



Making a Difference

Impact Report 2017/18

February 2018



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Welcome

Making a difference
Impact Report 2017/18

At the Sarah Agnes Foundation (SAF) we strive to strengthen and increase the experience of healthy relationships across the lifespan.

We believe we can have the highest impact on the lives of those we journey with by focusing our work on prevention and early intervention. Our team of counsellors and psychotherapists support those that seek our help by enabling and strengthening coping strategies that enhance resilience and empathy, to resolve and restore the balance of a healthy mind.

In this year's impact report we have focussed on the evaluation of our work on our five core thematic areas: Our work on family relationships, domestic violence, substance misuse, homelessness and children's mental health and well-being. Many of our services are working with those in our society who are experiencing some of the most complex problems we see; despite the challenges of this work I am encouraged that we are consistently delivering positive outcomes, which is good news for family and community life. The case studies in this report show that our work changes lives, and it is these real life stories and successes that inspire my colleagues, partner organisations and me to want to do more.

We would not have been able to do all we have done for those we journey with in our communities without our dedicated supporters and those who volunteer with us. I would like to thank each and every one of our supporters, along with our many funding partners for working so hard to be a part of everything we have achieved for individuals, couples and families this year. I am very proud of you, our work and the organisation we are building together. Finally, I'd like to thank the children, young people and families it is our privilege to work both with and for. Their stories of tenacity and resilience continue to inspire me, and remind everyone at the Sarah Agnes Foundation how important it is that we do all we can to ensure all are given the opportunity for a brighter future.



Agnes Rees, Chief Executive

Our impact in 2017/18

Our overall outcomes

71%

the percentage of children and young people who experienced positive change across key areas of their lives including relationships and mental health.

67%

the percentage of families we worked with who experienced positive improvements across key areas of their lives including increasing resilience, empathy, self-esteem and emotional intelligence.

400

The number of individuals, couples and families that we specifically worked with in our services, an increase of 60% from the previous year.

50

The number of local authorities and partner agencies we worked with including midwives, mental health specialists, social workers, teachers, GPs and homeless key workers.

Our achievements against last year's goals

Last year we set ourselves five key targets for 2017/18:

- 1. Work with more than 200 families including children, young people, couples and families with one or more of our key themes. We have exceeded the goal we have set ourselves due to an increase in partner organisation activity and a decrease in local service provision.**
- 2. Deliver more than 3000 positive changes to families lives through small positive emotional and psychological steps that increase wellbeing and experience of healthy relationships. This is measured through our evaluation tools and looks at changes such as resilience, empathy, self-esteem, healthy eating, healthy sleeping etc.**
- 3. Maintain the high proportion of those we journey with who experience positive changes through our services. We continued to deliver a high standard of delivery of service to those in need by strengthening staff training and listening to client and partner feedback.**
- 4. Increase the number of donation and new supporter actions. Despite a tough fundraising climate we recruited more financial supporters than we did in the previous year.**
- 5. Increase the number of counsellors and psychotherapists in the team. We have experienced a 15% increase of volunteer activity and a waiting list to mobilise as new partner interest to open new services increase.**

Our Work

At the Sarah Agnes Foundation, we strive to be changemakers for families and communities. We support all those who are in need of emotional and psychological care at vulnerable times in their lives enabling them to grow resilience of mind. Founded just four years ago we have been surprised at the rate of growth which has been born out of the increasing demand for the type of services we provide. The impact of broken relationships in family and community lives are taking their toll and at SAF in particular we see the scale and impact.

In the past few years we have closely analysed our work with those accessing our services at vulnerable times in their lives. Our focus on the family enables a refocus of its importance in our society and the need to strengthen relationships where possible in order to grow healthy minds for future generations to come. The intergenerational impact of broken relationships that remain unresolved is enormous and not to be underestimated.

We see in our work its impact in family breakdown, substance misuse, homelessness, eating disorders, domestic violence and mental health. Its impact reaches infants, children, young people through to elders. Research tells us that early intervention and prevention is a vital ingredient for the healthy minds of tomorrow. By supporting the relationships between parents and their children, couples and the wider family construct we offer an opportunity to facilitate a safe space for unresolved issues to have the chance to resolve and bring healing.

Research has shown that where relationships have the opportunity to thrive there is a knock on effect on education, stable relationships, career attainment, satisfaction and contributions to citizenship through community life. It is imperative we support for a healthy society.

