

2021

Tackling women's multiple
disadvantage in **Greater
Manchester**



AVA

AVA (Against Violence & Abuse) is a feminist charity committed to creating a world without gender-based violence and abuse. We work with survivors to champion evidence based change. We are an expert, independent and ground-breaking national charity particularly recognised for our specialist expertise in multiple disadvantage and children and young people's work. Our core work includes training, policy, research and consultancy.

Agenda

Agenda, the alliance for women and girls at risk, is working to build a society where women and girls are able to live their lives free from inequality, poverty and violence. We campaign for women and girls facing abuse, poverty, poor mental health, addiction and homelessness to get the support and protection they need. We work to get systems and services transformed, to raise awareness across sectors and to promote public and political understanding of the lives of women and girls facing multiple disadvantage.

Lloyds Bank Foundation England and Wales

The Lloyds Bank Foundation for England and Wales is an independent charitable trust funded by Lloyds Banking Group. The Foundation partners with small and local charities helping people overcome complex social issues, including domestic and sexual abuse. Through long term funding, developmental support and influencing policy and practice, the Foundation helps charities make life changing impact. This project and briefing was funded through the Foundation's Transform programme aimed at stimulating innovation and improvements in the domestic and sexual abuse sectors.

‘THIS IS NOT JUST’

This is not just a bench, a floor or a door, this is my bed where I rest my head

This is not just a bin, this is my food even though it is used I cannot refuse

This is not just Cardboard box, this is more than just a box that shown, this is my bed and my home my sofa where I sit

Stop me sitting in the grit

This not just a hat or a cup this is where I collect my 1’s and 2’s and loose change, stop me sleeping in strange places

with people that are off their faces

This not just a magazine, this is my job to save up for my dream.

This not just a drink of beer, it is to stop me having a sense of fear from sleeping here

This is not just a bag where I put all my rags and sheets that I have been using to sleep in the streets

This not just a trolley where I put my dolly, it is my wardrobe, my car, my van where I put my empty cans to earn some money

Where people look at me funny for weeing in this street,

I wish had a toilet seat

This is not just newspaper, my toilet roll, my sheet, my mattress, my shoes, my plate were I eat and use for shelter from the rain and sleet

This is not just a dog, my friend, my family member, I know that someone’s there who cares to stop me going into despair

Lyndsey Rowe-Gidley

About this briefing

About this project

This briefing builds on work following *Breaking Down The Barriers: the final report of the Commission into women's domestic and sexual violence and multiple disadvantage*.¹ The Commission was established by AVA (Against Violence & Abuse) and Agenda, the alliance for women and girls at risk, to explore the links between domestic and sexual abuse and multiple disadvantage – particularly mental health, substance use issues, homelessness and poverty. The Commission aimed to shed light on the challenges facing these women, who are often overlooked in policy making and practice development. This briefing specifically focuses on women facing multiple disadvantage in Greater Manchester and makes recommendations aimed at decision makers to improve responses. It was funded by the Lloyds Bank Foundation of England & Wales.

What does this briefing cover?

This briefing is aimed at decision makers, commissioners and funders in the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) and the ten Greater Manchester local authorities. It also provides valuable evidence and insight for voluntary sector organisations working with women across Greater Manchester.

These recommendations would also be of interest to decision makers in other local areas with devolved and strategic decision-making responsibilities.

This briefing sets out key strategic recommendations aimed at Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) and local authority decision makers. These have been developed in consultation with local partners and women with lived experience and highlight key strategic and positive opportunities in the current policy landscape across the Greater Manchester region. They cover:

- Strategic responses
- Gender and trauma-informed practice
- Co-production and working with experts by experience
- Commissioning and funding
- Responses to COVID-19

In addition to the main briefing, two further 'spotlights' are provided, highlighting areas of work and guidance for future strategic and commissioning priorities, as identified by local partners and women with lived experience:

- Annex A – Women's homelessness in Greater Manchester
- Annex B – Women involved in sex work and survival sex in Greater Manchester

Who is this briefing for?

This briefing is aimed at decision makers, commissioners and funders in the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) and the ten Greater Manchester local authorities. It also provides valuable evidence and insight for voluntary sector organisations working with women across Greater Manchester.

These recommendations would also be of interest to decision makers in other local areas with devolved and strategic decision-making responsibilities.

Who has contributed to the briefing?

The recommendations in this briefing emerge from our partnership working, influencing, convening, knowledge-sharing and work with women with lived experience in Greater Manchester.

With thanks to GMCA officials who provided guidance on current and future GM priorities and supported our engagement activities locally.

Our special thanks also go to AKT, Booth House, Early Break, Greater Manchester Homelessness Action Network (GMHAN), Inspiring Change Manchester, Jigsaw Housing, Mama Health and Poverty Partnership (MHaPP), Manchester Action on Street Health, Saheli, Safety 4 Sisters, The Pankhurst Trust, Support and Action for Women Network (SAWN), Women's Homelessness Involvement Group (WHIG), Women's Support Alliance and Women's Voices Movement.

We also particularly want to thank those women with lived experience without whose contribution and expertise this briefing would not be possible.

In addition to local evidence-gathering and coproduction, this briefing also draws upon three events, involving over 150 participants overall, which sought to influence and improve responses to women facing multiple disadvantage. These were:

- 'Breaking Down The Barriers launch event' (October 2019)
- 'Women involved in sex work and survival sex' (September 2020)
- 'Tackling women's homelessness' in partnership with Greater Manchester Homelessness Action Network (GMHAN) (December 2020)

The Annex 'Spotlight' sections are in response to the recommendations and discussions that took place at these events.

Summary Recommendations

These recommendations are aimed at Greater Manchester and local authority decision makers to tackle women's multiple disadvantage.

The following recommendations are overarching strategic recommendations that bring together key policy opportunities across Greater Manchester.

Strategic responses:

- **GMCA should hold a stronger convening role across Greater Manchester to ensure local systems work for women facing multiple disadvantage. A strengthened process should be able to take a 'helicopter view' of the system response, encourage collaboration and provide a platform for good practice.**
 - a. The forthcoming Gender-based Abuse Strategy, Victims Strategy, Homelessness Prevention Strategy, Drugs and Alcohol Strategy and Health and Justice Strategy should set out how the needs of the most disadvantaged women will be met.
 - b. Consideration should be made for those women who may fall out of the remit of these various strategies, including women with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF).
 - c. The Women and Girls Equality Panel, and its allies network, should have meaningful opportunities to input across all GMCA level strategies.
- **GMCA should undertake an audit of borough level strategies and action plans aimed at responding to the needs of women facing multiple disadvantage, including local authority Violence Against Women and Girls and Domestic Abuse strategies.** There should be a cross-border protocol establishing a system of local authority co-operation which defines responsibilities for the provision of housing, care and support services when victims of violence and abuse move between local authority areas.
- **GMCA and local authorities should fully involve the specialist women and girl's sector when developing strategies, commissioning services and identifying gaps in service provision.** GMCA and local authorities should develop a strategic plan with the specialist women's sector on how to work collaboratively to break down service siloes and offer person-centred, holistic support for women from diverse backgrounds. This should recognise an already stretched frontline and provide adequate time and resource for meaningful collaboration and consultation.

