



# **The Wellspring**

## **Annual Report**

### **2014**



The Wellspring would like to thank the following organisations for their invaluable support throughout 2014:







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# New Company, New Charity

## The Wellspring (Stockport) Limited

Some two to three years ago we were advised by a larger charity that helped us with the formulation of our business plan that it would be advantageous to us if we operated as a limited company limited by guarantee. The advantages included limiting the personal liabilities of the trustees and making it easier for us to deal with government bodies and local authorities. One of the members of our then management committee prepared draft Articles of Association and Memorandum of Association which were approved by the management committee and we understood that the company was being registered at Companies House. After the member of the management committee who had taken responsibility for the formation of the company resigned we discovered that the company had not been registered. The documents were prepared again and approved and The Wellspring (Stockport) Limited-Registered Company No.08880312 was registered at Companies House.

We then enquired of The Charities Commission as to how we could transfer the assets and liabilities of the existing unincorporated company governed by trustees to the limited company and were informed that we must first register the limited company as a new charity. We duly applied to do so and were required by The Charities Commission to slightly amend our Articles of Association before registration could take place. A proposal to amend the Articles was drawn and was approved by an extraordinary meeting of the company and registered at Companies House. On proof of such registration The Charities Commission then registered the limited company as a new charity-Registered Charity No.1157268.

At that stage we realised that documents transferring the assets and liabilities to the limited company were required and solicitors were appointed to prepare them. The documents were prepared and approved by the management committee of the unincorporated charity and by the board of directors of the limited company. The documents were duly executed and it is intended to complete the transfer on 1st April 2015.

***John R Hardy***

Vice Chairman



# Wellspring Chairman's Remarks

**Mr Andrew Ayres**

*“The homeless are still the priority, but each and every visitor to the Wellspring is an individual, with their own history and their own needs.”*

The Wellspring has changed greatly over the last two decades. It was established as a place where the homeless and hungry might be fed. Now, The Wellspring offers much, much more.

Whilst the provision of a daily meal is still central to the Wellspring's ethos now, increasingly, this is just a start.

The homeless are still the priority, but each and every visitor to The Wellspring is an individual, with their own history and their own needs.

To an expanding number of its visitors The Wellspring now provides far more than food. And the numbers needing that broader level of support are ever growing.

The Wellspring was born and sustained out of the goodwill and phenomenal hard work of a group of volunteers; a group that started small but has continued to grow.

Jonathan Billings, the project manager, is now the head of an able and committed staff team who, with the aid of this pool of volunteers, have enabled The Wellspring to provide visitors with much more than food.

Visitors can now access medical and dental advice; be supported in addressing a dependency on drugs or alcohol; learn life skills, to better deal with money and relationship difficulties. And I could go further. In other words, The Wellspring has truly become “a place for change”.

But now is not the time to rest on our laurels. In a period of austerity it is inevitably the most vulnerable who suffer the most, and demand for the services that The Wellspring provides increases every day. And, of course, there is a cost to everything that The Wellspring does. The emphasis for each of us, who hold The Wellspring dear, must be to continue to spread the word; to raise awareness, both of the work that The Wellspring does and the value of that work, but also of the financial implications.

Meanwhile, though, can I, on behalf of The Wellspring's board of directors, say thank you to Jonathan and his staff, and to all the volunteers and supporters, past and present, for their contribution.

**Mr Andrew Ayres**  
Chairman





# Project Managers Report

## Mr Jonathan Billings



### The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service

*The MBE for volunteer groups*

2014 has been a big year for The Wellspring and year of change. In June The Wellspring was awarded The Queens Award for Voluntary Service. This is the highest national honour that an organisation with less than 5 full time staff can be awarded, it is the equivalent of an MBE. It was the highlight of my career so far at The Wellspring to be invited to The Queen's Garden Party at Buckingham Palace which was a magical day that I shall never forget. The award reflects and acknowledges the

hard work and dedication that the staff and volunteers at The Wellspring have invested in the charity since its beginning in 1991. Many positive changes have taken place in 2014, as you will find out later in this report. The Wellspring is becoming a limited company and as a result of this we have had to register the limited company a new charity.



Mr and Mrs Jonathan Billings at Buckingham palace.

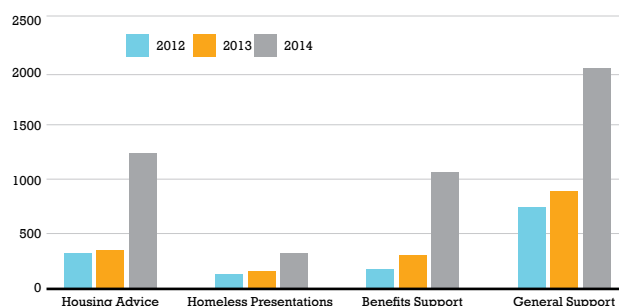
In 2014 The Wellspring was visited just over 50,000 times by people in need. This is a very slight increase in demand from 2013. Although the number of people coming through the door has stayed roughly the same in the last 12 months, the amount of work that has been done with these people by our staff team has more than doubled. Throughout 2013 3580 interventions took place with the members of The Wellspring. In 2014 this figure has risen to 8009. Some of these pieces of work have been very simple things, simple phone calls or small pieces of support. Others have been much more complex pieces of work dealing with tough issues. Over the years at The Wellspring I have come to realise that

*"In 2014 The Wellspring was visited just over 50,000 times by people in need.."*

the very small pieces of work are sometimes the most important. These direct pieces of support work go a long way to preventing homelessness from occurring as well as providing people in need with a professional service.

A very concerning statistic from 2014 is the number of people who have presented as street homeless at The Wellspring. In 2013 149 people walked through our door homeless. In 2014 this figure has risen to 324, more than double. We have been able to make many referrals for these people and have managed to support almost all of them into accommodation. It is often the case that challenging people with multiple issues and needs become homeless again after finding accommodation. This can be for many different reasons but I would highlight a lack of support as the biggest. It's all well and good supporting a challenging individual into housing but without addressing the reasons as to why that person is challenging then we are setting people up to fail. Staff at The Wellspring attempt to avoid this at all costs as we know only too well that if people are not given the right level of support once they have found accommodation then it will only be a matter of time before they are back to square one and sleeping on the streets. Our staff team has provided hundreds of pieces of support work to people that have been rehoused in order to give them the best possible chance of maintaining a tenancy long term. This year we have introduced our Member Support Programme which enables members of The Wellspring to take a voluntary position at the charity to not only provide work experience giving people an insight into paid employment and getting people up to a work ready standard but to provide ongoing support and guidance for that individual. Members taking part in this programme are offered The Outcome Star, this is an online support planning tool that tracks people's personal development and progress and it also assists in writing a support plan for the individual.