In our direct services we focus our work on five specific themes that have been identified as some of the most pressing areas of need for families we work with:

- family relationships
- domestic violence
- substance misuse
- homelessness
- children's mental health and well-being

This year in our services:

- We worked with 150 children and young people. Their experiences ranged from family breakdown through to exclusion from school and all with mental health concerns including anxiety and depression.
- 71% of children and young people experienced positive change across key areas of their lives.
- 95% of those we journeyed with were happy with the experience with us.

Through our direct services we learn more about the complexity of the issues that affect children, young people and their families. This learning is contributing to the way we shape our future services. Families are under enormous pressures and our most pressing areas of need are the consequences. We believe more than ever before in the need for early intervention and prevention services to decrease the levels of crisis currently been seen in our communities up and down the country.

It is our duty and responsibility through our code of ethics as an accredited counselling and psychotherapy organisation to enable the voice of vulnerable members of our society to be heard and to contribute any learning to the wider community of professionals, parents and policy makers where we are able to have those conversations.

Our methodology

Our evaluation approach

We measure impact in ways that put the person at the centre of understanding their journey of change. Our monitoring and evaluation strategy is rooted in three guiding values: participatory, ethical and collaborative. We use a combination of clinical measures as well as outcomes mapping and transformative learning techniques that guide our planning all the way back to feeding learning back into action.

How we measure impact

To understand how our services are performing overall, and how they are performing on a deeper level, we use a combination of evaluation tools that have been developed in-house and bespoke validated tools that vary from service to service. In this report, we are measuring our impact against outcomes and outputs that were set for each thematic area of need.

Evaluations:

We measure our impact to understand whether we're making a difference in peoples lives, and learn how we can do even better. We review our data on a quarterly basis in each of our thematic areas. We also conduct evaluations of services to learn which approaches work best. Whenever possible we incorporate the voice of those we journey with to ensure that we are continually listening from those we have the most to learn from.

Understanding Change:

When we talk about 'positive change' in this report, it reflects a snapshot based on a number of approaches to helping those we journey with. During our work with clients we aim for them to experience overall positive change as a result of the work, but it is important we understand that this is not a straightforward journey.

Our work on family relationships

Research from leading thinktanks in the UK estimate that around 50% of families experience family breakdown. Children and young people are at particular risk of experiencing emotional and psychological vulnerabilities due to added stress and strain in their environments. help

Domestic violence in particular is an issue that many families are struggling to come to terms with as well as various forms of abuse, neglect and maltreatment. Our mental health services in the community provide part of the solution to help our clients come to terms with their distress whilst helping restore a balance of mind.

At SAF we support families who are looking to build resilience and strengthen their relationships before family breakdown occurs with our team of family therapists, as well as where relationships have already broken down; helping to put in strategies and solutions for a way forward that decreases as much stress and strain as possible.

We work within a multi-agency framework to offer family therapy and one-to-one counselling and psychotherapy, intensive support and group work.

Our Outcomes

- Strengthening relationships
- Building resilience
- Establishing joint strategies and solutions

