



Complete Woman: Evidencing Strengths- Based Community-Led Social Action

Written by

Katy Adams (University of Hull, YPIP Team)

Joanne Cook (University of Hull, YPIP Team)

Rachel Isaacs (University of Hull, YPIP Team)

Sophie Cochrane-Powell (University of Hull, YPIP Team)

Complete Woman

Supported by:

The YPIP Community Panel

Summer 2026

Executive Summary

Introduction

This report presents an analysis of Complete Woman, a community organisation in Leeds, West Yorkshire. It examines whether and how it supports individuals, builds community capacity, agency and voice, and interacts with public services. As such, it offers insight into the approach to community support taken by Complete Woman and the value this generates for residents, the local community, and the wider service system in West Yorkshire.

This report is one of six VCFS demonstrator reports. Together these will form a comparative report, extending the evidence base through providing learning about a diverse set of VCFS organisations across the Yorkshire and Humber region. The research was undertaken between September 2025 and July 2026.

Findings are based on qualitative data and quantitative descriptive process data obtained through a mixture of interviews with founding members and individuals who currently receive support, alongside case studies, participant journey logs, and process data provided by Complete Woman. Working in partnership with Complete Woman, the research has been co-designed to understand the organisation's way of working and its outcomes and impacts for individuals, community, and public service systems.

Key Findings

Ways of working

- Complete Woman works with a broad cross-section of individuals and households, for whom it is seen to provide accessible, person-centred practical, spiritual and emotional help within trust-based relationships. Members described how it goes ‘above and beyond’, supporting them in an inclusive and proactive manner tailored to their needs and shaped by their input.
- Findings show how, through working in a strengths-based manner within a culture characterised by safety and acceptance, Complete Woman offers members hope and purpose, and helps them to own their own strengths and have their voices heard. This enables members to build positive futures for themselves and their families. Central to its approach is Reverend Eve, whose encouragement and compassion is repeatedly shown to increase members’ independence and confidence.
- Members described how Complete Woman’s help is grounded in shared lived experience, understanding and compassion. The organisation was seen to encourage and enable members to volunteer, as well as create a culture of friendship and peer-to-peer support underpinned by a faith-based ethos.
- The research evidenced how Complete Woman actively builds trusting relationships with other community organisations. This allows it to offer members more effective specialist support and signposting. It simultaneously develops community capacity, equipping and motivating members to use their skills and

experience to contribute to Complete Woman and other organisations.

- Findings also indicated that, through supporting those with limited access to statutory welfare assistance and filling in the gaps left by other services, Complete Woman occupies an important position within wider support networks for migrant communities.
- Members shared how, through connecting them with other services and translating services’ unspoken cultural ‘rules’ and expectations, Complete Woman helps them to effectively navigate the wider service system. The linguistic skills of Complete Woman’s volunteers are also relied upon by services to fill the gaps in their provision.

Outcomes and Impacts

At the individual level

- Members felt accompanied, understood and inspired by Complete Woman. Shared languages, cultures and faith meant they were accepted and welcomed, and able to openly share their experiences and confront their challenges.
- Findings demonstrate how the organisation reduces burdens for families. Through providing parents and carers with practical support, respite, and signposting to other sources of support, they become more able to manage their worries and care for their children.
- The research shows how members’ mental health improves as a result of their connection with Complete Woman.

Key Findings

They grow in self-belief and determination, able to move forward with new agency, conviction and motivation.

- Complete Woman is seen to recognise and respond to issues which would otherwise go unnoticed, acting as a safety net to prevent members from falling into crisis.

At the community level

- Findings show how Complete Woman connects those with different backgrounds and experiences, strengthening cross-cultural understanding, empathy and integration. This stands in contrast to other groups and breaks down cultural and social barriers within the community.
- The research demonstrates how Complete Woman strengthens community capacity through equipping and encouraging members to support others. It also reveals how this ensures the sustainability of the group despite a lack of external funding.

At the service system level

The research evidences how Complete Woman improves members' service system navigation at local and national levels, helping members successfully register for holiday childcare, secure UK residency and interact more positively with social services.

Policy Learnings & Recommendations

- **Prioritise peer-based support which enables those with shared cultures, faith and experiences to come together, share information and grow as a community.** These support networks enable resource and community capacity building which can prevent challenges from escalating into crisis and provide sustainable support at community level.
- **Recognise the potential for migration to impact across all areas of people's lives,** and how trauma, poverty and isolation can heighten its impact on an individual's or family's ability to integrate. Policy and practice should seek to ensure those with experiences of migration are not automatically prevented from accessing support due to their residency status. Co-designing support with community organisations enables services to be tailored to specific barriers faced by those with migration backgrounds, such as right-to-work restrictions, thereby improving relevance and avoiding resource waste.
- **Embed justice, dignity and belonging within policy and service design.** Services engaging with individuals with a migration or asylum background are most effective when they seek to understand, educate and build trust through embedding dignity and respect in their design. These principles help create services that support people through crisis, and towards longer-term inclusion, confidence and belonging. Services should therefore consider engaging with culturally-specific community organisations through, for example, informal observation, to help develop the stronger links which can be highly effective in communicating expectations, norms and rights to those unfamiliar with the UK's systems and processes.
- **Acknowledge and value community leaders whose passion, commitment and vision drives the development of community based support.** They are central to their organisations/community, possessing critical relationships with service users, staff and stakeholders. Invest in them and ensure they are both given the freedom and support to lead in line with their mission and supported adequately to ensure longevity and legacy.
- **Recognise the value provided to the public sector and the wider community by smaller, grassroots organisations.** Niche organisations can possess unique skills and knowledge, and build strengths-based, trusting relationships with members. Providing opportunities for grassroots organisations to develop stronger networks and relationships, such as through direct communication channels with public sector bodies, can also increase community capacity and cohesion. This benefits referral pathways, prevents system-wide blockages and avoids duplication of effort, while enabling effective escalation of priority cases and facilitating access to specialist support.
- **Recognise faith as an important part of identity, resilience and belonging for many migrant communities.** Services and funders should distinguish between promoting a particular faith and acknowledging the faith, traditions and values of those they support. Culturally responsive services should create space for people's beliefs to be respected as part of their wider identity and source of hope.

Introduction & Background

This report forms part of the Communities in their Places programme of community demonstrators research, which lies within the UKRI/ESRC funded Yorkshire Policy Innovation Partnership (YPIP). This research is designed to work in partnership with place-based Voluntary Community and Faith Sector (VCFS) organisations to enable them to develop evidence capture tools which effectively demonstrate the impact of strengths-based community-led or community-partnered social action.

The research has co-developed tools which have been applied by the partner organisations, and conducted data gathering to supplement and provide lived experience insights into the ways in which they work in a community-led or community-partnered manner.

This report represents one of six VCFS demonstrator projects which will be summarised in a public report available later in 2026. It investigates Complete Woman, a grassroots organisation based in Richmond Hill, a district lying to the east of the centre of Leeds in West Yorkshire.

About Complete Woman

Complete Woman is a community-based organisation in Leeds led by women from minoritised backgrounds and those who have recently migrated, to help support those dealing with the practical and emotional consequences of migration. Working with individuals and families from all over the world, it offers training, workshops and courses, particularly around practical skills and mental health, alongside social activities, holiday camps for children and The Pantry, which provides food and essential sanitary and household items. It is linked more widely to community organisations and services both directly and through its multi-agency hub.

These relationships increase the impact of its initiatives, providing members with additional sources of help and resources. It also advocates nationally in relation to issues affecting migrants, most notably through its 2024 migrant care work campaign (Humans Not Commodities: Work Justice Campaign) whose vision of an end to exploitative employment practices and dignity at work has been adopted by Citizens UK (Rev Eve, 2026).

As explained further in Chapter One, Complete Woman initially began in 2009 as the women's ministry at the church founded by Reverend Eve. It has subsequently expanded to become a

formally registered CIC serving the wider community from its own premises, located just outside the city centre. It is active on social media, sharing important messages and information for migrants on its various platforms.

Complete Woman has a small, dedicated group of staff, but key to its growth and continuation is the peer-to-peer nature of its support, whereby existing members share their experiences and knowledge with others facing similar challenges. Through empowering and equipping migrant women and their families, Complete Woman aims to help them build positive futures, overcome systemic and cultural barriers, and use their lived experience to help others dealing with challenging situations.

About the research aims and methods

Prior to undertaking this research, the team spent time listening to Complete Woman to better understand its values, activities, and the community it serves. These conversations shaped the focus and co-design of this study.

The research draws on Participatory Action Research Methodology, an approach to research which involves working with research stakeholders to produce outputs that are defined by and valuable to all stakeholders. As a result, the research is co-designed and co-owned by Complete Woman, for it to utilise as it sees fit. Further, the research tools and training are also left behind for future usage. The research design draws on the team's strengths-based evidence approach (Burchell et al., 2026; Cook et al., 2024(a)), which enables the understanding and evaluation of strengths-based preventative working at individual, community and service system level.

Data gathering methods comprised:

- Interviews with:
 - five individuals who had been involved with Complete Woman since its inception ('founding members')
 - seven individuals currently involved with the group ('current members')
- 12 case studies provided by Complete Woman, comprising one project report and eleven individual stories
- Process data obtained from an co-designed spreadsheet containing information about 77 individuals who had accessed The Pantry
- Eight participant journey logs completed by Complete Woman using a co-produced template.

For ease, other than when findings only stemmed from one group, the salience of findings from interviews is not split between founding and current members, but stated as a whole. Wherever the split between founding and current members in the overall salience is of relevance, however, this is noted as a footnote.

Three of the five founding members are still involved with Complete Woman on a day-to-day basis, whilst two no longer play an active role in the organisation. Individuals interviewed were compensated for their time and contribution with vouchers.

In reading this report it is key to situate its findings as a small-scale study offering insights into the work of Complete Woman and the value it brings to residents and the wider public services system in West Yorkshire.

