

# VOICES FROM THE FRONTLINE

Agenda Alliance exists to make a difference to the lives of women and girls at the sharpest end of inequality. We advocate for women and girls who have multiple, interconnected needs that are not being met by public services – and sometimes by voluntary sector organisations.

## Listen to women speak about their experiences

We recently made a short film, featuring two women, Charlie and Ola, with lived experience of these multiple unmet needs. They share valuable insight into the challenges they have faced whilst seeking support. **Watch it [here](#).**

## What does 'multiple unmet needs' mean for women?

Experiencing multiple unmet needs usually stems from experiences of poverty, gendered abuse, or trauma, leading to challenges with employment, mental health, homelessness, drug/alcohol misuse, criminalisation and more. These challenges are often interconnected and overlapping. They are worsened by structural problems like racism and other discrimination, stigma, and a lack of accessible long-term support.



Whilst men also experience cycles of harm, evidence shows the drivers and ongoing impacts for women and girls are gendered. They require specific and tailored responses that take this into account.

We can prevent women and girls from being swept into this cycle of harm, by providing effective tailored support or intervening earlier to stop problems escalating.

**You can support change  
for women and girls by  
sharing your response to  
the film - [click this link](#).**



# QUESTIONS TO REFLECT ON:

After watching the film, we'd love you to reflect on the following questions:

Are you meaningfully considering gendered harm and discrimination within the decisions you take at work?

- If not, why not?
- Could there be an opportunity to?

How much do you know about trauma-informed practice?

- Have you heard this term before?
- Have you received any training about trauma or becoming trauma-informed?
- Could there be an opportunity for you or your team to receive training?
- Could there be an opportunity for you to improve access to trauma-informed training for others (e.g. through commissioning)?

What is one step you could take within your role to advocate for improving involvement and co-production with women experiencing multiple forms of disadvantage?

- If you've taken steps already, to what extent has that co-production been present in design and strategic decision-making (including holding positions of power?)

Charlie highlights the impact that services working in siloes have had on her, and how a lack of joined-up working can further or reinstate a cycle of harm.

- Is there one action in your role that you could take to support services, organisations or departments working better together?

Charlie and Ola's experiences show how badly stigma or racism can affect women experiencing adversity, blocking them from support or creating feelings of exclusion. Stigma can be felt at an interpersonal, environmental or structural level (through policy, rules or regulations).

- Take some time to reflect on your pre-existing views of women who have criminal records, struggled with addiction or homelessness, or migrated to the UK.
- Consider how these might have come up in your interactions with people at work.
- Were your views challenged by anything Charlie and Ola shared in this film?