

# BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PLAN



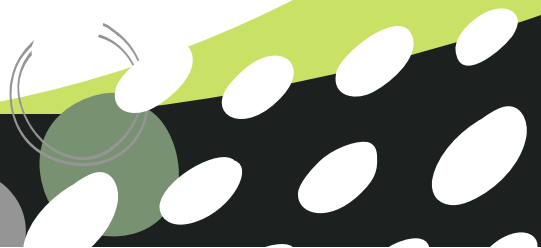
WADDINGTON  
STREET CENTRE

CHARITY REGISTRATION: 701514

COMPANY REGISTRATION: 2330506

2023-2026

"WE'RE ABOUT PEOPLE"





## Introduction.

Hello and welcome to our new Business Development Plan. We would like to thank all those who contributed to the discussions and thinking which helped us to choose our priorities for the next 3 years. It is always exciting to explore and agree our options. At the heart of this plan is the importance of people. Positive relationships are the backbone of our charity and after the trials and tribulations of the past two years it has never felt more important to celebrate people, relationships and connectedness.

The current climate is one of financial uncertainty and our charity will need to make tough decisions in the coming years. What will never be tough however, is that we'll do so for the greater good of maintaining the best possible services we can to ensure that people in County Durham who struggle with their mental health will have a safe, supportive and compassionate community in which to recover.

It is our honour and privilege to remain committed to helping people to live their lives to the full and without fear of stigma and discrimination. We want our members to be proud of who they are and to use their lived experience to shape and guide future services.

We will continue to embrace our partnerships which help us in our mission and seek to maintain these relationships as well as forging new friendships.

It will be an interesting and exciting 3 years. We can't wait to get started.

Ali Lee,  
Centre Manager



**Better quality of life**

**opportunities**

**respect**

**relationships**

**Compassion**

**Peer  
support and  
friendship**

**trips and  
outings**

**Volunteering  
and Peer support  
roles**

**Our Current Offer...**

**informal adult  
education**

**Sporting activities,  
health and wellbeing  
guidance**

**evening  
and  
weekend support**

**Placement provider  
for vocational  
students.**

**One to one  
and group  
support sessions**

**Gender specific  
support**

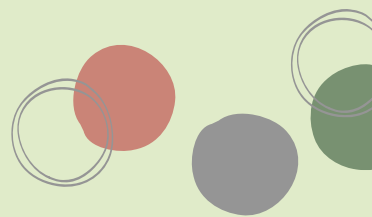
What our members told us.....

"More classes and activities please:"

- Maths and English ✓
- Cookery ✓
- gardening ✓
- photography ✓

"Making WSC more environmentally friendly"

"Being supported to learn more about Durham Mental Wellbeing Alliance and support to access its services"

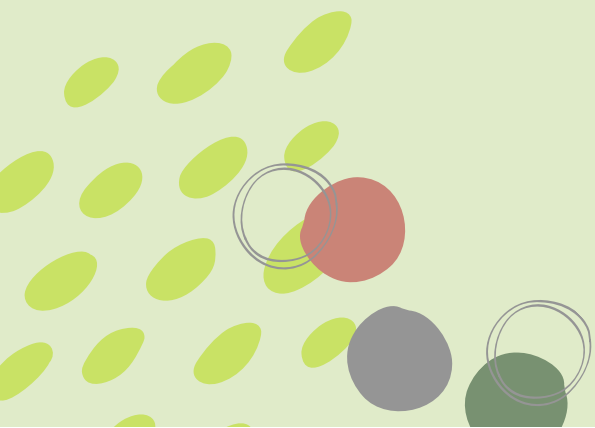


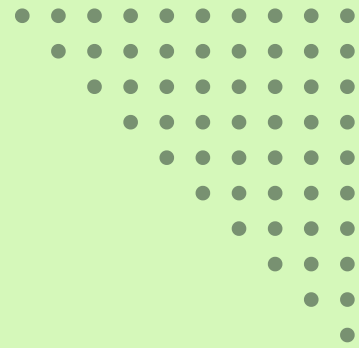
What our staff told us.....