Responses to COVID-19:

- **Commissioners across Greater Manchester, must work with the specialist women's sector at a regional and local level to ensure that the impacts of the pandemic on women facing multiple disadvantage are recognised and responded to.** All future strategies and plans need to reflect both the legacy and the lessons of the pandemic, including the Greater Manchester Strategy. This should particularly include low-income women, women involved in sex work or survival sex, homeless women and women with NRPF.

The following recommendations summarise the more detailed recommendations that are made throughout the briefing.

Gender and trauma-informed practice:

- **GMCA should lead on the development of a commissioning framework for gender and trauma-informed services and establish a shared approach across all services, including homelessness, health, drugs and alcohol and criminal justice.** This should

involve commissioning specialist women's services, including specialist services for Black and minoritised, LBT and disabled women, with access for women with NRPF.

- **The GMCA Gender-based Abuse Strategy, Health and Justice Strategy and Homelessness Strategy should outline how training on gender and trauma informed approaches should be developed** in consultation with specialist services and women with lived experience and provided to all staff working in services supporting women facing multiple disadvantage.
- **Public services across Greater Manchester must ensure staff make trained enquiries about domestic and sexual abuse, and respond appropriately with clear pathways into appropriate trauma-informed support.** This must be accompanied by data collection on enquiries and responses, to inform the picture of the levels of abuse and help services adapt in response. There should be clear strategic oversight of this process across the city-region so that it is embedded in public service responses and adequate training should be provided from specialists in gendered violence. This must be backed by sufficient funding to make this a reality.
- **Local authorities should ring-fence funding to commission specialist gender and trauma-informed services and developing trauma informed practice and principles across its work.** This should involve commissioning specialist women's services, including specialist services for Black and minoritised, LBT and disabled women, with access for women with NRPF.

Co-production and working with experts by experience:

- **Women with lived experience of multiple disadvantage must be centred and their contributions prioritised at all levels of decision making across GMCA** to help design and commission services differently, including areas where their experiences are often overlooked, including addiction treatment, criminal justice and homelessness.
- **Coproduction must be carried out in a way that is meaningful, by involving women with lived experience from the outset,** developing consistency in approach, and supporting those involved with remuneration and/or through accredited skills and training.
- **Local authorities should commission services that prioritise the recruitment, retention and development of staff with lived experience.**

Commissioning and funding:

- **GMCA should set out clearly in its Gender-based Abuse Strategy, Health and Justice and Homelessness Prevention Strategies commissioning processes and specifications that prioritise long-term funding for specialist women's services** to ensure the sustainability of vital organisations. This should also commit to ring-fencing funding for women with NRPF.
- **Local authorities should build incentives into commissioning processes to encourage mainstream services to work collaboratively with the specialist women's voluntary sector.** Specialist organisations should be fully involved at key stages of the commissioning cycle, in decision making and data collection.
- **Commissioners should ensure that services provide disaggregated data on which women are being turned away, and why,** to allow robust data collection on service thresholds and provide clarity on local need. GMCA should hold central responsibility for the collation and evaluation of this data.

Introduction

Women facing multiple disadvantage

Agenda *Hidden Hurt* research reveals one in 20 women have experienced extensive physical and sexual violence as both a child and an adult: that's 1.2 million women in England.²

Many women and girls who have suffered violence and abuse are deeply traumatised and go on to face multiple, complex issues. These experiences can be further compounded by overlapping and intersecting structural inequalities such as racism, ableism, homophobia, transphobia and classism³. National policies such as the No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) condition,⁴ where those with insecure immigration status are unable to access public funds, drive migrant women further into multiple forms of disadvantage.

Women with extensive experience of physical and sexual violence are far more likely to experience disadvantage in many other areas of their lives. The rates of domestic abuse-related incidents in Greater Manchester is the 5th highest in England and Wales, with 73,312 domestic abuse-related incidents and crimes recorded by police in the year ending March 2018.⁵

Overall, approximately **60,000 women** have experienced extensive violence throughout their lives in Greater Manchester.⁶ Of those approximately:

- 30,000 have a common mental health condition
- 12,000 have experienced homelessness
- 20,000 use alcohol problematically

Black and minoritised women and girls are further disadvantaged by the multiple forms of discrimination they experience. Structural racism and socioeconomic inequalities intersect with gender inequality and make Black and minoritised⁷ women disproportionately at risk of multiple disadvantage. As the Sisters For Change report, *Unequal Regard, Unequal Protection 2* on women in Greater Manchester reveals:⁸

- Over 26% of Manchester victims of domestic abuse have No Recourse to Public Funds
- Over 84% of Black and minoritised women victims of violence accessing specialist Black and minoritised services in Manchester lack the necessary English language skills to access physical and mental health services, housing services and welfare benefits
- 59.3% of Black and minoritised women victims in Manchester have mental health issues
- 85% of Black and minoritised women victims in Manchester are financially insecure

Women facing multiple disadvantage often find themselves bounced between services or excluded because of the complexity of issues they face. Breaking Down The Barriers identified the need for gender and trauma-informed responses that acknowledge and understand the interconnected experiences women face when seeking help for violence and abuse, mental ill health, substance use, homelessness and motherhood.⁹

Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA)

The Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) is made up of the ten Greater Manchester councils and Mayors, who work with other local services, businesses, communities and partners. These ten local authority areas are comprised of Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan.

The policy context in Greater Manchester

In order to best respond to the needs of women facing multiple disadvantage a better strategic approach is needed at both a regional and local level. Through successful devolution agreements, the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) have more power and control over budgets compared to other regions throughout England. These areas of power include, but are not limited to, more control over housing, employment, policing and crime, and health and social care. The [LGA Devolution Register](#) provides information on the remit of GMCA, and, for a more detailed overview, see [LGA Devolution deals](#).

The importance of the devolution of power in GMCA regions is crucial when improving strategies of support for women and girls experiencing multiple disadvantage in Greater Manchester. The increased power of GMCA, alongside its ambitious vision, has allowed the region to have a more joined-up and strategic approach to services across Greater Manchester boroughs.