The comparative report across the six demonstrators (forthcoming 2026) widens the evidence base through learning from a diverse set of VCFS organisations. Its comparative data findings are attributable to a larger sample of individuals and communities, providing robust policy learning.

It is also important to note that while this report includes a small sample of participants, the wider verification of findings is supported by the shared experience of strengths-based working across multiple studies carried out by this team in related projects (see Burchell et al., 2026; Cook et al., 2023; Cook et al., 2024(b); and Thiery et al., 2023).

This report is structured as follows. The remainder of this chapter discusses the wider environment of Complete Woman, including the geographical area in which it works, and the nature, extent and challenges of migration into the UK and care work, one of the chief forms of employment for those engaging with Complete Woman. Subsequently, Chapter One discusses how Complete Woman began and grew into its current form, the backgrounds and contexts of its members and the personal values guiding them. Chapter Two then examines the ways in which Complete Woman works across the three levels of individual, community and wider system, whilst Chapter Three looks at the difference the group makes, again across these three levels. Finally, Chapter Four then examines the future of the group: the challenges it faces and members' hopes for themselves and Complete Woman.

Complete Woman's wider environment

Leeds

Complete Woman is located in the Richmond Hill area of Leeds, a city in West Yorkshire. The population of Leeds is becoming increasingly diverse, with a 2.1 percentage-point increase in those identifying as Black between the censuses of 2011 and 2021 (5.6% compared to 3.4% respectively), and a reduction of 6.5% in the number of residents identifying as White during the same period (79% compared to 85.1% respectively) (ONS Census, 2021(a)). Richmond Hill is a particularly diverse area, with almost one in three residents born outside of the UK (ONS Census, 2021(b)).

Although there is a wide spread of levels of deprivation amongst the different districts of Leeds, it is currently ranked 33 out of 317 local authorities in relation to the proportion of its districts lying in the most deprived 10% nationally, and Richmond Hill itself lies in the top 20% for deprivation nationally (ESRI UK, 2026; The Guardian, 2025).

Migration and Asylum in the UK Context

International migration into the UK, defined as the number of individuals moving to the UK for at least a year, excluding refugees, has been steadily increasing ever since the early 1980s, with around 19% of the current UK population being non-UK born residents. Migrants have most commonly been non-EU nationals, with just under half coming from Asia, and most migrating for either formal study or work (House of Commons Library, 2026).

Migrants other than British citizens including, post-Brexit, EU-citizens, require a visa to enter and remain in the UK. Visas are available both for short-term / seasonal work ('temporary work' visas) or long-term residency ('worker' visas, which include visas for skilled workers and those active in the health and care sector) (House of Commons Library, 2026).

Health and Care Worker visas were introduced in late 2021 and quickly became the most popular visa, peaking at over 140,000 being granted in 2023. Chief amongst those travelling on these visas were applicants from South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, the majority of whom took on roles as care workers (Home Office, 2026(a)). These visas are, however, not awarded to individuals, but rather to their employers, a system seen to "place private care companies and employment agencies in a position of incredible power".

Indeed, migrant workers' have reported employer mistreatment including the illegal deduction of wages, being forced to stay in sub-standard accommodation, and living under the constant stress of unemployment and consequent deportation (Unison, 2025(a)). In response, recent years have seen increased scrutiny around employers and more stringent enforcement of penalties for non-compliance, leading to a dramatic fall in the number of Health and Care Worker visas awarded (Home Office, 2026(a)). Exploitation and abuse remain, however, a constant theme amongst migrants, who also often face racism, with a recent Unison survey revealing that 46% of migrant workers have faced covert and blatant racism, discrimination or unfair treatment (Unison, 2025(b)).

“

You hear a lot of people say, 'Oh, they're coming to take our job, they're coming to take our benefit', so it feels like you're constantly having to explain things, justify you being here. And it's very difficult. When we started the campaign, I remember saying, 'Do you realise that the country invited those people to come? They're not illegals' (CW1104, Current Member).

We want to integrate but we have so many challenges. My visa runs out soon and... when it expires, they will say 'You haven't contributed enough', but the system isn't letting me contribute. I want to but the challenges are at every turn (CW8101, Participant Journey Log).

”

The number of asylum seekers entering the UK has increased dramatically beyond levels over the last 20 years since the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020. Whilst some asylum seekers may claim asylum upon entering the UK, the number of those seeking asylum after previously holding a UK visa has also been rising. Asylum seekers come chiefly from Asia, Africa and the Middle East, and almost three-quarters are male (Home Office, 2026(b)).

Those seeking asylum are typically housed by the UK government. Prevented from working, they also receive a daily allowance of £7, although government support ends shortly after a positive decision on an asylum claim is granted, placing individuals at considerable risk of homelessness (Refugee Council, 2026).

Refugee charities have criticised the asylum system in the UK as “structured to disadvantage people seeking asylum”, noting how the structural and social racial injustices they face force them into “situations of poverty, isolation and low life chances” (Refugee Action, 2024).

Faith and Migrant Women

Introductory conversations with Complete Woman discussed how, for many migrant women, faith is not simply a private belief but a fundamental part of their identity and an often-overlooked dimension of intersectionality.

Alongside gender, ethnicity, immigration status and socio-economic disadvantage, faith shapes how women make sense of adversity, maintain hope, and build resilience. It is therefore one of the most significant protective factors enabling them to cope with trauma, displacement, exploitation and isolation. Complete Woman described, however, how this aspect of migrant women’s identity is rarely recognised within mainstream services, meaning women can feel that an essential part of who they are is overlooked or left outside professional spaces.

As such, Complete Woman holds to the belief that a genuinely person-centred and intersectional approach should acknowledge faith as a legitimate source of strength and resilience for many migrant women and ensure it is recognised as part of understanding their lived experiences and support needs.

“

She is also a believer. That has helped her... and [spoken] positivity into her life (CW8I07, Participant Journey Log).

I'm telling you if I was not going to have faith in God, I would have broken by now (CW1I05, Current Member).

”

Contents

Page

02

**Executive
Summary**

06

**Introduction
and Background**

12

Chapter One:
The Evolution of
Complete
Woman

26

Chapter Two:
Ways of Working

34

Chapter Three:
Outcomes and
Impacts

41

Chapter Four:
Looking Towards
the Future

44

References

Chapter 1:

The Evolution of Complete Woman and the Values, Contexts and Pathways of Participants

This chapter lays the foundation for the rest of this report. It explains the evolution of Complete Woman from a women's ministry to a visionary charitable organisation. It then describes members' motivations to connect with Complete Woman, before looking at members' broader contexts and experiences.

The Evolution of Complete Woman

(All founding members (n=5/5 interviewed) discussed the development of Complete Woman, describing how the organisation had grown out of the women's group at the church founded by Reverend Eve and her husband. This growth had resulted from focussed stewardship, driven by a desire to respond to the experiences and needs of the ever-growing number of attendees.

Reverend Eve described how, during and after a long and turbulent journey to become a British citizen, attending church had offered her safety, stability, and connection. She explained how this had inspired her and her husband to set up their own church, in which she had sought to create a similar non-judgmental, supportive community.

“

Where I found comfort and community [in the UK] was church... It was very welcoming, very warm, and that really gave me that sense of belonging... In a place where I was in a leadership role in the church, I think I just... wanted everybody to feel welcome and that belonging, whatever they were coming from or their beliefs. So that's how Complete Woman has always been.

”

Over time, women at church started coming to Eve for informal support and guidance, and strengthened their relationships with each other through sharing their difficulties openly and praying with and for one another. Despite the challenges of obtaining adequate funding, this saw the women's ministry shifting from a group providing emotional support to a formally established CIC supporting a wider strata of society. Founding members recognised Eve's commitment as central to this shift, explaining how it was crucial for Complete Woman's development, enabling it to grow and help people outside of the church, and giving it an opportunity to clarify its goals and plans for the future.

“

I actually found it really impactful because at the time [in the church] they were just dealing mainly with self-esteem issues, understanding your emotions (CW2I05, Founding Member).

A spiritual environment... It's a place where you want to share your experiences with everyone so that when they pray for you, they know what they're praying for... That's what made Complete Woman grow (CW2I02, Founding Member).

I remember sitting with someone who leads a migrant organisation within Leeds and he asked me, 'What's your vision? What's your strategic plans? What's your mission?'... And then we registered with Companies House. We now started having a vision and mission... it's understanding this is actually a business now (CW2I01, Founding Member).

It was working with the women and the families in the church and did it then move outside of the church to the wider community as well... So normally Complete Woman used to help women, help children, and we used to help homeless people as well... it was not easy because there was not a proper source or a proper source of fund, even to say people are standing with you and supporting everything. But I know she [Eve] stood on the vision (CW2I03, Founding Member).

”

Participants' Motivation to join Complete Woman

All founding members (n=5/5 interviewed) and a small number of current members (n=2/7 interviewed) had joined the church-based women's group as a consequence of their wider involvement with Reverend Eve's church. Their initial and on-going commitment to the organisation, however, was a result of their underlying values, which recognised the importance of giving back to their community, and creating a space to build connection. Members were also motivated by a wish to help women grow in independence and self-determination, as well as to respond to the particular needs of the Black community.

“

I love a community and all of that, being able to help people. That's really never going to leave (CW1I04, Current Member).

[We started it as a group] who are willing to help other women because... that time that we came there was not much help for Black minority... even though the help was there, it wasn't making sense for us because of cultural differences (CW2I02, Founding Member).

”

The other current members (n=5/7 interviewed) and all members whose engagement with Complete Woman was recorded in the participant journey logs (n=8/8) had joined the group at different points.

They had connected with it via a variety of channels including targeted publicity, signposting from other groups, and word of mouth. Nevertheless, their values often mirrored those of the participants who had been involved with Complete Woman since the start. For example, the importance they placed on nurturing and caring for others, as well as their faith, which was central in providing them with hope, comfort, and strength.

“

I met some people and that was where they introduced to me that there are opportunities to come to the UK as a carer, to assist people, the vulnerable people. So that's what I wanted to do (CW1I01, Current Member).

