been a well thought out and brilliantly executed series of sessions so far. I applaud RISE for being fabulous yet again."

Although we have moved back to in person training post pandemic, we recognise that this can be a barrier to some participants in attending, so we have introduced hybrid training with the option of attending online if this is preferable. During the sessions the participants take part in activities, group work and discussion, sharing and learning from one another throughout. They are provided with journals and art materials to creatively explore ideas and map out their vision.

## A Trauma-Informed Communities Rising Approach Visual

The page is split vertically, and on the left hand side, is an orange background split into several sections, which are sprinkled with images of leaves and dandelion heads. The introduction reads: At RISE we understand that working out the right 'stage' in your journey can feel hard. We know recovery journeys are not a straight forward path. It can feel like more of a spiral - back and forth. We have highlighted some key elements in our project to help you work out the best fit on your journey.

Walking with you: Whatever path you choose, the Communities Rising team will be there to help you think about whether it feels right and the support in place is a good fit for you.

A Space for Wellbeing: At RISE, we understand the subject of domestic abuse can affect us emotionally and physically. We offer different well- being opportunities for our community members. activities, movement, nature and storytelling are part of this work.

Taking Part: We offer lots of ways to take part in Communities Rising because we understand there is no one size fits all, and circumstances might change. You might start as a volunteer or a connector - or you might prefer to take part in a workshop.

Feeling Connected: We know that women feel strong when they are connected to others who understand and accept them and their journey. That is why we offer different ways for you to be part of our community.

Voice and Action: We want our community members to be able to make sense of their experiences and that of other women. We see community activism as part of the healing process. When we 'amplify voices' we look for ways to make everyone feel safe, included and inspired.

Thanks to our trauma-informed approach, Connectors are able to produce new ideas and initiatives. In the past year, these initiatives have included:

Peer supportive space specifically for women from Black and Minoritised communities to have conversations, connect with each other and explore issues related to DA.

Project and campaign to raise awareness of DA in pregnancy

Community Skillshare bank

Workshops and exhibitions to empower survivors to explore journey through art.

Trauma informed fitness, health and nutrition coaching

Colourful text boxes show the training statistics:

1 round of in-person training
1 round of hybrid training
5 sessions per round

## Ongoing Opportunities

A blue speech bubble shows the quote: "I like all the sessions as they help me reflect on what I want to achieve regarding my project and it is good to share with others and that way get encouragement and support."

Below this a purple text box reads: Following the training, Connectors are invited to take part in workshops or sessions and the women can choose which opportunities they wish to take part in. These are a mixture of practical skill building workshops, as well as coaching, peer support and networking opportunities.

Business Clarity

Grant Writing

Social Media

Anchored Decision Making

In the last year we have offered 5 workshops via external facilitators and have connected the connector community to external resources to help grow their idea and initiatives. We welcomed the community engagement manager from Brighton and Hove council to a group session. We have provided one to one support for website and social media with the opportunity to have a spotlight on the RISE and Communities Rising social media platforms. Ongoing one to one support is provided by the Community Builder, and these sessions are tailored individually to the connectors needs.

Colourful circles show statistics:

5 connectors received one to one specialist social media and website support

10 online one to one connector support sessions

12 community one to one connector support sessions

## The Circle

The Circle was established to offer useful skills or just a listening ear, support the RISE Connectors' visions, collaborate, network and encourage each other to make a difference. Initial interest has been slow, and we have been consulting our community members so that we can shape this opportunity for our Community Connectors to support them to manifest their vision in the way that best works for them.

## Integrating and Connecting

Community Connectors have access to an online workspace to connect which is a place to share and find out about opportunities. We support connectors to integrate within the wider Communities Rising community so that other members can benefit from the amazing skills the Connectors have.

For example-

Eloise\* delivered a workshop at a network meeting for ambassadors and connectors and will also be delivering a workshop as part of the Ageing Well festival in 2023.

Paula\* invited members of the community to take part in a workshop to explore collaborative creation through painting and movements, which was also an opportunity for her to gain experience and a build portfolio.

Lela\* was supported to deliver a wellbeing session as part of the Ageing Well festival in September 2022, and is now supporting the WRR sessions as a facilitator.

Rayan\* teaches classes in somatic yoga and is offering donation based access to the RISE community.

Below this a row of three images show a group of older women using clay and nature stamps to create bowls and an ornament of a smiling sunshine. These photographs were taken at a connector-led clay making workshop as part of Ageing Well Festival 2022.

## Creative and Reflective Practice

We held a consultation with community members to shape the way forward for creative and reflective practice at the end of 2022. We held two initial sessions solely for Connectors and have then invited both Connectors and Researchers to attend the most recent two sessions as a space to connect and learn from one another, further establishing the Connect community. The sessions are facilitated by an excellent external facilitator from In-Align and supported by the research lead and community builder.

Creative and Reflective practice is:

A safe space to celebrate successes, triumphs and hurdles jumped in relation to their projects/ research activities

A space for community members to reflect on and engage critical thinking about how their assumptions, biases and life experiences, including being a survivor of domestic abuse, may be impacting their project/ research activities

The external facilitator is trained in TRE and includes some grounding breathing exercises, as well as embodied exercise practice in the sessions as a way of releasing any tension or stress build up through exploration of the topics and conversations that take place. Creative materials are also used to express, process and explore thoughts, feelings and ideas.

The sessions have all been in person in community settings due to the nature of the activities, and are held at different times to be inclusive, we recognise that this may exclude some and are exploring ways to include those that are unable to attend in person.

A purple circle with white text reads: 4 in person Creative and Reflective practice sessions

## Learnings

Recognising success is not always project based. Setting up a community project is a huge task and at times plans and ideas change so a flexible approach is necessary.