## We can and will do more



It may appear concerning that the number of interventions has more than doubled over the last 12 months but there are several reasons for this. It's not just a sign of the times or because of cuts to other services, it's simply because The Wellspring has got better at doing what it does. We have also increased the staff team in 2014 employing a new Project Worker Alison Hunt, who has made a massive contribution to the amount of outcomes we achieve with the client group and has been a very welcome addition to our growing staff team. In 2014 we have also had an exceptionally good social work student who worked at The Wellspring for 4 months on placement. It has been a saying at The Wellspring that we can and will do more and in 2014 I feel we have very much stepped up a gear in the amount of work we have done with the client group. The foundation of this has been increasing the opening times at The Wellspring. It is an aspiration of mine to further increase our opening times in order to provide more services.

In 2013 Wellspring started to run The Rucksack Project in Stockport with the help of Wellspring volunteer Mr Iain Kelly. This project encourages members of the public and organisations to donate a rucksack containing warm clothing, toiletries, food and a sleeping bag. Wellspring can then distribute these packs to people who are sleeping on the streets in order to make that experience a little more bearable. Last year The Wellspring received around 500 rucksacks and sleeping bags. This is more than we would need to last us a full 12 months. The Wellspring and The Rucksack Project Stockport has supplied hundreds of packs and sleeping bags to other organisations right across Greater Manchester helping hundreds of people who are sleeping on the streets. The Big Yellow Self Storage Company in Stockport have provided The Wellspring with free storage for all our rucksacks and sleeping bags which helps us ensure that people sleeping on the streets are kept away from the cold.



*Wellspring Project Worker Alexandra Downes at The Big Yellow self storage company in Stockport*

It is fitting that this report can be used to have a look back over the history of The Wellspring and to say a goodbye to the old charity 1088776 and welcoming The Wellspring (Stockport Limited). It has been very interesting compiling all this information in this report and it has really brought home to me how much The Wellspring means to so many people.

Over the last 8 months The Wellspring has been key in running a new service aimed at breaking the cycle of homeless people being admitted to hospital and then discharged to the streets only to be readmitted to hospital again. The Wellspring secured funding from The Department of Health to employ Miss Emma Littlewood as Homeless Hospital Health Advocate. Emma has done some outstanding work which you can read about later in this report.



*Wellspring Drugs and Alcohol Support Worker Miss Kirstie Marie Wood.*

Providing innovative support to people who have problems with Drugs and Alcohol is a difficult thing to achieve. Over the coming months Drug and Alcohol services in Stockport are being streamlined. As the government cuts begin to affect these vital community services. The Wellspring has very recently employed a Drugs and Alcohol Support Worker who will be specifically working with Wellspring members who have issues with Drugs and Alcohol. We very much hope that this new worker will be able to make an impact on the number of people getting into recovery and staying drug and alcohol free.

## A summary of some of the work completed by the Project staff team at Wellspring in 2013/2014.

	2013	2014
Housing Advice	350	1253
Benefits Work	300	1085
General Support	889	2053
Homeless presentations	149	324
Food Bank Referrals	701	832
Furniture referrals	62	43
Employment Support	207	239
Mental Health Support	57	206
Drug support	71	142
Alcohol Support	62	156
Health Support/Referrals	72	371
Online support	96	333
Debt support	63	171
Crisis Interventions	32	77
Community Outreach Sessions	-	55
Family Mediation	-	111
ID Letters and Support	95	150
Other referrals	101	169
Domestic Violence Support	-	29
Benefit Sanctions Support	-	109
<b>Total Interventions:</b>	<b>3307</b>	<b>8009</b>



The Wellspring is becoming more and more productive. Although the numbers of people attending the project are only slightly bigger than 2013, the amount of work that we have done with these people has more than doubled. Demand on our staff team is very high and very often people have to wait for appointments with Project Workers.

*“We have been blessed this year with some fantastic support from local businesses...”*

We have been blessed this year with some fantastic support from local businesses who have adopted The Wellspring as their Charity of The Year, these organisations have provided volunteers, ran specialist groups, held fundraising events and helped us to develop our processes and systems.

Our Volunteers this year have been as amazing as ever. We currently have quite a large waiting list of people who want to get involved in the project and volunteer. We are very privileged to have so many dedicated hard working volunteers who work extremely hard to a very high standard every single day of the year. The Queens Award for Voluntary Service is a very fitting tribute to our Volunteers and our award is dedicated to each and every Wellspring Volunteer both past and present.



*Wellspring volunteers at the presentation of The Queens Award for Voluntary Service.*





# What Has The Wellspring Done For Me?

## Abdul Deen - Project Worker

Where there is recession, austerity is usually not far behind. Government changes are at times the root issue for many of our members due to decisions made at national and local level. These changes may have an adverse effect for our members in various ways. The year of 2014 in itself proved to be another challenging year. Our membership has grown continually with an average of 10 to 20 new registrations for each month of 2014. During this year, I have seen a visible increase in homelessness both at the resource centre and in our community, which we have collectively tried to address as a team.

My role here as a Project Worker has become diverse in many ways which includes providing support, care and mentoring. This is very essential to enable members to have more options and to maintain a better standard of living. This constant support is provided by numerous appointments such as one to one support or advocacy. It gives me great pleasure to have worked with the Staff and Volunteering teams. Answering the above question, here are some examples of outcomes achieved in 2014.

"I have been a member at the Wellspring for the last 4 years, The Wellspring has helped me with my recovery from drugs and put me on courses such as First Aid and I.T. Since coming to the Wellspring, my confidence has grown in many areas, enabling me to become a volunteer and give back to the community. Staff at The Wellspring have helped me physically, mentally and emotionally to build and to grow. Through daily encouragement from my key working sessions, I was able to graduate from a 16 week course that will enable me to gain employment working with those with drug and alcohol addictions and to always think positive".  
(Angie)

"The Wellspring has helped me so much over the years, the Staff got me off the streets, have given me practical and emotional support whenever I have needed it. I met my current partner there whilst volunteering and I can confidently say that I would always make myself available to help others as I have received the help."  
(Vanessa)

"The Wellspring has supported me for 10 years. From when I first signed up to the service, the project has been a great help. In times of need I found a hot meal 7 days a week, clothing and washing essentials provided and greatly appreciated donations of other essentials helped me so much. Besides the goods provided I also have engaged with Abdul Deen over the years, a great support worker who has helped to provide accommodation and helped me gain access to many health services to address drink and drug related issues. Abdul recognised my artistic talents enrolling me in the art group until last year when I became the art group tutor, a

position of trust and responsibility.