"Support team can be stretched due to higher levels of need across our member community."

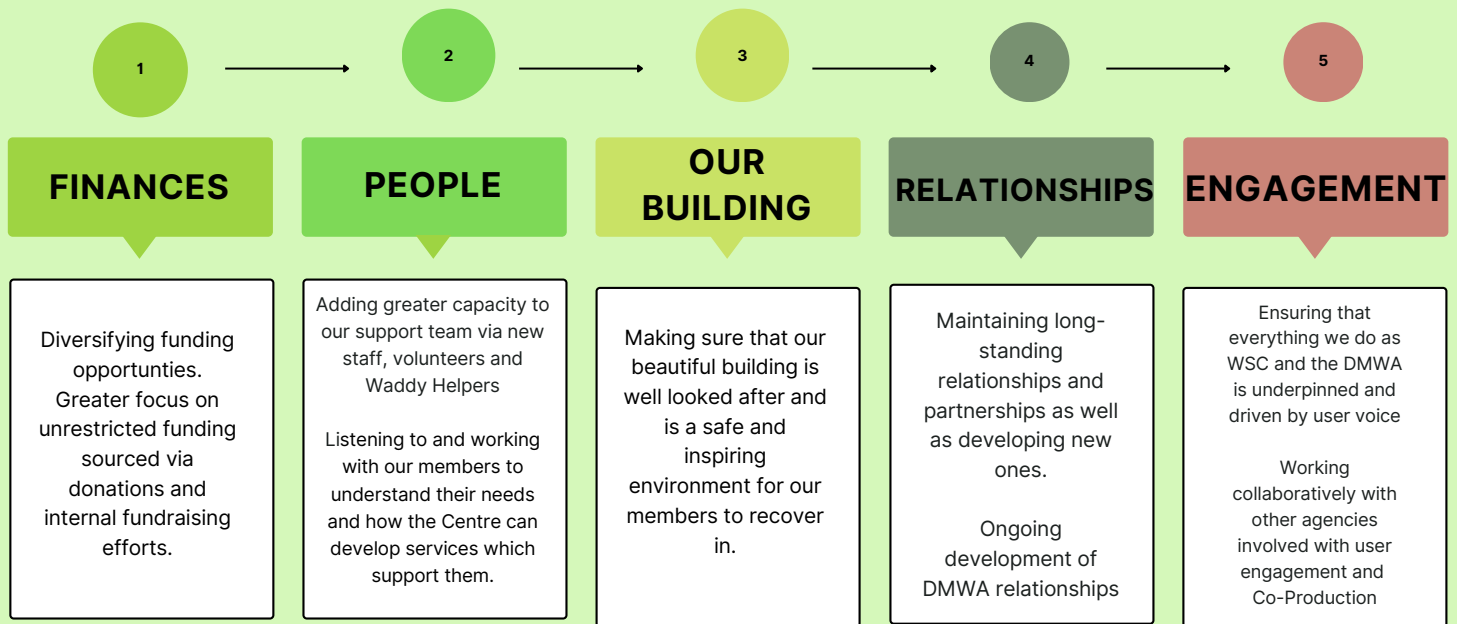
"More Volunteers please"

"More time as a team to plan and explore"



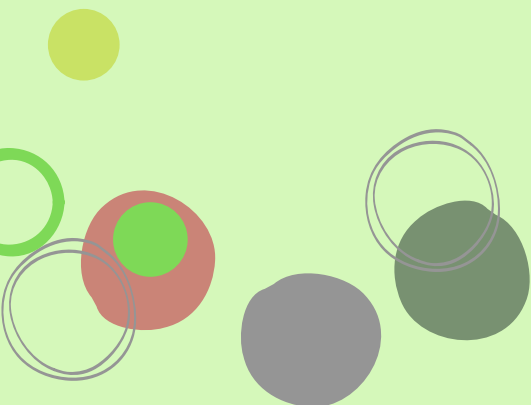


# Our Priorities



Due to the turbulence of the past two years we wanted to take things back to basics and really think about the WSC core offer. Membership of the Durham Mental Wellbeing Alliance (DMWA) means that we no longer have to be 'everything, to everyone'

The world has changed but what these uncertain times have confirmed for us is that our staff and members greatly appreciate consistency, mutual respect and being part of a community.