Supporting survivors in identifying their skills and strengths, can help to build confidence and resilience, empowering women to set and work towards goals of their own choice. This could be utilising their assets within an existing project or initiative, getting involved in activism or awareness raising, or looking for work within their area of interest. Some Connectors may get involved and take part in the training but then move on to use skills, passions, and strengths in a way that is right for them.

An orange text box shows Morgan’s story: Morgan\* who joined in wave two of the Communities Rising project as she was passionate about advocacy for survivors has since gone on to work in the third sector an advisor.

A purple text box shows Emma’s story: Emma\* trained in the first wave in 2022 and has since stepped back from the connector programme but said that the programme had been instrumental in her moving forward with her life. It has helped to ‘give me my life back’ She has since identified that she doesn’t want to put any pressure on herself and thanked the programme from helping her move in the right direction.

A blue text box show’s Sadie’s story: Sadie\*, who joined as part of the BLCP and \*Pip who got involved as part of the second wave of the Communities Rising project have both now moved into work within the DA sector for other organisations, one as a housing Independent Domestic Violence Advisor and the other as a specialist Black and Minoritised worker.

The Community Connector programme is an open-ended opportunity. At times Connectors pause involvement but the opportunity is there to re-engage when ready.

Libby\* got involved as part of the first wave of Connectors in the communities rising project but then had to take a step back due to family priorities. A year later she has re-connected and is now participating in opportunities and networking with newly joined Connectors.

Ada\* became a Connector as part of the BLCP, but over the last 2 years has had to maintain focus on work and life commitments, however she recently attended a training session with new Connectors as she still hopes to develop her project idea when the time is right for her.

## Volunteer

We recruited one Connect Up volunteer in year 2 who joined us in January 2023 for 6 months and she became a real asset to the team. Ella provided much valued support to various aspects of the Connector programme and the wider project, including recruitment, supporting facilitation of training and meeting and greeting community members at the Community lunch in July. Ella was a student studying politics and international relations and was looking to gain some experience working in the charity sector.

A blue speech bubble reads a testimonial as follows: "Volunteering at RISE has helped me to learn about what working at a charity/non-profit might be like as a full-time job and has helped me to learn that it is a career path that I am interested in. I really value all that I have learnt through my time volunteering at RISE and working with the team"

## Research

Connect builds on the legacy left by a pioneering group of community researchers who over 2017-21 collaborated with RISE and the women we support in order to build knowledge about the experience of freedom from violence and abuse. This has resulted in a clear research approach to fit with the needs and experiences of our community.

In March 2023 we recruited a new generation of Community Researchers to generate new knowledge about the expansion of freedom from abuse with a focus on community spaces and places, relationships and activism. Reflecting our wider community, we have taken care to ensure that this opportunity has reached women from diverse backgrounds including two Black and Minoritised Researchers, the experience of multiple disadvantage and disability. All of our researchers are educated to degree level (although this was not a requirement) and bring a significant wealth of skill and expertise alongside lived experience of domestic abuse.

A blue circle reads: 7 community researchers recruited

## The Walk Together Approach Visual

A graphic a bit like a mind map, showing 1 large circle with 8 slightly smaller circles around it, each with writing. Between these are even smaller circles detailing how the circles are connected to one another. The large circle reads The Walk Together Approach, with the Rise logo. Holistic, Women-Centred, Strengths-based practice. Ethical Research Practice, Professional, Duty of Care.

Starting in the top right, a line from the centre leads out to a circle that reads Asset-Based Community Development Research. This is connected by stories and mapping to the next circle that reads safety, trust, relationships of trust and mutuality, collaboration, inclusivity, voice and choice, empowerment, community support. Gender and Intersecting oppression and inequality connect this to the bottom right circle reading trauma informed practice. Safe environments connects this to time and space, pace of storytelling, flexibility, fragments in present, future-focused. Pace, connects this to the bottom left circle of feminist qualitative longitudinal research. Above this, social and geographical context of lived lives and gender and intersecting oppression and inequality connect this to co-produced process, reflection, solidarity, shared sense-making, awareness of power, privilege and emotions, valuing shared experience. Photo voice methods, mobile and active methods connect this to feminist participatory action research. Collaboration connects this to with, by and for, empowerment, participation, collaboration, strengths/assets, ‘living experience’ stories. And finally, stories, links this back to asset-based Community Development Research.

The report continues below: In March 2023 we recruited a new generation of Community Researchers to generate new knowledge about the expansion of freedom from abuse with a focus on community spaces and places, relationships and activism. Reflecting our wider community we have taken care to ensure that this opportunity has reached women from diverse backgrounds including two Black and Minoritised Researchers, the experience of multiple disadvantage and disability. All of our researchers are educated to degree level (although this was not a requirement) and bring a significant wealth of skill and expertise alongside lived experience of domestic abuse. In a blue circle: 7 community researchers recruited.

## Accessibility

Building on learning from the Umbrella Lockdown Community Research Project (2021), we wanted to make sure that we offered both online and face to face training to make it more accessible. This has been the case for disabled members and those juggling childcare at home. The Researchers have worked together to look for ways to make online spaces feel safe and comfortable.

## RISE Community Researchers' Drop- In Guidelines Visual

A white poster titled RISE Community Researcher’s Drop-in Guideline, dated April 2023. The posted is split into four sections by purple grid lines. The sections are as follows:

Privacy and Confidentiality. Ensure you are in a private space with no people in the background. If you do have people in the background or possible interruptions check with the group first. Don't record the session without permission. Give people option to turn screens off for recording. Below is a graphic of a woman sat at a table using her laptop.

