



# THE WELLSPRING (Stockport)

Registered Charity No. 1088776

## ANNUAL REPORT 2013



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# Introduction to the Wellspring's Annual Report 2013

I was appointed The Wellspring's Chairman in July 2013 – so have but a half-year's experience.

I am grateful to my predecessor, Mark Whyllie, for his contribution, as well as to other members of the Trustee Board, for their guidance and support.

That half-year has been stimulating and rewarding. It has also been an education.



I am now much better able to recognise and appreciate:

- (a) The professionalism, skills and compassion of The Wellspring's staff
- (b) The commitment and loyalty of the deep pool of volunteers, many of whom have been giving of their time and energy for a long, long time
- (c) The generosity of the people of Stockport whose donations of money, food and clothing ensure The Wellspring's survival – and its future

And I have also come to understand just how far The Wellspring has come since its modest beginnings, over two decades ago.

Elsewhere in this Report you will read of the extensive range of support services that The Wellspring provides.

But this is not a time for The Wellspring to rest on its laurels. We are living through very difficult economic times – a period of austerity and change – and this is impacting hardest on the most vulnerable.

The coming year for The Wellspring will offer many challenges. However, the Wellspring can face those challenges confident that it has the financial stability and the people to continue to develop and to thrive.

I am proud to have been appointed The Wellspring's Chairman, and I relish the opportunity to be part of what I am sure will be another successful, albeit demanding, year ahead.

**Andrew Ayres - Chair**

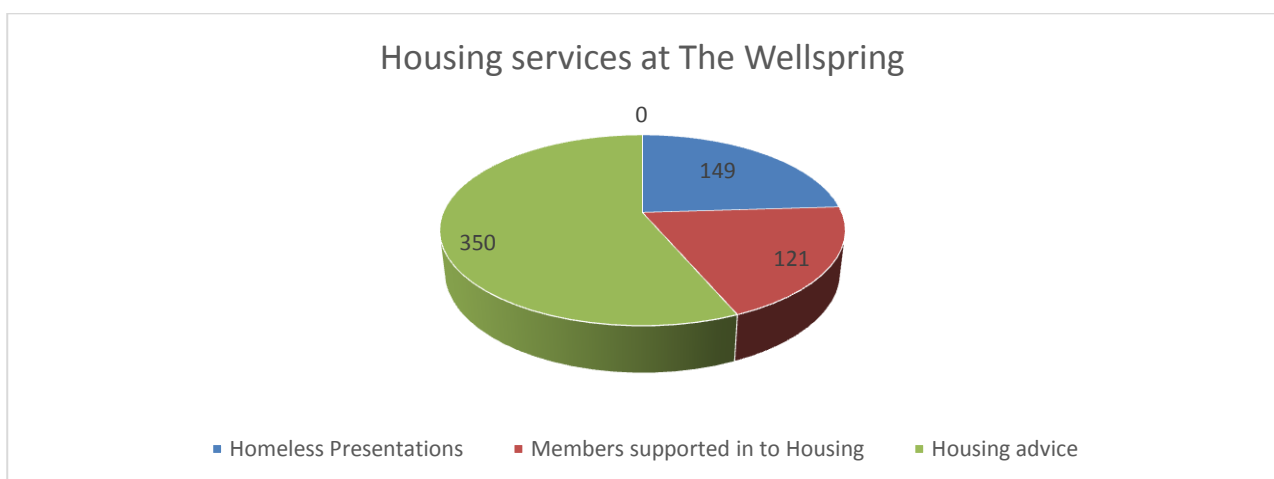
## Project Co-ordinator's Report 2013

2013 was a very busy year for The Wellspring with over 47,500 individual visits to the project by homeless and disadvantaged people. This figure shows an increase of approximately 15% from 2012. The Wellspring is becoming busier and more people are using the service than ever before. Because of the generosity of the community of Stockport, we find ourselves in a strong position both financially and resourcefully. I have been overwhelmed this year by the support and kindness that has been shown to The Wellspring by the community of Stockport. We have never had so many donations of goods and produce that can be used at the project. It would be impossible to thank everyone who has donated here, as there are so many people and organisations to thank.



The staff team at The Wellspring have been stretched in 2013, providing 3580 separate interventions; these interventions are at the core of what Wellspring is all about.

In 2013, 149 people presented as homeless at the project. Of these 149 people, 121 have been successfully supported into accommodation of some description, either a private tenancy or a specialist project that meets the needs of the individual. Providing services to homeless people is fundamental to what The Wellspring does. In 2013, The Wellspring hosted The Rucksack Project in Stockport; this new project encouraged members of the public and organisations to make donations of practical items that The Wellspring can give to people who are sleeping on the streets in order to make that experience that little bit easier. This also provided The Wellspring with the opportunity to maximise engagement with homeless people and people who are sleeping rough. We will be continuing with The Rucksack Project throughout 2014.