# Finance

Core funding at WSC has always been provided via a block contract from Durham County Council. Since April 2021 WSC has been a member of the Durham Mental Wellbeing Alliance, a formal partnership of VCSE mental health providers from across Durham County. Whilst this contract offers us guaranteed funding for a 7-10 year period it is not index-linked and offers us less flexibility in how we use these funds than in the previous contract. Strategically our decision to move away from supported housing to focus on services which promote physical wellbeing, despite being the right choice for service users, will add to our deficit position. Housing services had generated a surplus which helped to fund other Centre running costs.

We are operating in a harsher economic climate which means that many of our core costs and overheads are increasing at an unprecedented rate. We have been able to tap into funding for warm spaces but as we head into the spring and summer months these funding streams are diminishing.

Finance will be our biggest challenge over the next three years and our Board and Management Team are aware that some tough decisions are on the horizon. We remain positive but also realistic.

## Here's what we need to focus on in the next 3 years.

- We need to concentrate on ways of bringing unrestricted funding into the charity. Whilst grant and project funding will always be essential for our operations, it offers very little flexibility. Grant funding very rarely covers our full costs and its time limited nature often means that we have to end the project before it has reached its full potential or we have to find a new funder and 'rebrand' the project so it meets criteria around newness and innovation. Project funding rarely allows for 'continuation' work even though the maintenance of services which provide consistency is often what we most need - because our members have told us so.
- There is also greater competition for grant funding. As a member of the DMWA we now have to declare any grant funding we apply for. This funding is often for WSC work which sits outside of Alliance scope. We have to make sure that we are not competing for the same funding and that our proposed projects do not duplicate the work of Alliance partners.
- We need to think big about private donors. There are wealthy and philanthropic minded potential patrons out there. We need to have a clear and strong message to put to donors and we need to promote the importance of funding the potentially less glamorous aspects of the Centre's running costs. Whilst it is evident that donors like to attach themselves to exciting resources such as minibuses, we need to promote the message that we need to fund infrastructure too. We will produce an annual 'donor statement' which will outline our work, examples of how we use donations and plans for future uses of donations. This will help to focus us as a Board and management team and provide clear and open information to potential donors.



# Finance

- Purchase of our minibus for our 40th anniversary proved that fundraising activities are both fun and financially viable. We need to have regular, scheduled events which help us to raise unrestricted funds. Getting members involved as part of our engagement strategy will be key to our success. Care will however need to be taken not to over ask within our community. The current cost of living crisis is taking its toll on people's disposable income and 'constant asking' could become onerous and tiresome.
- Reducing our reserves to under 12 months of running costs. Although our healthy reserves are a great comfort in these difficult times they do also hinder us from applying to a range of trust funds. We will keep an eye on this via our Finance Sub Committee and our annual finance and fundraising strategy which outlines our position and plans. This strategy will be drawn up at the start of each calendar year and approved by the Board.
- Whilst there is great need to diversify our funding streams and explore all possible options, our Board are keen to ensure that all funding coming into the centre is in line with our own ethics and values - as outlined in our policy created in 2022.
- We remain open minded to the possibility of commissioning fundraising support from an external agency or by a temporary, time limited post. We should also explore the possibility of sourcing this support from volunteers; either from the wider community or within our own Board.
- Be more pro active in the planning of projects or things to be funded so that we can turn around bids quickly if we are pressured by time constraints.
- All monies are useful and gratefully received. Develop a newsletter or bulletin which can be used to promote our fundraising efforts, report on our fundraising outcomes and maintain communication with our donors large and small.
- Continue our search for a patron. Someone who can support us with a substantial donation or use their position to introduce us to others who can.