Taking part. Give time at the start to check in with everyone and time to check out at the end. Use emojis so that people feel heard when they talk. Use the chat and hand gestures (hand up) to ensure you get a turn to speak. Invite speakers and bring things for discussion, like articles. Work on documents together. Go for a dog walk together and share dog stories and cuddles!

Taking care of group wellbeing. Allow people to have screens off if they want to attend but not feeling up to face-to-face. Things that make you feel comfortable. A warm drink, blanket, pets. Alongside is a graphic of a woman walking and looking at her phone.

Group facilitators. Lucy Hadfield (Research Lead). Volunteer Coordinator TBC

## Training and Support

The Walk Together training package includes:

Trauma, Self-Care and Safety

The Walk Together Approach

Research Ethics and Safety

Research Methods

Community Space, Connection and Action

Designing A Research Project

1:1 Supervision with Research Lead

Drop in Online Space

A purple text box showing a graph: on the graph, numbers go up the y axis 20 at a time, from 0 to 120. The y axis reads pre-score and post-score. A blue line called the walk together approach goes from just below 60 to just above 100. An orange line called research ethics and safety goes from just below 40 to just above 40 and a grey line called walk together research methods goes from just above 20 to just above 60.

Text below reads: In July 2023 all 7 of our Community Researchers completed our Walk Together training programme. This consisted of 4 online and 1 face to face session. As the graph shows, participants experience a significant expansion of knowledge around the Walk Together approach (100% increase) and research methods (140% increase), despite pre -existing academic research training. This indicates the innovative nature of our work. Participants also valued the opportunity to reflect on the significance of their own lived experience of domestic abuse, in both the research they encounter and with regard to intersectionality.

Two blue speech bubbles show testimonial from researchers:

“Great examples and room well held. It’s so good, thank you.”

“The training felt safe, like everyone could speak and no-one dominated the room. Felt clear, warm, unity.”

## Key Successes

An orange circle with white text reads the following bullet points:

Safe and accessible spaces for learning

Connection with others

Expanding reach of knowledge

Embedding legacy of community voice in practice

Working with both online and face to face spaces.

## Researcher Journey

Currently we are working our way through 1:1 'Stay Involved' evaluation sessions with our Researchers. This is to capture the shift in their key strengths (skills, gifts and passions) and their sense of distance travelled related to self-efficacy, resilience and community. We are also revisiting our Get Involved questions to ensure we have the right fit. Even over such a short period of time, our researchers are reporting a significant shift in their sense of community or belonging through their participation in the research workshops, drop in space, reflective practice and the community lunch. For one participant this sense of belonging extended to the wider staff team and the feeling that, she could also work in the sector in the future.

A blue speech bubble shows the quote: “There is a real value of just being with survivors, that sense of community is so powerful now. I was surprised how much I enjoyed the learning sessions. There is a real community feel because we are all working towards a common aim.”

A photo of friend’s meeting house in Brighton, a quaker meeting house with two arches at the front of a brick building. There are three windows above also with beautiful arches matching the ones below at the entrance. There is grass either side of a long path, which leads to a few steps up to the doors. We have added writing to the path: making connections, listening, learning, community this way, belonging, new ideas, sharing stories.

## Next Steps

All 7 of our Community Researchers wish to continue volunteering in year 3, with an interest in research with women experiencing multiple disadvantage, the judicial system, connection with nature, storytelling in Black and Minoritised community groups and the stories that are inspired through communal cooking. Our first steps towards the creation of these projects began at our community lunch where researchers were able to connect with frontline staff and partners and meet community members.

We will continue this matching process by inviting Researchers to contribute to the wider Communities Rising evaluation, building in our Walk Together research tools and approaches. This will enable them to build connections and design their projects around the needs of our community.

## Women Rise Rooted

RISE have worked in close partnership with At Home In The World to deliver Women RISE Rooted (WRR). This offers a unique opportunity for nature re-connection for VAWG survivors to build a connection to Self, Nature, Community and Heritage to heal and move towards wholeness. WRR programme is underpinned by theories and frameworks offered by Intersectional feminism, Ecopsychology, Ecofeminism, Trauma / Polyvagal Theory and Psychosynthesis and employs The Way of Circle to model the principles of the programme.

Our weeks include:

Relationship, Reciprocity & Community

Womanhood

Telling our Earth story

Sit spot contemplation

We understand how life cycles relate to us

Challenges that have been handed down to women through generations

Exploring our personal relationships to nature

How we can gain strength from nature

Reflection

Next to the above text is a photograph of postcards spread out on a brown flowery tablecloth. The postcards are detailed earth tone watercolour illustrations of nature such as birds, fish, foxes, thistles and berries.

Four colourful circles highlight the key aims of the group:

Connection to nature. Connection to community. Connection to self (mind, body and spirit). Connection to heritage.

A blue speech bubble shows a quote from a participant: "My connection to nature strengthened immeasurably. I noticed so much, the significance of the space, the shift as the season opened up, all of the life and growth, my appreciation has grown, my sunflowers are growing too! It was a wild and beautiful discovery, and a space I can return to throughout my future".

# Skill Up

## Skill Up Introduction

All of the skill up pages are green. Bold white text reads: The aim of Skill Up is building capacity through trust, skills and knowledge, empowering survivors, professionals & communities to better support those affected by domestic abuse.

We recruited the Community Capacity Building Lead in August 2021. We continue to roll out RISE’s Community Capacity Building Model with professionals who work with marginalised women. This skills up workers to better identify, assess and assist those affected by abuse. Adding to our already strong Disability partnerships with Possability People, Speak Out, Blatchington Court Trust, we now have a partnership with Macmillan Horizon Centre. Our Assertive Outreach worker has two strong partnerships with Equinox, a women only hostel in Hove, and Housing First, a branch of St Mungo's. We continue to offer training, consultancy, advocacy and systems change work to those trusted professionals that already have a relationship with women that other services struggle to reach across our city.

