

Final report of the Salford Women and Girls' Commission

Findings and recommendations March 2023

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Foreword

by Councillor Sharmina August

Lead Member for Inclusive Economy, Anti-Poverty and Equalities, Salford City Council

Chairing this commission, and working alongside so many other inspirational and deeply knowledgeable women from diverse communities and sectors, has been an immense privilege and source of pride. Throughout the process, the commission always kept focused on one single key idea: we were here to listen to the women of Salford; to hear their thoughts, views and experiences, and to let those voices shape the process.

The death of Sarah Everard, the #MeToo campaign, Black Lives Matter movement, the inequalities highlighted by Covid, and the cost-of-living crisis have made plain the deep fault lines running through our society; fault lines which disproportionately impact the lives of women. The commission arose from a desire to focus on these challenges, challenges faced specifically and particularly by women, and how these can be addressed in Salford.

Over the past 12 months we have heard from women who live and work in Salford. These amazing women, from a range of different communities, cultures, and backgrounds, have told us about the range and complexity of issues affecting their lives, though with a focus on three areas - Poverty, Safety, and Voice. It is



perhaps inevitable that each of these could have easily been the sole focus of the commission's activity.

The report provides a detailed snapshot of the issues we covered, but it can only ever be a starting point. Indeed, that's what it must be. While this report is hugely valuable, it isn't enough on its own. Rather, we should see it as a call to action, as a reminder we all, individually and organisationally, have a vital responsibility to take up and address these recommendations together.

We want a Salford which has gender equality at the heart of the city. We want to be a place where all women and girls move towards feeling safe, respected, and valued in their communities. I hope this report can be a valuable part of beginning that process.

About the Commission

Salford Women and Girls' Commission was established in January 2022 in the aftermath of the appalling murder of Sarah Everard.

Made up of 17 women leaders from across Salford's public, private and voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors, its purpose was simple - to generate a conversation, and develop local solutions, to address issues affecting women and girls' safety and prosperity in Salford.

This final report presents the findings and recommendations from the commission's work over the past 15 months following extensive engagement with women from communities across the city.



Our commissioners



Chair - Councillor Sharmina August, Lead Member for Inclusive Economy, Anti-Poverty and Equalities, Salford City Council.



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 Officer, Doosti.



Sue Fletcher, Assistant Chief Executive Officer, 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.



Chief Inspector Lucy Smallwood, Greater Manchester Police.

Acknowledgements

The commission wishes to thank the women and girls who have contributed to the production of this final report including those who attended our listening events, meetings of the commission and community events, along with those who submitted written evidence online and in-person.

It would also like to give thanks to Flourish Together CIC for helping to facilitate meetings of the commission. Flourish provides support to women and the wider social enterprise sector in Greater Manchester to overcome disadvantage and lack of opportunity by helping them to realise their full potential through services such as mentoring, intensive training, and leadership development.

Finally, the commission would like to also extend its thanks to Salford City Council's Policy and Partnerships Team and Salford CVS for providing invaluable secretariat support during the past year including undertaking citizen engagement and providing data and research intelligence.



Introduction

Women in Britain won equal voting rights in 1928 thanks to the suffragette movement led by Emmeline Pankhurst. Since then, women have made many strides to achieve gender equality but there is still a long way to go until we have achieved a society where all women can feel safe and the equal opportunity to reach their full potential.

Whilst gender equality has come a long way in this time, there are still many barriers and inequalities women, and girls continue to face. For example:

- Women overwhelmingly do not feel enough is being done to ensure their personal safety, with three quarters (76%) saying men in society don't do enough to keep women and girls safe. 63% of men tend to agree with this statement also ([YouGov](#))
- Women are less likely to be employed full-time with a rate of 45% compared to 61% of men. This exacerbates the concentration of women into low paid and insecure work, most notably in sectors such as retail and hospitality.