I never thought this would happen.

In my support plan, Abdul has always given me positive advice and good words of encouragement to further myself in life and get back on my feet. Without the support of Abdul and all the other workers and volunteers at The Wellspring, I don't

think I would be at such a good point in life. Having beat my addictions and living in a flat in Manchester, I have so much to thank The Wellspring for!

My life is better than it ever has been and the progress made with Abdul's guidance has had a massive positive impact on my life."  
(Nathaniel)

"Finding and using Wellspring has made an enormous difference to my life in two ways. I can access the food service and also have support when I need it for fairly complex issues."  
(Gina)

These are just a few examples of outcomes achieved in 2014, other highlights for me include supporting a newly registered member with complex issues including serious anger management into supported housing. In addition The Wellspring receiving the Queens Award for Voluntary Service is a credit to the staff and volunteers both past and the present and was another great highlight.

To conclude, I would like to say thank you to everyone who supports The Wellspring, it is more than a good cause, to many it is a last chance or hope in times of need and is indeed... a "place of change".

*"During this year, I have seen a visible increase in homelessness..."*





# How The Wellspring Started

**Mr Brendan Cojeen BEM Wellspring Vice Chairman.**

During 1990 the Catholic Saint Chad's deanery, which comprised of the 11 Catholic parishes in the central and adjacent areas of Stockport, put out a questionnaire to the parishioners asking them the question that if they were missionaries arriving in Stockport, at that time, what would they like to initiate in the town.

The answers were that the people would like to initiate, amongst other issues:

- A spirituality and prayer centre,
- A bereavement service,
- A crèche to support single parents,
- A community café,
- A resource to care for unemployed people and those in need.

Aside from the last point the other desires were, to a greater or lesser extent, dealt with by other groups. It showed that there was a strong realisation of the need for resources of some kind to help those people in society who were vulnerable but which service could not be met by one parish alone.

The last desire was taken up by the then Parish Priest of Saint Joseph's Church located on Tatton Street just off St. Petersgate in the centre of the town. The priest, a Dutchman Father Con Botter, discussed the idea with some of the parishioners of St. Joseph's and asked if we wanted to be involved. He asked me to chair a group to look into the feasibility of such a scheme. This group subsequently became the Steering Group for The Wellspring Kitchen.

After an open meeting where all the proposals were outlined and willing people were divided into their fields of interest, a meeting was set up for those people wishing to help those less fortunate than themselves, and that was on 19 June 1991.

After that meeting, the feeling was that those interested would like to take forward the idea of setting up some sort of resource for those in need of help.

To the rear of St Joseph's church and school there was a former sea-scout hut (2nd Stockport Sea Scouts) that was built on land owned by Shrewsbury Diocese. The hut had been a former drawing office of the Simon-Carves Engineering and was donated to the scouts, and was transfer to the site in the centre of the town. The sea-scouts had no further use for the property and as it, and the site, were the ownership of the catholic diocese it was decided that the use of the hut could for the project for the people in need free of charge.



After the initial meeting groups were set up, and volunteers were sought from steering groups to oversee:

- To obtain fittings and equipment to be able to provide catering for visitors, and appeals were made for utensils/crockery and volunteers, with posters prepared to advertise.
- To clear the hut of all the surplus equipment other rubbish,
- To furnish the hut with curtains and paint the interior to make it a more welcoming environment.
- To outline a timescale, decide on an ethos and get volunteers to run the project.

The ethos was eventually settled as:

- Giving service to homeless people and those in need, with no means test.
- No charge for services or the nourishment.
- We are non-judgemental with no limitation on who is served.
- Aim to improve people's self-image and life style for them to become independent and not to need to use our services.

The name "The Wellspring" adopted. Planning permission was applied for and granted, grants were applied, and advice was sought from other "soup kitchens" and homelessness agencies

It was decided that the project would be opened in the first week in 1992, and that it would provide nourishment, shelter and companionship for those in need in Stockport. The project would be open for one day a week at midday on Sundays.

Before the opening of the hut it was decided that Christmas lunch would be offered for people in need, in the St Joseph's parish hall with food, in the form of a hot pot meal which was to be bought in and was to be paid for by the parish priest of the Catholic Church in Cheadle Hulme, Father Pat Rice.

On the day of the lunch the hall was prepared, tables laid, flowers put on each table and catering provided for 35 visitors. At the end of the day one person attended. The volunteers were very disappointed and questions were asked if we should proceed with the scheme. Fortunately we did persevere.

It was a lesson in the need for widespread advertising of what we were doing and that a project of the kind we were proposing needed time to be accepted by the people that we wanted to attract. The only person to attend the lunch was Neville, a former serviceman sleeping rough on the streets, and who tragically froze to death one night in a doorway some years later.

If it were not for Neville we may have been so despondent at the beginning we may never have proceeded with the project.

On 12 January 1992 the first session was held in the hut with catering for 40, and three people attended. After these initial sessions the numbers of attendees increased.

Progress continued with:

- Meeting held on 20 January with other churches regarding volunteers and the running of the project.
- From 16 February confirmed the project would open one afternoon a week from 2.00 am to 4.00am on Sundays.
- From 23 March the shower was in operation and the project was open on Fridays, Sundays and Mondays.
- From 19 May the project was open for 7 days a week (from 28 April 1994 evening opening started on Thursdays from 6.30 pm to 8.30 pm).
- Subsequently the Steering Group decided on the set up of the catering teams, that there needed to be team leaders to take control of each session and the use by the visitors of the telephone.

In the early days of the project everyone was an amateur and did not know much about running a "soup kitchen". Over the years we have learned many lessons, some the hard way.

We decided that we needed a full time paid project worker to coordinate the work and to ensure that the project was opened daily, and we needed a new premises.

Now 24 years after the first meeting we are much more than a "soup kitchen", we are a valuable resource for the homeless and those in need in a new premises serving over 70,000 meals annually and giving thousands of consultations and action for housing issues, benefits advice and many problems which arise with our visitors.

We look forward to giving service and help to our visitors into the future with the aid of the community and volunteers to take us forward.

