



Future Hope (formerly known as Pause) is a project based in Durham that works with women who have children who don't currently live in their care. We know how difficult it is when families can't stay together. We are here to equip women with the tools they need to move forward. Our goal is to support women in building their confidence and self esteem, addressing the root issues, and finding the stability to make positive changes.

We work with women who have experienced, or are at risk of, repeated pregnancies that result in children needing to be removed from their care. We aim to give women the opportunity to take a break, reflect and take control of their lives, breaking a painful cycle that causes both them and their children deep trauma. To ensure that the women are able to take a break from pregnancy, we ask them to choose from the most effective forms of reversible contraception.

Our practitioners form long-term relationships with the women, helping them in all areas of their lives to achieve their goals and attain stability. We work with women regardless of circumstances, we are assertive in our outreach, working to build their trust and engagement. Our practice is trauma informed, strength based and woman focussed.

In England over 13,000 are involved in care proceedings and many women will lose their children permanently from their care. Studies have shown at least one in four of these mothers will return to court again to further sets of care proceedings. This figure is closer to one in three for women aged under 23. (Broadhurst et al., 2015, 2017b)(1). In Durham we are prioritising young mothers with the goal of intervening earlier so removals don't happen more than once.

(1)Reference Broadhurst K, Mason C, Bedston S, et al. (2017b) Vulnerable Birth Mothers and Recurrent Care Proceedings. Final Main Report. Lancaster: Centre for Child and Family Justice Research.

Eligibility criteria

- Must live in the County Durham area and have had one or more child/ren removed from their care.
 - Women will be prioritised based on age, level of need and care experience.
 - Their last pregnancy needs to be within the last 5 years.
 - We do not work with women who are currently pregnant or who have children in their care.
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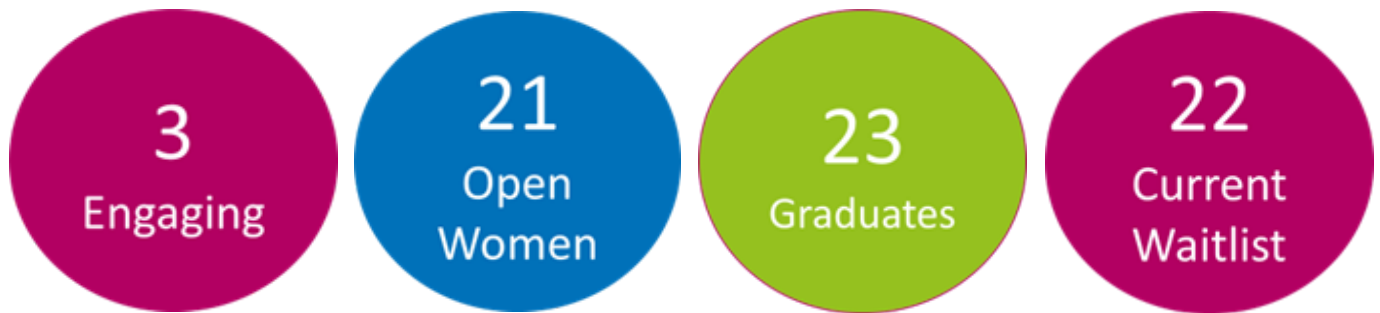
Future Hope

From April 2024 we will no longer be part of the Pause network, but will take the learning and experience from the past three years and launch our own service, bespoke to County Durham. Our new name 'Future Hope' and tag line 'Stepping Forward Together' have been coproduced by Durham women.



Stepping forward together

Our Current Community



Stage of program current women are at



We are currently working with 24 women, 3 in the Engagement stage and 21 in the Open stage of the programme. The total number of children removed from Open women is 46 which is an average of 2.2 children per woman. The current age range of our cohort is 21-39 years old with an average age of 29.8 years. 57% of the women have care experience.

At present, no care proceedings have been initiated for graduates from Pause and although this is not our primary aim, we are aware of four children being returned to their mother's care. Additionally, four women have made enough changes and been reassessed to have unsupervised contact with their children. Improving relationships between mothers and their children is a key aim of the program and is consistently in the top 3 needs that women identify when working with us.

Women who have had their children removed often have complex needs. The diagram below illustrates the key support needs identified in our community. The data shows that engagement with Pause has a significant impact on women's abilities to have these needs met.