The Wellspring staff have spent many hours visiting rough sleepers and providing an outreach service across Stockport. We will endeavour to support anyone who is homeless in Stockport and providing services directly on the streets is one way of doing this. Building and developing a relationship of trust with people who are sleeping rough is essential.

In early 2013, The Wellspring extended its opening hours by an extra 16.5 hours per week; the reason for doing this was to increase the amount of engagement at the project, particularly with people who are rough sleeping. This has proved to be successful and is a major contributing factor to the record number of completed interventions with the members that The Wellspring has achieved this year.



A rough sleeping spot in Stockport Town Centre

2013 has seen the rise of several food banks in Stockport. These have proved to be an excellent resource for disadvantaged people in Stockport. In the last 12 months, The Wellspring has made 701 referrals to the food banks. Wellspring itself has provided around 70,000 free meals this year. We are experiencing more and more people attending the project who cannot afford to buy food. A high percentage of these people have experienced sanctions of welfare benefits. Cutting benefit to people who are already on a very low income has been very hard on some people. In 2013, The Wellspring provided 300 individual pieces of benefits related work. This would involve supporting people to apply for benefits that they are entitled to, supporting people to meet the criteria in place to carry on claiming benefit and supporting people who have been sanctioned and do not have any income at all, as well as addressing problems with benefit claims as and when they arise.

We have seen a massive increase in the amount of employment support that The Wellspring is doing: supporting people to find and apply for jobs, creating CVs, supporting people with general employment advice and supporting people to learn to use the Employment Service's online system Universal Jobmatch. The Wellspring teamed up with Stockport Job Centre Plus in 2013. Job Centre Plus have been running computer support sessions at The Wellspring on Thursday mornings. These short courses have proved to be not only popular, but also proactive in supporting people with low level computer skills to develop and learn new skills. In 2014, The Wellspring will be providing its own official Job Club. This service has been funded by Stockport Job Centre Plus and The Wellspring. The Job Club will provide job seekers with intensive support and guidance.

Many people have struggled to get to grips with our modern computerised world. These days, all benefit claims, housing and job applications are online processes and access to a computer is vital. This can be a huge barrier for homeless people to access the services to which they are entitled. In 2013, The Wellspring has installed 4 computer work stations in the main room at The Wellspring. We have also been very generously supported by Stockport Council who have supplied The Wellspring with 12 brand new computers for our dedicated training suite at The Wellspring. We very much look forward to 2014 and expanding the educational courses that we offer to homeless and disadvantaged people. In 2014, The Wellspring will be providing bespoke training in Web design, accountancy, computer and many other skills.

The Wellspring has continued to provide Maths and English classes, Art classes and Computer groups, as well as several single day classes, such as First Aid.



The Wellspring Women's Group continues to grow and develop. This group is a fantastic support to disadvantaged women in Stockport and the group have done many activities in 2013 that have created positive outcomes for those involved in the group.

2013 was also the year that The Wellspring made both national and global news! Reports were made by news agencies all over the world about a young Estonian man rough sleeping in a cave in Stockport. Some of these reports were far from the truth. The Wellspring was fortunate in being able to provide this young man with a safe return to his family in Estonia. This young man had suffered much abuse in the UK and we were delighted to be able to assist him.

The Wellspring has provided 889 pieces of general support to Wellspring members this year. These pieces of support cover many different issues. They can be very small pieces of work like supporting someone to sort out a basic utility bill, or they can be much more complex, like providing ongoing support to a homeless lady who has had a baby. In my experience these small pieces of work make a big difference and on the whole prevent people from becoming homeless. Preventing homelessness is at the forefront of everything we do at The Wellspring. Hundreds of 1-1 support and guidance sessions have taken place in 2013; this is an area of work that we will be expanding upon in 2014.

Drug and alcohol services have been expanded this year, with The Wellspring teaming up with the START team in Stockport. START team appointments regularly take place at The Wellspring, meaning that more people are getting access to treatment and recovery services in Stockport. Over 130 people have received support from The Wellspring regarding a drug or alcohol issue in 2013. All these people have been referred on to specialist drug and alcohol services.