For women facing multiple disadvantage, this is particularly important because which borough a woman lives in can impact the support she is entitled to receive. This in turn impacts on the safety of women when they are escaping violence, leaving prison, or moving across boundaries for involvement in survival sex or sex-work, for example.¹⁰

Voluntary and community organisations

This public policy and legislative framework sits alongside a well-established women's sector, with a strong record in both addressing gender-based violence and in supporting women facing multiple disadvantage. Manchester also has a proud tradition of wider social justice activism, having played a key role in the development of both the trades union and suffragette movements, which has left a legacy of grassroots activism that exists across the region today. This history finds its modern-day reflection in the grass-roots organisations and a growing women's voices network who are seeking to create policy and practice change through women and survivor-led approaches.

One of the most important areas of good practice across Greater Manchester are the spaces in which experts-by-experience come together to have a voice and shape and influence local work. Greater Manchester also has locally innovative and forward thinking approaches to supporting women who are at risk of offending or serving a prison sentence. The [GM Women's Support Alliance](#) is a 'whole systems approach' (WSA) integrated model of working that brings together women's organisations to provide services. The model draws on a multi-agency framework to embed gender specific approaches for women at key points in the criminal justice system and is embedded into communities. Originally a Ministry of Justice Initiative,¹¹ the success of the approach has been driven by support both at a local and regional level.

COVID-19 and its impact

The response to COVID-19 by GMCA and its 10 local authorities has demonstrated how a strategic and coordinated response can effectively support those most at risk. This has been driven by strong visible leadership from the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, such as weekly online briefings and lobbying on behalf of Greater Manchester at a national government level. Across Greater Manchester, GMCA and local authorities have been working closely with the voluntary and community sector to ensure that those most vulnerable to the effects of the pandemic are prioritised.

However, the Greater Manchester region has been profoundly impacted by the pandemic and there remains key opportunities and levers to help 'build back better'.

Since the pandemic began, from the start of the first national lockdown in March 2020, most of Greater Manchester has only enjoyed three and a half weeks without some form of enhanced restriction.¹² Consequently, women already facing multiple disadvantage have faced further entrenchment of social and economic inequality as a result of this crisis. Across Greater Manchester:¹³

- 39% of women say their mental health has got worse since the pandemic began
- 29% of women say they are 'struggling or worse off' financially compared with 18% before the pandemic
- 21% of women say their employability has worsened
- 22% of women have been furloughed, with more low-income women (30%) compared with higher income (19%)
- 14% of Black and minoritised women have experienced two changes in their work compared to 6% of white women

The biggest challenge as GMCA plans its recovery, will continue to be the budgetary impact of COVID-19 on the local economy and its finances. Analysis undertaken by the 10 Greater Manchester local authorities and GMCA in June 2020 showed that the impact of coronavirus and the actions taken to manage the pandemic will be in the region of £732m by the end of 2020/21 alone.¹⁴ This was estimated before the second and third national lockdowns, with many areas of Greater Manchester remaining in a tiered restrictions for long periods of time during the rest of the year. It will be crucial to ensure that women facing multiple disadvantages are not disproportionately hit by any resulting funding cuts.

The newly established [GMCA Women and Girls Equality Panel](#) has recognised the need for a strategic response to the impact of the pandemic on women and girls across Greater Manchester. The panel brings together specialist expertise from across the 10 boroughs to advise on gender inequality across the region. The panel is aiming to develop a detailed two-year action plan focusing on addressing gender inequality and is aligned to the [Greater Manchester Strategy](#) – which sets out GMCA's strategic priorities across the region. This panel, and the strategic oversight it holds, has real potential for practical change. In addition, GMCA has established the [Independent Inequalities Commission](#) in October 2020, which will be exploring the causes of inequality across Greater Manchester and will offer solutions to tackle these issues, setting out recommendations for action to the Mayor and 10 local authorities in March 2021. These recommendations will inform the pandemic response and recovery, as well as informing the next Greater Manchester Strategy. Such initiatives demonstrate how learning from responding to COVID-19 can impact future policy and strategic approaches.

The pandemic has also shown the strengths, positives and agility in Greater Manchester's coordination of activities and ability to respond on the ground. Following the outbreak of Covid-19, national and local government took decisive action by placing rough sleepers into emergency accommodation under the 'Everybody In' directive. This national policy was developed further by GMCA and the Greater Manchester's health and care system who jointly commissioned a third phase of the 'A Bed Every Night' scheme which aimed to deliver 445 beds across all 10 local authority areas.¹⁵ Evidence from local services suggests that GMCA's ambitious 'Everybody In' response to rough sleeping during the first national lockdown and continued commitment in the third national lockdown showed that integrated working was able to support the speedy and relevant delivery of gender sensitive services in many cases. Such responses have provided key opportunities to learn about how effective multi-agency working and commissioning can and should work, further developing

Spotlight on Stockport Women's Centre

Stockport Women's Centre was established in 2001, born out of the 'AFTA club' which was set up in 1999 by a social worker and a qualified psychotherapist who set up a group working with women where there had been sexual abuse in the family. Stockport Women's Centre provides a range of holistic services for women including counselling and psychotherapy, self-help groups, domestic abuse drop in services, legal advice and education course. Its trauma-informed approach aims to respond to the needs of women, promoting good mental health in a safe and non-clinical environment. It is also a member of the Greater Manchester Women's Support Alliance (GMWSA).

1. Gender and trauma-informed practice

Women's experiences of abuse and violence, as well as other forms of disadvantage, can leave women severely traumatised and have lifelong consequences. More than half of women who have experienced extensive abuse and violence across their lives have a common mental health condition like depression or anxiety.¹⁶ A trauma-informed approach is the most effective model of support for survivors facing multiple disadvantage. This should also recognise the barriers created by gender inequality, poverty, insecure immigration status, racism, disability, homophobia and transphobia. These inequalities should be understood in a wider context of social norms, community contexts, how institutions are shaped, and national and local policy making, all of which shape women's lives and the ways in which they can access help and support.

Involvement of women with lived experience is a core component of trauma-informed approaches, therefore women's experiences and voice should be centred wherever a trauma-informed approach is being prioritised.

The Greater Manchester Combined Authority Victims Services Review consultation (2019) recognised the importance of trauma informed approaches.¹⁷ Research and evidence gathered throughout the consultation informed the GMCA Serious Violence Action Plan (2020) which set out to tackle serious violence across the city-region.¹⁸ The [Manchester City Council Strategy](#) to become a trauma-informed city is also welcome as an example of how this can be developed at a borough level. There remains further potential to progress and embed such an approach more systematically across Greater Manchester. This is particularly in relevance to the development of a GMCA-led Trauma Responsive and ACE Framework Implementation Plan. This strategic commitment aims to set out a plan for GM to become a trauma-informed city-region.