Profile of Needs for Current Women



65% have housing needs
Of these 80% are receiving support and 7% have moved into more suitable accommodation



48% have substance misuse needs
Of these 45% are receiving support



100% are accessing a GP



52% are care experienced



96% have mental health needs
Of these 91% are receiving support



96% have experienced domestic abuse and 22% have disclosed current domestic abuse
Of these 100% are receiving support



48% need support around debt and/or benefits
Of these 73% are receiving support



61% asked for support around family time/letterbox contact
Of these, 79% are receiving support

Statistics of Women 2023-24



53
women reached

Who have had a total of
146
Children removed
(2.8 per woman avg.)

20
new women opened to Pause

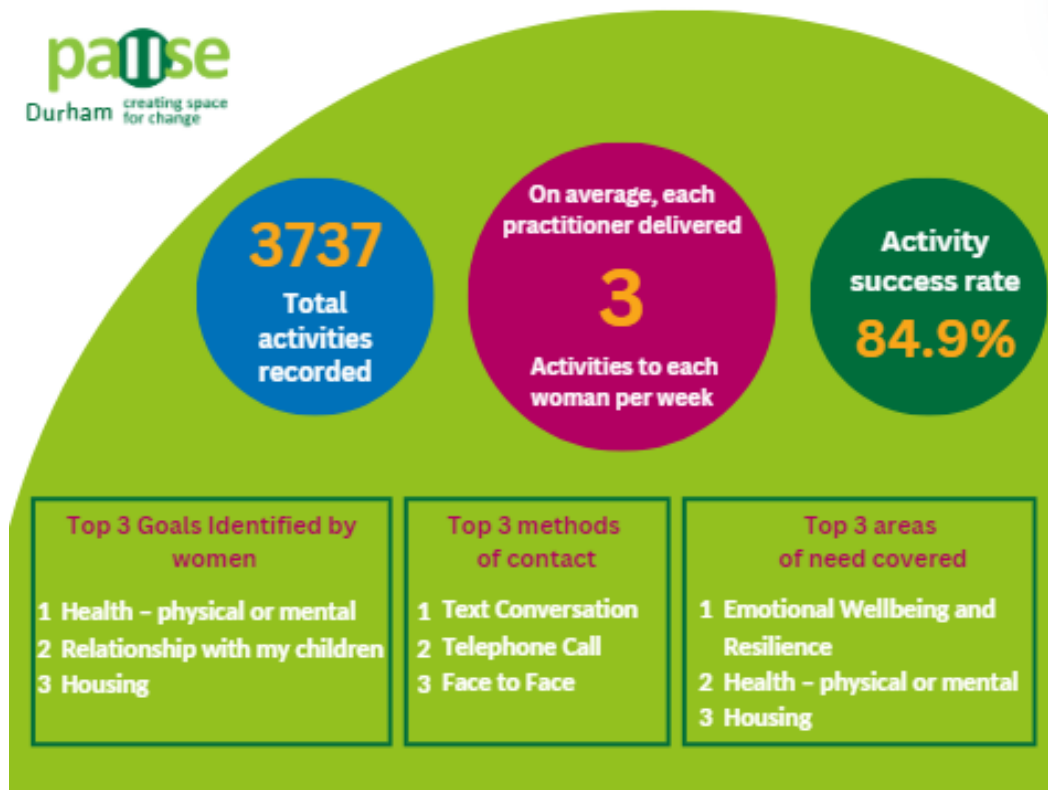
Pause Durham currently has **21** women open on the programme

6 women are in North Durham

9 women are in South Durham

6 women are in East Durham

Annual Activity Data (2023-24)