In hot pink writing on top of an orange banner to highlight it, text reads due to capacity, Skill up and speak up will no longer be able to reach East Sussex.

Continuing below in white writing, relying on the knowledge and networking expertise of the Rita Project for our East Sussex work, we have been unable to expand our reach as hoped. The Rita Project has closed its doors and without another sustainable, reliable contact in the area, we are unable to provide the wrap around support service, Ambassador Programme, and roll out the Capacity Building model.

Skill Up in Brighton and Hove, however, continues to go from strength to strength.

# Assertive Outreach Worker

A blue text box and white text highlights the stats for the Assertive Outreach Worker in the last year as follows:

8 champions meetings. The Assertive Outreach worker hosted eight Champions Network meetings since her recruitment in November 2022. These meetings offer professionals from all multiple disadvantage organisations the opportunity to update on services, network and learn more. Recent meetings have hosted Surviving Economic Abuse to discuss the impact of economic abuse on survivors.

28 champions. Consistency of these meetings since recruitment to the post has meant that Champions Meetings have gone from strength to strength. Attendance has been increasing and requests to join the network continue to come in.

15 disclosures. The Assertive Outreach Worker has joined up with a local charity, Crew Club in Whitehawk, one of the most disadvantaged areas in Brighton. Attending their walk and talk once a month, there have been at least 15 disclosures since January 2023.

50 one-to-ones. The Assertive Outreach worker has had 50 one-to-ones with clients over the past year. These are sessions run in the community, meeting clients where they are and following their lead. Providing holistic support, clients have visited museums, developed their interests and continued telling their story and reclaiming their identity in the best way for them.

The next page is split up into different shades of green to give updates on two previous partnership organisations.

Despite finding new premises, due to a loss of funding, No Second Night Out, a branch of St Mungo's have been unable to continue their partnership with the project and have closed their doors. However, with one closed door, a window opened, and our Assertive Outreach Worker has been able to create a brand new partnership with the Housing First branch of St Mungo's.

Unfortunately, the whole of St Mungo's are currently on strike and have been for over a month, which impacts the work we are able to do with their professionals. Yet, even before the strike started, our worker picked up several new clients, provided numerous hours of satellite working at their offices and provided consultation on dozens of cases. As soon as they return, training will be scheduled to continue rolling out the Capacity Building Model with their staff.

This is followed by a bright pink text box displaying the text 5 active clients.

The Assertive Outreach Worker has been picking up clients who are at high risk of harm and/or homicide and due to their experience of multiple disadvantage, it is important we keep the caseload small. This means she is able to work holistically, flexibly and compassionately with her clients and be strengths-based and led by the client themselves. Capacity wise, she is able to take 1 - 2 more referrals.

## Client Feedback

Two quotes from clients of the Assertive Outreach Worker are written in a large bold white font on top of blue speech bubbles with a white outline.

“I enjoy spending time with you doing things I enjoy and not just talking about DA as this helps me not feel overwhelmed and you listen to me and don’t judge me like other services have”

“I love spending time with you, and you work so hard but never rush me and thanks to support am starting to sort out debt (caused by economic abuse) and feel more positive about future”

## Assertive Outreach Networking

Purple text boxes with white writing display the Assertive Outreach partner work:

A keen networker, our Assertive Outreach Worker has been using her skills to build new connections across the city, and reach more women for short term support and advice.

### Possability People

Utilising the partnership our own Community Outreach Worker has, the Assertive Outreach worker met with a DA Champion to build on accessibility knowledge in the city to better support a disabled client who is a wheelchair user to access the community.

### Bramber Bakehouse

Bramber Bakehouse works alongside victims of domestic abuse, survivors of human trafficking, asylum seekers and refugees to break the cycles of poverty, violence and disadvantage. Our worker is currently assisting their new contact in Brighton to navigate the city and decide the best way to work together.

### Inspire

Inspire is a multi-agency partnership lead by Brighton Women's Centre supporting women with multiple vulnerabilities at all stages of involvement in the criminal justice system. Our worker has been in talks with several agencies supporting women under probation and those in recovery from substance misuse and will be delivering an empowerment programme in year 3.

### Off the Fence

Gateway Women’s Centre provides a welcoming, safe space for women going through a time of crisis or emotional difficulty. Our worker will be hosting a drop-in once a month, as well as delivering staff training around domestic abuse and managing disclosures.

### Crew Club

Walk, Talk, & Play at The Crew Club starts with a 1k led walk followed by a play session for children. The sessions also provide parents with regular times to meet, a place for their children to be active and engage in playful activities that they could not do at home. Our worker attends this session once a month to provide support and advice to the women attending.

# Community Outreach Worker - Black and Minoritised Communities

Orange text boxes with white writing section off the various group offers that the role delivers. Details below.

Our Black and Minoritised Communities Worker left her post in August 2022. We have faced challenges in recruitment and have now modified the name of the role to align more with our other Community Outreach Worker, who specialises in Disabled and Older women's needs. We hope to have recruited for this role by Autumn 2023.

Our work with Black and Minoritised Communities is still incredibly important to us. We have had the pleasure to continue working closely with the previous Communities Rising project manager in her new community role(s) and we have been as creative as possible to keep this vital work going in the absence of the related post.

## Sew and Grow

To the right of this text is a supporting photograph showing a participants hands stretching out some denim fabric to pin before sewing. She is wearing a striped shirt and has a henna design on her hand.

The text reads: In partnership with Sew Fabulous we provide a 6-week sewing course, which runs throughout the year. It brings together a collective of women keen to enhance their skills or learn new ones. Many women find it so rewarding, they may do a second programme to build on their skills. We are looking forward to the autumn term and have had expressions of interest from 8 new women.