Project Workers, Alex Knight and Abdul Deen, have done some fantastic pieces of work in 2013 and have very much evidenced their worth to the project. Without these 2 dedicated workers we would not have been able to support so many people. I have absolutely no doubt that the support that both Alex and Abdul have given to people in 2013 has saved lives, tackled homelessness head on and prevented countless people from becoming homeless. As The Wellspring is the only homeless service in Stockport that is physically open 365 days a year, we are often the first point of contact for people who are in crisis. In 2013, The Wellspring has been involved in 32 emergency crisis interventions that have been very serious in nature. The Wellspring continues to work with the police, social services, safeguarding and lots of other essential Stockport services.

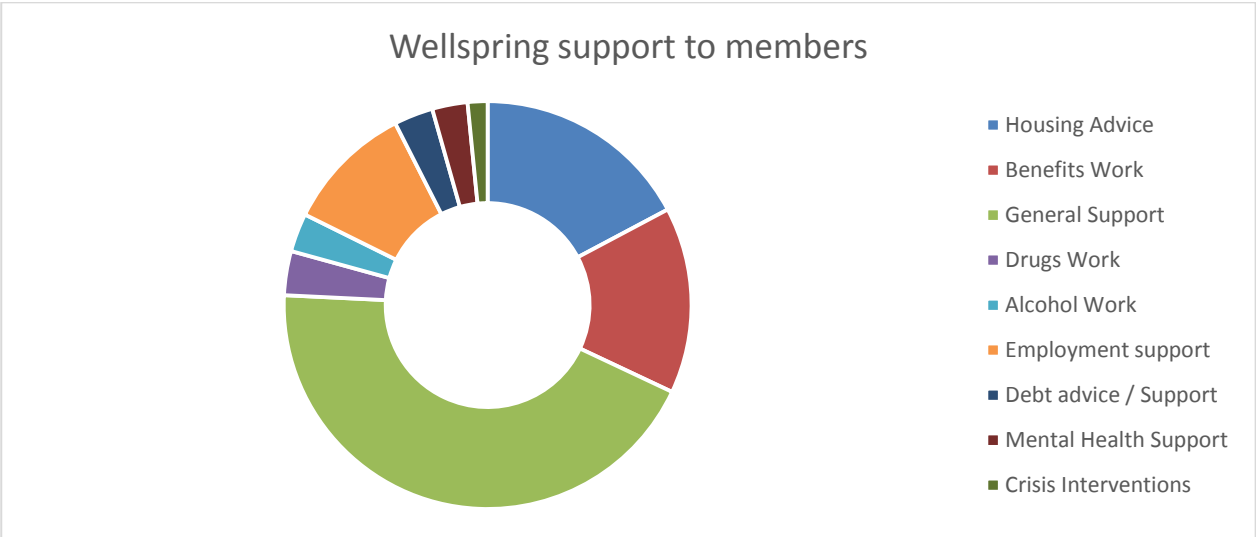
The Wellspring has been blessed this year with numerous excellent students, who have all successfully completed placements at The Wellspring. These students have also done some fantastic work and have very much been a credit to their respective colleges and universities.

The Wellspring has employed a full time chef, Mr Stephen Wilkins, who has been both a member of The Wellspring and a volunteer for many years. We are delighted to be in a position to offer Stephen employment and look forward to him continuing to improve the kitchen service at The Wellspring.

The Wellspring is currently on the cusp of something really big. We are currently working on a new business plan. The next step for the advancement of The Wellspring will be a huge one and I am very excited about what these plans could bring to homeless and disadvantaged people in Stockport. The community of Stockport has a massive resource in The Wellspring and everyone should be very proud of the services we offer and the things we achieve. Without the support of everyone involved we would not have been so successful in 2013.

The volunteers at The Wellspring have, as usual, been very hard working and without these dedicated people we would not be in such a strong position. I would like to thank each and every volunteer for the difference they have made to the lives of homeless and disadvantaged people in 2013. I would like to give my congratulations to Wellspring Trustee and Director for Volunteers, Mr Brendan Cojeen, who in 2013 was awarded the British Empire Medal for his services to homeless people in Stockport.

The Wellspring will be starting a new programme of support in 2014 by providing homeless and disadvantaged people the opportunity to instil real positive change within their lives. This new support programme will provide Wellspring members with support and guidance as well as voluntary work experience and 1-1 mentoring targeted to individuals in order to speed up the process of becoming independent. It is and always will be my goal to open the door of The Wellspring and for nobody to walk through it. Until this day arrives then our job is not done. We can and will do more. In 2014 we will continue to strive towards this goal. With the continued support and generosity of the people of Stockport, I have no doubt at all that The Wellspring will continue to grow and develop and the number of people in need in Stockport will reduce.