*"Over the years we have learned many lessons, some the hard way"*





# A Volunteers Perspective

## Andrew

Following my retirement after working 49 years for the NHS I embarked on a “new career”. I heard about “The Wellspring” (a charity caring for homeless/vulnerable/disadvantaged people) from a friend. I am not sure why, but for many years I have had an empathy with homeless/disadvantaged people ( In the winter I used to collect clothes from friends/neighbours etc and distribute them to needy people whom I saw as I walked back from my job at the MRI to Oxford Rd station. On one very cold day I gave a very nice sheepskin coat to a very “needy-looking” lady who thanked me effusively and said that would keep her warm. The next day I saw her shivering in the cold minus the sheepskin coat :- you can’t win them all or maybe she was a vegan!!) So some three and a half years ago, armed with my CV I presented myself at The Wellspring asking if I could be considered for voluntary work. Can you start in the kitchen tomorrow Brendan asked me and that was the beginning of my involvement with “The Well”.

I have loved working there ever since. Why you may ask:-

1. The first point is that altruism did not really come into it. I initially did it for myself, having worked since the age of 13 as a paper boy/butcher boy and then for 49 years with the NHS, after retirement I needed something to do.
2. Having had a job where I met many people I knew that I would miss this aspect of my retired life, so I guessed that I would be meeting similar minded people amongst the other volunteers. It’s good to interact with other people
3. As I have already said I do have a certain amount of empathy for the homeless/disadvantaged and have never tried to pre-judge them. After all, would I want to sit in the cold and wet on a street in Manchester waiting for someone (having walked out of Harvey Nicholls or wherever after spending many hundreds of pounds on some trivial!) to put a few pence in my cup? I do not know the circumstances that have led them to this kind of life, I am just glad that, fortunately, I have never been reduced to living this kind of life.
4. So, a fairly selfish start to my involvement with “The Well”, mostly about me finding something to do. All that changed the first day I started working at “The Well”. I was put on the Wednesday afternoon shift where I met a lovely team of ladies (most of the volunteers are ladies and having worked with women for almost all of my life I got on great with them). Loved my first day there just doing the washing up and keeping out of the way. Anyway, over the next few weeks I began to learn what the “Well” was really about. I met so many lovely people such as (a) the volunteers who give their time willingly and cheerfully to help other people less fortunate than themselves (b) the permanent staff who work long hours (often far beyond their call of duty) in order to help our guests. I really believe that it is much more than “just a job” to them, they are really dedicated. (c) The students who come on placement for work experience etc always seem to be very dedicated, sincere and compassionate. But finally (d) I find that getting to meet “our guests” on a personal level and hearing their stories really showed me what “The Well” is all about.

5. I have worked there for over 3 years now, in addition to working my regular Wednesday kitchen shift I also come in on another day where I am on the “other side of the counter” just talking to our guests and getting to know them. My feeling is that the “The Well” is more of a social club and feels like a welcoming home where our guests can come, feeling safe, have a good meal/shower/haircut etc followed by a chat with friends of which I now consider myself one. Certainly, the initial feeling is that the primary purpose of the “Well” is to feed people but I think that this is secondary to providing people with companionship, a place where they can meet up in safety and where much needed help with all sorts of problems is provided by both staff and volunteers.

### The motto of The Wellspring is “A Place for Change”

This is certainly true of the work done here. Sure, there are a number of people who, deep down you know will never change – but nonetheless we are still providing a valuable service to them. However I have been privileged to witness many cases where there has been a very positive change. I shall just mention a couple as examples. One of the first people I noticed when I first started was a very polite gentleman dressed in a suit/shirt tie etc. I thought that he couldn’t be homeless as he looked too smart (stereotyping I know), however I found out he was sleeping in the local cemetery (he had been homeless for 2 years). At this time the temp was dipping down to -10°C at night. One day he didn’t come in and I thought the worst, however he was in the next week and told me that the “Well” had sorted him out with accommodation and he had been busy moving into his “new home”. I could have cried for him, well actually I did. He is now living a totally different life. Another story is that of K. who had owned his own business and house but following divorce he had started drinking heavily which led to him losing his business and home so consequently he ended up on the streets. Finally he found his way to The Wellspring, a total wreck (his own words) but this place saved my life he told me. He went into re-hab and now never drinks, has got a flat so he can have his children come to see him and, has now been working for over a year as a gardener. These are just a couple of success stories but there are many more which goes towards making working at the Wellspring so very rewarding and enjoyable.

To me The Wellspring works at many levels not only helping in a number of different ways those people less fortunate than ourselves but also providing very rewarding experiences for all the many volunteers.





## Why I Volunteer At The Wellspring

Jon

I have wanted to work with the homeless and vulnerable for a while but found it a difficult area to get into. The company I work for chose you as our charity and I was lucky enough to get to come down and help for the day. I asked about volunteering and without any complications I was serving the drinks the following Wednesday. The Wellspring is a fantastic organisation and when I help out not only am I helping some very nice, polite and good people who have fallen on hard times but the fact that I work with a great team and always enjoy the shift is the icing on the cake.



## Why We Do What We Do.

Jane

I started coming to The Wellspring in March 2014. I was a broken woman who was physically and emotionally damaged by being in a violent relationship. Homeless and hopeless with drink and drug issues and the loss of my children and family and friends. I had no faith in myself. The only people who had faith in me were The Wellspring. I can say today that The Wellspring saved my life and helped me emotionally and physically rebuild my life and my self-esteem, starting with talking things through and putting an action plan in place weekly, ticking my mile stones as we went through them. They helped my relationship with my mum improve and rebuild and helped me claim correct benefits for my mental health issues. They helped me get some of my personal belongings back from my abusive ex partners flat. All the way the staff at The Wellspring have emotionally kept me on the straight. When I have had a wobble they have been there for me, with anything. I have been helped with practical things like bedding, clothes, food vouchers and toiletries to help me get started in my new home. My bills and debts have been organised with the help of The Wellspring where they showed me how to budget. I have also had help with medical services. When I have ran out of medication. The Wellspring has helped me in every aspect of my life. I will always feel indebted to everyone at The Wellspring. Who have supported me on my journey and they still continue today. For all my support I have received I am so grateful for The Wellspring, especially the project workers.







# Alexandra Downes

## Project Worker

Last year was by far the busiest I have experienced since I started at The Wellspring. 2014 for me was emotional, challenging and rewarding. The work I do can vary greatly from a simple phone call to preventing evictions, homelessness, enabling and supporting people to access benefits, education, employment and mental health services. The list is endless. If we can help we will.