Three speech bubbles in orange, blue and purple display short quotes from participants of Sew and Grow:

“I feel confident in myself”
“I’m so happy to learn new things”
“This space is a blessing”

## Telling Our Stories

In year 3, we will be continuing our previous partnership with New Writing South. Having recruited several facilitators, they will provide short courses, which will enable women in the group to come together and improve their wellbeing through storytelling.

Our hope is that this important work will be carried out with Black and Minoritised women, and later in year 3, will be delivered to women who experience multiple disadvantage, and Disabled or older women.

## Women of Colour (WOC) Wellbeing Group

Survivors are incredibly resilient individuals. However, life can be very challenging and how we deal with these challenges can affect our physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being. These sessions are intended to support women understand their own personal stress response and to share some practical tools to help them manage their stress and increase their resilience and well-being.

The course is a 6-week program and 5 programmes have been delivered in partnership with In-Align (funded by ROSA) in the last year. The program has been delivered by sharing knowledge and information on stress and resilience as well as some essential physical based exercises, such as breath-work, self-massage, stretching, mindfulness and the therapeutic tremor, also known as shaking, all great ways to help us to access resilience.

The intention for year 3 is to further embed this vital and bespoke programme into the project and related community offer, with both a peer support and psycho-educational element.

Two purple speech bubbles with bold white writing show feedback from two participants of the group which read:

"There is nothing else like this in the city...this is a life line for Women of Colour who are attending the group"

"I feel so calm after doing that (practice), I do not feel as if I just had that conversation (about DA)"

# Community Outreach Worker - Older Women and Disabled Women

Relationships and connections are being rejuvenated and going from strength to strength - with the addition of a new partnership and close to our worker's heart, is the Macmillan Horizon Centre. From help with money worries or how you are feeling, to complementary therapies, Macmillan provide a warm welcome for anyone at any point in their cancer experience.

Purple text boxes with white writing show the statistics as follow:

Possability People, 13 Champions.
Blatchington Court Trust, 6 champions.
Speak Out, 5 champions.
Macmillan Horizon Centre, 8 champions to be trained in Y3.

Building community connections is a key element of the Outreach Community Worker's role.

Orange text boxes with white writing separate the various groups and offers that the Outreach Community Worker as follows:

## Knit and Natter

The Community Outreach Worker attends a weekly Knit & Natter at the Hop50+ cafe to build trust and relationships with Older Women in the community, and raise awareness of the conversation around domestic abuse.

## Healthy Relationships

The Community Outreach Worker has developed a healthy relationships workshop for visually impaired young adults, in partnership with Blatchington Court Trust. We have adapted the usual frameworks and exercises to be inclusive of the experiences of disabled people – with a focus on having power, control and choices in relationships with a caring dynamic including with parents.

## Mums Club

The Community Outreach Worker, in partnership with Speak Out, led a self advocacy & empowerment group for mums with learning disabilities who have experience of the care system. Together we made a foster care passport for mum and baby placements to help with the transition of moving into somebody else’s home.

## Accessibility

The Outreach Community Worker works alongside her partnership organisations to develop more accessible methods for domestic abuse provision, centring the needs and voices of the communities she works with. For example she has developed an easy read DA support plan template, and is often consulted by staff members about implementing accessible methods and language into daily practice.

## Speak Out Drop-In

The Community Outreach Worker attends Speak Out drop-ins across Brighton & Hove for people with learning disabilities. They are an informal and social space, and many people have felt comfortable to disclose instances of abuse which have sparked healthy group conversation around self care, boundaries and autonomy.

## Champions Network

We are discussing amendments we would like to see in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 to better represent Disabled people’s experiences of Domestic Abuse. In particular – the addition of Unpaid Carer under the personal connection clause. We believe recognition of the intimacy in a sustained relationship with an unpaid carer would open up much needed support pathways for people being controlled and exploited in these relationships. In year 3 we aim to explore how we can contribute to this on a parliamentary level.

## Drop-In

Pink, orange and purple text boxes display the development of the drop-in during year 2:

Thanks to funding from the Dodgson Trust in addition to the Lottery Community Fund, in year 2, the drop-in has seen 41 women and provided short term advice and support.

Our Community Capacity Building Lead has built a strong relationship with the Brighton and Hove library service in this time. She was invited to take part in the library service away day in March 2023, after staff requested an information session about what we provide. Coining their "speed dating" event, the Capacity Building Lead hosted 3 groups of staff to raise awareness of domestic abuse, the drop-in service and why it is needed. Staff were engaged, asked intuitive questions and said they left feeling empowered and better informed.

We have worked hard on using the most appropriate language for advertising. Flyers from our most recent print run are now being distributed around Brighton and Hove to raise awareness of the service, and contain clearer language around eligibility criteria.

Alongside this paragraph is an image of the drop-in flyer. It is a white flyer with a graphic image of three women in the bottom corner: a young white woman sitting in a wheelchair, a woman of colour standing an waving, and an older white woman holding a walking stick. The information on the flyer reads as follows:

Free One-to-one drop in. For women experiencing domestic abuse who are: living with a long-term health condition, living with an impairment, neurodivergent and/or women aged 55+. Every Monday 10:30am – 12:30pm. Hove Library, 182-186 Church Road, Hove, BN3 2EG. Talk through your concerns, Receive free advice, Discuss your options. For more information: communities@riseuk.org.uk

We have also partnered with the older people's charity, Hourglass whose focus is on the abuse and neglect of older people. They attend our drop-in on the first Monday of each month to provide their own specialist knowledge to those who need it.

## Community Outreach Worker Summary

Orange text boxes with white writing highlight the client work of the Community Outreach Worker.