When I was younger, I wanted to work with children. And everybody said, including my mother, you won't be able to do it. And when I put my foot down, I said, I'm not listening to you, I'm not listening to job centre, I'm not listening to that, I'm listening to my heart (CW1I03, Current Member).

Before coming to Complete Woman, she had been attending some classes at the old fire station where she also volunteered and still does... She has always been committed to her volunteering duties and consistent in attending support groups (CW8I04, Participant Journey Log).

”

Although the values of the beneficiaries recorded in the process data were not

known, this data nevertheless underlined how word of mouth was still important in enabling people to connect with Complete Woman: almost two-thirds of service users (65%) cited it as their source of referral.

Personal Contexts and Backgrounds

Personal Contexts

Findings from case studies, interviews and participant journey logs revealed the complexity of the contexts in which members were living and from which they engaged with Complete Woman. These fell under three main areas: (i) physical or mental health challenges or financial insecurity; (ii) challenges related to migration, which included isolation, housing difficulties, and exploitation; and (iii) sudden and traumatic events, including the loss of employment and bereavement. Members were often simultaneously dealing with more than one difficulty, meaning that their challenges were regularly interlinked and related, compounding the pressure they experienced.

Possibly reflecting how founding members' initial involvement with Complete Woman had resulted from a drive to give back to others, rather than their own need for support, almost no data in this section relates to the experiences of founding members.

(i) People facing physical and mental health difficulties and financial insecurity

Participant journeys revealed the extent of the day-to-day challenges members were facing. They showed how over half of members (n=5/8) were dealing with physical or mental health difficulties.

Slightly more were receiving benefits or struggling financially (n=6/8), whilst almost all (n=7/8) were struggling to access adequate food or basic goods.

Combined, findings therefore appear to indicate a general context of both acute and low-level everyday need amongst the overwhelming majority of Complete Woman members.

“

I've suffered with mental health for a long time, I have medication for it. I also have a brain issue which affects my short-term memory, I struggle with remembering things and names (CW8I03, Participant Journey Log).

The bills are so expensive and all the money you are getting goes to bills (CW8I01, Participant Journey Log).

”

(ii) People experiencing challenges related to migration (discussed by n=5/12 interviewees, n=4/12 case studies, and n=6/8 participant journey logs)

Almost all interviewees had migrated to the UK from Africa or Europe. For just under half, this journey had been extremely challenging, with experiences relating to: (a) periods of isolation and hopelessness (four interviewees); (b) inadequate and unsafe housing (four interviewees), and/or (c) exploitation and abuse (two interviewees and four case studies).

Together, these experiences reveal how members had been forced to manage

challenging and often dangerous situations without support from personal networks or wider services, leaving them isolated and powerless. They also show how members' migration status heightened the impact of their wider challenges.

“

There are very many consequences as a result of that [migration], that are unheard, unseen, they go hidden below the radar... You've broken up a family... taken them away from their comfort zone... People think you should be fine, but you're not (CW2I05, Founding Member).

”

Over half of participants described members' feelings of isolation and hopelessness after migration. For some, this had been caused by the challenges of obtaining a visa or of finding employment, particularly when also dealing with ill-health, as well as uncertainty around their migration status. The pressures this entailed had led to some members becoming ill with depression and stress, whilst restrictions around a current member's visa had led to her becoming separated from her husband and family. For another interviewee and her family, simply being alone in a foreign country had been enough, their lack of connections within the UK heightening the isolation they felt, overwhelming them at the time they were trying to integrate and build a new life.

“

I was dealing with a waiting list for schools, nurseries, and in the meantime I was looking after two children, 24-7, with no help, nobody, and it is a lot,

and then I was isolated quite a bit. 2021, we started to breathe a bit, but till 2021, we were totally isolated, and that was not the best for my family, for myself (CW1I05, Current Member).

Sickness has really taken a toll on her, not being able to work has taken away her independence, she has to rely on others for support with basic needs. She has fears that she might be sent back home... no hope... consistently... fighting for her visa (CW8I05, Participant Journey Log).

Most of the jobs want you to have a driving license, but only working 20 hours doesn't give me enough money to afford driving lessons. I've found myself stuck.... Sometimes it feels like an endless circle of trying to move forward (CW8I01, Participant Journey Log).

¹ This is composed of n=4/7 current members, with just one founding member reporting such experiences

A minority of participants discussed lengthy searches for housing and insecure, overcrowded living conditions post-migration which had threatened their physical and mental health. These difficulties had been exacerbated by the challenges of navigating the UK's housing system, and a lack of support from the wider service system.

For two interviewees, the shared accommodation provided for them by their employers had been unsafe and the requests by one to the police for alternative accommodation had gone unanswered, forcing her to remain in her exploitative and stressful role in care work.

Another described the desperation she had felt having to move home five times in the last few years. Not only had the physical condition of the houses threatened her and her family's health, but the insecurity of their precarious situation had also taken an emotional toll.

“

They were not giving us a house... it was a nightmare... I have seen my husband breaking into tears many times (CW1I05, Current Member).

I live in a shared house, so even though my friends are in the house, I feel bad most of the time. It can be very depressing staying there (CW1I02, Current Member).

”

A minority of participants revealed stories of financial exploitation by employers, despite promises of honest employment and career opportunities in the UK. Poor treatment was shown as having led to financial precarity and homelessness, as well as fears that seeking support would threaten participants' employment or residency status.

“

Then she [employer] came up with a kind of threat. We are only here because of her... So if anything happens to [boss], it will affect us, not she. We should remember that we paid a whole lot to get here and we wouldn't want to go back empty handed. That was the first threat... If we make a report and anything happens, we will be at the losing end (CW1I07, Current Member).

At the time I came to the UK my employer promised work but there were no shifts for me... I picked up some work with a company that could give me 20 hours, but they found out I was not working for sponsor, so they dismissed me... I have a ten-year-old son and had to pay rent, but I had no help as a single mum (CW8I01, Participant Journey Log).

[CWCS6I02] had endured over two years of exploitation, including non-payment of holidays, wage theft, and threats from his employer... After two months without pay, [he] became homeless and slept rough for two nights... [his] situation remained unstable due to visa restrictions... [leading] to another eviction... [and his] mental health declined further due to grief and uncertainty (CWCS6I02, Case Study).

”

Taken together, these experiences again demonstrate the physical and emotional precarity of members following migration, and their lack of appropriate support systems to rely upon.

iii) People experiencing sudden and traumatic events or important changes in life circumstances (discussed by n=5/12 interviewees, n=3/12 case studies, and n=5/8 participant journeys)

Around a third of participants had also experienced unexpected trauma or crisis situations. Many participants had experienced challenges in relation to their employment, all through no fault of their own. Some had been faced with an unexpected

loss of employment, with one participant having lost their visa sponsor, and another forced to leave their job after her employer refused to adhere to the requirements of her Wellness Action Plan. Others had struggled to find employment due to their previous involvement with the police following the criminality of an abusive ex-partner, or being over-qualified for the work available. These circumstances had taken a toll on members both financially and emotionally, leaving them at the mercy of decisions made by others.

“

February, March, April, I continued to work without payment... I was using two accounts overdrafts. Instead of being paid I was using the overdrafts and borrowing money from friends. On the 25th [April] the news broke out that it had been revoked and the company liquidated... We don't know where to go (CW1I07, Current Member)

One kid came up to the school 'Why are you leaving?'. I couldn't say... I was in hysterics. I was just down in myself. Just crying all night, tears, my bed is all wet because it was really traumatic (CW1I03, Current Member).

She loved her job and the sudden change [redundancy] left her feeling sad. She lacked confidence and did not want to go outside for a long time (CW8I08, Participant Journey Log).

”

Wider experiences of trauma and crisis were also reported. One current member, for example, had experienced depression as a

direct result of the abuse from her ex-partner and her related engagement with the criminal justice system. Others were coping with anxiety, on-going grief following a bereavement, and challenges within families, including relationship breakdowns and children with disabilities.



A young mother of two children under six, relocated from London to the North of England after the tragic loss of her husband two years ago... However, being the sole caregiver to her youngest son, coupled with the challenges of single motherhood, took a toll on her mental health. Though she had undergone grief counselling, [she] struggled to balance her emotional recovery with the demands of raising her children alone, which left her feeling overwhelmed and isolated (CW5I02).

[CWCS5I03] had been struggling with depression and a learning disability... Her parents... often found it difficult to communicate with her in a way that didn't escalate tension... [which] caused further withdrawal and strained their relationship. The family felt disconnected, and [CWCS5I03's] depression worsened as she isolated herself more (CWCS5I03, Case Study).

She has always been introverted. She was attending other groups but was still looking for more to occupy all her time with things she loves. She never went out much and struggled to make friends (CW8I06, Participant Journey Log).



These narratives reveal how current members' found themselves in crisis situations as a result of factors outside of their control. Combined with the consequences of migration, discussion of isolation and powerlessness reveal the background of overwhelm and helplessness from which members sought the support of Complete Woman.

Beneficiaries' Backgrounds and Pathways to Support: Process Data

In addition, Complete Woman utilised the co-produced spreadsheet during June 2026 to gather data on 77 participants who had been provided with food through its basic needs support services at The Pantry. The aim of the co-produced spreadsheet was to provide a tool which enabled a rich understanding of activities, support accessed and the resulting impact.

Due to new categories of data collection and retroactive input, a small number of entries (n=5/77) were incomplete in some categories. The data analysis focussed on using descriptive statistics and cross-tabulations to examine the profiles of beneficiaries and to identify trends in their utilisation of Complete Woman's basic needs support services. Whilst the process data relates only to a single programme, findings nevertheless provided useful and important insight into the contexts of those engaging with this service and the way in which Complete Woman responded.

Findings are discussed below under the following headings: the contexts and characteristics of beneficiaries (including household composition, health conditions and benefit status); referral pathways; and patterns of service delivery (including visit frequency and duration).