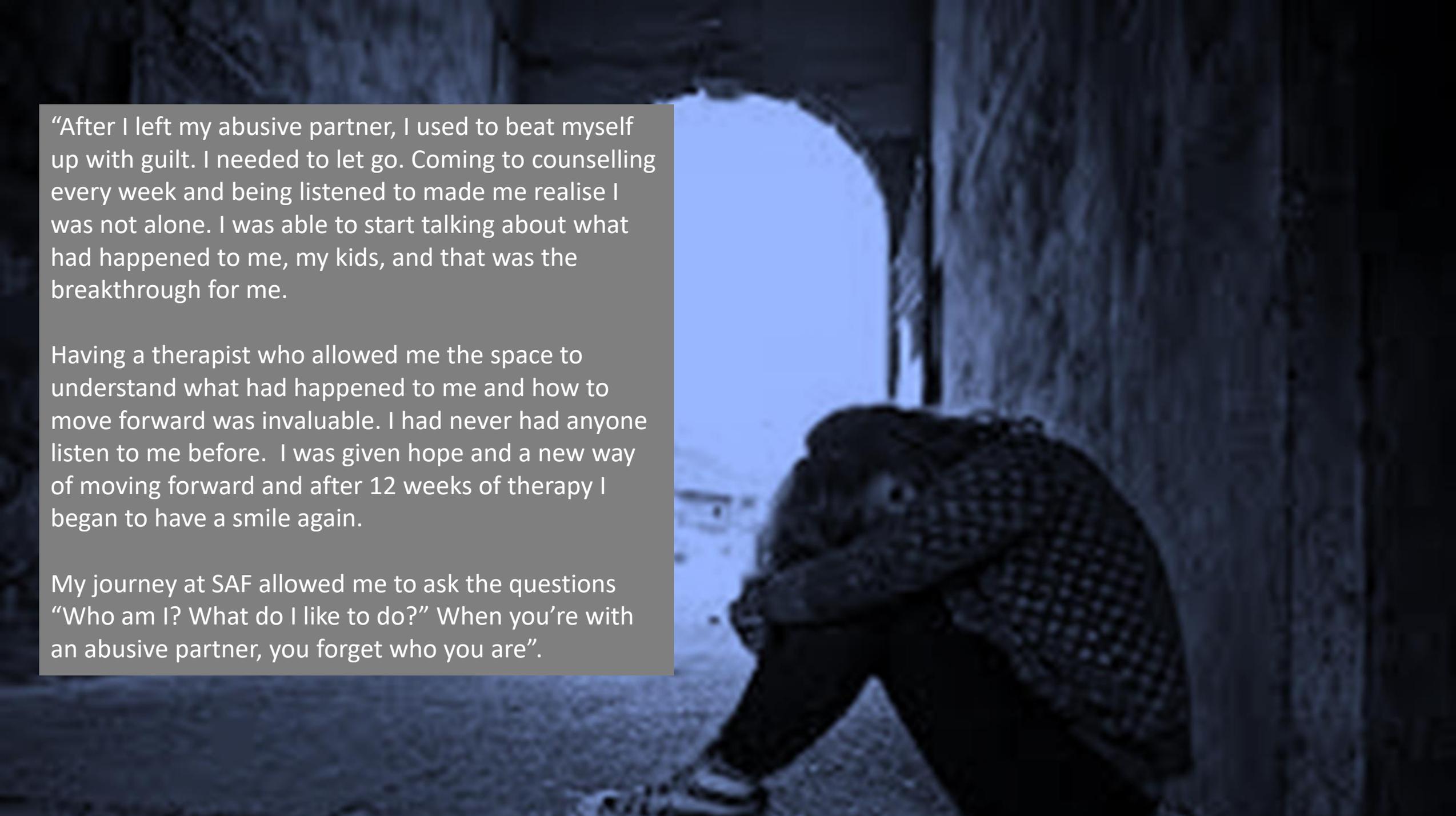
Our work on domestic abuse

Domestic abuse affects not only the victim, but the whole family

At SAF, we believe that no-one should have to live in fear of violence and abuse. SAF supports clients experiencing a range of violent and abusive behaviours, helping them rebuild their lives. Different forms of violence and abuse we hear about include; for example domestic violence, sexual violence, so-called 'honour'-based violence, human trafficking and modern slavery, and female genital mutilation.

- SAF provides specialist support to women, children and some men escaping domestic violence and other forms of violence. Around one in five children have witnessed domestic abuse, with a third of children witnessing domestic abuse also experiencing another form of abuse.
- All our staff are specially trained to the highest standard and we also provide training to other professionals.

Research evidence shows that children experiencing domestic violence and abuse can be negatively affected in every aspect of their functioning, safety, physical and mental health and well-being, school attendance and achievement, economic wellbeing and emotional development. The effects may continue into adulthood affecting their ability to form peer friendships and healthy partner relationships of their own.

A person is sitting on the floor in a dark room, looking out a window. The person is wearing a dark, patterned sweater and has their head resting on their hand, appearing to be in a state of distress or contemplation. The room is dimly lit, with the light from the window providing the primary illumination. The window is arched and shows a bright, overcast sky.

“After I left my abusive partner, I used to beat myself up with guilt. I needed to let go. Coming to counselling every week and being listened to made me realise I was not alone. I was able to start talking about what had happened to me, my kids, and that was the breakthrough for me.

Having a therapist who allowed me the space to understand what had happened to me and how to move forward was invaluable. I had never had anyone listen to me before. I was given hope and a new way of moving forward and after 12 weeks of therapy I began to have a smile again.

My journey at SAF allowed me to ask the questions “Who am I? What do I like to do?” When you’re with an abusive partner, you forget who you are”.

Our work on substance misuse

- Parental drug and alcohol misuse affects the lives of thousands of children and young people – too many aren't getting any help, leaving them struggling alone.
- We support children and young people in our services by offering one-to-one counselling with our team of specialist counsellors.
- We have therapists who are specifically trained in Cognitive Behavioural Therapies
- SAF works alongside the UK's leading charities in substance misuse to promote a holistic approach for our clients who may need other services alongside counselling.