The Community Outreach Worker has done:

42 One-to-one's in the community with clients in the past year. Three new clients have come through the service this year.

5 Clients have been supported this year. Four of which are active and one completed their support.

Orange text box bullet pointing client support provision.

These one-to-one's have included:

Understanding abusive behaviour
Gaining safe and appropriate accommodation
Accessing child protection and maintenance
Reducing isolation and building support networks
Advocacy with other professionals
Understanding their rights
Finding work, education and volunteering opportunities

Two purple speech bubbles show two client testimonials in white text:

"You are the first person who has believed me and been patient with me. You understand my disability and make me feel calm when I get overwhelmed"

"Thank you for everything you have done for me and my kids and for keeping us safe."

## Changing Futures

A coral text box with white writing displays the following information:

Funded by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing & Communities and the National Lottery Community Fund, Changing Futures (CF) aims to improve the way that local systems and services work for adults experiencing multiple disadvantage.

In 2022 RISE worked with Brighton and Hove City Council and recruited a Domestic Violence & Abuse Worker (DV&A) for the CF team. It was decided that due to the nature of the programme and the people Changing Futures supports, the worker would sit best with the Community Capacity Building Lead, in Communities Rising.

The DV&A Worker has settled in well to her role in the CF multidisciplinary team and at RISE and has worked closely with our Assertive Outreach Worker to support several clients.

## Community of Practice

An orange text box with white text displays the following information:

The Community Capacity Building Lead relaunched the Community of Practice (CoP) and Case Review to support caseworkers in RISE who are working with clients. RISE uses a strengths-based, needs-led approach, and this space is used to discuss different issues and obstacles workers are facing in the system to get the support their clients need.

This group acts as case review, peer support and a CoP. It also acts as a reference group to develop an external feedback system to inform systems change and best practice outside of RISE. Each session has designated time for resource and information sharing, as well as brief questions. In future this may be a space we can use for relevant professionals to come meet with us and share updates.

## Specialist Training Requests

### LUNCH AND LEARN - DISABILITY AND DOMESTIC ABUSE

A coral text box with white writing reads:

A member of the Disabled Workers and Carers Network reached out to their steering group requesting a lunch and learn session on the topic of domestic abuse and disability. As the most suitable speaker with particular knowledge around the relation between domestic abuse, disability, neurodiversity and caring, the Community Capacity Building Lead delivered a 45 minute presentation with a 15 minute Q&A. Over 50 members of Brighton and Hove Council attended and the recording is left available for viewing at a later date.

### DOMESTIC ABUSE AND THE CHURCH – ST PETER’S

An orange text box with white writing reads:

The Community Capacity Building Lead attended several focus groups at a local flagship church in Brighton. They were looking to see how they could continue meeting the needs of women in the city, following the closure of their cafe and hope centre, Bloom. After her contributions to these sessions, she was asked to if she would attend one of their staff meetings to give some training to St Peter's staff on domestic abuse and how they can respond. The session was attended by 30 - 40 church staff members. They discussed domestic abuse and the correct terminology, the Church of England policy on domestic abuse and how scripture can be misinterpreted. The session ended with dispelling myths and how to respond to both survivors and perpetrators.

A purple speech bubble with bold white writing displays a quote from one of the participants.

"Thank you again so much for giving up your morning yesterday, you are such a passionate and clear communicator and the information you gave I know has been really well received by the team."

## Skill Up - Additional Information

Colourful text boxes show the following statistics:

51 Domestic Abuse champions. To assist with our aim of creating a wide network of support across Brighton and Hove, the Champions meetings chaired by our Assertive Outreach Worker and our Community Outreach Worker will now be merged. This will provide our total of 51 professional DA Champions with the opportunity to network with others outside of their field of expertise, and make new connections which could support their clients in future. These meetings will be held monthly.

450 Capacity building sessions. The Skill Up stream has had a whopping 450 capacity building sessions in the past year. This includes staff members providing on the spot upskilling sessions, consultations and conversations about domestic abuse in our partnership organisations as well as out in the community.

172 hours in satellite services. Our Skill Up team have spent 172 hours in the past year working in a satellite service. This has provided opportunities for clients and staff members to ask questions and get support and advice on the spot.

160 professionals trained. In the past year, 160 professionals have been trained by our Skill Up staff. From domestic abuse and managing disclosures training, to disability and domestic abuse. in the church, we have reached a wide range of professionals to raise awareness and build capacity.

# Speak Up

## Speak Up Introduction

All of the Speak up pages are blue. White text reads: The aim of Speak Up is to encourage communities to use their voices to play an active role in ending domestic abuse through conversations, learning and raising awareness.

## Community Ambassador Programme

Following the departure of the Community Engagement Lead, the decision was made to develop our own training package and move away from Ask Me. With intersectionality at its core, developed in coordination with community members, the new Community Ambassador Programme was launched in May 2023.

Developed and led by our Community Capacity Building Lead, 3 cohorts of the new programme have been delivered in community locations across Brighton and Hove. Participants learn how to provide supportive responses to survivors first time round, challenge victim blaming and break the silence. Ambassadors become part of the solution.

A coral text box with large purple writing reads: 91 ambassadors in the Brighton and Hove area

Large purple writing reads: So far, the new programme has trained 20 community members with another 39 signed up for the next programmes

Whilst continuing to run the programme for anyone and everyone to attend, we also have plans to run specific sessions for particular audiences. In November, we will be delivering the programme to students at the University of Sussex and we will be running a men only cohort to encourage more men to step up.

Our hope is to deliver the programme to beauticians and hairdressers in early 2024 as they often hear disclosures from their clients and do not know how to respond.