Recommendations:

1. GMCA should lead on the development of a commissioning framework for gender and trauma-informed services and establish a shared approach across all services, including homelessness, health, drugs and alcohol and criminal justice. This should involve commissioning specialist women's services, including specialist services for Black and minoritised, LBT and disabled women, with access for women with NRPF.
2. Local authorities should ring-fence funding to commission specialist women's services, as well as the development of trauma-informed services and trauma-informed practice and principles across its work.
3. The GMCA Gender-based Abuse Strategy, Health and Justice Strategy and Homelessness Strategy should outline how training on gender and trauma informed approaches should be developed in consultation with specialist services and women with lived experience and provided to all staff working in services supporting women facing multiple disadvantage.
4. Public services across Greater Manchester must ensure staff make trained enquiries about domestic and sexual abuse, and respond appropriately with clear pathways into appropriate trauma-informed support. This must be accompanied by data collection on enquiries and responses, to inform the picture of the levels of abuse and help services adapt in response. There should be clear strategic oversight of this process across the city-region so that it is embedded in public service responses and adequate training should be provided from specialists in gendered violence. This must be backed by sufficient funding to make this a reality.
5. GMCA and local authority strategic responses should understand and reflect that experiences of inequality are traumatic and trauma-informed approaches should acknowledge how women are retraumatised by systems. Public services across Greater Manchester should put in place action plans that move towards anti-racist working practices and consult and respond to the needs of Black and minoritised women.

2. Co-production and working with Experts by Experience

“Trust must be at the core of good involvement and the focus of involvement must be clear: explain the purpose, include women in developing the process, focus on relationships and safety and make people feel valued by paying them or benefit in kind, like providing skills and training or social opportunities. And focus on creating equal power, when you’ve been treated unequally this is the difference between ‘doing to’, and ‘doing with’ and can be transformative.”

Women’s Voices Movement

Breaking Down The Barriers highlighted that an integral part of creating gender and trauma-informed systems and services for women is to involve women to enable them to participate in all aspects of services and systems. When done well involvement can shift the balance of power that is too often removed from women who have been denied agency and experienced trauma by both abusers and through re-traumatising experiences in services.

Across Greater Manchester there is good practice on co-production with experts-by-experience, where they have come together to have a voice and shape and influence local work. One such key example has been the creative and participatory way in which the GM Homelessness Prevention Strategy has been developed in partnership with the Greater Manchester Homelessness Action Network (GMHAN).¹⁹ This strategy driven by Mayor Andy Burnham and GMCA aims to prevent and reduce homelessness and rough sleeping across GM. As part of developing this strategy, GMCA funded a legislative theatre project, which uses creative community-led and participatory processes to creating policy.²⁰ Bringing together residents from all 10 boroughs who had experienced homelessness, council staff and service providers, they created three original plays on multiple disadvantage and multiple complex needs and funding and commissioning. Further public events were held inviting other experts by experience, frontline support staff and GMCA officials. A further collaboration with the [Support and Action Women’s Network \(SAWN\)](#) and the GM Inequalities Panel saw a series of theatre and dialogue workshops exploring structural racism in homelessness services. During these events, ideas were collaboratively developed into specific and feasible policy proposals aimed at informing the GM Homelessness Prevention Strategy.

Such innovative approaches demonstrate how co-production can be meaningful, creative and have direct impact. These types of approaches have real potential to be adopted across the GM region when developing policy and practice.

Recommendations:

1. Women with lived experience of multiple disadvantage must be centred and their contributions prioritised at all levels of decision making across GMCA to help design and commission services differently, including areas where their experiences are often overlooked, including addiction treatment, criminal justice and homelessness.
2. Coproduction must be carried out in a way that is meaningful, by involving women with lived experience from the outset, developing consistency in approach, and supporting those involved with remuneration and/or through accredited skills and training.
3. Local authorities should commission services that prioritise the recruitment, retention and development of staff with lived experience. Clear progression paths should be identified through volunteering, work opportunities and targeted ‘experts by experience’ apprenticeship programmes, with appropriate support and remuneration in place.
4. GMCA responses to COVID-19 in the short and long-term should involve women with lived experience, including in the refreshed Greater Manchester Strategy. Women with lived experience, and the specialist services that support them, should be fully included at all stages of any ongoing multi-agency response.

Spotlight on Women's Voices Movement

The Women's Voices Movement brings women together and supports women to raise their voices and influence system change across Manchester and Greater Manchester. Born in Manchester in 2015, the group has been nurtured and hosted by Inspiring Change Manchester (ICM) ever since. The group was founded by a group of passionate women from different walks of life who are vocal and proactive about women having a say, getting involved in decisions that matter to them and creating positive system change for women facing multiple disadvantage. Women-led and co-created with women with lived experience, the group supports women with different life experiences. As well as meeting as women's groups, they also provide regular 1-2-1 catch-ups for all the women involved to foster a sense of connection and deepen relationships over time. Women's Voices provides training and peer support to help women build their confidence and skill set when speaking to other women and decision-makers for peer research, consultations, and other involvement work. The Women's Voices Movement has been involved in national, local, and regional consultations on commissioning of women's services, strategic policy, and plans. They also conduct peer research into women's lives with specific areas of disadvantage, such as homelessness and domestic abuse. As well as this, they hold key events: bringing decision-makers, services and women together to make positive change for women and girls.

3. Commissioning and Funding

Good commissioning and adequate funding can transform responses to women facing multiple disadvantage. Across the Greater Manchester region there are positive examples of how this can work in practice. In 2019, The Greater Manchester Housing First (GMHF) pilot was commissioned by Mayor Andy Burnham and the GMCA. Housing First is an evidence-based approach, which uses housing as a platform to enable individuals with multiple and complex needs to begin recovery and move away from homelessness.²¹ In January 2021, GMCA commissioned Manchester Action on Street Health (MASH), as one of four new partners appointed to the GMHF pilot. This is one such welcome example of how commissioning can recognise and respond to the specific needs of women in areas such as housing.

However, the impact of central government austerity policies, funding cuts to local governments and subsequent reductions in public services have led to a rise in women accessing crisis support, rather than being able to get support earlier.

In February 2018, Greater Manchester's local authorities warned that they could be close to bankruptcy within four years if central Government cuts continued at the same rate. Local news reports stated in February 2018 that the 10 GMCA local authorities will have £689 million less to spend this year than they had in the year 2010/11 under a 24% per cent reduction in funding. Local authorities across Greater Manchester have seen some of the highest spending cuts in the country, with Salford, Wigan and Oldham each suffering cuts of over 40%.²²

The effects of austerity have been further compounded by immediate and long-term social and economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the most marginalised women. Research has shown that working class women were the worst affected by the first UK-wide lockdown in March 2020.²³ This meant women have been spiralling into further crisis, ultimately at great cost to society, the public purse, women themselves and their families.