A breakdown of data from 2013 and work completed by the project team at The Wellspring.

Housing advice:	350	Benefits work:	300
Members supported into housing:	121	Homeless presentations:	149
General support:	889	Furniture Station referrals:	62
Food bank referrals:	701	Employment support:	207
Educational support:	51	Mental Health support:	57
Health Support / referrals:	72	ID Letters:	95
Drugs Work:	71	Alcohol Work:	62
Emergency / Crisis Interventions:	32	Food Parcels:	24
Computer/Online Support:	96	Other referrals:	101
Support with forms:	77	Debt advice/support:	63
Total Interventions:	3580		

**Jonathan Billings – Project Co-ordinator**

## Financial Report

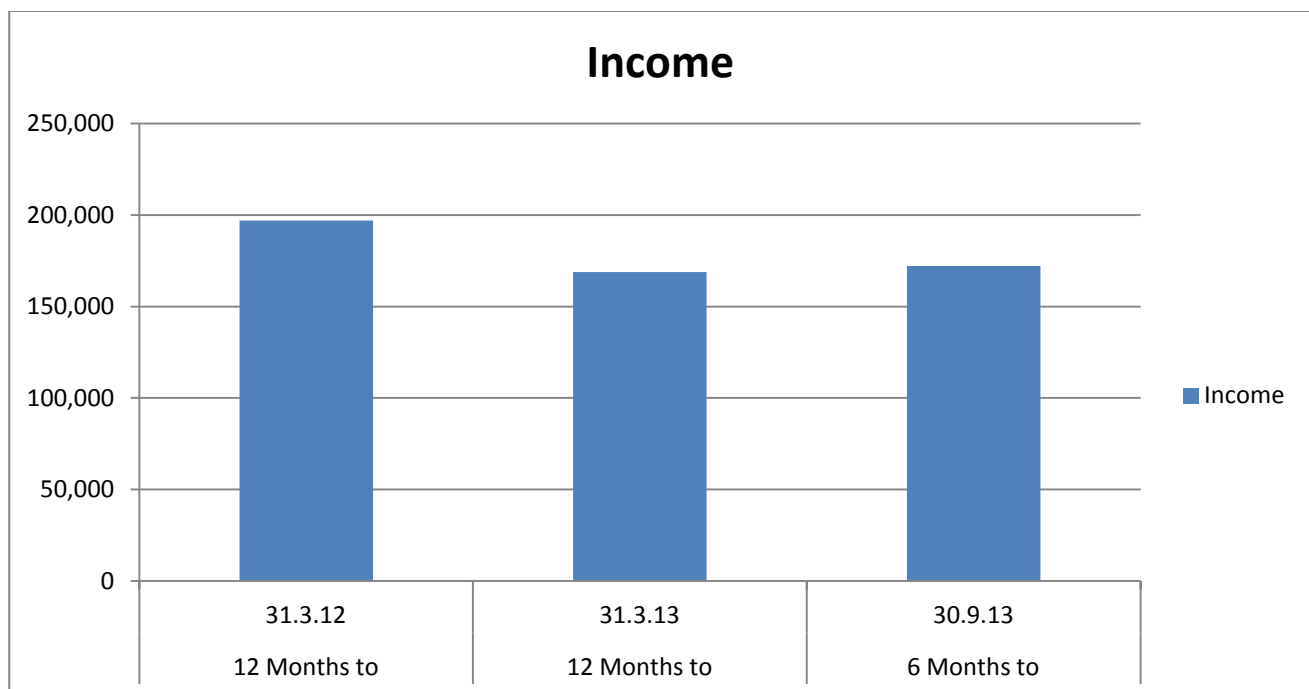
The Wellspring was financially blessed in 2013. The Stockport public & business community has continued to respond with huge generosity in response to the increasing demand placed on our service.