- 41% of women provide care for children, grandchildren, older people, or people with a disability compared to just a quarter of men – adding to the pressure of finding work that allows them to balance earning with caring.
- 85% of women cook and/or do housework every day, compared to just 49% of men.
- Only 35% of board members for the largest publicly listed companies are women.
- Only 35% of councillors in England are women. Gender equality in local councils will not be achieved until 2077. ([Fawcett Society](#))
- Black girls are twice as likely to be permanently excluded at school compared to white girls ([Equality and Human Rights Commission](#))
- One-third of women of colour say they've been unfairly passed over or denied a promotion at work.

The exacerbation of inequality over the past three years as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic has also had a huge impact on women. Cases of domestic

abuse increased, women's mental health deteriorated and women shouldered much of the caring and schooling demands of the lockdown (UK Household Longitudinal Survey). Single parents, most of whom are women, have been particularly badly hit by the pandemic with a third in financial difficulty, and 11% experiencing problem debt.

The high-profile death of Sarah Everard, followed by the national debate around violence and harassment towards women and girls brought into sharp focus the debate about women's safety. This led to Cllr Sharmina August, Lead Member for Inclusive Economy, Anti-Poverty and Equalities at Salford City Council to announce the establishment of a new commission to explore issues of women's safety and inequality and identify ways in which these can be addressed locally here in Salford. This included a core aim to provide a voice for women who feel marginalised and disempowered due to intersectional inequality.

In this report we reflect on the work of this commission and what has been learnt.

Summary of recommendations

Improving skills and access to good quality work

- **Recommendation 1:** Agree a joint commitment across 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.
- **Recommendation 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.
- **Recommendation 3:** Strengthen the Salford City Mayor's Employment Standards Charter to explicitly add commitments aimed at improving skills and employment outcomes for disadvantaged women in Salford

including: putting in place flexible working policies to support women to access opportunities; setting targets to increase representation of women in senior positions (if underrepresented); and reporting on organisation's gender and ethnicity pay gaps.

- **Recommendation 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.

Improving women's safety

- **Recommendation 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.



- **Recommendation 6:** Work in partnership to develop a joint Salford wide movement, linked to the annual 16 Days of Action campaign against gender-based violence to further raise awareness and improve night-time safety for women and girls in public places and public transport.
- **Recommendation 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.
- **Recommendation 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.
- **Recommendation 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.
- **Recommendation 10:** Pilot a programme of workshops delivered to secondary schools/young people's settings by the [Schools Consent Project](#).

Ensuring women's voices are heard

- **Recommendation 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.
- **Recommendation 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.

- **Recommendation 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.
- **Recommendation 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.



Our journey

Stage 1: Formation

The commission is comprised of 17 women leaders from organisations across Salford's voluntary and community, public and private sectors. These commissioners were selected and invited to participate based on their unique knowledge and extensive professional and lived experience to explore identified topics from a gender perspective and help develop practical local solutions. The commission's aims included:

- To raise awareness of women's lived experiences of inequality here in Salford.
- To hear from women of all backgrounds with a fully inclusive and diverse approach that recognises inequality as a multi-faceted issue.
- Ensure women are included in shaping the recovery process from the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Positively influence and champion equality in all areas of life here in Salford, including putting forward recommendations to improve outcomes for women in the city.



The work of the commission was conducted in safe spaces dedicated to the promotion of gender equality, the promotion of women's rights and empowerment. There was board agreement across all aspects of the commission that men and boys have a key role to play in addressing inequality and that it is essential for men to have ownership of their role and response to the issues identified by women.

Stage 2: Evidence Gathering and Insight

The commission's focus was informed by the views of over 100 Salford women who attended three listening events in 2022. These facilitated sessions identified several issues which were of key concern or interest for women in the city.

As a result, three broad themes were identified as the standout areas for the commission to focus its work:

1. Women and Poverty
2. Women's Safety
3. Women's Voice.

To ensure that a broad representation of views and opinions were captured on an ongoing basis, extensive wider engagement also took place to provide further opportunities for women, community-based organisations and partners to participate. This included:

- In-person consultation via the five Salford Gateway centres, along with Salford Women's Centre.
- Several community events (including at Salford Pink Picnic, the Black History Month community celebration, Salford Mad Pride, Salford Disability Forum AGM and Refugee Week conference)
- Targeted focus groups to ensure a wide range of seldom heard women's voices were captured, particularly from

women who may feel marginalised and disempowered, including those of older women, WASPI women, trans women, Lesbian and Bi women, D/deaf women, women involved in the asylum process, women with disabilities, women impacted by racial inequalities and Jewish women.