In addition, the most marginalised women's life experiences largely remain hidden from the view of decision makers, partly as a result of limited and genderblind data collection that leads to a lack of evidence of need. The shift from local grants to competitive commissioning has also disadvantaged many smaller specialist women's providers, including those led by and for Black and minoritised women.

Future commissioning of services should build on existing good practice, as well as identifying improved ways of commissioning. Responses to COVID-19 provide an important opportunity to reflect on and learn from new opportunities to embed positive strategic approaches at a local level.

As an example, as part of GMCA's response to Covid-19, its A Bed Every Night Scheme, was commissioned to accommodate and support individuals with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF). Leaders from across GMCA also made an [open statement to the Home Office](#) asking it to halt its policy to evict those in the asylum system who had received a negative decision. In the statement, leaders across GM also made clear their continued commitment to accommodate and support individuals with NRPF. This demonstrated strong and clear leadership and the will to change how regional service provision can be commissioned to support those facing multiple disadvantage. Whilst this demonstrates a welcome strategic commitment, there remained further development needed to ensure that that these ambitions were embedded at a local and practical level. The Safety4Sisters report, *'Locked in Abuse, Locked out of Safety: The Pandemic Experiences of Migrant Women'* documents the challenging experiences of migrant women during the pandemic. During the initial lockdown period, between April and June 2020, of the 35 referrals into Safety4Sisters, 32 women were without recourse to public funds: 27 of these women needed refuge space and all 27 women were refused by other agencies citing the NRPF condition.²⁴

Such missed opportunities to support women facing multiple disadvantage illustrate the importance of collaborative multi-agency working, involving the specialist women's sector and clearly setting out how policy can be translated into practice.

Future commissioning cycles can better establish real and long-lasting change at a local level through open and regular dialogue with the specialist women's sector. This can help identify need, who is being turned away from support and why, and other potential barriers and blockages to the successful delivery of services. This can also help facilitate better communication across statutory and voluntary

The following case study from the Safety4Sisters' report 'Locked in Abuse, Locked out of Safety: The Pandemic Experiences of Migrant Women' highlights the challenges that a woman with NRPF faced when trying to access housing support.

Ingrid, a young European woman approached a local authority homelessness department during the fourth week of the COVID-19 lockdown in Spring 2020, after fleeing domestic abuse in another borough in Greater Manchester. She was refused support by the homelessness team because she was a single woman with NRPF. She was referred to the social services NRPF team who also said that they could not help her, the reason being that she was a single woman.

Ingrid paid for a bed and breakfast for two nights herself with what little money she had on her. When the money ran out, she slept on the streets for two nights. The police found her sleeping on the street and took her to a mixed-sex hostel, who were also not able to accommodate her longer than two nights – due to her immigration status and the NRPF condition.

After referrals to five other frontline agencies, Ingrid was eventually referred to Safety4Sisters, a frontline feminist Black and minority ethnic majority-led women's charity based in Manchester working with vulnerable migrant women who have experienced gender-based violence. Safety4Sisters knew that she was entitled to be accommodated in the GMCA Covid-19 hostel. Within two hours, Ingrid was housed safely in the Covid-19 hostel. The trauma and danger of her sleeping rough for two nights could – with better communications between agencies– have been easily avoided.

Spotlight on Early Break

Early Break is a Children, Young People and Family charity established in 1994 and is the existing commissioned service provider to deliver a range of services in Bury, Bolton, Rochdale, Salford and Trafford. They offer emotional health and well-being services and their family work is trauma-informed and focuses on addressing intergenerational substance misuse and criminality. They work with the whole family to support children affected primarily by parental substance misuse, emotional and mental health and domestic abuse. Early Break also runs Holding Families+: a co-produced project that takes a structured child-centred approach to working with mothers in prison pre and post release. This project offers trauma therapy and family mental health support and takes a whole system approach to meet the needs of mothers, children and family members.

Recommendations:

1. GMCA should set out clearly in its Gender-based Abuse Strategy, Health and Justice and Homelessness Prevention Strategies commissioning processes and specifications that prioritise long-term funding for specialist women's services to ensure the sustainability of vital organisations. This should include revised domestic and sexual abuse commissioning arrangements, ensure health and social care is central to this process, and commit to ring-fencing funding for women with NRPF.
2. Local authorities should build incentives into commissioning processes to encourage mainstream services to work collaboratively with the specialist women's voluntary sector. Specialist organisations should be fully involved at key stages of the commissioning cycle, in decision making and data collection. Lead contract holding organisations must be responsible for specifying the amount of funding partners will receive and for ensuring this is then allocated. This must form part of the contract monitoring process, with penalties in place where this is not honoured.
3. Commissioners should ensure that services provide disaggregated data on which women are being turned away, and why, to allow robust data collection on service thresholds and provide clarity on local need. GMCA should hold central responsibility for the collation and evaluation of this data, which should in turn feed into new commissioning cycles and processes.
4. GMCA should lead on the development of a commissioning framework for gender and trauma-informed services. All public service commissioning bodies across the GMCA should adopt trauma – and gender – informed commissioning principles for the types of services for which they are responsible.
5. Commissioning processes must involve genuine and meaningful co-production with women with lived experience at all stages, including in developing needs assessments, shaping service specifications, scoring service tenders and sitting on tender panels, evaluating existing services and contract monitoring. Experts by experience networks should be drawn on to support this, and beneficiaries should be supported with remuneration or through accredited skills and training.
6. Commissioners across Greater Manchester, must work with the specialist women's sector at a regional and local level to ensure that the impacts of the pandemic on women facing multiple disadvantage are recognised and responded to. Commissioning services should particularly address the needs of low-income women, women involved in sex work or survival sex, homeless women and women with NRPF.

Conclusion

Leaders across Greater Manchester have a real opportunity to make profound and long-lasting change for the many women and girls most at risk of inequality.

The most disadvantaged women and girls across Greater Manchester face a complex set of issues. Experiences of homelessness, destitution, abuse, poor mental health and substance use are further compounded by overlapping structural inequalities such as racism, ableism, homophobia, transphobia and classism. Migrant women in particular, facing insecure immigration status and No Recourse to Public Funds, are pushed further into destitution and other forms of disadvantage. The COVID-19 pandemic has put even more women and girls at risk, and further entrenched inequality across the Greater Manchester region.

Despite these significant challenges, both at a GMCA level and a local authority level, there has been real willingness and capacity to meet this need. This briefing has brought together important evidence and recommendations on how the Greater Manchester region can effectively tackle women and girls' multiple disadvantage, and has broader lessons of value for other local regions with devolved powers. It outlines the importance of understanding the specific needs of women and girls and shows how effective multi-agency working and commissioning can and should work, further developing the good practice already established in Greater Manchester.