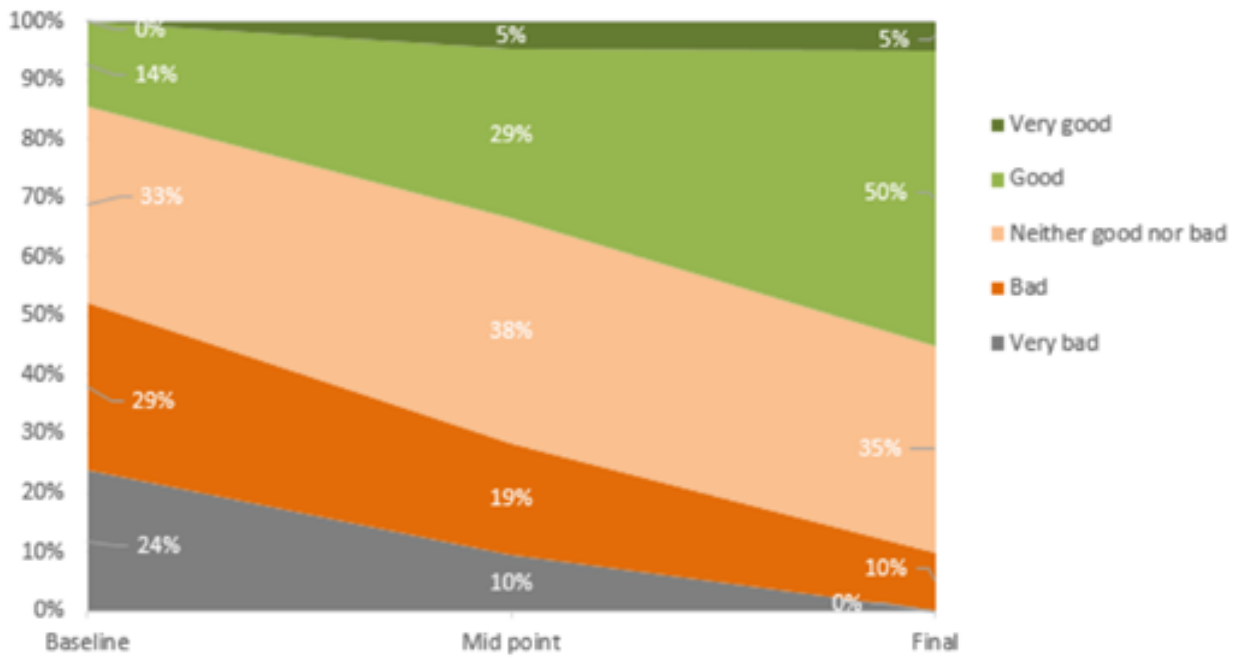
Reported Improvements Over 6 Months



Mental Health and Psychological distress charts

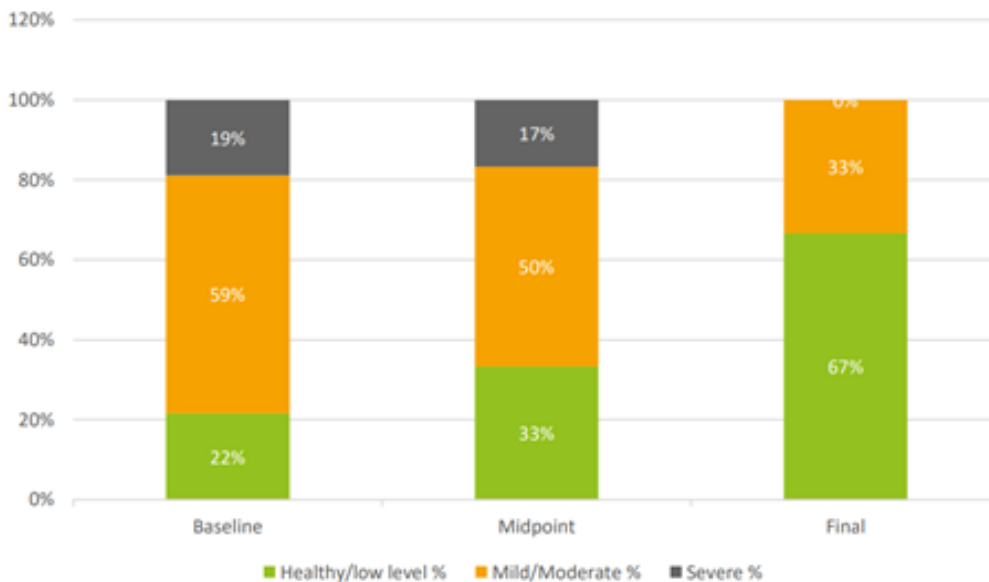
The impact of the program can be seen by comparing women's responses to the question 'How would you describe your mental and emotional health?' at the start of the program and the end. The data shows a significant increase in women describing their mental and emotional health as either 'very good' or 'good' (from 14% to 55%) and a decrease in women describing their mental and emotional health as 'very bad' or 'bad' (from 33% to 10%) through the course of the Programme. **24% of women described their mental health as 'very bad' at the start of their Pause Programme. This reduced to 0% by the end.**

How would you describe your mental and emotional health?