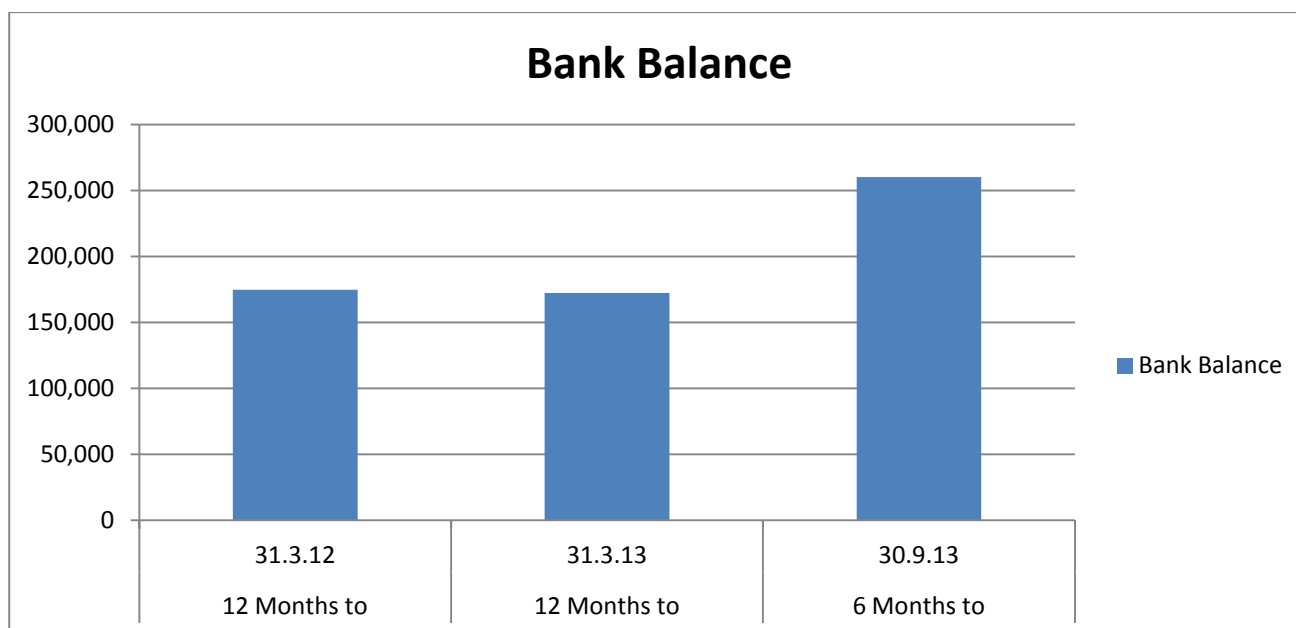
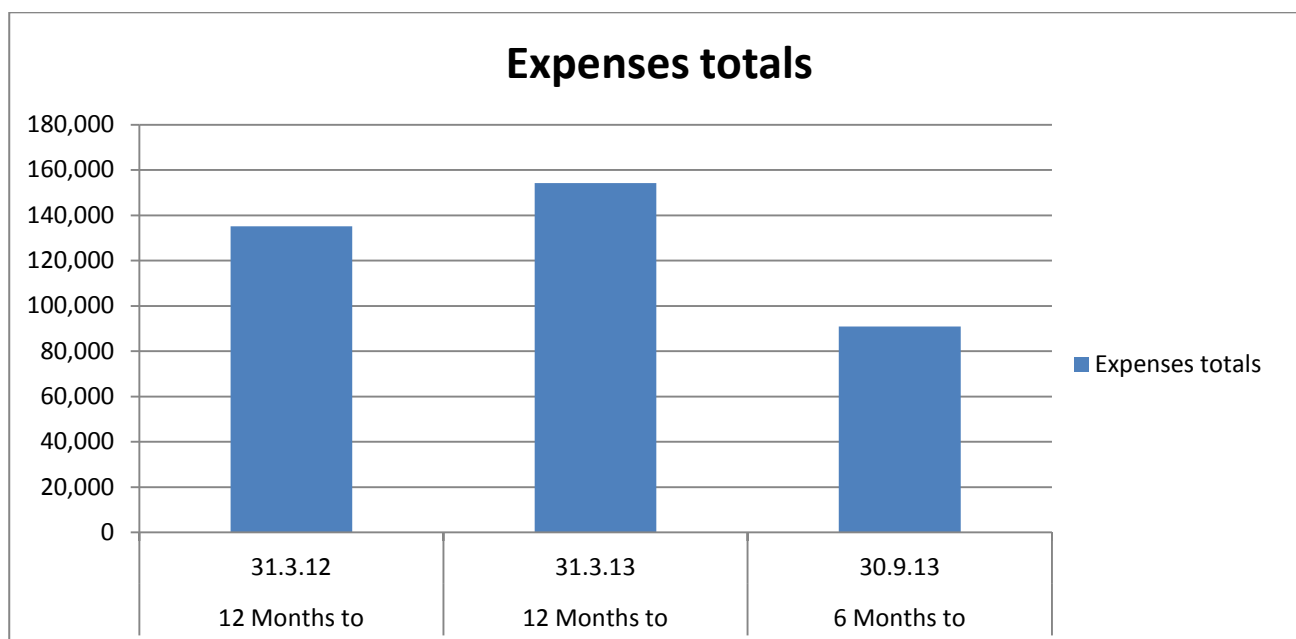
The financial year end for the 12 months to 31 March 2013 showed a surplus for the year of £16,158 and cash in the bank of £171,547.