The issues people face are becoming ever more complex, and The Wellspring has seen many changes in the last year with new services such as new laptop station, fully functional training room and additional members to our staff team being employed to meet the ever increasing need.

I have the pleasure of working with amazing people and feel proud to be part of such a wonderful, diverse team of staff and volunteers.

This past year I have been a part of co-ordinating the volunteer rota and I am very pleased to say that our volunteer teams are stronger than ever. The generosity, dedication and hard work of our volunteers is overwhelming and I would like to thank everyone who has given up their own time to support us. The food service provided by our incredible volunteers is quite often what gets people through the door. It can take months for people to disclose what support they need but having regular contact with our members is certainly a step in the right direction and our volunteers play an integral part in that.

I meet people daily who have an intense distrust of the world in general due to their own experiences and circumstances. Developing positive relationships and earning trust is the thing I believe The Wellspring does best. We as a service, pride ourselves on an 'open door policy' and non-judgemental approach. This is something unique that many services, due to demand or result focused outcomes are simply unable to provide.

The success of this ethos is highlighted within the work we do, and below are three examples that were particularly challenging and poignant for me in 2014.

'Robert' was evicted from his home he had lived in for over 5 years due to arrears from under occupancy charges. He finds even opening his post extremely difficult. His mistrust of services meant that engagement was non-existent and he eventually asked for support when he reached crisis point. I made the time to get to know him, gaining his trust, building his confidence and offering practical support trying to minimise his anxiety. The eviction had a severe impact on his mental health and he spent a period of time in hospital as he was simply unable to cope. The mental health team were incredibly supportive and we organised for him to have his community appointments at The Wellspring as it is where he felt most comfortable. This meant his engagement with their service was positive and successful.

Throughout 2014 Robert attended 65 one-one support sessions with me, even attending the local authority housing office which in itself was a huge achievement. I am incredibly proud of what he has achieved to date, I hope that moving forward into 2015 with the continued support of The Wellspring Robert will progress and be able to secure more permanent accommodation.

A highlight of 2014 for me was supporting "Stuart" to the housing office to finally sign his tenancy agreement following a long, difficult period of ill health, benefit issues and rough sleeping. Stuart has been a regular attendee at The Wellspring for many years, and had experienced homelessness before, but, having suffered two heart attacks in 2013, Stuart felt more vulnerable than he ever had before. Intense support with housing, benefits and health was put in place with Stuart attending approximately 85 one-one sessions. Advice from our health care team and regular contact with the local pharmacy ensured that Stuart regularly collected his prescription and most importantly, took his medication. After many months of weekly bidding in August 2014 Stuart secured a one bedroom flat. Relevant referrals were made to ensure he had all the furniture he needed and with regular visits to the flat we supported Stuart to make it feel like home.

*"I have the pleasure of working with amazing people and feel proud to be part of such a wonderful, diverse team of staff and volunteers."*

In May 2014 I was approached by "Jon". He was rough sleeping having left temporary accommodation and disengaging from services. By August Jon had still not engaged with housing and he had spiralled into a cycle of criminal activity and increased drug use. I arranged on many occasions to meet with him to go to the housing office but he did not attend.

Concerns around his vulnerability, mental and physical health increased. I kept regular contact and worked closely with the town centre police, pharmacy and housing in an attempt to try and engage with him but, by this time, he was in complete denial about his circumstances.

In November he came in and I have never seen anyone in such despair, believing there to be no light at the end of tunnel and wanting to end his life. I sought advice from the GP here at The Wellspring and supported Jon to A&E to see the Mental Health Team. After a 7 hour wait the consultant psychiatrist admitted Jon onto a ward. I kept regular contact with him whilst in hospital and liaised with housing, meaning that he was discharged straight into accommodation.

Since then Jon has joined our member support programme. He volunteers here daily and has full programme of support including debt/money management, registration with a dentist, full health screening and regular engagement with the community drugs team. An intense multi agency approach is in place to ensure he does not become at risk of eviction as this is his tenth stay in temporary accommodation. I have spent the past 9 months developing a relationship with Jon, gaining his trust and helping him to restore his confidence in himself. We set realistic, achievable goals and after weeks of preparation and savings Jon has now been supported to obtain a birth certificate and provisional driving licence even recently passing his theory test! The sense of achievement and self-belief this brought is indescribable. I have seen an immense change in Jon, his whole outlook on life has changed for the better and I feel incredibly proud that, within my role as project worker, I am able to be a part of facilitating that positive change.



# Alison Hunt

## Project Worker

I would like to introduce myself as Dora the explorer, I was successfully recruited for the position of a project worker for The Wellspring in March 2014. My working background has been with Stockport MBC for 25 years in adult social care, services for young people and Greater Manchester fire and rescue. All my previous experiences within these roles now provides a positive contribution to my role at The Wellspring. My role is to support vulnerable people, to reduce risk, prevent homelessness, to safeguard people at risk and educate people at risk of engagement in all forms of crime and disorder whilst improving their quality of life. This role also entails working closely with other agencies such as the police, housing providers, education and health services.

What an amazing, rewarding and busy year I've had! I feel that I have dedicated myself to The Wellspring as a project worker to support vulnerable and disadvantaged people. I have been faced with so many cases over this year where many people have been at crisis point. I have reassured service users by supporting them emotionally and practically to be able to make positive changes at a pace they can emotionally deal with. Some of the people who walk through the door don't have any form of ID, a birth certificate, a bank account, nothing! Which I'm sure others take for granted, or just don't think about.

I have supported many women who have been victims of domestic abuse and are therefore very fragile and vulnerable. I have spent time in building their confidence and self-esteem so they can gain my trust and be able to move on in a positive way. This is done in an empathetic, non-judgemental way. Looking at the practical aspect of things, I am able to support with housing, benefits, opening bank accounts, registering with a doctor and dentist; whatever the needs are for that individual at that time. Then looking at referrals to professional agencies who are specialised in domestic abuse such as Women Without Abuse, Police Victim Support and Stockport Women's Centre.

I have supported several people at The Wellspring where there has been a breakdown within the family, due to complex issues in relation to the choices they have made, such as substance misuse and criminality, which can then affect or lead to mental health issues. Within my role I have been able to advocate for those people, to express how they feel and to provide the necessary support that is tailored to their needs. I have been able to break

down those barriers, enabling them to rebuild their relationships back up with their families.

