

# MP Kevan Jones Visits Aspire 8<sup>th</sup> November 2019

Former MP and current candidate MP for North Durham, Kevan Jones visited Aspire earlier in November to see first-hand the leaning, wellbeing and support services we provide from our Chester le Street hub and to listen to our women discuss their stories and celebrate their achievements.



Aspire Directors Janice Rokni (right) and Jan Vincent (left) greeted Mr Jones (centre) and took him on a tour of our services - including the creche, classrooms and listening service facilities but it was the assembled group of women, including our National Lottery Community Funded Supporting Sisters, who really grabbed his attention.



The experience of grilling a former/prospective MP on issues such as female pensions (the WASPI movement) and women's service funding gaps was extremely empowering. Mr Jones was especially moved by the success stories several of our volunteers who have come from diverse backgrounds of bereavement, refugee status, domestic abuse and poor mental and physical health to find wellness, support and meaning in their lives through Aspire.

Kevan Jones has long been an outspoken supporter of mental health campaigns and he was delighted to see the holistic approach that Aspire takes to promoting women's self-care. He was impressed with the way the women expressed the meaning and support they had found in their lives through their peers and activities at Aspire. It was the women who steered the conversation, and they articulately explained how recent initiatives such as the credit union and domestic violence support programme had added extra value and depth to the support on offer.

Aspire is not a political organisation, although we massively support and celebrate women's suffrage and political engagement, so this visit was about our women having a chance to communicate with an experienced member of the UK Parliament for their local area and to raise awareness of our services and successes.



All the local MP candidates for the general election on 12th December can be found here:

<https://www.chroniclive.co.uk/news/north-east-news/find-my-mp-constituency-election-13110501>