With women and girls at the heart of strategic and practical responses, the lives of many can be profoundly transformed.

Annexes

The following annexes aim to provide more detail and guidance on the key components of success for supporting women experiencing homelessness in Manchester and who are involved in sex work or survival sex. These priority areas in Manchester were identified by local partners and women with lived experience and were explored in two events run in 2020.

Annex A: Spotlight on women facing homelessness and multiple disadvantage

Homelessness

This annex is aimed at commissioners, services and decision makers across the Greater Manchester region who are tackling homelessness.

Women and girls experience homelessness differently to men and as such require a different approach. All GMCA programmes, strategies and governance arrangements must tackle homelessness and take account of the needs of women facing multiple disadvantage.

- More homeless people died in Greater Manchester from 2016-2019 than in any other combined authority.²⁵
- At a national level, women are recorded as making up 11.7% of deaths of homeless people, so of the estimated 50 people to have died in Greater Manchester, **at least 6 are likely to have been women.**²⁶
- 1,010 women are statutorily homeless and 840 women are at risk of homelessness in Greater Manchester. Approximately half of these women are single parents with children.²⁷

“Being homeless isn’t always about sleeping outside... when you’ve got no option you have to stay with someone you don’t know...”

Above and below - Sketches and quotes from women in the Women's Homelessness Involvement Group (WHIG). Created and shared at the AVA, Agenda and GMHAN homelessness event in December 2020.



Homelessness has a high profile in Greater Manchester, both as a visible crisis in its city centres and as the target of ambitious policy commitments. In 2017 the newly elected Greater Manchester Mayor, Andy Burnham, pledged to end rough sleeping in the city region, and the 'A Bed Every Night' programme has provided a focal point for joint action between the GMCA and the Mayor, local authorities, health and social care and criminal justice agencies, and homelessness charities and activists.

Rough sleeping however remains a serious problem, including for women. Snapshot data from autumn 2019 showed that 15% of people sleeping rough on any one night across Greater Manchester were female. National studies show that the vast majority of women sleeping rough are survivors of past domestic and sexual abuse, and are at disproportionate risk of further violence, abuse and exploitation by male partners, acquaintances and members of the public while sleeping rough. Women facing homelessness and abuse are at high risk of mental health problems, often caused and exacerbated by trauma.

'Hidden' homelessness

Beyond street homelessness, a large majority of homeless households owed a duty to be housed by local authorities are female-led or include women caring for children, who may be living for long periods in temporary accommodation. The Greater Manchester Housing Strategy identifies more than 97,000 households in waiting for a social home, with over 26,000 of these found to be in priority need for social housing.

Further evidence shows that official statistics mask the true scale of women's homelessness in English local authorities. Support services in Greater Manchester have reported growing numbers of women sleeping rough and accessing housing related support services. Rough sleeping figures fail to capture those women who remain 'hidden homeless', sofa surfing or sleeping rough in concealed locations for fear of violence and abuse in public spaces.

Partnership working

Greater Manchester is well placed to take a holistic approach to tackling women's homelessness and multiple disadvantage, thanks to partnership models like the Greater Manchester Homelessness Action Network (GMHAN) that work across sector and borough boundaries taking an intersectional approach. GMHAN has noted the lack of specialist women's accommodation and other services in the region, which are key to securing women's safety, and advocated for action on women and family homelessness.

The region is also home to a range of creative and promising practice, including early examples of tailored Housing First approaches for women facing multiple disadvantage. The 'Everyone In' response to the COVID-19 crisis in 2020 showed that action was possible for groups that are usually unable to access housing and support, including women with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF).

“AKT offered me accommodation at the age of 16 when I was classified as homeless. I was brought in by my amazing host and AKT worker and to this day I continue to remain safe, happy, and healthy, knowing my future is secured and I no longer risk being a homeless young person. AKT is a truly amazing charity. Here's to many more years of continued support for homeless and in-need youth.”

-Young trans woman who received support from AKT

Recommendations:

As well as investing in homelessness projects, Greater Manchester authorities will have the greatest impact by ensuring that all programmes, strategies and governance arrangements to tackle homelessness take account of the needs of women facing multiple disadvantage. Long-term change will also require sustainable funding to meet need, and investment in data collection to build a fuller picture of women's needs and outcomes.

1. GMCA and local borough homelessness prevention plans must recognise and respond to the needs of women and girls. This gendered approach must be taken when monitoring and evaluating services. These approaches must be linked to other local area plans including but not limited to: GM plans for COVID-19 recovery and Gender-based Abuse Strategy.
2. Data on homelessness must be disaggregated by gender, ethnicity, immigration status, sexuality, age and disability, with a clear plan on how to collect this data safely. Local boroughs should map provision of women's accommodation and understand barriers women face in accessing services, including reviewing exclusion criteria to understand where and why women are being turned away from accommodation and support.
3. Commissioners should build incentives into contracts to encourage mainstream homelessness services to work collaboratively and ensure that specialist expertise, including that provided by the specialist women's voluntary sector, is prioritised. Specialist women's services including domestic violence, Black and minoritised-led, and those working with women involved in sex work should be adequately resourced and their expertise recognised as a vital part in ending women's homelessness.
4. Women who have faced homelessness should be recruited and involved in strategic work that aims to support them. Their involvement should be on-going, continuous and not tokenistic and be built into the commissioning process, as well as the monitoring and evaluation of services. The approach must be intersectional and consider how women's experiences relate to other forms of oppression including racism, ableism, ageism, homophobia, transphobia and classism.
5. Local areas must provide adequate women only accommodation which is trauma and gender-informed, including a holistic offer to meet women's various needs including: specialist refuges, Housing-First, outreach and supported housing.
6. All 10 boroughs must respond to the needs and experiences of migrant women with insecure immigration status, through measures including mandatory training for frontline staff, practitioners and managers. Commissioners must ringfence funding to ensure that women with NRPF can access safe accommodation and support, including refuges as well as access to interpreters. Women must be given options to access confidential and impartial immigration advice alongside their housing.
7. Homelessness responses must consider family and motherhood and build in support that offers space for children to be accommodated either at point of entry into the care system or in the future, should women be seeking to reconnect with their children. Practitioners should understand the trauma-impact of child removal on mothers and be able to provide ongoing support and information around parental rights.

Spotlight on AKT

AKT's mission is to prevent LGBTQ+ youth homelessness. In the last 12 months (2020-21) they supported 48 young LGBTQ+ women, 47% of their overall GM homelessness cases.