Summary

The dataset comprised 77 beneficiaries who had accessed the organisation's basic needs support services at The Pantry during June 2026. Table One provides an overview of beneficiaries' key characteristics. Together, these illustrate the diversity of individuals accessing the organisation, indicating how Complete Woman supports a wide range of migrant households experiencing varying levels of social, economic and health-related vulnerability.

For example, whilst families with children constituted the largest beneficiary group, support was also accessed by adult-only and single-parent households, as well as pensioners, and whilst nearly half of beneficiaries were recorded as having long-term physical or mental health conditions, a similarly large proportion reported no health issues. The almost equal split in beneficiaries receiving and not receiving statutory benefits further highlights the varied circumstances of those seeking support.

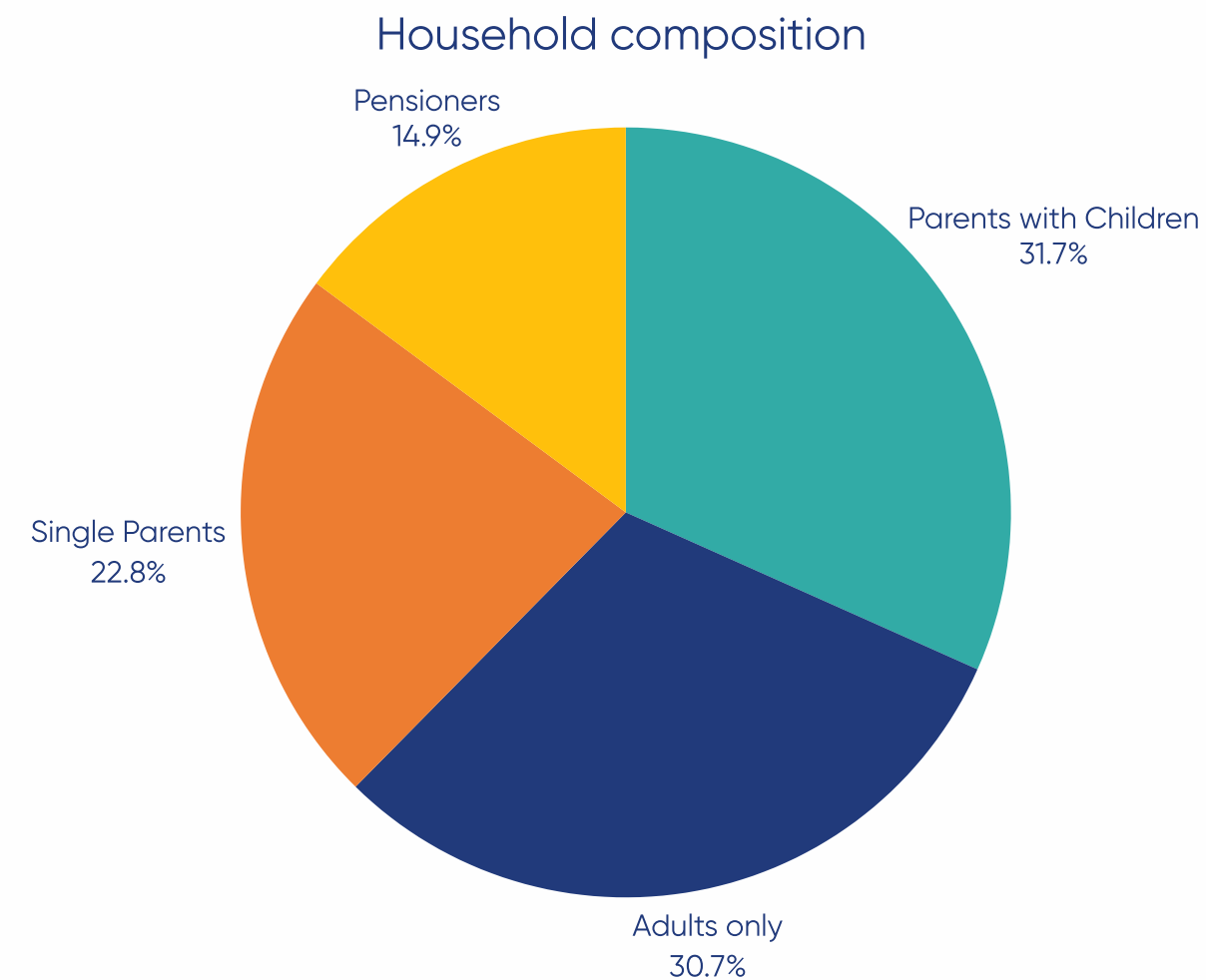
Characteristics	Details
Referral Pathways	65% referred through Word of Mouth 35% through Migrant Action
Household Composition	32% Parents with children 31% Adults only 23% Single parents 15% Pensioners
Reported Health Conditions	43% Long-term physical health condition 15% Mental health condition 43% No reported health condition
Benefit Status	49% Receiving benefits 51% Not receiving benefits
Visit Duration	86% <5 minutes 14% >5 minutes

The contexts and characteristics of beneficiaries

Findings demonstrate that household composition, health conditions and benefit status intersect in different ways across beneficiary groups, revealing the varied and overlapping needs of the individuals with whom Complete Woman engaged.

Household composition

Findings illustrate how Complete Woman supported a broad range of household types. Families with children represented the largest group of beneficiaries (32% of all service users), followed by adults-only households (31%), single-parent households (23%) and pensioners (15%).



Health challenges and statutory benefit support

The distribution of reported health conditions varied across household types, revealing important differences in the circumstances of beneficiaries accessing support. Long-term physical health conditions were most commonly reported amongst pensioners (100% of all pensioner households) and single-parent households (53%), suggesting that both groups experienced relatively high levels of health-related needs. By contrast, similar challenges were reported in just 35% and 17% of adult-only households and households of parents with children respectively.

Single-parent households also reported higher levels of mental health challenges than in adult-only or households with children (35%, compared to 9% and 12.5% respectively), suggesting the additional pressure faced by single-parent families.

Although no pensioners reported any mental health concerns, their high rates of physical challenges meant that beneficiaries from households with children and adult-only households were the most likely to not report any health conditions (71% and 56.5% respectively). As such, findings may indicate that beneficiaries’ need for food support was not necessarily linked to ill health, but may instead have been driven by other social, economic or migration-related pressures.

Household type and health condition

Household Type	Physical Health (Long)	Mental Health (short)	Neither	Total
Adults only	35%	9%	56.5%	100%
Parents with children	17%	12.5%	71%	100%
Pensioners	100%	0%	0%	100%
Single parents	53%	35%	12%	100%

Beneficiaries from these groups were also the least likely to receive state welfare assistance: 79.17% of beneficiaries of households of parents with children and 65.2% of those from adult-only households did not receive any form of benefits.

Moreover, findings indicated that whilst all those reporting long-term physical health conditions for whom data is complete were also in receipt of benefits, those presenting with mental health challenges did not consistently receive such support. As such, findings suggest that state assistance may be potentially inaccessible, insufficient and inadequate.

Household type and statutory welfare support

Household Type	In receipt of statutory welfare support				
	No		Yes		
	Mental health	No health issues	Mental health	Physical health	No health issues
Adults only	9%	56.5%	0%	35%	0%
Parents with children	12.5%	67%	0%	17%	4%
Pensioners	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%
Single parents	12%	12%	24%	53%	0%

Referral pathways and patterns of service delivery

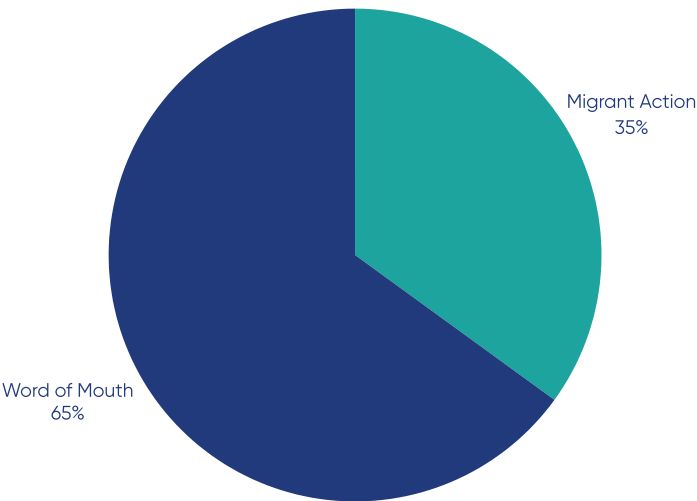
Referral pathways

The 77 individuals who accessed the service had either heard about it informally via word of mouth (65%) or had been referred by the nonprofit organisation Migrant Action (35%).

As such, whilst individuals reporting mental health concerns appeared more likely to access the organisation through formal referral pathways, those experiencing physical health conditions or no reported health condition appeared to more commonly access Complete Woman through informal community networks.

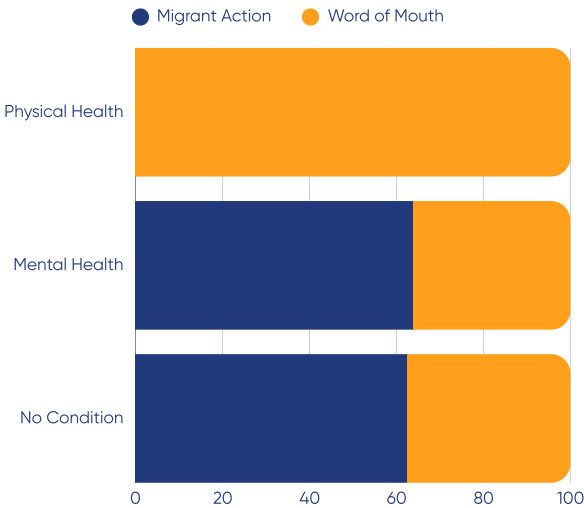
Whilst the data is not comprehensive enough to fully understand reasons behind the referrals made by other organisations, these findings nevertheless indicate that Complete Woman occupies an important position within local support networks and referral pathways serving migrant communities, filling in the gaps missed by other services.