*"The young woman had been rough sleeping in Stockport for a while in a tent in very poor conditions.."*



Part of my role is to also to provide an outreach service where I would go out on the streets, supporting rough sleepers and to build positive working relationships. In one particular case I was introduced by my co-ordinator to a young woman who was rough sleeping, as he felt that a female support worker was more appropriate. The

young woman had been rough sleeping in Stockport for a while in a tent in very poor conditions, with health and welfare concerns and apparent safeguarding issues. Over a period of time I had built a positive relationship with her which was achieved by regular contact, going out for coffee and developing trust by listening and communicating. This young woman would only access The Wellspring late evening when most of our service users had left, to have a shower and something to eat. This was a massive achievement for us which encouraged her to continue to make positive changes and to access our service.

I worked alongside other agencies regarding this woman, as concerns were getting greater which involved the mental health team, housing, and the police. This young woman was admitted into hospital with support from health professionals to provide the care this young woman needed and I was able to support her when in hospital by attending professional meetings. After a period of time she was well enough to go into a supported tenancy with one to one support, and now this young woman has her own tenancy and is supported in the community. She looks and feels like a different person and says so.

The Rucksack Project was an experience I found overwhelming, very emotional and extremely enjoyable to be a part of, as it was my first time. There were times when children, young people and families came in and donated a rucksack in order to make the lives of people who are sleeping on the streets a little easier. People shared their personal experiences as to why they donated to the project. One woman donated as her brother is a missing person, I wasn't aware of how wonderful and generous the Stockport community is. It made me feel so proud to be part of The Wellspring project.





# Homeless Health Advocate

Emma Littlewood



As a result of winning a bid from the Department of Health in 2013, I was given the position of 'Homeless Health Advocate' in February 2014. My role is to provide a service to patients in hospital who are either homeless or accommodated in Stockport Homes temporary accommodation schemes. I work to ensure that their health and housing needs are met, both in hospital and on their discharge, and continue to work with them for as long as is necessary. I aim to prevent individual patients representing at A+E within 7 days, and to prevent readmissions within 30 days. To do this I work with the patient to access relevant health support such as registering with a GP and dentist, engaging with drug/alcohol support, addressing any mental health concerns, as well as ensuring they are maintaining their tenancy effectively.

Over a period of 13 months; 149 patients attended A+E 325 times. Here are a few tables to outline further figures:

#### Emergency Department re-attendance within 7 days

Number of patients	28 out of 149
Number of times	59 out of 325

#### Patient re-admission within 30 days

Number of patients	8 out of 149
Number of times	11 out of 325

#### A table to outline the demographic of A+E attendances

NFA	Buxton Road	Brindale House	Strathclyde House	Other
85	12	24	18	10

In one particular case, a young lady was a victim of a serious domestic assault, resulting in a stay in hospital. She had led a very chaotic life involving drug/alcohol use, mental health issues, violent behaviour, criminal convictions etc. When I came to support her in hospital she had been evicted and was faced with homelessness. The patient openly admitted that she felt she was going to commit a crime to receive shelter in prison. However, I was able to support this lady into accommodation. She is now into her second successful tenancy, she engages with a number of support services including the local alcohol team, the women's centre, Stockport Without Abuse, a tenancy support service and a local church group. She also attended swimming once a week and is currently looking into volunteering with animals. I have been working with this lady for 1 year and have seen massive improvements!

As I have liaised with other services during my role, many have commented on the success of the service so far:

"I have found Emma's support to be invaluable when working with clients... Clients have commented to me how helpful it has been to have a worker who they develop a relationship with, provide ongoing support and see them through a difficult time"

"I feel that the most positive part of your service, when dealing with homeless patients, is that I can be confident that you will do all you can in linking patients up with the appropriate services"

I feel that being based at The Wellspring really aids this service as it is a great place to either introduce patients to, or for patients who already use The Wellspring, a familiar centre to work from. Being able to use The Wellspring as my base means I can often catch patients that can be difficult to engage with, and use The Wellspring as an initial engagement point into services.



# Nurse Advisor Report for 5 Month Period September 15th 2014 - February 20th 2015

Sheila Whittle(BSc RN RMN DipHSw)

## Objective

To demonstrate the importance of health inclusion work for members of The Wellspring Stockport who represent some of the most deprived residents of the borough with the poorest health outcomes. Average life expectancy of 47 years for our members. To demonstrate the importance of health inclusion work in the overall achievements of the organisations Stockport Foundation Trust and The Wellspring Stockport.

## Clinical Presentations

### Trauma

- Lacerations
- Self-inflicted wounds
- Dog bites
- Facial wounding
- Suture removal
- Fractures

### Substance misuse

- START referral
- Advice (harm reduction) and support
- Collaborative work with CDT and alcohol team workers
- IV injection site

## Implementation

Nurse presence at the Wellspring 2/3 times each week between 3-6 hours of access for members to visit during opening hours. Usual daily number of contacts between 6 and 16. Temporary accommodation visits twice each week. Usual numbers attending between 4 and 9 individual residents.

### Urgent and long standing conditions

- Cellulitis
- Venous ulcers
- Thrombophlebitis
- Wound dressings following hospital admission
- Wound dressings following A+E presentation for rough sleepers

### Physical general health checks

- Weight monitoring
- Diabetes management
- Liaison with GP's
- New registrations with GP
- CVD risk assessment

### Sexual health

- Referral to Choices
- Referral to Central Youth service
- Blood borne virus advice
- Advice
- Condom distribution

### Mental health

- Assessment
- Referrals to access and crisis teams
- Advice and encouragement to access services
- Administration of long term medications

### Dental health

- Referrals for emergency treatment
- Referrals to dentists taking NHS patients

### Immunisation and Vaccination

- Provision of seasonal flu vaccinations (32)
- Advice

### Podiatry

- Referrals for urgent treatment
- Assessment

## Numbers Attending

Average number of presentations to healthcare = 32 per week. Over 21 weeks (time period of nurse secondment to post) = approximately 672 members. More than half of this number was repeat visits. Approximately 292 unique individuals presented for healthcare attention from the nurse advisor.

## Case Study

Peter had experienced long standing binge drinking episodes – this resulted in presenting threat to his accommodation, finances and work.

When he lost his job he experienced spiralling low mood – drinking 5 bottles of wine each day. Seizures resulted in serious head wounds and facial lacerations. Sometimes no medical intervention was sought. The pinna of one ear was completely cut through in a fall and healed unevenly.