AKT use a person-centred approach, centring the voices and wishes of young people at the core, and securing accommodation via numerous routes which involves collaborating with other organisations. AKT exist because mainstream services are not always accessible for people from the LGBTQ+ community: they are acutely aware that for people with intersectional and multiple needs, the barriers they experience are increasingly challenging. AKT provide trauma-informed support for homelessness: their service allows young lesbian, bi, and trans women the support they are entitled to in an environment that celebrates LGBTQ+ identities.

Annex B: Spotlight on women involved in sex work and survival sex

This annex is aimed at commissioners, services and decision makers across the Greater Manchester region who responding to the needs of women involved in sex work and survival sex.

Women who are involved in who sex work, particularly those who work on-street, can lead chaotic lives with complex and multiple needs. Lack of suitable accommodation, substance misuse, poor health including mental health, violence, and exploitation, among other issues, can have a huge impact.²⁸

- At least 724 women have been identified as being involved in sex work in Manchester, this is likely to be a significant underestimate, with many women working online and/or not in touch with outreach services.²⁹
- At a national level, there are estimated to be around 60,000-80,000 people involved in sex work in the UK, which is approximately 2940 in Greater Manchester alone.³⁰
- The numbers of women involved in sex work in Greater Manchester have increased by an estimated 51% from 2012-13 to 2017-18 with the majority of women identified working on the streets or as sauna workers.³¹
- The true picture of the nationality and ethnicity of sex workers in Manchester is unclear but research in 2017 identified at least 533 online sex workers in the Greater Manchester region, with those reporting their nationality being British (45%), Romanian (6.5%), Polish (1.6%). 39% did not report their nationality.³²
- In the first weeks of lockdown in March 2020, Manchester Action on Street Health (MASH) supported 173 individual women, including helping 26 women to access emergency accommodation.³³

There is a lack of understanding of the true picture of sex work or survival sex across Greater Manchester. Whilst some sex work can take place on the streets, saunas or massage parlours, hotel rooms or homes, many women travel across boroughs and from outside of the Greater Manchester region. Additionally, the increase in online sex work has brought about some anonymity to how women are involved in sex work and where they are based. This can provide challenges in connection to social isolation, lack of peer support and less support or contact with services.

The Manchester Sex Work Forum, a network of organisations in the borough of Manchester, was set up in 1998 to bring together a range of voluntary and statutory services to take a multi-agency approach to sex work. Setting out a Manchester Sex Work Strategy (2020-22) it identifies a link between homelessness, begging and survival sex in the Manchester City Council area.³⁴ Women experiencing poverty, homelessness and/or addiction often have no choice but to enter exploitative arrangements, such as 'survival sex' or exchanging 'sex for rent', to meet their most basic needs.

Women involved in sex work or survival sex often fall through the gaps in mainstream services, and face stigma, discrimination and multiple barriers to accessing the support they need. Women involved in *Breaking Down The Barriers* highlighted that support for women involved in sex work is best when it takes a supportive approach, rather than one of enforcement. The complex issues that arise for women involved in sex work such as homelessness, mental health, substance use, criminal justice, asylum and immigration, domestic and sexual abuse, exploitation and poverty all lead to these women being at the sharpest end of inequality.

“Getting a new place is like getting a new start, I’m going to focus on getting a job and seeing my kids...Everyone at MASH and partners are fantastic... everything you have done for me I’ll never forget it.”

– *Woman supported by MASH*

Impact of the pandemic

Women involved in sex work are also likely to be amongst those hardest hit by the pandemic. Those who have been involved in survival sex in order to survive face a cliff edge and potential homelessness and destitution as a result of the pandemic, and have risked breaking the law on rules around self-isolation.³⁵ The pandemic has made those involved in sex work more visible to services due to lockdown restrictions and the shift in moving many women who were street homeless into hotels.

Partnership working

The increased powers of GMCA means it is well placed to take a holistic and multi-agency approach to supporting women involved in sex work or survival sex across the ten boroughs. Strong borough connections can impact the support women are entitled to receive, especially when moving across boundaries for involvement in survival sex or sex-work, or for other support services such as housing.

There have been welcome steps in this area, as demonstrated by the commissioning of Manchester Action on Street Health (MASH) which is described earlier in this briefing in the commissioning section. Approaches such as these must be further developed to better support women involved in sex work or survival sex.

Recommendations:

Greater Manchester authorities will have the greatest impact for women involved in sex work and survival sex by ensuring that all programmes, strategies and governance arrangements are joined up across boroughs, and by investing in specialist projects for women. Sustainable change will also require sustainable funding to meet need, and investment in data collection to build a fuller picture of women’s needs and outcomes.

The following key actions for change were created based on the expertise of organisations and experts-by-experience across Greater Manchester, particularly Manchester Action on Street Health (MASH) and their women’s advisory panel. They were shaped further by over 60 participants at an event organised by AVA and Agenda held in [date].

These recommendations apply to strategies and services across the Greater Manchester region:

1. GMCA should develop and coordinate a strategic approach to responding to women involved in sex work and survival sex across GM. Specialist women’s organisations should be actively involved in developing this strategic and service response to women facing multiple disadvantage across Greater Manchester.
2. Accommodation services should not evict women for their involvement in survival sex. Funding for women involved in sex work must be ring-fenced and directed to support for women facing multiple disadvantage and their children. This should provide dedicated safe, gender and trauma-informed accommodation including for those with NRPF, and extend to support women throughout and beyond COVID-19.
3. Safe, non-judgemental mental, physical and sexual health services should be made accessible to women involved in survival sex, through any further lockdowns and to respond to the impact of the pandemic.
4. All services and first responders, including police, should have knowledge and awareness around survival sex and be able to identify and support women involved in a gender and trauma-informed way. Instead of punitive responses, particularly in the context of new COVID-19-related legislation, police should refer women to specialist women’s services who can work with women to build clear pathways to safety and support.

Spotlight on Manchester Action Street Health (MASH)

MASH provides non-judgemental support to women who are sex working so they are safer, healthier, and more resilient. The majority of the women MASH work with are working on the streets and are some of the most marginalised women in the area. Despite often having the highest and most complex needs, they often fall through the cracks of mainstream services and face huge barriers to support and opportunities.

MASH supports anyone who is sex working and identifies as a woman. Through their expert team of caseworkers, their drop-in centre, their mobile drop-in vehicle and their dedicated sexual health nurse, MASH builds trusted relationships, working with women where they are at, and offering a trauma-informed approach.

Women tell MASH that without them they wouldn't know where else to turn. Through their engagement with MASH, women take fewer risks, keep themselves safer, access expert support for their physical and emotional health, are supported to access accommodation and have improved self-esteem and resilience.

MASH has always been committed to keeping women who are involved in sex work safe, prioritising this when responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. They have had to make some changes to ensure their service is COVID-secure, like strengthening their partnership working so there has been as little disruption to their service as possible.