- Online calls for evidence via the Salford Women and Girls Commission website, promoted via social media, where submissions (including lived experience, research, data and best practice examples) could be sent anonymously.

Stage 3 - Considering the evidence

During 2022, the commission met five times to consider the information and insight from the evidence gathering stage in more detail and hear first-hand the lived experience of many women living and working in Salford.

These meetings were chaired by Cllr Sharmina August and facilitated by Flourish Together CIC - a Greater Manchester based social enterprise that specialises in supporting women to thrive through peer learning, mentoring, coaching and seed investment.

Prior to each of the commission meetings, an information pack summarising the topic from a national, regional, and local perspective was also produced alongside a summary of evidence submitted via the commission's website.

The publication of this report serves as the culmination of this process, which reflects the commission's learning and experience over the past year. It is the commission's hope that partners and community organisations across Salford will come together to help deliver these recommendations for the benefit of women and girls in the city.

Themes and Findings

Theme 1: Women and Poverty

There is a wide range of national research and evidence available regarding the disproportionate impact of poverty on women. Research shows women are not only more likely to experience poverty than men, but also at a more persistent rate. Women are paid on average 15% less per hour with most part-time employment being held by women.

Key issues around skills and employment are key factors in women's experiences of poverty and led to the commission's first sessions having a clear focus around improving access to support and training and employment opportunities.

Commissioners heard from a range of local women with lived experience of poverty as well as exploring good practice examples and identifying further opportunities for women as part of Salford's award-winning [Tackling Poverty Strategy](#).

"Poverty' is one of the most serious topics of our times. And as has been evident in the past, we again see women and girls suffering the most. Women have to 'budget' life basics at home for their children often sacrificing their own health"

Feedback from Listening event



Summary of key findings and learning

Discussions at the session illustrated a range of issues affecting women in accessing skills and work to address the impact of poverty. These include:

- A gap in widely available, affordable and flexible childcare provision in the city.
- A lack of opportunities for flexible working and advancement in the workplace, along with limited opportunities for women to become self-employed.
- The high cost of travel to, and from, training including to cover for caring responsibilities.
- The need for more opportunities for women to engage in 'soft learning' training to develop confidence to return to the workforce.
- More widely available finance skills training for women of all ages.
- A lack of knowledge around mentoring opportunities for women to support them in developing skills and talent.
- A need for more support for women with disabilities in the workplace.
- A lack of culturally sensitive support for women who have been involved in the asylum process or where women face multiple forms of intersectional discrimination.
- Need for better support/signposting for women in abusive relationships with limited options to leave the relationship.
- Lack of free legal support for women
- A need to address many of the key barriers for migrant women in Salford, including multiculturalism, propaganda, bias, prejudice, and religion.
- Digital exclusion and difficulties in accessing IT equipment due to financial hardship or digital illiteracy.
- The dual impact of language barriers, and a lack of confidence for those whose first language isn't English including low self-belief, mental health issues, involved in an abusive relationship.

- More opportunities for women to come together and address imposter syndrome and under-confidence in the workplace.

Solutions to address barriers

There was wide agreement amongst commissioners that grassroot organisations played a hugely important role, alongside well-funded public services and ethical local employers, in supporting women impacted by poverty. This, alongside capacity building work within the VCSE sector were identified as key tools to make this happen. Other solutions put forward included:

- Improved skills and work support, particularly to attract women to re-enter or progress within the workforce.
- Provide simple, relevant information of all the support services available for women in one place, which is easily accessible to communities.
- Look at financial literacy for women as part of the Learning City approach.
- Work to increase awareness of migrant women's rights in the community and to inform migrant women about related legislation to overcome barriers they face.
- Ensure staff from all sectors attend appropriate training to broaden and update their understanding of the issues faced by migrant women.
- All sectors to work in partnership to ensure migrant women can access safe accommodation, financial support, child protection, ESOL classes, legal advice, and opportunities to connect with the local community.
- Explore the possibility of providing free travel passes for women to access training and employment opportunities.
- Targeted grant provision for women to help with additional costs encountered in accessing training and skills development such as childcare.
- Ensure the promotion of positive and inspiring role models for local women and coaching opportunities.