Over a period of 16 weeks the health intervention and co-operative work with his primary care services led to work with alcohol treatment services and his GP assisting him to become abstinent safely. He has now returned to work and good emotional health.

He visited to remind me that when a Stockport person has no family or friends left to believe in them the only place to offer a belief in the ability to change is the team at The Wellspring. Whether it's a shower and a change of clothes. A warm drink while you wait for the nurse to check your observations and monitor your continued improvement. A kind word whilst your wounds are dressed. Great nutrition, at a time when you have no chance of providing this for yourself.

## Outcomes

Diversion from A+E. New registrations for GP service. Members at The Wellspring receiving a good standard of healthcare when they most need it. Appropriate signposting and referral into mainstream services.

## And Finally...

In September 2014 I was offered the short term opportunity of returning to work as the nurse/health advisor with The Wellspring team.

It has been heartening to see the huge improvements in the support that is offered to homeless and vulnerably housed in the borough since I was last with everyone from 1999 to 2002. Stockport is, and should be, very proud of the provision you make. The building is almost as incredible as what you all do within its walls. I have watched people turn their lives around with your belief, respect and support as the wind in their sails. Thank you all members and supporters for making me so welcome – I have really enjoyed being a part of the health inclusion team work once again.

# Women's Group Report

## Jenny Went



It's very encouraging to be able to report that we are still up and running and now in our sixth year! We continue to welcome all-comers and keep a watchful eye on all our members whether 'old faithfuls' or newcomers! Our numbers are not quite as high as they have been, but we average at least 10/11 members and leaders per week. Members enjoy the safe and secure environment we provide. The Training Room is ideal for us; we are self sufficient up there, with our own storage cupboards and facilities for making refreshments. (Although we do venture downstairs for Keep Fit sessions and cake decorating and the like!)

We continue to encourage, enable and equip our members in many different areas and we are continually surprised at the hidden talents which are revealed in creative sessions. (Have a look at our display board in the main hall)

Yet again, we have been able to enjoy trips out. We were welcomed at Marple Ridge Methodist church where there is always a creative skill to learn and a wonderful afternoon tea to enjoy! The ladies at Marple Methodists also invited the members to help pack some Operation Christmas Child boxes; we saw a video about the project and of course enjoyed another tea! We all came away with personal gifts too and we hope to get involved ourselves with the project for Christmas 2015.

We have been enabled to talk and discuss amongst ourselves, facilitated by visits from skilled leaders (Rachel Stone and our own Nurse Sheila etc.) Members were able to share and talk at a much deeper and personal level than ever before. We have continued to repair, restore and sell items of jewellery which have been kindly donated to us, thus boosting our financial base.

Our usual party times have been enjoyed. We celebrated the re-commencement of the group with a traditional afternoon tea. Christmas was a very creative time, making decorations and arrangements, to say nothing of a magnificent spread of treats! This year, instead of carving Halloween Pumpkins, we had a Light Party, when we decorated Tea Light holders and placed battery candles in them and played Halloween games such as 'bob apple' and 'hunt the 10p piece' (hidden in a pile of flour!) No programme of events would be complete without a meal out and we were able to visit the Chinese Buffet, conveniently situated on the A6!

An outstanding event at the end of the summer session was a celebratory Canal Cruise. This was to celebrate our Fifth Anniversary. So on a beautiful summer's day, we cruised from the Ring o' Bells in Marple up to High Lane and back to the pub for a wonderful celebratory buffet meal. We sang, gave out awards and ate birthday cake whilst afloat. A memorable afternoon!

We are all so grateful for the support and encouragement we receive from friends of The Wellspring. Those of us who lead the group are pleased too, to witness the personal development in our members and we celebrate the ownership they display. Long may this continue!



# Treasurers Report

## Simon Leigh

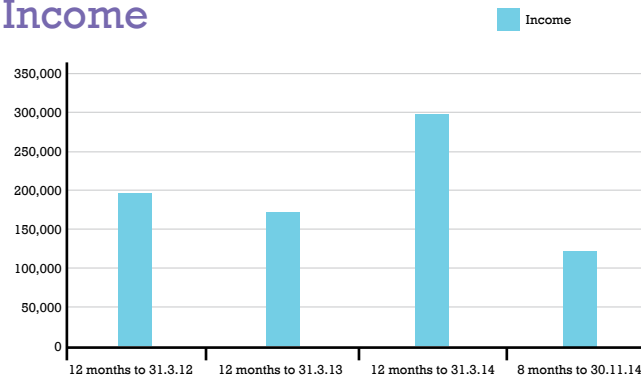
The financial year for the 12 months to 31 March 2014 showed a surplus for the year of £97,018 and cash in the bank of £296,415.

Costs rose again due to increasing demand for our services – the charity was able to raise adequate funds to cover these costs with the large surplus being the result of a generous one off legacy (£81,399)

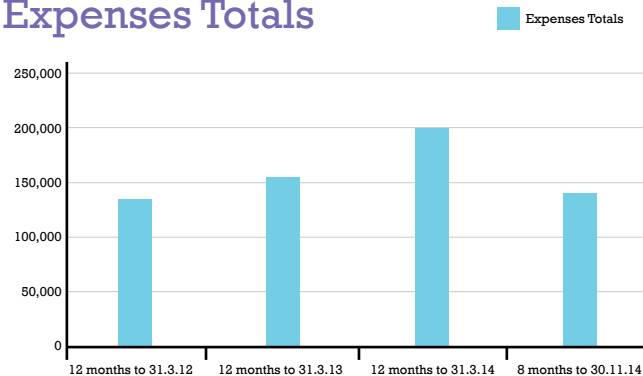
Since the March 2014 financial year end, costs have continued to rise. The management accounts for the 8 months to 30 November 2014 show a deficit of £16,411 and cash in the bank of £279,421.