Since the financial year end, the position has further improved. The management accounts for the 6 months to 30 September 2013 show a surplus of £82,885 and cash in the bank of £260,008.

The finances for the last two and a half years are summarised on the graphs below.





There is, however, no room for complacency going forward. Running costs have increased from £365 per day to over £400 and the main reason for the large uplift in income to 30 September 2013 (accounting for nearly half of total income for the 6 months) was a one off legacy from the will of a very generous benefactor.

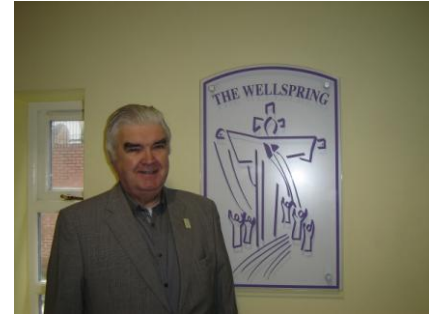
In order to secure financial stability into the future, The Wellspring will need to effectively and systematically communicate the objectives of its forthcoming business plan to a wider audience of finance sources both local and nationwide.

**Simon Leigh – Financial Director**



# Volunteers Report

Over the last 12 months the response from people wishing to be considered as volunteers at The Wellspring has been encouraging. Many people have come into the project for an informal chat, with some of them joining us as volunteers.



The role of volunteer includes duties on a daily basis, in addition to food preparation and service, including:

- Cleaning the premises by wiping down the tables, sweeping and mopping the floor, emptying bins and other tasks
- Sorting and tidying the clothing store's donations
- Sorting food donations and rotating stock to bring forward items with a short "use-by-date"
- Maintaining the cleanliness of the toilet and shower facilities.

There are also other volunteering opportunities such as:

- Fundraising
- Public relations
- Maintenance and repair of the premises
- Administration
- Information gathering

During the last year, the Coptic Church, John Lewis Partnership, the Cheadle Muslim Association and the Janist Faith, amongst others, have taken over a kitchen shift to give, prepare and serve a meal. We have also had donations of food from many groups, businesses and individuals, including various faith groups, Waitrose and local bakers and confectioners. It is great that these local organisations and traditions are becoming involved by supporting us.

I feel strongly that one of our duties is to explain and show what the problems of homelessness, rough sleeping and being unable to afford wholesome food in our community, to people who would not, in the normal course of events, encounter these problems.

To that end, groups of primary school children, college students, church groups, employees from various commercial organisations and other groups, such as The University of the Third Age, Women's Institutes and Amnesty International, have visited the project and been briefed on our work and the problems that we face.

We have helped:

- The Seashell Trust
- The School for the Deaf
- The Youth Offenders Service

These, among others, have benefited from helping at The Wellspring. Their involvement has assisted in their development and rehabilitation.



Here are a few numbers to give another view of the work done by the Wellspring Volunteers' Group. Over the last 12 months these are some of the jobs our volunteers have undertaken:

- |                                                         |     |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| • Talks given away from The Wellspring:                 | 14  |
| • Radio interviews:                                     | 11  |
| • Meeting and briefing adult groups and schoolchildren: | 55  |
| • Interviews with potential volunteers:                 | 105 |
| • New volunteers who have started on teams              | 62  |
| • Volunteer newsletters produced:                       | 5   |

Aims for 2014:

- To prepare newsletters to inform volunteers and improve communication
- To offer the opportunity to volunteers to attend training courses which will broaden their abilities

**Brendan Cojeen, BEM – Vice Chair, Director Responsible for Volunteers**

## Fund Raising Report

Throughout 2013, Fundraising Committee members have worked hard, meeting monthly to plan and taking part in various fund raising events to improve public awareness.

Events organised by The Wellspring this year include:-

- The Manchester 10K sponsored run, which was a great success;
- The Spirit of Christmas, our Christmas variety show at The Stockport Plaza;
- The Wellspring Factor quiz at Stockport Grammar School;
- Bag packing at various supermarkets and
- Flower arranging demonstrations.



We also attended a number of carnivals and fairs during the summer months. At some of these events we used our Human Fruit Machine, which proved a fun way to attract people's attention and engage with them to let them know about The Wellspring and its work in the Stockport area.

During 2014 we will repeat most of the above events. In addition, we will also take part in the Great Manchester Swim on 19<sup>th</sup> July.