Referral pathways



All 32 individuals with long-term physical health conditions had discovered Complete Woman through informal pathways (word of mouth). By contrast, nearly 64% (7 individuals) of those with mental health concerns and a similar proportion (62.5%, 20 individuals) of those with no health conditions had been referred through Migrant Action. As such, whilst individuals reporting mental health concerns appeared more likely to access the organisation through formal referral pathways, those experiencing physical health conditions or no reported health condition appeared to more commonly access Complete Woman through informal community networks.

Referral pathway by health condition



Patterns of service delivery

Only five of the 77 recorded interactions (6.5%) were identified as initial visits, with 72 (93.5%) having been recorded as non-initial interactions. Initial visits lasted approximately 30 minutes, whereas non-initial interactions were typically completed within 5 minutes. As might be expected, initial visits therefore generally required substantially longer engagement, lasting around 30 minutes, compared with approximately 5 minutes for non-initial interactions.

In addition, across non-initial interactions, individuals reporting mental health conditions required the longest conversations,

averaging almost 12 minutes, compared with those without a reported health condition (over nine minutes) and those with a long-term physical health condition (five minutes). Whilst the process data does not capture the specific content of each interaction, these differences may indicate differences in the complexity of circumstances presented by beneficiaries and the support required during interactions.

Moreover, the variation in consultation length highlights how beneficiaries presented with differing levels of complexity, despite receiving the same recorded service.

Interaction length by health condition

Health Condition	Count	Total Time (mins)	Avg. Time (mins)	% of Total Time
Physical health (long)	32	160	5	27%
Mental health (short)	11	130	11.82	22%
No health condition	32	300	9.38	51%
TOTAL				100%

Outcomes

Although the support recorded in the dataset as given to beneficiaries was primarily food assistance, almost all beneficiaries (nearly 97%) reported an improved ability to cope with daily challenges, with a very small proportion (2.6%) instead reporting increased confidence in their own potential. This suggests that Complete Woman's staff perceive the practical support the organisation provides through its food service to offer wider benefits, reducing immediate stress and strengthening individuals' capacity to manage difficult circumstances.

The data suggests that Complete Woman provided welfare support to a wide range of different individuals and households facing a mixture of difficulties, including, but not limited to, physical or mental challenges. Complete Woman's service delivery was, however, suggested as responsive to beneficiaries' varying circumstances. Alongside indications that beneficiaries may be looking to Complete Woman for assistance due to the inability of the state to provide appropriate welfare support, consistently positive reported outcomes also suggest that beneficiaries perceived the practical assistance as helping them cope with wider challenges beyond food insecurity.

Chapter 2:

Ways of Working and the Nature of Support Provided

This chapter examines the way in which Complete Woman supports members, and how it interacts with other community organisations and the wider service system. Findings are drawn from interviews with founding and current members, as well as the case studies.

The chapter notes three chief aspects of Complete Woman's way of working, namely: (i) a strengths-based, person-centred approach; (ii) the provision of reliable and accessible support; and (iii) the creation of links with other community organisations and the wider service system. Common to all of these is how members are not just service users, but also volunteers and peer supporters, a blurring of roles which enables Complete Woman's support at all levels to be grounded in lived experience, understanding and compassion.

The high levels of agreement between founding and current members in this section also suggest how the ways of working highlighted by the findings are intrinsic to Complete Woman, existing from the start and continuing into the present.

Individual Level

Founding members, current members and case studies all spoke at length about the unique way in which Complete Woman works. Findings reveal how it provides practical and emotional strengths-based help which is tailored to need, shaped by members' input, and grounded in a compassionate, nurturing and encouraging ethos. Together with process data findings, they also demonstrate how Complete Woman, particularly Reverend Eve, works with people in a person-centred, reliable and trustworthy way, supporting people without discrimination or hierarchy and helping them move into their futures with confidence and hope.

i) Accessible, reliable support (discussed by n=11/12 interviewees, and n=3/8 participant journey logs)

The majority of participants discussed how Complete Woman offers members a reliable source of support. It provides help as and when it is needed, offering support over the phone, WhatsApp or in person and welcoming everyone without discrimination or strict eligibility criteria, as often experienced elsewhere.

Complete Woman goes out of its way to help whenever and however it can with a wide range of issues. The organisation was seen as a safe space where members are able to share their individual difficulties, offering members a point of contact whenever they need help.

“

We wanted to give them a space where they can really come, sit down, talk to us, however long you want to be here... we're here for you. If that means I will open four, five, six hours, we're here (CW1I04, Current Member).

It's just over and beyond... It's when people need whatever it is that they need, then they will get that support for that... I've had experiences where I've gone to other agencies [like a food bank] for support... you just say one sentence and then that sentence ['I have no visa'] disqualifies you... Complete Woman doesn't look for it as a barrier (CW2I04, Founding Member).

They can actually open up and have that space. That they feel they have this space to come in and they can actually talk, not necessarily about food, literally about anything. That's really important and long-term (CW1I02, Current Member).

Participant has required lots of support to initially access help (he was concerned about being reported to authorities, so building trust was key to helping) and then understanding how we can best support (CW8I02, Participant Journey Log).

”

ii) Person-centred, strengths-based approach (discussed by n=9/12 interviewees, n=3/12 case studies, and n=1/8 participant journey logs)

Findings from founding members demonstrate how Complete Woman adopts a person-centred, strengths-based approach, meeting people where they were and responding to them as individuals. Complete Woman takes the time to uncover the full extent of members' challenges in a respectful, caring manner, and supports them with compassion and empathy. As experienced by founding members both personally and in the lives of others, this creates an environment of empowerment, hope and purpose, in which individuals are encouraged and equipped to gradually become less dependent on support, to own their own strengths and have their voices heard, and to move independently into their futures.

“

Everyone is met at their point of need. Where we can, we try to meet people [with] what support we can, to empower them, to make them feel seen, feel helped... We will work so hard to find whatever it is that they need... I think there's no qualification that can actually replace compassion that comes from knowing what the person is going through and what they are carrying inside of them (CW2I04, Founding Member).

We don't only advocate for you, we advocate with you... [Our work is] to empower them, support them in times of crisis with compassion, dignity and justice (CW2I01, Founding Member).

We want you to know your worth and your strengths so you're not always depending on other people... so you can go out and do better... You're working with individuals with people on a journey with the hope that at the end they've come out and they're gone - yeah, I can do this (CW2105, Founding Member).

”

Findings from the process data demonstrate how Complete Woman seeks to get to know its members beyond their presenting issues. Initial visits lasted for an average of around 30 minutes, suggesting the organisation took the time to understand people's circumstances and needs before determining next steps. Participants agreed with this assessment, describing how Complete Woman cares passionately about those it supports and works in a relational, person-centred manner to encourage, equip, and empower them to grow in agency. The organisation takes the initiative to help, regularly making contact with members to find out how they are, and alerting them to opportunities they might find interesting or useful. Complete Woman also tailors its support to individuals, identifying their abilities and, through connection, friendship and practical workshops, helping them use these to work towards their goals.

“

It's confidential. You don't feel like they're gonna [share information] and for me that's really important... I have had experiences where confidentiality has been breached. So for me coming somewhere... confidentiality is a really

important factor and when I've spoke to them in confidence... that's always been maintained (CW1106, Current Member).

I'm someone who is on asylum, but... I've done so many courses, health and safety... because I used to be a chef.... So when you have stuff, I cook... I've done mental health, so I can facilitate some mental health groups here... there's so much that you can do (CW1102, Current Member).

I feel like most organisations build communities, but they build according to where they are... I feel like sometimes you need a launching pad... I know that I can stand on my own two feet and actually do something (CW1104, Current Member).

”

Finally, we also found some evidence of how Complete Woman develops its wider service design and delivery in line with members' thoughts and wishes. Encouraging members to share their ideas allowed Complete Woman to align their support with what people need. It also helped members to develop a sense of responsibility and ownership over the organisation, encouraging engagement and connection.

“

We learn as we're going. Some of the service users will come in and then they'll be the one giving us ideas on how to actually run the food bank (CW1104, Current Member).

”

But even though there was more spiritual help, we don't live in heaven, we live here, [support needs to] be relevant to the earth that we are living in. So people would come up with ideas (CW2I02, Founding Member).

It was special because when people get there, you don't feel like a stranger, you get involved in things even for them. You feel like part of the family arranging things, preparing. But even being involved in the conversation on the way forward, how do you feel? What do you think it should be? Should be good to different, just finding the opinion of people (CW2I03, Founding Member).

”

iii) The importance of Reverend Eve (discussed by n=11/12 interviewees, and n=1/8 participant journey logs)

The majority of participants explained how Reverend Eve is central to Complete Woman, shaping its ethos and the support it provided. Her initial vision led to her starting the women's ministry, and her continued welcoming and non-hierarchical, servant-leader approach continues to encourage people to engage. Moreover, her sensitive manner builds individuals' trust and their willingness to share their difficulties. Eve takes a genuine interest in participants' lives, perceiving and encouraging qualities and potential in them which they might not see in themselves; providing them with any support they might need. Through validating the emotions of participants, walking alongside them, and checking in on them regularly, she builds a rapport with them, encouraging them to grow in self-esteem and – confidence.

“

[It's] how she relates to people, especially when you come privately... She's part of us. She make you feel at home... she opens her doors anytime you want to come to discuss anything with her... She's with us packing, cleaning, after we serve... she gets herself involved and that is the leader (CW1I01, Current Member).

Spiritually, mentally, she's able to encourage you, talk to you, speak to you, give you hope. She gives hope for that interaction (CW1I07, Current Member).

[Eve] just walked in: she was like 'Oh by the way I've registered you for that' and you're going 'What! Why?!'. For some reason she sees things in me that I don't think are there, but she's always like 'No, I know you can do this', so she's always pushing me in those places of leadership (CW1I04, Current Member).