## Feedback

The training has been developed for delivery in person, and cannot be offered online at present. This is because of the feedback we received from participants, who were longing to feel part of a community again. Those consulted reported a lack of sense of community on Zoom. From the feedback we have received so far about the new programme, this was the right decision and has led to more conversations happening over coffee breaks, friendships developing and community building.

Two colourful speech bubbles display the following quotes from community ambassadors:

"The most useful aspects were discussions with the others in the group. Hearing other peoples thoughts. Having my beliefs challenged in a safe environment."

"I'm much more aware of the things that make women feel unsure or unsafe in daily life. Helps me be more sensitive"

Three colourful boxes display the following statistics:

3 community ambassadors programmes delivered

12 hours spread over evenings, mornings and weekends

6-11 participants per session

## Male Survey

The majority of our participants in the Community Ambassador Programme are women. We know that domestic abuse is not just a women's issue - in fact, we would argue that it is a men's issue. We have been encouraged to see more men in the spotlight stepping up to call out misogyny and sexism, but we want to see more men in Brighton and Hove engaging with our programme.

For this reason, our Community Capacity Building Lead developed a survey specifically for men to find out why they may not be signing up already, what would encourage them to sign up and their preferences for where and when.

We asked how could we make our current flyer or another flyer more appealing to men and received a wide range of honest feedback, which has been taken into consideration to build a new poster for the programme, specifically targeting men.

Three colourful speech bubble display the following survey feedback:

"Most Men in reading that would easily assume someone else will do it, but if they knew that Men where not doing anything it might encourage them to step up."

"Needs to be directed at the target audience and needs a call to action. Content heavy - feels overwhelming. Colour - blues, navy etc would appeal more to target audience. Images - more male focused"

"Currently feels a bit too playful with the people and unclear of focus for men and those who identify as male form the flyer colours and content"

Colourful squares display the following statistics from the survey:

75% would prefer weekday evenings

Over 50% would prefer a community centre or pub

72% want to know more about why men should be involved

## Male Marketing

Based on the results of this survey, we have created our brand new poster for marketing. By using a diverse group of real life men, not cartoon pictures, colours that attract the target audience and a clear call to action, we hope that this will encourage men to step up and join in.

To match this new poster, we have also adjusted the posters and flyers to attract all audiences, not just men. These will be widely distributed to replace the old marketing and are available in all our brand colours.

A large image of the new flyer. It is blue with white writing saying, it’s time we put a stop to abuse. Below this it says be a domestic abuse community ambassador. Free training. In smaller writing it says It’s time to step up. Be a part of the change, be a part of the solution and become a Domestic Abuse Community Ambassador. There is a QR code on the right, and below this there are five people of different genders and races. A young female wheelchair user, an older white man, a young black man, a young woman of colour and a young white man.

## New Marketing

This page shows all four versions of the new flyer described above with different coloured backgrounds: purple, blue, orange and pink.

## Programme Objectives

This page is screenshots of 3 powerpoint slides from the community ambassador training outlining the objectives. They are white background with a row of pink houses across the bottom and an orange brush stroke. The bullet pointed objectives read:

Recognise the signs of abuse, discuss myths and move beyond stereotypes.
To ask questions you have wanted to ask, free of judgment.
Offer strategies for how to support survivors and create safe spaces.
Become better equipped in how to respond to disclosures of domestic abuse and make sure survivors get the right response.
Be able to signpost survivors to support.
Understand the role of a community ambassador.

Why a community approach?
Explores options for survivors to stay in their relationship if desired, or supports safe co-existence in the same community.
Equips friends, family members, neighbours, co-workers, or other community members with the skills to provide the best response to survivors first time round.
Encourages an end to victim blaming, myths circulating and space for action building.

## Key Learnings

Orange and blue boxes shows four key learnings from delivering the training so far:

1. If we want men to be involved, we need our marketing to target them specifically.
2. Running the programme in person city-wide in different community locations is appreciated by those attending.
3. Participants love the embedded intersectionality of the new programme.
4. Consistency works when trying to engage communities - keep showing up and people will come.

A purple text box with orange writing reads: Just under half of participants are survivors themselves. Next to this is a graphic image of a woman using a wheelchair, raising her first and shouting into a megaphone.

The statistics continue to show we have a lot of survivors attending the Community Ambassador Programme who see this as part of their ongoing recovery. Survivors are never pressured to share their experiences in the room but encouraged if they feel the space is safe for them.

We celebrate their decisions to take part and know when to step back. We know that survivors are the experts in their own lives and their own experiences. We call every participant before the programme starts to make sure they are ready for the content and to alleviate any anxiety they may have.

A blue speech bubble shows the following participant quote: "I had a great conversation with my parents last night about the training and they both raised things about my past relationship and now being able to recognise what was happening and why I wasn't able to talk to them about it while I was in it. The training was worth it for that conversation alone"

## Training Delivery Locations

We aim to deliver the training at least once in each department of Brighton and Hove. Those marked with an X have had training based there or scheduled there for later this year.

A colourful map of Brighton and Hove split into smaller areas with pink crosses in the locations we have delivered ambassador training so far: Portslade, Hangleton, Patcham, Withdean, City Cenre, Bevendean and Falmer.

## Newsletter

The Community Capacity Building Lead writes a monthly newsletter, which is sent to all Ambassadors, Connectors, Researchers and Volunteers involved in the project. The newsletter provides updates to services, adverts for jobs and volunteer roles, opportunities for further training as well as book, tv and film recommendations. We also use it as a space to discuss activism and topics we have seen in the media that are relevant to our feminism and activism. This has been a great way of threading the Act Up stream through everything we do.