Many organisations very kindly hold events to raise funds on our behalf, whilst others may sponsor us for a day's running cost using the 365 Scheme.

Every little helps, and a big **THANK YOU** to all our fund-raising volunteers and supporters is well deserved.

To become really effective as fund raisers, we need not only to increase awareness of The Wellspring's existence, but also the public's perception of how important our work is within the community. If we can show people the many ways in which we are changing people's lives and helping them towards gaining their independence, the charity's true value can be appreciated and the continuing and increasing support of its work by the community is obvious. The widespread use of our new leaflet, "The Wellspring – A Place for Change", can greatly assist in achieving this end.

**Peter Hodkinson MBE – Chair of the Fundraising Committee**

## Reports on other Wellspring activities

### Building maintenance and DIY

Early in 2013, the installation of the lift was completed and, although the main work was undertaken by specialist contractors, a good deal of enabling work and making good was undertaken “in house”, giving a significant reduction in overall cost.

Installation of ten computer workstations in the training room was also completed and a further four were installed in the main dining area. Internet access is available on all workstations and the equipment is being well used. All the computers and associated equipment were fairly old and mainly donated. I understand that since then a number of new units have been kindly donated by SMBC.

The disabled toilet has been upgraded and improvements made to the surgery.

Numerous other minor works have been dealt with to assist with the general running of The Wellspring. It is sometimes necessary to call in specialist tradespeople, but wherever possible the DIY team undertake the work, so costs are kept to a minimum. A pleasing aspect of this is that several Wellspring members have assisted the DIY team and they have enjoyed and benefited from the experience.

**Mike Milner – Leader of DIY and Improvements Team**

### Health Services

What an exciting year 2013 was for health care at The Wellspring. We were successful in winning a bid from the Department of Health to provide a service for patients in hospital who are homeless and we have joined forces with H3, a charitable organisation affiliated to Stockport Homes. Working together, we engage with patients whilst they are in hospital and use our combined wealth of knowledge to ensure that all their health and housing needs are being met whilst in hospital and continue that health care after they are discharged.

We have successfully recruited Emma Littlewood to fulfil this role. Emma has a degree in Psychology, which brings an extra dimension to the service in terms of increased engagement through motivational interviewing. This helps people begin to address their problems and move through some of the difficult areas that have been holding them back. Emma will have the support of the nurse, the H3 workers and Dr. Mian and we welcome her to the Health Inclusion Team at The Wellspring. The aim of this service is to improve the patient experience and health

outcomes, as well as to reduce unnecessary use of A & E and to increase the use of primary care services, where the care more accurately reflects the health issues of the patient.

Meanwhile, the day to day health work of The Wellspring continues. We have seen an increase in people trying to quit smoking this year and attending for cholesterol checks. We have also had a slow and steady start to patients attending for spirometry, which is a breathing check for people who are asthmatic or potentially may have COPD, another lung disease.

We took part in a national survey for health from Homeless Link. The results are with Public Health England and will be used by the Health and Wellbeing Board, our commissioners for health in Stockport, to improve inequalities in health care. I would like to share with you some comments made about our service by two clients who took part in the survey:-

“Having the nurse and support staff at The Wellspring is a great enabler to access services.”

“The Wellspring service enables a wide variety of services to be delivered more effectively, i.e. access to more medical care, help with housing and a place to volunteer to develop a sense of self-worth again.”

I feel our service has been developed to truly meet the needs of the service user.

### **Lucy McJannett – FT (Foundation Trust) Nurse for The Wellspring**

#### **Women's Group**

It's hard to believe we are now in our fifth year! Since 2009 we have welcomed over 70 women, many who presented to the Wellspring as disadvantaged, vulnerable or in danger of becoming homeless. We have a core of several women who have stayed with us since our opening day; others come, give us a try and disappear; some select what activities they want to partake in, whilst others have become regulars.

Each Friday about 15-16 women (including leaders) meet in the Training Room, which is a superb venue for us. We are in the midst of The Wellspring, yet safe and secure, away from the bustle of the centre and (for some) with the security of being a single sex group. We offer a varied and enriching programme. The group's Mission Statement states that we aim to 'Encourage, Enable and Equip' our members to move on in their lives.

As the group has matured, so have the leaders! We now clearly recognise where and when to intervene in situations, which generally sort themselves out without our help. We are thrilled at the ownership our members now have for their group. The leaders listen to and accept all who come; members know we are there for everyone. Although difficult at times, we do not take sides!! Leaders have qualifications in counselling skills, group dynamics, etc. However, we signpost our members to Wellspring staff where appropriate.