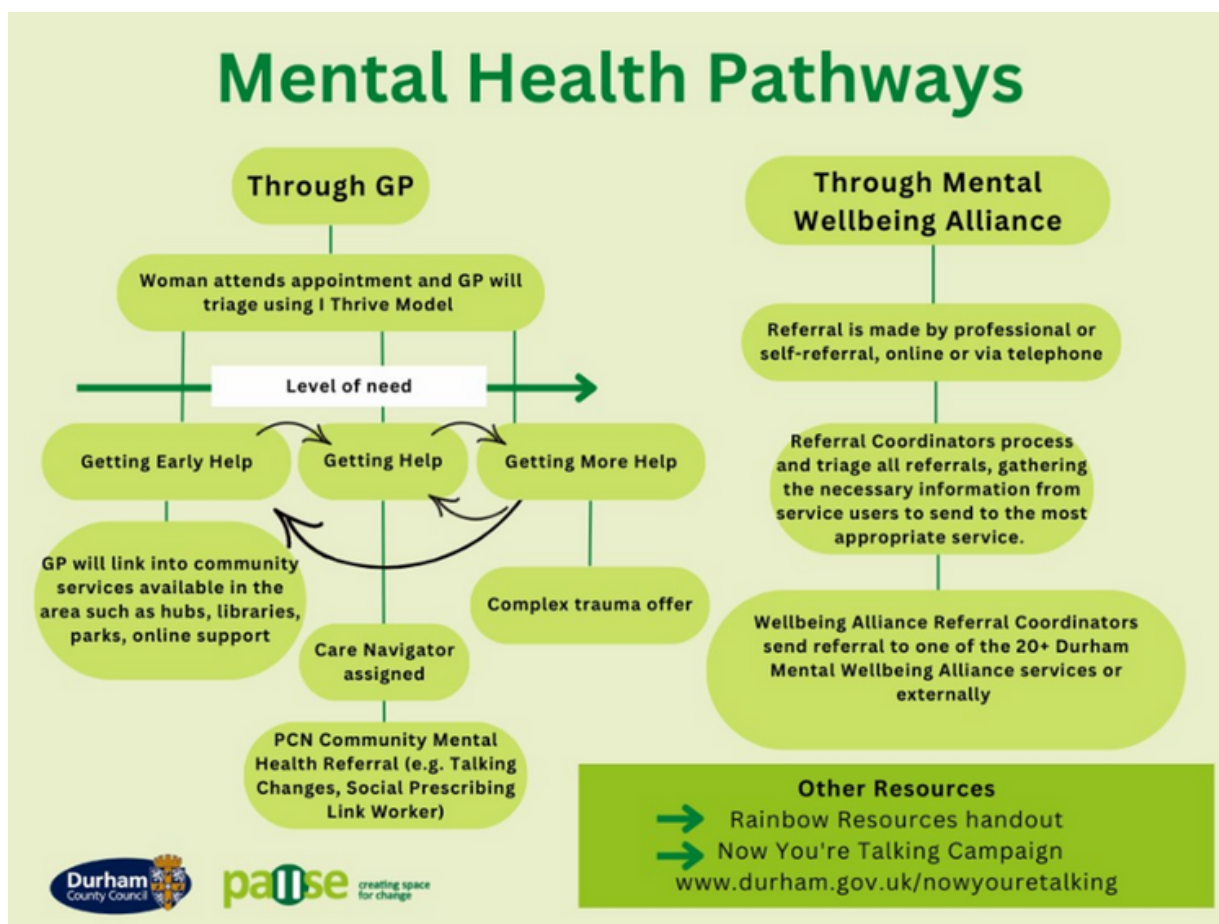
Pause Durham Levels of psychological distress (CORE-10)[2] scores also show significant positive improvements with healthy / low psychological distress levels increasing from 22% to 67% over the duration of the program. Women with severe psychological distress scores reduce from 19% to 0%.