The finances for the last 3 and a half years are summarised in the graphs below-

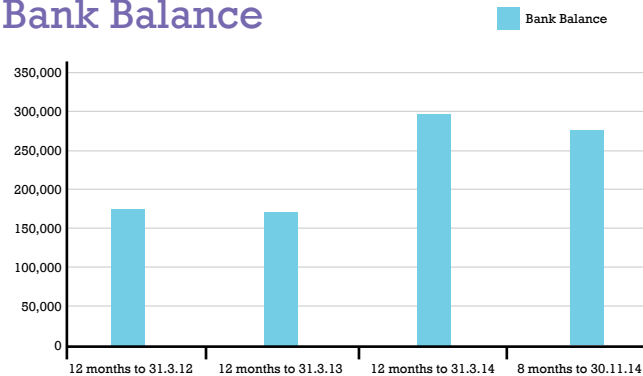
### Income



### Expenses Totals



### Bank Balance





# Fundraising Report

## Mr Peter Hodkinson MBE - Director of Fundraising

During 2014 the monthly Fundraising meetings have been well attended. The events we planned generally proved most rewarding. The proceeds going towards The Wellspring running costs. However this year we will have to make changes with regard to The Spirit of Christmas. This Christmas Variety Show was first put on at Stockport Town Hall in 1997. After three annual shows, we had to move to The Plaza, Stockport in order to accommodate the growing audience. Sadly after a long successful run, we have decided to rename & re-jig the show which has been booked at The Plaza for 24th October 2015.

When events prove successful we continue, trying to stay on a winning streak.

Events include:

- The Great Manchester 10k Run.
- The Great Manchester Swim.
- Wellspring Factor. Our quiz at Stockport Grammar School.
- The Annual Grand Draw.
- Bag Packing at supermarkets.
- The Silent Auction.
- Flower Arranging Demonstrations.
- Rock & Roll Nights

to name but a few. These events also raise the public awareness of The Wellspring.

Whilst the widespread distribution of literature produced by us improves the public perception of our cause, this in turn leads other organisations to lend their support to The Wellspring.

We always give new members of the Fundraising Committee a warm welcome.

Why not join us in having Fun whilst Fundraising for.....  
The Wellspring .... Supporting people in need in Stockport





# Fond Memories

## Mr Peter Hodkinson MBE

In 1991 a public meeting was held at St. Joseph's Catholic Church in order to establish an organisation to cater for people in need in Stockport.

Father Botter, the then parish priest, suggested that the people attending the meeting should look at an old scout hut on Fletcher St. to see if we considered it suitable for our purpose.

The building was in poor condition, with many broken windows, the roof subsiding and the walls bursting outwards. Not to be daunted, the volunteers were keen to get started on a transformation. The walls were pulled upright & the roof jacked up. Plumbing & heating were installed. MFI donated a flat pack kitchen. The school meals service donated a large gas cooker. An S.S. twin tub sink was donated by a Sheffield manufacturer.

The dining hall was furnished with small round pub tables, each with a pan to collect the water dripping through the porous asbestos roof. The ladies made smart red check gingham curtains to put up at the newly glazed windows & the building was vigorously cleaned.

Later we managed to persuade a cladding manufacturer in North Wales to supply us with a heavily discounted, insulated steel roof which transformed the environment, making it light, clean, warm, dry & secure (& we did away with the asbestos.)

Food was donated by many churches, who each displayed a carton as a food collection point, which the volunteers brought in weekly. Eventually we wrote to junior schools & churches to ask them to donate tinned food at harvest time in order to build up a stock.

Initially we received more than our fair share of prize marrows & beans. Clarks DIY, our neighbours, kindly allowed us to store food on their premises.

We opened originally, without a kitchen, on a Sunday. A local caterer provided hot soup for thirty. A homeless man called Neville was the only person who turned up, so the volunteer drank a lot of soup. Soon numbers grew as the word spread. Our teams of volunteers increased also, which enabled us to open each lunchtime, then eventually in the evenings also.

Whilst the building was now in a usable condition it did not have a long term future & things were straining at the seams. In 1997 the building fund was started with our first major event, The Spirit of Christmas, a variety show presented by Gordon Burns of BBC News Northwest, at Stockport Town Hall.

Gordon had recently agreed, along with a number of religious leaders, to become Patrons of The Wellspring. With the help that we were providing to people in need, on a daily basis, together with ecumenical recognition, The Wellspring was by now becoming widely known.

The Wellspring at this time was run by teams of volunteers under the guidance of a steering committee but following an incident it was felt that we should close temporarily until we could find a suitable person to employ as manager.

Over the years the facility was improved, a shower added, an office built for the manager, then a surgery for the newly appointed nurse.

By 2009 the Building Fund had increased sufficient for us to invest in a new purpose built Wellspring, on a site in Harvey St. provided by SMBC.

We are able to continue to sustain, improve & increase the range of services we offer to those in need in Stockport thanks to the diligence of our staff & volunteers.

All this is thanks to the generosity of the people of Stockport.

*The original Wellspring building.*





## How you can get involved:

- Adopt The Wellspring as your company's Charity of The Year and receive bespoke support to plan events and get members of staff involved in volunteering.
- Donations of clothing and food are always needed. These can be dropped off at the project any day of the year from 9am-4pm and until 8pm Mondays to Thursdays.
- Attend a Wellspring fundraising event, up to date list of events can be found at [www.thewellspring.uk](http://www.thewellspring.uk)
- Become a volunteer at the project. Application forms can be found at [www.thewellspring.uk](http://www.thewellspring.uk) or drop in to the project and collect one.
- Financial donations are always needed to make sure that the services continue to grow. Donations can be dropped off at the project, made online via [www.thewellspring.uk](http://www.thewellspring.uk) or sent in the post to P.O. BOX 456, Stockport, SK11WZ
- Come and visit the project any day of the year and have a chat with the staff about how you can get involved.

### **The Wellspring (Stockport) Limited.**

Harvey St, Stockport SK11YD.

**Tel:** 0161-477-6344

**Fax:** 0161-477-6344

**Email:** [thewellspring@btconnect.com](mailto:thewellspring@btconnect.com)

**Web:** [www.thewellspring.uk](http://www.thewellspring.uk)

**Twitter:** @jon\_wellspring

**Facebook:** [facebook.com/thewellspringstockport](https://facebook.com/thewellspringstockport)

**Project Manager** Jonathan Billings **Tel:** 07866985242







**The Wellspring (Stockport) Limited.** Harvey St, Stockport SK11YD.  
Registered Charity Number 1157268 Registered Company Number 08880312  
**Tel:** 0161-477-6344 **Fax:** 0161-477-6344 **Email:** [thewellspring@btconnect.com](mailto:thewellspring@btconnect.com)  
**Web:** [www.thewellspring.uk](http://www.thewellspring.uk) **Twitter:** @jon\_wellspring  
**Facebook:** [facebook.com/thewellspringstockport](https://www.facebook.com/thewellspringstockport)  
**Project Manager** Jonathan Billings **Tel:** 07866985242