Eve will help and show you where to go to get help with whatever you need (CW8I01, Participant Journey Log).

”

Community Level

In comparison to how Complete Woman works with individuals, there was less data about how it worked within the local community. Nevertheless, participants' discussions highlighted how Complete Woman actively and consciously builds trusting relationships with organisations, and encourages and enables individuals and other community actors to connect with each other and share their time and expertise.

Again, the alignment in findings between founding and current members suggests the continuation of Complete Woman's initial values and operational approaches despite the growth and change it has experienced.

i) Building community capacity (discussed by n=7/12 interviewees, and n=3/8 participant journey logs)

Over half of interviewees discussed how Complete Woman enabled and motivated members to use their skills and experience to contribute to both Complete Woman and the wider community. Through recognising and building on individuals' strengths and working with, rather than for them, Complete Woman seeks to equip and inspire members to grow in commitment and make a difference.

“

It's us who in the community who sees the potential in someone we know... We know the people that we have in our community that are good at certain things, but they need a certificate to be able to practise. So then push them to go and gain that certificate so that they can practise whatever they can impact the community with freely (CW2I02, Founding Member).

It's about the self-efficacy... the belief that Complete Woman installs in them, that self belief. That moving them from just being recipients of aid into agents of change (CW2I01, Founding Member).

[CW8I04] is a regular at our crochet group where she also helps teach the beginners... With her teaching background, she exercises great

patience with anyone who wants to learn and she comes alive during these sessions. She has been active inviting and introducing a few members to the group (CW8I04, Participant Journey Log).

”

ii) Building connections between individuals, cultures and organisations (discussed by n=4/12 interviewees, n=4/12 case studies, and n=3/8 participant journey logs)

Around one third of participants discussed how Complete Woman offers opportunities for connection at numerous levels including: creating tailored opportunities for those in particular life phases, such as young women, mothers or those new to the area, to meet together and build relationships. Its open and non-discriminatory approach brings together individuals from different cultures, allowing people to learn from and about each other, building community and understanding. Relationship building with other organisations to help it run its programmes more effectively, offer members more in-depth, specialist support, and effectively signpost members as and when required.

“

[I could] talk to someone here. People were sharing in confidence. I had that space (CW2I04, Founding Member).

It's very multicultural, so you'll get children of all backgrounds and they've [CW1106's children] learned so much from people of different backgrounds... They are learning from us as well, and I think that is what makes it... I think that the best way of learning is from other people:... it's always going to be mixing with other people that we're going to learn these things (CW1106, Current Member).

Our partnership with St Vincent's Counselling Services [and with] Leeds Mental Wellbeing Service... Alongside this, we continue to work collaboratively within the wider Community Mental Health Transformation ecosystem (CWCS7, Case Study).



These collaborative relationships were also evident in participant journey logs, which showed referrals in both directions between Complete Woman and other organisations, as well as the process data. Here, just over a third of referrals (35.1%) into Complete Woman came from Migrant Action, another Leeds-based advice and support organisation for migrants. Moreover, this proportion stood higher at almost two-thirds (63%) in respect of individuals with a mental health condition, suggesting the trust other organisations have in Complete Woman's skills and expertise needed to work successfully with this cohort.

System Level

Discussions with founding and current members revealed the extent of Complete Woman's engagement with the wider service system. Reflecting their organisational-level involvement with Complete Woman, founding members reported how services rely

upon the language skills of Complete Woman's volunteers to meet the needs of residents. Current members additionally shared how Complete Woman helps its members obtain the support they needed from services. Both members' lived experiences and Complete Woman's relational way of working were seen as particularly valuable in providing this support and these connections.

i) Supporting the wider system (discussed by n=3/5 founding members, and n=2/8 participant journey logs)

Service system level impacts were discussed only by a small number of participants which to some extent relates to the parts of the process visible to different participants. Nevertheless some discussed how Complete Women works alongside the wider service system to help fill service gaps and strengthen understandings of the migration experience. Its multi-lingual volunteers, experience supporting migrant women, and the trust it had built with services over the years mean that Complete Woman is now relied upon by these services to provide both practical and advisory support.



But right now, [organisation] are the ones that want the signpost people to us. They really want to engage with us... they don't know what to do with someone, they just send them to Complete Woman, when they can't understand their language, they're sent to Complete Woman because we've got interpreters... So they'll just send people to us... they actually know we are there and they're confident enough to send people to us (CW2101, Founding Member).

I went to the sponsorship hubs because my sponsorship was revoked and I was looking for another sponsor... and was advised to go to Complete Woman for support with food supplies and other help (CW8I01, Participant Journey Log).

We came to council and were directed to come to Complete Woman because my wife wasn't given enough shifts to be able to feed us all (CW8I02, Participant Journey Log).

Our name is really going out there for the work that we are doing... It's a new project by Migration Yorkshire... for migrant women and enterprise... and they're asking me to sit on the Board to inform how to support migrant women into enterprise (CW2I01, Founding Member).

ii) Helping people navigate the wider system (discussed by n=6/12 interviewees and n=6/12 case studies)

Half of case studies and around the same proportion of those interviewed discussed how Complete Woman supports those who were stuck in the system, at risk of falling through its gaps, or struggling to navigate support. In particular, Complete Woman offers practical and emotional support to help people integrate into UK society, with members sharing their experiences to help others better understand the UK's systems and their unspoken 'rules' and approaches. Complete Woman also actively works with specialists and professionals to connect members with advice and guidance it is unable to provide itself. Current members in particular noted the uniqueness of this,

comparing Complete Woman to their experiences of other organisations, which they saw as inflexible and unwilling to learn.

The goal that we want to achieve has got nothing to do with where you're coming from. It has got everything to do with where you are... as we want to maintain our identity, we also want to be able to make our identity fit in the society where we are... We meet together and we change the way we do things so that we can fit in (CW2I02, Founding Member).

Where maybe we may not be as experienced as that organisation, it always helps to come together and work together... We can't bring all the outcomes that people need, so working in conjunction with other agencies, with other professionals we can then come to a holistic outcome for people: we can work with people that are specialists in different areas (CW2I04, Founding Member).

Perhaps unsurprisingly due to their current receipt of support, experiences of signposting and advocacy support were also more prevalent amongst current than founding members. The majority of current members have been represented by Complete Woman within the wider service system and/or connected by them with other services, especially those related to housing and employment. Crucially, members highlighted how this involvement by Complete Woman continues to demonstrate the relational approach which makes it so unique.

“

If it's something that we can't do for them, we'll try and signpost them to another organisation that can help them better than we could because the services that we're running are quite limited... and then we'll try and follow up (CW1104, Current Member).

”

Half of case studies similarly speak about how Complete Woman helps people access support from the wider system. Noting how this reflected Complete Woman's underlying commitment to holistic support, they demonstrate how the organisation helps members access advice and practical resources. Complete Woman alerts members to what is available, and connects them via formal training programmes, signposting and referrals to organisations better placed to support them with their particular issues.

“

We provided practical support for [individual], helping her navigate the school registration process and apply for FSM benefits. As this was the first time she had ever needed to claim such support, Complete Woman guided her through the steps... We take pride in offering support that goes beyond a day's meal and activities for vulnerable families (CWCS3102, Case Study).

”

Taken collectively, these findings demonstrate Complete Woman's person-centred and strengths-based ways of working, its role in building and supporting community capacity and cohesion, and its function as a conduit with the service system. The outcomes and impacts of this way of working are now discussed in Chapter Three.

Chapter 3:

Outcomes and Impacts

This chapter discusses the outcomes and impacts of Complete Woman, drawing on data from the interviews with founding members and current members, the case studies and the process data. Findings are categorised at individual, community and wider service system level, reflecting how, despite the strongly individual and community-centred nature of the group, it is also making a difference more widely.

Individual-level outcomes and impacts

Findings demonstrate the positive outcomes of engagement with Complete Woman for individuals practically, emotionally and spiritually. The peer support offered by the Complete Woman community helps members feel accompanied and understood, enabling them to share stories, inspire each other and grow in confidence and purpose. Specific support for those struggling with parenting, digital exclusion and limited English enables respite, increased opportunity and better integration. Combined, these outcomes led to Complete Woman working preventatively through spotting and responding to issues which would have otherwise been left ignored, thereby preventing individuals from falling into potentially serious crisis.

i) Feeling accompanied, valued and encouraged (discussed by n=11/12 interviewees, n=4/12 case studies, and n=4/8 participant journey logs)
Reflecting the strength of this aspect of Complete Woman, all but one founding member, all current members and a third of case studies had experienced the organisation as a place of understanding, openness and acceptance. Its translation services help non-English speakers feel at home and build confidence, whilst a shared understanding of culture, faith and/or migration create a family in which members could be honest and authentic. As a result, members felt heard, valued and motivated to continue.



They offered rest and renewal and the sense of being truly seen and truly heard. It was really where we shared our stories, our burdens, and we lifted each other up through those conversations and it strengthened us as people (CW2104, Founding Member).

With Complete Woman, I feel like I've got a family... I don't think a Complete Woman is just an organisation, it's a sisterhood... sometimes you need an ear to hear you. You need a voice that is telling you that things are going to go better (CW1105, Current Member).

[CW8107] said ever since she joined The Pantry and the online sessions, she has felt a sense of belonging. Her mental health and well being is getting better. She stated 'I feel like I have a family now'... She does not feel like she is alone anymore (CW8107, Participant Journey Log).

”

ii) Growing resilience and coping mechanisms (discussed by n=10/12 interviewees, n=6/12 case studies, and n=5/8 participant journey logs)

The majority of Participants experienced Complete Woman as benefiting members' mental and spiritual wellbeing. Being around others who shared their faith or life experiences, contributing to Complete Woman, and having the space to share their feelings allows members to worry less, strengthens their faith, and equips them to effectively confront difficulties, including those relating to their mental health.

“

They meet other people, knowing they have the same story, they share the same experience... And you're like, 'Oh my God, I understand'... knowing they can... drop the mask... that freedom. That's so helpful (CW2104, Founding Member).