- Promote the use of Gateways as inclusive places to go, including support for disadvantaged women to use digital tools to access job and training opportunities.
- Further provision of peer-mentoring schemes.
- Improve access to foodbanks and food clubs to make them easier/less bureaucratic to access key items for women.
- Recognise and promote the VCSE sector and associated organisations as an accessible, flexible route to enabling women to build soft skills as well as employment readiness skills. These can be comparably more impactful, accessible and cost effective than some mainstream skills and employability options.



Good Practice Case Study: Improving women's financial resilience

Salford City Council's in house Welfare Rights and Debt Advice Service has a long history of championing women's rights in the face of benefit cuts and sanctions. Ongoing changes to the welfare system over the past decade has seen many women pushed into poverty at an exponential rate through no fault of their own. This has intensified over the past months in the wake of a cost-of-living crisis which has seen women impacted across the city.

As well as this, the service has worked closely supporting women to safeguard their financial situation in the wake of domestic-abuse related cases where financial abuse has been a significant factor. This includes the employment of a specialist Financial Inclusion Officer working with victims-survivors of domestic abuse.

Both the Welfare Rights and Debt Advice teams also work closely with other services such as Adult and Children's social care to ensure practitioners are aware of these pressing issues for women as well as providing training to internal and external staff to equip them with the skills to ask about money issues and know when and how to make an effective referral.

This vital work has seen financial gains achieved for clients, which is on target to top £5 million by the end of this 2022/23- much of which goes directly into the pockets of women in the city on the lowest incomes, many of whom are carers, have a disability or are in low paid and insecure employment.

Theme 2: Women's Safety

A recurring theme from the listening events and evidence submitted to the commission was the need for a much stronger local focus on women's safety and street harassment, particularly at night-time in public places and transport system.

Commissioners heard wide ranging evidence from women with first-hand experience of domestic abuse and harassment, along with professional experts on behalf of the Salford Community Safety Partnership who provided members with an overview of safety initiatives currently being delivered throughout the city.

Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) also shared recent consultative work carried out across the Bee Network, highlighting that 57% of women said that they did not feel safe on the region's transport system. It was noted that TfGM have received £500k from the Home Office's Safer Streets scheme since 2021 which has been invested in a series of schemes to both prevent and respond to safety issues facing women and girls. Key initiatives include:

- A campaign to increase reporting of incidents on the Metrolink, with a focus on promoting GMP's Live Chat and the QR Code.
- Trusted People scheme launched in Oldham involving Street Angels and youth workers out and about on the network to educate and engage young people, increase safety, and reassure the public.
- Investment in 51 CCTV cameras at strategic locations around five Metrolink stops.
- Rollout of a poster campaign in parts of Greater Manchester to challenge inappropriate behaviour on public transport and how to report it.

"By half past three I'm in the house all locked up and I won't go out again - it's not safe, not even to the local shop, even in summer. If I ever go out at night it's with my friend who has a car and will pick me up and drop me off at my door"

Feedback from Listening event

Key findings and learning

Discussions at these events highlighted several key protective factors identified by women which aid their personal safety. These included:

- The need to ensure safe travel around the city across all forms of transport, including buses, trams and trains.
- Personal knowledge of the local community is crucial - the physical space, community demographic, local crime initiatives and local trusted services.
- Women's access to appropriate accommodation, quality streetlighting and neighbourhood planning around safety were seen as key components of safety.
- The importance of visible community policing.
- Ensuring professionals such as the police and community workers have a respectful approach to local women.



- Support network – friends, family, neighbours, being part of a community.
- The need for women to be able to afford a mobile phone so emergency help can be accessed when needed.
- The possibility of female-only carriages on public transport.
- The inclusion of women in the development of female friendly safety strategies, including public realm safety design features.
- The increased diversity in the makeup of local communities has made many women feel safer and more welcome.