# Staff

It is always in the best interests of WSC to make sure that its staff team are well supported, appreciated and motivated. They are the lifeforce of the Centre. The increased needs of our members, being part of the DMWA and the tougher times in which we all live has placed greater pressures on our staff team. At times our capacity can be greatly limited and although our small team always pull together, longer term this may not always be tenable.

Since returning, post national lockdowns, we have concentrated more on group supervision for staff. This has been a revelatory process for the team as it has really helped us to open up and explore the day to day challenges of providing mental health support in a long term, place based service. In this context the support dynamic is very different to time limited support. Staff are also at greater risk of burnout and compassion fatigue. We want staff to feel supported- their mental health is important to us too.

## How we will support staff in the next 3 years:

- A major review of our sickness and leave policy has taken place and our new updated policy will be in place from 1st April 2023. Other personnel policies will be reviewed across the period to ensure that best practice is being followed and carried out. Most notably, flexible home working options (at the discretion of the Management Team) are now more widely available to colleagues – strangely, this is not something we'd ever imagined possible pre-Covid. Whilst it is evident that our team prefer to attend the actual Centre, homeworking can be highly beneficial for a multitude of reasons. Alongside other flexible working arrangements we want to ensure that our staff are offered choice and support.
- We hope to pursue the Mind Employer's Pledge – which is an organisational commitment to changing the way we think about mental health in the workplace. Our DMWA partners, Stamp It Out are leading on this piece of work. As a mental health organisation, it is essential that the support we offer our members is underpinned by staff who are happy, motivated and thriving themselves.
- A repeated theme in group supervision is around the lack of time we spend together as a full team and therefore not always having quality time to plan and review as regularly as we would like. We close the Centre and have a staff training and development day once per year. Staff always find it useful to step out of the day to day and focus on wider issues which support our work and enable us to spend valuable time together as a team. We hope to offer two further half day sessions each year which give us more time to plan, evaluate and engage. All staff will play an active part in the planning, delivery and format of the sessions.





# Staff

- Staff Volunteering opportunities are to be offered to interested colleagues. As a partner in the DMWA we are contractually committed to contributing towards social value via TOMS (Themes, Outcomes and Measures). Staff will be allocated half a day per year whereby they can volunteer in their working hours for the benefit of another community organisation. This is rewarding for staff as it allows them to try something new as well as sharing their skills and talents with other people and groups.
- Sourcing funding and recruiting a new member of support staff. Support needs are greater than ever so we need more staff. From April 2023 we will recruit a new member of support staff who will also be a champion for user engagement, alongside the WSC management team. This additional resource will bring greater capacity to the support team by sharing the load and bringing new ideas and energy to the team.
- Recruitment and retention of skilled volunteers. Nothing is more useful and appreciated than great volunteers. Sadly, Covid, negatively impacted our volunteering numbers and we are steadily re-growing this team. This will remain an important focus over this Business Development Planning period. We also plan to develop and offer a range of training and support opportunities for these important colleagues.
- We will continue to fund, via reserves, a support colleague whose grant funding has ended, maintaining much needed capacity within our support team.



# Relationships

WSC has a long history of working in partnership and collaboration. As well as developing new relationships we also think it's important to maintain those we have. Perhaps most notably our long standing relationships with New College Durham and Durham County Council have offered us strong foundations on which we have been able to develop and grow other services and opportunities. More recently we have greatly benefited from the support of Durham University and use of their sports facilities at Maiden Castle. Getting through Covid would have been impossible without the support of our neighbours, the United Reformed Church. We began in this space so it has been wonderful to reconnect with the church and its wonderful people.

In 2021 we collaborated with 13 other mental health providers as an Alliance to tender for a county- wide, mental health contract. Our tendering success and subsequent launch in April 2022 was a huge but rewarding undertaking. We continue to grow and develop our relationships with our Alliance colleagues.