## Newsletter Extracts

An orange text box alongside a photograph of Madonna, a white woman, wearing a suit with plaits in her hair. Text reads:

Madonna – who watched the 2023 Grammys in February? Madonna was there to introduce the performance of Kim Petras and Sam Smith, after Petras became the first transgender singer to win a Grammy. But how did that get lost in the media fury over Madonna's appearance? At 64, she received a barrage of hateful abuse about her "new face" and the way she dresses but she rightfully took to her social media pages to call out the critics for what the abuse really was - ageism and misogyny. What do you think about how society views women ageing? Why do you think women are given the responsibility of "ageing gracefully"?

An orange text box alongside a photograph of Tina Turner, a black woman, smiling with her arms behind her head, wearing a black turtle neck, red lipstick and wavy hair. Text reads:

Tina Turner – an icon, a legend, a survivor. Tina Turner died last week at age 83 and I for one have been listening to her on repeat ever since. I have always been a fan of her music, enjoying all the renditions of 'The Best' over the years (particularly that serenade in Schitt's Creek, if you know, you know). But my love for her only grew when I came to work in the domestic abuse sector and began to truly understand all that she had to overcome after leaving her abusive husband, Ike Turner. In 1976, she turned up at a hotel in Texas in a blood-stained white suit bruised and with one eye swollen shut. She ended the 1970s surviving on food stamps after her divorce left her with nothing but debt, but she climbed out of the ruins and rebuilt her life into what can only be described as an extraordinary comeback. What a woman.

## Network Meetings

To ensure our community members have the opportunity to access all facets of the project, our network meetings are no longer just for Ambassadors. These meetings are open to Ambassadors, Connectors, Researchers and Volunteers, further embedding the Act Up stream within our work.

The network meetings run every 6-weeks. To see as many people as we can, we do not have a set time for these, but run them at various times throughout the day, on different days of the week. We also alternate between meeting online and in person.

Thanks to the consistency of the meetings, we are starting to see more Ambassadors rejoin the network who perhaps joined 4 or 5 years ago. Our last meeting took place at Al Campo Lounge, a large cafe where people could stop by after work for a drink with us. We used this time to talk about our concerns regarding Andrew Tate and the influence he has on young children as several of the attendees were teachers or worked with young people. However, it was also a space for them to get to know us better, be part of a social community and enjoy some fabulous (non-alcoholic) fancy drinks.

A pink speech bubble reads: "It's just nice to have a space to meet other people who want the same things I do. I've learned so much from the other people who come as well as your team."

## Volunteer Recruitment

Lastly, we are finally in a position to recruit for a Volunteer Administration Assistant and Training Co-Facilitator. Giving community members the opportunity to build skills, particularly in training facilitation, will allow our project to be even more member focused.

We hope the new volunteer will be able to begin co-facilitating towards the end of 2023, if recruitment is successful.

# Concluding Year 2 – Looking to the Future

All conclusion pages have a coral background. An orange text box with white writing reads:

We were delighted to conclude the year by hosting a community lunch, which 84 people attended. These included community members, funder(s) and partners. We took this opportunity to gather the voice of the community, to hear what was important to them, how things were working for them now and what they wanted us to prioritise in the remaining year of the current project and beyond. You can see the summary of priority areas below. We will be building on all the feedback received and will be reaching out to other community members / groups who were unable to attend to centre their views for the future of the project.

A purple speech bubble showing a quote from an attendee reads: "I found the whole thing totally inspiring/moving and the positive and powerful force of the women in the room was tangible – it was a great honour to meet so many of them and to talk with them."

As we go into year 3, we will be further embedding our community offers, centring the voice of our community members and utilising the opportunities for peer led support. We look forward to the start of Telling Our Stories with our partner New Writing South, further embedding the Women of Colour Wellbeing Group, Women RISE Rooted and the Changemaker Programme. We are so excited to see the research and connector projects come to life and the roll out of the new male focused Community Ambassador sessions. We will be continuing to look for ways to further join up our work across the project strands to better reflect the survivor journey and further improve the experience of our community members.

A row of 3 pictures show candid photographs of the community lunch. The majority of attendees are women, in summery clothes (it was hot!) sitting at tables and standing around the various information boards chatting to each other.

## Act Up Priority Areas

A purple box outlining the three priorities outlined by community members:

1. Paid volunteer opportunities
2. Establishing a mentorship scheme within Communities Rising to support action
3. Community activities and events that combine activism with care

A row of 3 pictures showing the purple Act Up and red Connect Up boards from the community lunch. Alongside this a blue speech bubble reads: "Thank you for inviting us to an event where we could take things at our own pace and for not speaking at us. What an amazing idea."

## Connect Up Priority Areas

A red box outlining the three priorities outlined by community members:

1. Investment in a physical community hub
2. More opportunities for fun and hanging out
3. Increasing diversity of community members

## Skill Up Priority Areas

A green box outlining the three priorities outlined by community members:

1. Continuation and development of holistic support service offer
2. Working with Early Help services and family hubs to support survivors of domestic abuse and their families
3. A pathway for male survivors

A row of 3 pictures showing the green Skill Up and blue Speak Up boards from the community lunch. Alongside this a purple speech bubble reads: "If we were to put a community event on, we wouldn’t get anywhere near these numbers! You obviously have some very engaged community members!"

## Speak Up Priority Areas

A blue box outlining the three priorities outlined by community members:

1. Curating an Ambassador Programme for teenagers
2. Develop and implement tailored offer e.g. men, beauticians, hairdressers etc.
3. Increase reach and provision of Community Ambassador training

# Back Page

The back page is pink with two orange speech bubbles. The first says The Communities Rising project continues to be BY AND FOR our communities. The second says 'I am not free while any woman is unfree, even when her shackles are very different from my own.' Audre Lorde. In bright bold letters below, the words thank you for your continued support with our project are written in capitals.