



**VOCAL**

VCSE Forums facilitated  
by Salford CVS



## **Equalities, Diversity & Inclusion Forum**

Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> April 2023  
2.00pm – 4.00pm  
Walkden Gateway

Number of people registered: 14

### **Speakers**

Jessica Pathak (Salford City Council)

### **Salford CVS staff present**

Anne-Marie Marshall (chair)

Helen Johnson (minutes)

Beatty Osborne (facilitator)

The theme for this forum meeting: Women and Women's Issues



Anne-Marie Marshall from Salford CVS welcomed attendees and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

Today's Forum meeting focused on Women and Women's Issues and in particular, the recommendation from Salford Women and Girls' Commission. The Commission came out of Salford's Equality Strategy.

Jessica Pathak, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Lead for Salford City Council shared a presentation. Part of Jessica's role is heading up the Equality Strategy and cross cutting it for public, voluntary and private businesses across Salford.



There was then a focused discussion by the commissioners who then reduced the themes down to three - Women in Poverty (skills and employment), Women and Safety (transport), Women's Voice (women's participation)

The focused themes would be a tool to engage with communities to collate evidence through community events, social media, displays in Gateways and the Women's Centre, listening events and focus groups.

The Salford Women and Girls' Commissioners were women from across the community who had experience working with women and who could influence and make changes in organisations. They are as follows:

- Councillor Sharmina August, Local Member for Inclusive Economy, Anti-Poverty and Equalities, Salford City Council (Chair)
- Jasmin Bakhre, Chief Executive Officer, Women with Wings
- Lynn Blay, Chief Executive Officer, Ladybird Private Day Nursery
- Debbie Brown, Strategic Director of Service Reform, Salford City Council
- Kimberley Cash, Deputy Group Principal (Welfare, Safeguarding and Pastoral Care), Salford City College
- Charlotte Cooke, Deputy Director of Delivery, LGBT Foundation
- Safieh Eskandari, Chief Executive Office, Doosti
- Sue Fletcher, Assistant Chief Executive Office, Age UK Salford
- Councillor Karen Garrido, for Worsley and Westwood Park
- Maggie Langhorn, Operations Manager (Adults), Salford Foundation
- Councillor Sophia Linden, for Pendlebury and Clifton
- Pipeeh Miyalu, Chief Executive Officer, Warm Hut
- Alison Page, Chief Executive Officer, Salford CVS
- Councillor Hannah Robinson-Smith, Executive Support Member for Social Care and Mental Health, Salford City Council
- Sue Sutton, Chief Executive Officer, Salix Homes
- Allison Taylor, Manager, Salford Women's Centre
- Inspector Lucy Smallwood, Greater Manchester Police



The Commissioners came together to have two meetings on each of the three themes, bringing together key evidence from the community to give depth to the conversations taking place. After 12 months, a series of recommendations came out based on the three main topic areas.

### **The 14 recommendations from Salford Women and Girls' Commission**

1. Agree a joint commitment across Salford's public agencies, education providers, businesses and the VCSE sector to prioritise the upskilling and retraining of women furthest from the labour market as part of the city's new skills and work programme with a clear plan for roll out.
2. Ensure training opportunities in Salford are accessible for disadvantaged women with caring responsibilities through flexibility and financial support where possible to cover travel and childcare expenses.
3. Strengthen the Salford City Mayor's Employment Standards Charter. To add commitments aimed at improving skills and employment outcomes for disadvantaged women in Salford.
4. Encourage employers in Salford to sign up to the 'Open to All' pledge initiated by Children England requesting employers not to ask for qualifications in their job adverts unless technically essential for the role.
5. Explore the opportunity to provide additional council tax support (or exemptions) for women fleeing domestic abuse, who both currently live in the city and those relocating to Salford.
6. Develop a joint Salford wide movement linked to the annual against gender-based violence. to raise awareness and improve night-time safety for women and girls in public places and public transport.
7. Lobby Transport for Greater Manchester, Greater Manchester Police and the UK Government to secure funding to trial the extending of Metrolink services until 2am during the week and 4am at weekends, supported by a visible police presence to improve women's safety and security.
8. Work in partnership with Transport for Greater Manchester to develop further Salford based safety initiatives (such as improved lighting and CCTV) which meet the transport needs of Salford women, utilising good practice developed in Oldham, Bolton, and Liverpool.
9. Promote the [White Ribbon Campaign](#) across Salford as a way to engage with men and boys to end violence against women, with members of the commission exploring the possibility of their own organisation applying for accreditation.
10. Pilot a programme of workshops delivered to secondary schools/young people's settings by the [Schools Consent Project](#).
11. Map existing women's mentoring, development and coaching opportunities across Salford's public, VCSE and private sectors to identify good practice and create further low-cost, stigma free, personal and professional development opportunities for Salford based women.
12. Develop networking opportunities for women to continue to share their lived experiences in a safe environment and deepen the understanding of the



support services landscape within the city to improve both signposting and broaden women's participation and representation in those services.