**Flower arranging with Ann Coffey, MP**

In 2013, our programme included: meals out; theatre visits (who will ever forget the 'Lion King'); Stockport Plaza's pantomime; ten pin bowling; afternoon tea; keep fit sessions; flower arranging and cake decorating. All this, as well as learning new skills like cross stitch, embroidery, crochet and knitting. Our varied programme has been made possible by the generous grant we received from the Methodist Church.

One outstanding visit this year was to Cheadle Mosque. We made friends with the Muslim ladies who provide a curry once a month to Wellspring members. After talking together about the role of women, we were invited to visit them one Saturday afternoon. We learnt and asked questions about the role of women in their mosque, in their homes and family and their lives in the community. The visit included an explanation of worship in the mosque and their way of dressing. We were given tea, which included their delicacies, our egg sandwiches and fruit! Some of the Women's Group had a hand 'henna decoration', which was a real joy! Each member was also given a gift bag containing, amongst other things, an Easter egg!

Our skills base has benefited from links with John Lewis and Barclays Bank. Staff members from these establishments have been allowed to come and work with our group. One recently retired lady from John Lewis liked us so much that she wanted to work alongside our members and is now a valued group leader.

Sharing skills brings such surprises. When we realised the crocheting ability of one member, she was able to share her skills with others. When completing an embroidered picture, one member announced: "I never knew I could do this. My mother said I was no good at anything." This brought tears to several eyes and reassured us that we are doing the right things.

This year has seen the last instalment of our grant. However, we want and need to keep going! One leader has organised jewellery making and runs extra sessions to make items to sell. After a great deal of personal effort and endeavour, we now have a stock of goods, which we have sold at several events. Thus, we are making funds for our future, trusting that group members realise their opportunity to contribute to it.



**Sale of jewellery at the Spirit of Christmas**

We want members to move on from experiencing what we can offer to the point where all contribute to what we have and are. To date, we have gathered a fair amount of money to keep us going and are looking to the future, in the manner to which our members have become accustomed!

**Jenny Went – Leader of the Women's Group**



## **PR and Communications**

During the first few months of 2013, Stockport Express contained weekly articles on various aspects of The Wellspring and its work, as one of the newspaper's supported charities for that year. This coverage did much to increase awareness of the charity within the Stockport area.

A number of press releases have been submitted to local newspapers throughout the year, although they do not always get printed. Details of fund-raising events have also been sent to the local radio and press as required.

The most recently produced Wellspring information leaflet, "A Place for Change", was produced this year with significant input from the PR team. The leaflet has proved to be a useful awareness-raising tool at various events during 2013.

Unfortunately, there has been no newsletter produced for supporters of The Wellspring since December 2012, although the team hope to distribute one during the early months of 2014.

The PR team is small and made up of volunteers who also have work and/or study commitments in addition to their voluntary work, meaning that they are unable to attend the centre on a daily basis or attend all the events held in aid of The Wellspring. This places a reliance on other involved volunteers and Wellspring staff to make the PR team aware of items which it would be useful to let Wellspring supporters know about. A short paragraph accompanied by high resolution photos, where relevant, to [pr@thewellspring.co.uk](mailto:pr@thewellspring.co.uk) would always be most welcome.

Good communications and public relations remain the responsibility of all The Wellspring's staff and volunteers, especially those who are dealing directly with anyone who contacts the centre, whether the contact made is in person, by phone, e-mail, social media or any other method.

**Helen Rogers – Public Relations/communications**



## The Wellspring (Stockport) 2013

### Board members

Chair	Andrew Ayres
Vice Chair	John Hardy
Vice Chair, Director for Volunteers	Brendan Cojeen
Financial Director	Simon Leigh
Director	Michael Butroyd
Director of Fundraising	Peter Hodkinson
Director Secretary	Pauline Cooke
SMBC Representative	Peter Burns

### Staff

Project Co-ordinator	Jonathan Billings
Project Worker	Abdul Deen
Project Worker	Alex Knight
Kitchen Manager	Steve Wilkins

**The Wellspring – for the wellbeing of people in need**

### Patrons

Rt. Rev. Robert Atwell, *Bishop of Stockport*; Rt. Rev. Mark Davies, *Bishop of Shrewsbury*  
 Rev. Dr. Keith Davies, *Chairman of Manchester and Stockport Methodists*  
 Rev. Richard Church, *Moderator of the North Western Synod of the URC*  
 Gordon Burns, former presenter of *BBC North West Tonight*  
 Jennifer Pike, *BBC Young Musician of the Year 2002*

**The Wellspring (Stockport) Registered Charity No. 1088776**