Endnotes

1. Agenda and Ava (2019) [Breaking Down the Barriers](#)
2. Scott, S. & McManus, S. 2016. (DMSS research for Agenda) [Hidden Hurt: Violence, abuse and disadvantage in the lives of women](#)
3. Coined by Professor Kimberlé Crenshaw, the term intersectionality was originally used to describe a kind of analysis recognising and contextualising African American women's experiences of inequality as experiences of racism and sexism, overlapping and reinforcing each other. Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics, University of Chicago Legal Forum, 140 (1), 139-167. Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color, Stanford Law Review, 43 (6), 1241-1299.
4. No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) refers to a visa condition set out in the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 that prevents migrants from accessing 'public funds' if they are 'subject to immigration control'. This means they have no entitlement to most state-funded benefits, tax credits and housing assistance. The restrictions include women not on a spousal visa who are fleeing abuse, limiting their ability to access financial support, legal aid and safe accommodation. NRPF individuals can, nevertheless, be eligible for assistance from their local authorities for a range of services. Consequently boroughs often have the responsibility to provide for subsistence and accommodation needs that, under different circumstances, would be centrally funded.
5. Office of National Statistics, Statistical Bulletin, Domestic abuse in England and Wales: year ending March 2018, citing the Crime Survey for England and Wales year ending March 2017.
6. Taken from, Agenda (2016) Hidden Hurt. Based on Greater Manchester population estimate of 2.8 million taken from [2019 ONS stats](#)
7. The term 'Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic'(BAME) is commonly used in policy contexts but it can reinforce the idea that certain groups automatically occupy a minority position. Drawing on critical analysis of this term by services led by and for marginalised groups, we refer to 'Black and minoritised' women and girls to highlight the way in which these groups are constructed as 'minorities' through processes of marginalisation and exclusion.
8. Sisters for Change and The Manchester Maya Project (2019) [UNEQUAL REGARD, UNEQUAL PROTECTION 2, Spotlight on Manchester](#)
9. The Commission was established by AVA (Against Violence & Abuse) and Agenda, the alliance for women and girls at risk. It was funded by the Lloyds Bank Foundation of England & Wales. Baroness Armstrong of Hill Top chaired the Commission and convened a panel of leading experts from across the health, homelessness, substance use, criminal justice and violence against women and girls sector. The Commission sat from October 2017 to December 2018 and was supported by a secretariat, it covered England and Wales. There was a national call for written evidence in addition to seven oral evidence sessions which took place across three days in Manchester, Cardiff and London. Alongside the Commission a Community of Practice was set up, bringing together 35 professionals from a range of backgrounds to share good practice, make recommendations and review the Commission's Recommendations.

To put women's voices and experiences at the heart of this work, 13 volunteer Peer Researchers were recruited and trained. The Peer Researchers conducted interviews with eighteen other women with whom they shared similar life experiences. The findings of their research underpinned the Commission report and were published in Hand in Hand: Survivors of Multiple Disadvantage Discuss Service & Support.

The final Commission report made a range of recommendations to improve service design and pathways, commissioning and more specific recommendations related to women's experiences of multiple disadvantage. At the core the Commission identified the need for gender and trauma-informed responses that acknowledge and understand the interconnected experiences women face when seeking help for violence and abuse, mental ill health, substance use, homelessness and motherhood.
10. By survivor we mean both survivors of abuse but also women who have survived multiple systems that have not always placed their experiences at their heart.
11. Ministry of Justice (2018), [A Whole System Approach for Female Offenders](#)

12. Article by Economics Observatory (17 Dec 2020), [Why has Manchester been hit so hard by the second wave of coronavirus?](#)
13. Fawcett Society and West Midlands Women's Voice (July 2020) [Attitudes and Experiences of Women During the Covid-19 Pandemic](#)
14. Article on the GMCA website (June 2020), [£732m cost to Greater Manchester local government from coronavirus](#)
15. Article on the GMCA website (June 2020), [Mayor calls for partnership with Government as A Bed Every Night launches its ambitious third phase](#)
16. Scott, S. & McManus, S. 2016. (DMSS research for Agenda) [Hidden Hurt: Violence, abuse and disadvantage in the lives of women](#)
17. GMCA Victims Services Review consultation (2019) 'Supporting Victims and Witnesses Every Step of the Way'
18. [GMCA Serious Violence Reduction Action Plan](#) (June 2020)
19. Greater Manchester Homelessness Action Network (GMHAN) is a cross-sector network to end homelessness in Greater Manchester and includes representatives from all 10 boroughs across GM.
20. Article on Street Support Network website (2021), [Greater Manchester Legislative Theatre Update GMCA funded a legislative theatre project](#)
21. The Greater Manchester Housing First (GMHF) pilot was commissioned for three years in 2019 by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) with funding from Ministry of Homes, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). <https://www.gmhousingfirst.org.uk>
22. Sisters for Change and The Manchester Maya Project (2019) [UNEQUAL REGARD, UNEQUAL PROTECTION 2, Spotlight on Manchester](#)
23. Economic and Social Research Council and Women's Budget Group (2020), Briefing Note, 'Carrying the work burden of the COVID-19 pandemic: working class women in the UK'
24. Safety4Sisters (2020), [Locked in Abuse, Locked out of Safety – The pandemic experiences of migrant women](#)
25. Office of National Statistics (2020), [Deaths of homeless people in England and Wales](#), for estimated deaths in years 2013 to 2019
26. From Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2020) [Rough sleeping snapshot in England: autumn 2019](#) (Table 1), (Table 2) and (Table 8)
27. From: Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2020) [Detailed local authority level tables: April to June 2019](#) (Table A1 + Table A5P)
28. As reported at <http://www.mash.org.uk/about-mash/our-impact-old/>
29. A report by the House of Commons in 2016 identified that there were around 60,000 to 80,000 sex workers in the UK, . With the Greater Manchester population standing at 2.8 million people this would mean there were approximately 2940 sex workers in Greater Manchester. However it is difficult to have conclusive evidence on the number of women involved in sex work or survival sex. [Commons H of. Prostitution Third Report of Session](#) (2016-17); Office of National Statistics (2020), [Annual population estimates](#).
30. This number is based on comparative figures provided by Manchester Action on Street Health (MASH). In 2012-2013 MASH supported a total of 480 women, in 2017 – 18 they supported 724 women over the year.
31. Manchester Action on Street Health and Manchester Metropolitan University (2017), [An Invisible Workforce: An Investigation into the Support Needs of Online Sex Workers](#)
32. Manchester Action on Street Health (2020), [Response to the Coronavirus Pandemic](#)
33. [Manchester City Council Sex Worker Strategy 2020/22](#)
34. Manchester Action on Street Health (2020), [Response to the Coronavirus Pandemic](#)