13. Organisations to consider settings targets to increase representation of women in senior leadership positions, where they are underrepresented, and ensure the effective inclusion of women's voices and lived experience in all consultations and strategies.
14. Establish an annual open day, organised by Salford women councillors, to raise awareness of local democratic processes and encourage more local women to become involved in local politics and decision making.

As part of an action plan, pledges were also taken. The presentation from Jessica is being presented to different boards and Council departments. Pledge cards are available for VCSE organisations to complete. To complete one, for more information or to invite Jessica to talk to organisations about Salford Women and Girls' Commission, contact Jessica Pathak at [Jessica.Pathak@salford.gov.uk](mailto:Jessica.Pathak@salford.gov.uk)

A question was raised asking how girls are involved. Jessica explained that there hadn't been capacity to develop this at the time but that it needs looking into how this can be included, perhaps within the Equality Strategy. The Youth Service and other organisations are already doing work with young women, therefore it will be about bringing this all together. There are lots of avenues where consultations are already taking place such as the Seldom Heard Voices.

**[The final report of the Salford Women and Girls' Commission is available here](#)**

An easy read version will be available shortly.



The attendees were split onto breakout groups to discuss the three main themes which are the focus of Salford Women and Girls' Commission from a VCSE perspective.

### **Improving skills and access to good quality work**

#### Group 1

- VCSE sector – women feel represented
- Unconscious choice – operate in VCSE bubble but need to reflect on equity in our work places. Pay gaps and gender leadership
- Quality of training/career development
- Training budgets cut in times of need
- Volunteering is access into job into CAB and wider welfare rights support sector but not everyone has opportunity to volunteer
- Young people gain skills from CAB – law students not from working class background, class issue
- Mental/emotional load from caring responsibilities can be barrier to skills and employment – DWP say that young people can't be available for work if they are volunteering
- Women employed more in caring/social care professions (VCSEs)

#### Group 2

- Open to all pledge
- Promoting different interviewing methods and sharing across sector e.g. proving questions prior to interview
- Behaviour based interviewing
- Skills are needed, confidence building essential
- Difference can be positive, identify strengths people have
- Engage with women distanced from labour market directly
- Biological life – understanding and addressing it
- Challenging of 9-5 working model and look at how people can work and what is actually needed
- VCSE is on average 7% less well paid
- Job club value can sit down and give confidence

#### Group 3

- Organisations linking together
- City wide work clubs not being linked into DWP
- Hoop jumping for support from DWP, prove need to get support elements
- ESOL resources not being supported in work clubs
- Career guidance in colleges but not necessarily in VCSE
- Digital skills funding for women and girls – filia and F word project
- Sharing information within VCSE sector

## Improving Women's Safety

### Group 1

- Everyone feels unsafe on public transport (male and female) its everyone's responsibility, it's not just the women's problem – onus on women but it is down to everyone. Perpetrators on the whole are men
- Policies that organisations can do, lone working, dynamic risk assessments, decisions on where meetings are held, whole organisation safety culture
- Public transport encouragement, but is it safe?
- Male behaviour and awareness
- Impact on young people – knife crime, lighting, CCTV
- Challenging perceptions of who is going to cause issues
- Public vs own transport – car use can be a protective factor for women
- Lack of trust
- Women and men have different fears – rape/assault
- Different messages are given to boys and girls about personal safety

### Group 2

- Real stats to support and/or received fear – deep dive required
- Is transport the only significant issue
- Lobbying
- How to ask for help safely in public
- Treating symptoms – tackle the problem
- More to be done in schools/communities to raise awareness
- What is the issue? Ask the people its effecting

### Group 3

- Women's commission it was a clear focus on women and if any actions for men it would come out through the recommendations. Women's commission is issues for women
- People with extra vulnerabilities e.g. illness, disability, more than one – are they safe? Do they feel safe? For example, Salford Precinct incidents – had GMP discuss issues related to incidents
- Older women "e-scooters" safety – Salford Council should work with GMP to capitalise on private scooters being used for antisocial behaviour
- Impact on pornography/sexualisation of gender/Hooters at Salford Quays/sexual harassment during peak time school traveling
- Salford Community Cohesion strategy – more promotion needed in VCSE – maybe in SCVS ebulletin?
- Men At Work training to get training of misogyny
- Women's safety should be priority not men's feelings
- Salford CVS should share the "it's not ok" video from GMCA and send the Community Cohesion Strategy via their e-bulletin – is there subtitles and BSL? If not, ask Andy Higgins

As the session overran, there wasn't enough time to cover the last discussion point, ensuring women's voices are heard. Some feedback on this was provided after the session.

### Ensuring Women's Voices are Heard

- We need to be 'doing' rather than just 'talking' about giving women a voice
- In many ways women do have a voice in the VCSE sector, but we need to make time and space to enable women to develop their confidence to speak up