## In the next 3 years we'll:

- Continue to learn and work with our Durham Mental Wellbeing Alliance partners. At this time there are still services that we need to understand more fully. We want to make best use of signposting opportunities so that we can ensure our members have access to relevant support as they need it.
- New College Durham are one of our longest- standing and most important partners. Our collaborative work together continues to give our members access to bespoke and informal learning opportunities. As with all long term relationships, we can at times fall into the trap of taking things for granted. We hope to continue to refresh our offer and further promote the other services and opportunities the College can offer. We also want to get back to offering Health and Social Care placements as we believe that WSC is an exciting and beneficial environment for future practitioners to learn.
- As we develop our work around user engagement and Co-production both internally and as part of the DMWA we want to connect with and work alongside other individuals and organisations who are also leading in this area. This will help us to learn from good practice, share our own knowledge and reduce duplication.
- We would love to find a Patron. As well as financial assistance we would relish the opportunity to build a new relationship and our charity would ultimately benefit from connections our Patron may have.



better  
together



# Relationships

- Our good neighbours the United Reformed Church continue to be a key asset. It would have been impossible to get through the 'Covid' years without their support. As possibilities around joint working emerge we are always more than willing to get involved. Their offer of space is currently well utilised by our Waddy Feel Good Service but as this area develops we'll have even greater need for the space and we hope to offer many new activities and services in the next 3 years.
- Durham University also provide us with essential space and resources which enable our members to exercise regularly in a safe and supportive environment. We also hope to develop our new relationship with Josephine Butler College; this relationship will bring new volunteers in to WSC and give us access to their social spaces and allotment. Over the next 3 years we hope to develop further relationships with the university and individual colleges. We have also recently returned to providing placement opportunities for Post Graduate students of Social Work. We hope to continue to offer this opportunity over the next three years. We are committed to supporting and training future practioners.
- As our new Waddy Feel Good Service grows, we hope to develop new and long term relationships with other spaces which complement this work. The more people we know, the more we can offer - all very beneficial for our members.



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together



# Members

It's nice to be able to call this section 'Members' as it was only recently, and as part of our last Business Development Plan

that we decided to put the collective naming of our people out to a vote.

As a person- centred, recovery focused- organisation we value what our members tell us and use their voice to shape and design our values and services.

## How we will support members in the next 3 years:

- The recent, turbulent past and the current 'cost of living' crisis have created further stresses for the people we support. As a result of some consultation about 'Cost of Living Increases' we were able to learn that some of the key concerns for our members were; less disposable income which then impacts upon social activities, and needs around affordable grocery shopping, cookery skills and the motivation to cook. Although not explicitly addressed there is a general tension across our member community which seems to be a result of the somewhat unpredictable times in which we live. Consistency remains one of the key factors in remaining well.
- We will further support our members through our partnership in the DMWA. We already have members accessing support within other services and we plan to dedicate more time over the next 12 months to help our members to fully understand the wider DMWA offer and will actively support members to access those services which will provide the support needed.
- We will hold 6 weekly focus groups – (Valued Views). Intelligence gathered within these meetings will be disseminated and used for planning within the management team, Trustee Board and the DMWA.
- Keeping our offer up to date and ensuring that activities are 'refreshed' when needed. This can of course be a challenge and is largely dependent upon funding and our lead provider – New College Durham, having capacity to do so. We want to develop more opportunities for peer and volunteer led activities.



# Members

- More support for members from the LGBTQ+ community. A co-produced group devised and developed by people who would like a specific safe place to explore the history of issues and the wider movement, share personal experiences and offer peer support, raise awareness and promote related issues in WSC and the wider community.
- More Generally, whatever future services and developments look like at WSC they will always derive from members needs and wishes. We will do things *with* people and not *to* people.
- Continuing to explore ways in which we can resume some form of cafe service for our members. It is evident that this is important to the people of WSC but as yet we have not found a long term solution despite exploring a variety of potential options – one to keep an eye on however.



# User Engagement

In our last Business Development Plan we really started to explore how we could improve our services and create personal development opportunities for our members through a greater focus on user engagement opportunities. We developed our Waddy Helper role which continues to grow. It hasn't always been an easy or smooth process but we believe that making our members partners in what we do and what we deliver has vast amounts of mutual benefit. Our regular focus group-'Valued Views'- is an excellent source of communication and ideas generation between the management team, Board and members.