Pause Durham Levels of Psychological distress



[2] The CORE-10 is a standardised measure of psychological distress, in which the respondent considers 10 statements and notes how frequently each has occurred for them over the past week. Each statement has an attributed score which sum to create a total CORE 10 score, with higher scores indicating higher psychological distress.

Mental Health Pathways



Research has shown that 51% of women in recurrent care proceedings have experience of mental health issues (Broadhurst, K. and Mason, C. 2017)(3). 96% of the women we currently work with, have experienced issues with their mental health.

This year has seen us create and implement a clear mental health pathway, working alongside Public Health. This is working well and Practitioners are clear on what support is available to women and can give clear options for accessing it. We continue to work on options for therapeutic pathways, as women often have challenges accessing the interventions recommended in court as the don't meet the required thresholds. (Mason et al. 2022: 21)(4) or it is not offered in a form that sufficiently meet the complex needs of these mothers.(Mason et al. 2020)(5)

(3) Broadhurst, K. and Mason, C. (2017). "Vulnerable Birth Mothers and Recurrent Care Proceedings". Lancaster University

(4) Mason C, Broadhurst K, Ward H, et al. (2022) Born into Care: Developing Best Practice Guidelines for when the State Intervenes at Birth. Nuffield Family Justice Observatory.

(5) Mason C., Taggart D. and Broadhurst K. (2020) Parental non-engagement within Child Protection Service - How can understandings of complex trauma and epistemic trust help? Societies 10(4): 93.

Graduate Story

K's Story

- She is a care experienced young woman who met the father of her children at the age of 16 while living in a hostel
- She had two children removed from her care, and had recently experienced pregnancy loss with her third child
- She was in a domestically abusive relationship and struggling with drug misuse and at risk of homelessness
- She was extremely isolated and had very poor mental health
- She completed a full Pause programme and was supported to move to safe accommodation and access services to address her needs
- She is now working part-time, seeing a counsellor and more hopeful for the future

“ Tell them my kids will know who saved there mammy!! Because Pause saved my life and ill say that for the rest of my life because yous did you brought the colour back into the world for me when everything was just so dark and horrible ill never forget pause or anyone in it both ... I'd never forget anything you did for me and I keep going cause I can hear your calming voice in my head telling me I can do it!! You always say it's me that did the work I agree I did but you got me there.’ ”

– Pause Graduate

K shares her honest reflections on Pause Durham

“

What Pause has given me is a group of girls that are not really judgemental. I used to love it, I used to love waking up on a Wednesday and know that I was going to group. You helped us get away from an abusive relationship, you helped us move away from the toxic traits I had and I've learned to say no. I learned that my boundaries are my boundaries. You can be yourself around Pause and you can be vulnerable and angry and they'd still not walk away from you. Id of give me a slap basically! But they stood by us. If it wasnt for Pause, I probably would've killed myself and that's me being honest.- K

”

We are passionate about amplifying the voices of the women we work with, we are always looking to refocus and improve upon our practice. Please see the feedback collected from women we have worked with this past year.

“
My practitioner goes above and beyond for me. She either supports me or finds the right people who can. She got me out to the farm and now I'd like to keep going to group activities”

“
The groups give me a couple of hours doing something different and socialising. I enjoy all of the programme If I didn't have Pause support I don't where I would be now to be honest. I can always get through to XXX, she helps me to get to my appointments”

“
She's helped me through a lot actually. she's a good lass, I really like her. In the past when I've gone to mental health workers, you open up to them and then they change who you are seeing and it's hard to trust them. I can tell her my problems and not be judged. when I'm having an off day I can ring her and let it all out My trust issues towards people are very bad but I trust her 100% I always keep her updated on what's going on in my life. There's nothing you can do better”

“
I don't think anything has to be changed activities are my favourite part of Pause”

“
Pause is fine the way it is, it's on my time so I know if I don't want to go out I can just call instead. XXX goes at my own pace. I like being able to speak my own mind knowing I'm not being judged for things.”

As our growing wait list shows, the need for relational, trauma informed and woman centred post care proceedings support is great. Our team currently has 3 Practitioners and can work with up to 24 women at one time. This year we are hoping to expand our team so more mothers across County Durham can access this support.