The potential for parenting capacity to be undermined and children's health and development to be harmed by parental substance misuse is considerable, particularly when other risk factors such as domestic abuse and mental health difficulties are present (Cleaver et al, 2011; Horgan, 2011; Barnard, 1999).

There is a serious risk that parents will neglect their children. This is because their focus is on obtaining drugs and alcohol, and their capacity is impaired by the effect of substances so they are not able to pay sufficient attention to their children's needs. Such neglect can have a negative impact on children's health, their emotional and physical development, their education and put them at risk of physical and sexual abuse. At SAF we support prevention and early intervention support to reduce risks and enhance health and wellbeing of families.



‘My mum is an alcoholic and has been for as long as I can remember,’ explains Frankie. ‘For a long time I felt lonely. ‘It was just me coping with it on my own and that could involve anything from cooking the dinner to cleaning up. ‘Many young people feel they have to keep it a secret to protect their parents,’ Frankie says.

‘I’m never angry at my mum. It’s just the alcohol that I don’t like. ‘When she is drinking she is verbally abusive – it’s like she’s two different people. ‘One side is my mum, who’s loving and caring, the other side is this woman that I don’t know.’

Frankie adds: ‘It is a big issue for young people and they should be aware that there is help out there from organisations like SAF’.

Our work on homelessness

Anyone can become homeless. However, certain factors such as relationship breakdown, redundancy, poor mental health, alcohol/substance addiction, and domestic abuse can make homelessness more likely.

The effects of benefit cuts, the housing crisis and increased migration, along with cuts in funding to services, mean the number of people sleeping rough has increased sharply in recent years.

There are 164,365 homeless people currently living in London, this equates to one in every 53 people in the capital.

Of the people sleeping rough in London, many had one or more support needs: 41 per cent alcohol; 31 per cent drugs. Only 25% have no alcohol, substance use or mental health support needs.



SAF works alongside some of the leading homeless charities in the UK to provide one to one counselling and group workshops that help build self-esteem, resilience and support the journey of health and wellbeing.

SAF understands the complexity of homelessness and appreciates the need to work in a multi-agency capacity to meet the practical and psychological needs of each person and family.

Additional Achievements

It is well established that families who are coping with multiple levels of vulnerability face even more barriers to accessing the support they need. Some of the most vulnerable groups we work with in our key five thematic areas need additional support to overcome such barriers and we work with our partner organisations together to find solutions.

Here are just three of our achievements:

- Accredited British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy Service Status
- New partner organisations including school and health initiatives
- Additional staff capacity across our services

Our strategic focus for 2018/19

For around five years the Sarah Agnes Foundation (SAF) has been there to help, support and listen to this country's vulnerable families. All of our services and outreach are committed to having the greatest possible positive impact on the lives of the Uks most vulnerable parents, children, young people, adults and elders. Their needs shape the focus of everything we do.

In line with our renewed organisational strategy with families who in particular are struggling from poverty, abuse or neglect, we have set ourselves the following five goals for the forthcoming year:

1. Work with more than 600 families comprising of combinations of children, young people, couples, adults and elders.
2. Deliver a 15% increase in the positive changes experienced by those we journey with.
3. Put in place a new Fundraising and Supporter Engagement Strategy
4. Increase our current level of income from
5. Expand our services to three other locations in the UK
6. Achieve new commissioned work with existing and new partner organisations

Evaluation: Our journey

In 2017/18 Sarah Agnes Foundation once again is driven by a commitment to honesty and accountability when reporting our impact. On a quarterly basis on reviewing what works throughout our services through listening to our partners, professionals and those we journey with through feedback and evaluation methods we use, we remain vigilant with a listening ear to all who are building this organisation with us.

We are keen to work with our partners in continuing to use and develop new ways of reporting mechanisms with our partner organisations such as Caritas Anchor House, Peabody Housing Association and Providence Row among many other individual schools and practices hosting our work, We are equally keen to enhance and grow in our evaluation of services that offer a methodology which is integrated and talking to systems that our partner organisations are using.

In the way forward we will be expanding our team to add an analyst, researcher and evaluator to enable us to continue developing the outcomes frameworks for each service, whilst conducting needs assessments and launching a user satisfaction survey.

In 2017/18 our focus is on feeding learning into action. Collecting demographic data on race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality across our practice. We will continue to revitalise the way people engage with research and evaluation through our literature, workshops and short talks. We are as ever with the intention to drive practise improvement and innovation through strong evidence from the clinical field and other related professions that's affect our work.