Our challenge over the coming three years is to develop a standardised approach to user engagement and co-production across the DMWA.

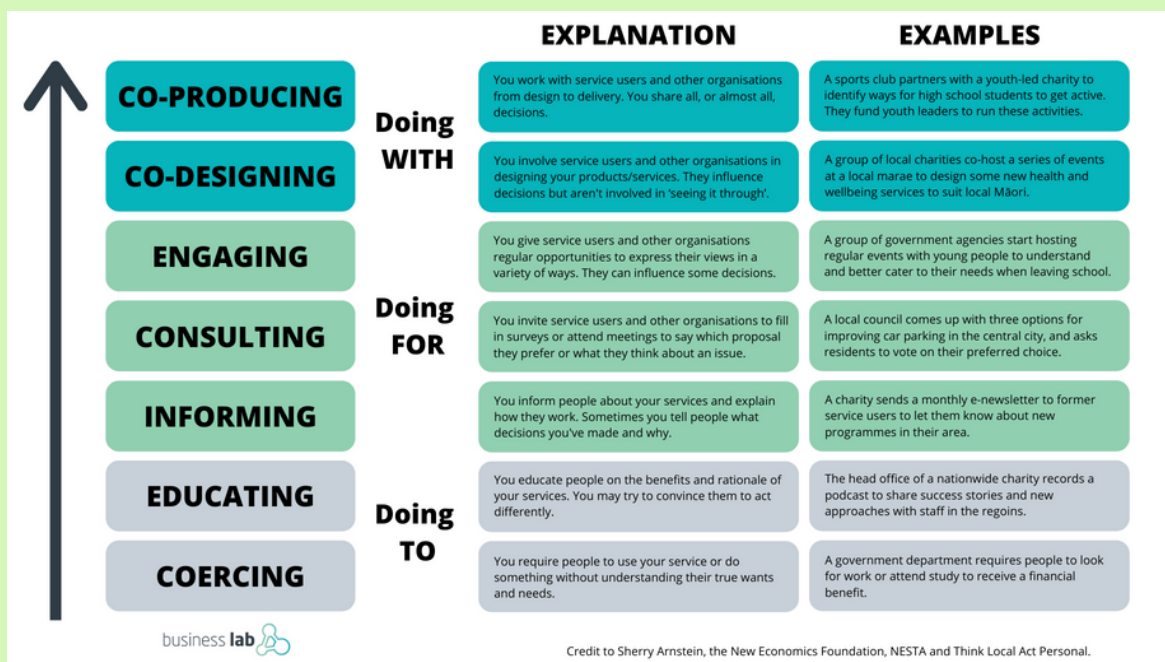
## How we'll approach this in the next 3 years.

- Bi- monthly working group meetings of DMWA partners (including users) to plan and develop activities and outcomes
- Quarterly Newsletter which users from across the DMWA will be encouraged to contribute to.
- Recruitment of a new support worker who will also be a Champion for user engagement.
- Linking in at strategic and operational levels with other partners and groups who are also leading on user engagement and co-production. So far we are collaborating with the County Durham Vision-Better Together Forum, Intergrated Care Board Engagement Forum, TEWV transformation engagement (via Pioneering Care Partnership ) and Durham University.
- Regular engagement with, and attendance at the monthly County Wide Forum, which is a service user led group aimed at people with lived experience and carers from County Durham and Darlington. A great base for sharing DMWA updates and collecting user concerns which are fed back to the Alliance Leadership Team or other relevant agencies.
- WSC to lead on the importance and benefits of promoting and facilitating opportunities for user collaboration.
- Development and delivery of training for users, colleagues and organisations. Working with and drawing upon the skills and knowledge of Stamp it Out - a subcontractor of the DMWA.