I'm finding my spiritual self... I believed in God, always, but practicing, it started with Complete Woman.... because sometimes you need that joy for your life to become happier. And what is a person's destiny if we don't

have God close to us? We came from Him, so if we're not close to Him, we're going to get lost. I've been lost, but I've been found (CW1105, Current Member).

Participant occasionally has difficulty managing her finances, and until a year ago would regularly struggle to make payment for The Pantry – often having to pay the next week. She has built financial resilience over time, making more careful choices and prioritising things... 'I have no need to hang out with the bad crowd anymore... I've been through a lot and I'm in a good place now' (CW8103, Participant Journey Log).

”

Some discussed the benefits of Complete Woman's work with families by providing children with stimulating activities, particularly during the school holidays, providing a safe space in which they could engage and build relationships. This offers parents respite, enabling them to cope better with their daily challenges. Having meals included in holiday camps and making participants aware of their entitlements to childcare also lessens the financial burden of the holidays for some families, an additional source of reassurance.

“

One was special needs... would only cling to Mum... kick and scream if anyone else tried to come near me... to all of a sudden, this kid now will come and give us a hug. He will now play with other children... So Mum is now left to have her 5 minutes of me-time so that she can emotionally cope with the rest of the day (CW2105, Founding Member).

[Healthy Holidays] gave her some time to herself, some respite... because she was really struggling with her own mental health. She absolutely enjoyed it. I think she was struggling financially as well, so the children having the meals here was really important for her... and her mental health improved during the holidays (CW1I06, Current Member).

”

Half of the case studies echo the findings from the interviews that Complete Woman creates a trusted environment which benefits members' mental health and overall ability to integrate and cope with their difficulties. Peer-led support, enhanced by targeted training and effective links to other community organisations and services, is crucial to such outcomes, as is holiday childcare provision, which not only helps children and families directly, but also provides an opportunity to signpost members to other forms of support. Such outcomes are in part supported by the process data, where nearly 97% of beneficiaries reported an improved ability to cope with their daily challenges following engagement with Complete Woman.

“

[Child] joined the Complete Woman Healthy Holidays program... The program provided him with nutritious meals, ensuring that he was well-fed... On some days, [child] even went home with packed meals from the program's leftovers, helping to further ease the financial strain on his family... He made friends, which helped ease his feelings of isolation... His mother also expressed relief at receiving support with the

school registration process and FSM application, as she was not aware of her eligibility (CWCS3I02, Case Study).

The sessions provided her with both practical parenting tools and emotional support, helping her develop new ways to nurture her children while managing her own grief... "I'm learning to process my experiences differently using the Thought Diary exercise and journaling. Taking care of my mental health allows me to be a better parent for my boys"... she found solace in connecting with other parents facing similar struggles... giving her the confidence and strength to move forward (CWCS5I02, Case Study).

By blending social activities with reflective practices, women have engaged more openly without the stigma associated with direct mental health terminology. The inclusion of British social and workplace etiquette... has been especially valuable for new migrants, equipping them with skills that support integration and resilience. Beneficiaries have also reported improved coping strategies [and] the peer-led nature of small groups has created a trusted and safe environment, encouraging women with complex needs to participate consistently (CWCS7, Case Study).

”

iii) Increased confidence, determination and purpose (discussed by n=10/12 interviewees, n=3/12 case studies, and n=4/8 participant journey logs)

All founding members believed that Complete Woman's way of working increases individuals' confidence, vision and resolve.

Founding members had witnessed in themselves and others how Complete Woman helps individuals grow in self-belief and determination through encouraging them out of their comfort zones within a supportive community where they see others succeeding. As a result, their engagement with Complete Woman has enabled them to move forward both personally and professionally with new conviction and motivation.

“

It's transformed me, to be honest. I started this just for the heart and the love for people and now to a place where I actually see myself as a transformational leader. I see myself as a feminist leader. I see myself as a gender advocate. It's literally just transformed me... to lead with confidence and clarity (CW2I01).

The journey with Complete Woman has shaped me into a compassionate, reflective and impact-driven person... It's made me to be someone who's deeply rooted in purpose, in people, in their lived experiences... Complete Woman's played a very significant role in my personal and professional development (CW2I04, Founding Member).

Complete Woman didn't just give me a role... it invested in me. I was challenged and I was helped to refine myself and my voice and through the journey of being coached, I rose into spaces of leadership... I founded a caregiving company... So it has been and it continues to be a very meaningful journey for me (CW2I04, Founding Member).

”

This aspect of Complete Woman was supported by over half of other participants. Who discussed how Complete Woman provided members with a safe place in which their confidence, resilience and understanding have been strengthened. Stories of others' successes inspired hope and motivation and the support offered grew their skills and resources enabling them to advocate for themselves and others, and redirect their lives. As a result, members have grown in agency, become better able to navigate challenges confidently and proactively, and to take practical steps towards a more positive future.

“

I think it's brought me out of my shell because I was in the shell and then it brought me out, like a sunflower (CW1I03, Current Member).

To date, women have described the coaching sessions as transformative, helping them regain confidence and agency (CWCS7, Case Study).

Through our equipment lending scheme and tailored digital skills training, we enabled participants to access the internet, essential services, and information that they previously struggled to engage with... For those experiencing exploitation and modern slavery, the digital skills training provided a pathway to greater independence and control... Many participants learned how to search for employment, write CVs, and access financial services, significantly boosting their confidence and employability... Overall, the activity has reduced digital exclusion, fostering independence and enhancing... wellbeing (CWCS4I01, Case Study).

The crochet group has given her space to expand on her creativity and an opportunity to continue her teaching. She has been able to connect with others and make some new friends. She feels empowered instead of feeling like a victim... Participant has also learnt to be vulnerable and accept help (CW8I04, Participant Journey Log).

[CW8I08] said she has had a big change with her confidence. She doesn't feel alone anymore and doesn't feel like staying in her house all the time. She said 'I do not look down on myself anymore because I was given the opportunity to help'... She mentioned how this journey has made her come out of her shell and empowered her (CW8I08, Participant Journey Log).

”

iv) Members better able to access relevant, timely support before crisis (discussed by n=6/12 interviewees, n=1/12 case studies, and n=6/8 participant journey logs)

Over half of current members described how Complete Woman recognises issues which would have otherwise gone unnoticed and responds in a compassionate and holistic way. This allows it to play a unique role in helping them and others avoid harm. The impact of this is heightened by the lack of other support available, meaning that, without Complete Woman, individuals would have no safety net to prevent them from falling into crisis.

“

I'm very thankful to Complete Woman... If I was not going to have Complete Woman at that time [housing

difficulties] I would break even more... [others] would be completely depressed or would have given up... There'd be no form of support for them. There would be a void that they would end up in (CW2I05, Founding Member).

She wrote a letter to the city council for the house... real support with the steps what I can take... at the end with a lot of pressure from both sides, let's say council found private rented house for us (CW1I05, Current Member)

I don't know where I would have been.... I think about those who aren't getting help [the people that haven't been reached by Complete Woman], some of them have died... Complete Woman has done so much, has changed so many lives. And has saved so many lives as well. Not just physically, but spiritually (CW1I02, Current Member).

I always have the basic items to... put together a good meal for me and my son because of The Pantry. This helps so much because I don't have to worry about food on top of all the other worries... you always have the things you need... If it wasn't for Complete Woman I don't know how I would get food because it's so expensive (CW8I01, Participant Journey Log).

Accessing The Pantry helped me in so many ways. Providing us with food and other things like laptop and phone. I've benefitted a lot from this and so has my family. My son was using his phone for his studies, and he can now use the laptop, this has helped us so much (CW8I02, Participant Journey Log).

”

Community-level outcomes and impacts

Both founding and current members discussed how the relationships and links Complete Woman helped to develop benefited both the group and its members. Findings revealed two main conclusions. Firstly, Complete Woman helps members connect with and learn about those with different experiences, helping break down cultural barriers and increase empathy. Secondly, Complete Woman encourages members to give back to others, creating a cycle whereby individuals support others in the same way they have been, and continue to be, supported. Complete Woman's outcomes and impacts at the community level were, however, discussed less than the difference it made at the individual level, reflecting its focus on working with each member on an individual basis to effect change.

i) Increased cohesion and understanding across groups (discussed by n=4/12 interviewees)

Complete Woman was seen by a small number of founding members and members to act as a bridge between individuals with different backgrounds and experiences, encouraging understanding and supportive relationships. Its community is one of compassionate cross-cultural understanding and positive integration. In contrast to other local support, which is seen to work in an exclusionary manner and target specific groups or cultures, Complete Woman enables members to learn about lives and journeys different from their own, helping them develop a compassion for others.

“

Before, I was like, what's the value? You're not a part of my life. So should I care?... It definitely softened me. It's made me go. OK, you know what? They're people (CW2I05, Founding Member).

Now they belong to a community... I belong in England now. England is home... now when they come in, it's almost like, oh, now I'm in England. Now I've got life in England (CW2I01, Founding Member).

We've got these play schemes and they're meeting people of different colours, of different languages. [...] And I think it's about them getting used to rules, different culture in this country... It's nice because it's very multicultural, so you'll get children of all backgrounds and they [my children] have learned so much from people of different backgrounds... They are learning from us as well, and I think that is what makes it (CW1I06, Current Member).

”

ii) Growing capacity and reach of community groups (discussed by n=8/12 interviewees)

For the majority of founding and current members, Complete Woman's support and investment in members' capacity and self-belief leads to them supporting others in the community. The skills, confidence and vision they develop at Complete Woman equip them to give back to others facing similar challenges, creating a cycle of community support and change. Complete Woman also benefits from increased numbers of

volunteers, resulting in relationships of reciprocal support which enable Complete Woman to continue to function despite lacking outside funding.

“

I am working with women and youths [in her African-based organisation]... It's not just giving them money or paying them, it's more of helping them. They can stand even tomorrow on their own, sharpening their skills... I'm really thankful for Complete Woman in UK, really it help (CW2I03, Founding Member).

She came first time, didn't say a word to anyone... sat at the back with a hoodie on, really withdrawn... Now she's a chef, she cooks for all the events (CW2I05, Founding Member).

We are not funded and... Complete Woman relies heavily on volunteers... I believe that that's what's actually really held us up so strong to date. It's almost like even if we don't get any other funding, there will be people who will rally for this organisation to keep going (CW2I01, Founding Member).

I can find myself here, because sometimes if you try to pour from the empty cup you're not doing much and we need something for ourselves as well (CW1I05, Current Member).

”

System Level (discussed by n=3/12 interviewees)

Limited data from both founding and current members revealed how Complete Woman

enables better service system navigation at both local and national levels. Outcomes range from members successfully registering for holiday childcare at Complete Woman, through to members interacting more effectively with social services and securing UK residency.

“

Me and my other neighbour told her about Healthy Holidays [at Complete Woman]. She had no idea that she had an entitlement to Healthy Holidays. She then signed up and then we helped her access (CW1I06, Current Member).

This lady who we supported. She got her visa... Long term, my friends [I'm] watching did they get the job, and now they're working, they settle (CW1I02, Current Member).

”

Whilst one founding member mentioned Complete Woman's previous campaigning around migrant work conditions, no other references to the organisation's advocacy were made.

Chapter 4:

Looking Towards the Future

This chapter looks at founding and current members' thoughts about the future for themselves and for Complete Woman. Drawing on data from interviews with both groups of members, it highlights participants' optimism around the potential for Complete Woman's growth. However, discussions also made clear the various barriers to this, including in particular insufficient funding, meeting increasingly complex needs and encouraging individuals to engage despite previous negative experiences of services.

Personal plans (discussed by n=5/7 current members)

The majority of current members shared their personal plans for the future. These varied considerably, ranging from travelling to reconnect with family, to recuperating from recent upheaval, and undertaking further study. Although current members acknowledged some of the barriers they faced, such as obtaining visas and managing poor health conditions, they were nevertheless optimistic that they could still achieve their goals.

“

Even with all that I've gone through, last year I went home to visit my family, and this year I'm planning to go back... Next year I'm getting ready to go on vacation, going back to see my family and my boys (CW1I01, Current Member).

We're going to Egypt in April for 10 days... And then in August, we're going on another little trip... to Western Super-Mare... I can't wait to go on my holiday (CW1I03, Current Member).

I want to do psychotherapy... So when my visa comes, I can just study that, continue my mental health training (CW1I02, Current Member).

”

The future potential of Complete Woman (discussed by n=10/12 interviewees, and n=7/8 participant journey logs) Although a small number of participant journey logs described members as satisfied with Complete Woman's current operations, others, and almost all founding and current members were keen to see Complete Woman expand further and respond to the needs of those seeking support. Participants wanted Complete Woman to provide engagement opportunities which were not only enjoyable, but also aligned with its wider mission of equipping people to build positive

futures, mentioning projects such as developing entrepreneurship amongst migrant women. Notably, current members saw themselves as becoming increasingly involved in such activities and helping others more as Complete Woman continued to grow.

“

We've only scratched the surface. I honestly think there's just so much more that is needed (CW2I05, Founding Member).

I'd like to run a book club... not just a book club, but it's something to equip them to really integrate into the system, understanding the system, knowing how it works, where to go (CW1I04, Current Member).

I'd like to be able to evolve in the roles that I have within Complete Woman. Hopefully, that's going to happen as we grow and as we go. More opportunities... I'm sure that as we grow, things are going to change and we're going to morph into other things (CW1I04, Current Member).

[CW8I05] would like some physical health advice services as we already provide support with mental health (CW8I05, Participant Journey Log).

”

*Perceived obstacles and challenges
(discussed by n=9/12 interviewees and n=1/12 case study)*

The majority of current and founding members, as well as one case study, discussed what was needed for Complete Woman to grow, and the barriers to it

increasing its impact. In particular, they noted the need to develop beneficial relationships with the wider community, to continue to shape initiatives in line with the wishes of service users and stakeholders, and to involve more skilled workers in the provision of support. There was also a recognition that Complete Woman needed to actively reach communities and individuals whose previous negative experiences of support may create a barrier to engagement.

“

It shouldn't be something that we see among ourselves and decide that, 'Oh, we're going to do this'... It has to be something that really answers the needs of that community... We're getting more volunteers and people really wanting to work with us. And I think it would be really good to be able to equip those people with the knowledge and the information that they need for us to grow (CW1I04, Current Member).

You know when you need proper people, skilled people, you need to pay them well, we all aware of that... if there is people somewhere else [that] are skilled, that can support Complete Woman, [if] they can get paid or compensated somehow, not necessarily giving them money, it could help (CW2I03, Founding Member).

The barriers are there because sometimes it's difficult to trust people... because of the experience that people have... You don't want to go there and not tell people the truth, but it becomes difficult because you don't trust anyone... The fact that people have been not helped in other spaces also becomes a barrier (CW2I04, Founding Member).

”

Current members additionally recognised how the organisation needed more physical space and funding in order to extend what it could do. Combined with increasing the numbers of skilled staff and volunteers, this would enable them to better support the community's increasingly diverse needs through offering support with more complex challenges. Reflecting their greater awareness of the operational side of the organisation, founding members stressed how this funding needed to be diversified and stem from funders committed to the vision of Complete Woman.

“

They need space, they need food, they need people. It is about money and it's about setting... and it's about people... I think they need more resources, because, the will, the desire, the passion, and everything is there (CW1I05, Current Member).

Looking ahead, we are planning to recruit a part-time African migrant counselling graduate... We are currently seeking additional funding to meet the increasing demand for our services. Specifically, we aim to expand our offer by adding an extra day of activities, increasing support worker hours, and recruiting a part-time counsellor to provide culturally sensitive and sustained one-to-one support. These developments will allow us to respond more effectively to the complex and growing needs of our service user (CWCS7, Case Study).

If you get your partnerships and you get known, then you're going to get more people, but then you're going to

need more funding... [We need] funders who believe in the mission... and we're not quite there yet (CW2I05, Founding Member).

I think that this service needs to go forward. There's a real need for it in the community and I think with the right amount of funding... I think that there's a lot more potential that could happen here because I think that they've got all the hands that they need. They've got all the people that can support with this. I just think that it does boil down to money (CW1I06, Current Member).

”

References

Burchell, J., Cook, J., Thiery, M., Tweedy, M. & Hulme, C. (2026). 'Presentation of the SBM and its distinctive value for evidencing the impact of second wave prevention strategies'. Journal of Social Work.

Cook, J., Burchell, J. & Thiery, H. (2024(a)). [A Strengths-Based Model for Evidencing the Impact of 'Second Wave' Prevention Strategies](#). [Report].

Cook, J., Burchell, J., Twiddy, M., Hulme, C., Wilberforce, M., Martin, A., Thiery, H., Jessop, B. & Webb, E. (2024(b)). Bridging the Gaps In Evidencing Prevention: Key Findings from a Multi-site Study of Local Area Coordination. [Report]. Available from: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1U07lvT-uhknJEtyY9f9LrqFqJ_Ejtbo8/view?usp=drive_link.

Cook, J., Thiery, H. & Burchell, J. (2023). No longer "waiting for the great leap forwards" - ? Advances in Local State, Voluntary and Community Sector Relationships During Covid-19. (2nd ed., vol. 2). Journal of Social Policy.

ESRI UK (2026). Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2019. Available from: <https://www.reports.esriuk.com/view-report/36d34b574b6c4d6f9ba3e408146faa82/E08000035>

Home Office (2026(a)). Why do people come to the UK? Work. Available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-system-statistics-year-ending-december-2025/why-do-people-come-to-the-uk-work>

Home Office (2026(b)). How many people claim asylum in the UK? Available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-system-statistics-year-ending-december-2025/how-many-people-claim-asylum-in-the-uk>

House of Commons Library (2026). Migration statistics. Available from: <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN06077/SN06077.pdf>

ONS Census (2021(a)). How life has changed in Leeds: Census 2021. Available from: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/censusareachanges/E08000035/>

ONS Census (2021(b)). Census maps. Available from: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/maps/>

Refugee Action (2024) Asylum in the UK: A Frontline for Racial Justice. [Report]. Available from: <https://www.refugee-action.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Asylum-In-The-UK-A-Front-Line-For-Racial-Justice-Briefing.pdf>

Refugee Council (2026). Top facts from the latest statistics on refugees and people seeking asylum. Available from: <https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/stay-informed/explainers/top-facts-from-the-latest-statistics-on-refugees-and-people-seeking-asylum/>

Rev Eve (2026). Leadership and Impact. Available from: <https://evemaloba.com/leadership/>

The Guardian (2025). How deprived is your health? Available from:
<https://www.theguardian.com/society/ng-interactive/2025/oct/30/how-deprived-is-your-area>

Thiery, H., Cook, J., Burchell, J., Wilberforce, M., Twiddy, M. & Hulme, C. (2023). Transforming adult social care systems? A systematic review of the costs and outcomes of local area coordination in England and Wales. *Social Sciences and Humanities Open*.

Unison (2025(a)). The slavery and exploitation of migrant workers. Available from:
<https://www.unison.org.uk/news/article/2025/06/the-slavery-and-exploitation-of-migrant-workers/>

Unison (2025(b)). Caring at Cost: A survey of migrant care staff working in the UK. Available from:
<https://www.unison.org.uk/content/uploads/2025/02/Migrant-care-worker-report-2025.pdf>

We thank you for your ongoing support.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank participants for their time and insight.

Yorkshire Policy Innovation Partnership (YPIP)

YPIP is a regional partnership working on new and better ways of sharing knowledge and making decisions to improve local lives and places in Yorkshire.

Get in touch



ypip@leeds.ac.uk



ypip.org.uk



[LinkedIn](#)



**Economic
and Social
Research Council**