# User Engagement

- Making sure that user engagement and co-production remain a key focus of the Alliance Leadership Team. WSC to advocate at all times for the right and the opportunity for service users to have a genuine say in how services are developed and delivered.
- Closer to home, we will develop our Waddy Helper roles even further. Areas still to build upon are buddy/befriending roles and activity leaders. We also hope to create and maintain a member led group which will offer peer support to those from the LGBTQ+ community.
- As we review our policies, working with members to assist us with the ones which have a direct impact upon people who attend WSC (e.g. Equality and Diversity policies)
- Working collaboratively towards an annual event which will showcase and reward the talents and efforts of the DMWA service user community.
- Continuation and further promotion of our Valued Views focus group.
- Whilst many of us are currently working between consulting and co-designing, we aspire to co-produce where possible.
- Explore and undertake a variety of research projects in partnership with Northumbria University and their Psychology department.



# Looking after and making good use of our premises

We are in the fortunate position of owning our building, a building which many have praised over the years for its discreet location, accessibility and its unique, homely and safe ambiance. It has also been of vital importance to us to make sure that our members have access to good quality resources. Our vibrant, colourful and art filled building aims to be the opposite of the clinical and sterile spaces members have encountered in other areas of their support. However, as our building ages it becomes increasingly important to maintain it to a high standard. In 2022 our Trustees approved a £10K fund for potential building maintenance.

As a place based service in a time of economic crisis we are also impacted by energy increases, although we were able to take to advantage of an energy contract which will keep our bills affordable for the next few years. It is inevitable that over the next 3 years we will have to tighten our belts at times and ensure we are always getting the best value for money.

We are also keen to share our building with other community organisations and groups. During Covid we've been less able to offer our premises to others but we hope to place greater emphasis on doing so over the coming 3 years.

## In the next 3 years we will:

- Promote room hire particularly on evenings and weekends. This will help us to generate funds which can be redireced into its upkeep as well as funding other centre services.
- Maintaining the structure and decor of the building. Continue to conduct 6 monthly reviews with our Property Inspection Committee.
- Willing Waddy Helpers to assist with minor decorating activities.
- Working towards making our building more eco-friendly, energy efficient and sustainable where possible. Developing a working group, including members, to drive this forward.





# Looking after and making good use of our premises

- Continue to work closely with our neighbours in the United Reformed Church. Their generous offer of using the Church space on Thursdays and Fridays has given us scope to expand our activities offer outside of our premises. Making sure that we treat the Church space with the same care and respect we demonstrate in our own building
- Ongoing rental of our Campbell Room to the DMWA central management team as their office base. Not only an important source of income generation but an important means of developing and maintaining a strong working relationship with Alliance colleagues. We also need to ensure that our H&S responsibilities as the landlord are regularly reviewed and implemented as required.
- Making sure that all Centre services and activities comply with H&S legislation and are risk assessed as necessary.
- Involving our members more in the upkeep of the building. Roles for Waddy Helpers within the Property Inspection Committee. Encouraging members through focus groups to contribute their ideas for building improvements. Making sure that our members, in a learning context feel that classroom spaces are inspiring and resourced correctly and contribute to their learning experience.
- Design and creation of a mural in our backyard. Our limited external space means that we are always trying to make best use of what we have.



# Summary

We have a busy three years ahead and we look forward to everything which awaits us. Our focus for this period will concentrate mostly on our financial security and our relationships with people. If we get this right other good things will follow.

As a Board and a staff team we'll work together to ensure that Waddington Street Centre continues to provide good quality support and always prioritises the needs of its people. We'll do this by listening to member voice and by continuing to maintain and develop our working relationships with partners and stakeholders. We need to keep a close eye on financial matters-this next period will not be our easiest but by having a clear plan and by chipping away at it we will make sure that we are operating within our means and doing what is best for our members.

The Board and management team will revisit the BDP on a 6 monthly basis via the Action Plan. This will enable us to celebrate our successes as well as discuss our next priorities or address any challenges and concerns.

Other key documents will form part of our business development approach. They are:

- Action Plan - Actions, time frames and responsible people. To be reviewed every 6 months. First review to take place in September 2023.
- Financial Strategy Document - To be updated annually and reviewed on a 6 monthly basis in line with the Action Plan.
- Annual Report - A reflection on the past year - our achievements and successes.