Solutions to address barriers

There was wide consensus amongst commissioners of the need to strengthen the city's response to improving the safety of women and girls in the city. Key areas identified included:

- The need for women to feel safe moving around the city on affordable, regular public transport in the evening.
- Ensuring a visible police presence is maintained across the transport system.
- The provision of training for transport staff and police to develop a robust understanding of safety issues for women through a gender specific gender lens.
- Upscaling work being done to educate men and boys around positive masculinity.
- Ensuring women's safety considerations form a key role in the planning and development of local area regeneration plans, including improved streetlighting in public areas.
- Enabling a professional response from organisations to safety concerns raised by women at all times.
- Culture change to challenge sexism and society perception of gender - including language used, social sexism, microaggression, people accountable for their actions, and normalising respect for women - shaping positivity.

Good Practice Case Study: Tackling negative influences on men

In response to tackling violence against women and girls, the city has launched a range of initiatives that aim to educate practitioners and build holistic wraparound support which challenges young men's behaviour whilst supporting their individual needs mentally and physically.

Incel ideology which promotes the physical and sexual violence of women and girls has become increasingly popular since lockdown with more and more young men spending time online. To reduce the risk of this behaviour being perpetrated, training has been introduced for front line services which looks at how radicalisers groom young men into destructive ways of action and how we can protect those vulnerable to these negative influences.

When young men are referred into the Prevent programme for Incel related behaviour it's important to recognise first and foremost they are treated as victims not perpetrators. Radicalisation is a grooming process in the way sexual and physical exploitation is. The service provided looks at the person as a whole not the problem in isolation and understands that for some of these vulnerable people, there are complex needs which have to be addressed as well as tackling the rhetoric which we do by providing a specialist worker. Working in this way builds up protective factors as well as reducing the risk to girls and women in Salford. The support is monitored monthly and can be changed according to need.

- To better engage and involve men where appropriate and create safe space to openly discuss better ways for men to learn, be supported and commit to championing women's voice, safety and empowerment as a route to improving equality and access to opportunities for all.

Theme 3: Women's Voice and Influence

The final topic the commission explored was focused on amplifying women's voices and increasing women's participation. Ensuring women's and girls' views are effectively heard and increasing representation in all areas of private and public life is essential to meet the needs and rights of people of all genders.

Commissioners heard evidence from local women with a range of experiences around this topic, including the lived experience of domestic abuse, grassroots work to influence change and providing a platform to advocate for other women.

Findings and learning

The topic and associated evidence highlighted several points for commissioners, including:

- Voice and participation can take different forms but means nothing without influence. Women can participate as much as they want, what will make them fail when implementing sustainable change is the influence.
- Power comes when a woman is in a situation where she has a voice AND is listened to. Power structures play a massive role in that regard (e.g. hierarchy within a company, women living in patriarchal families and communities).

"The biggest hurdle we have at the moment is making our needs known. The people in power (who are often men) need the unavoidable truth placed in front of them, every second of every day. On every strategy note about the impact on women and girls."

Feedback from Listening event



- There is a need to create safety structures to welcome the voice from vulnerable women who might fear the repercussions and negative impacts their participation might have on their credibility in their household and community.

Further discussion explored local opportunities for women to be heard and have influence, with conversations centred around barriers to being heard and ways women have addressed and challenged the power structural barriers (these included cultural and community constraints, hierarchy barriers, cost, knowledge, and confidence).

Solutions to address barriers

Commissioners considered ways in which women's voice can be amplified within the city and recognised the importance of peer support and other women leading by example. Suggestions for improvements include:

- Educational and training opportunities are key to equip women with the right knowledge and skills that will enable them to gain confidence and make their voice better heard.
- Many women feel uncomfortable to share their opinion because they are too afraid and ashamed of what would happen if they spoke out, which leads to self-censorship.



- Challenging the democratic deficit within Salford is crucial with the most recent local elections turnout being the lowest within Greater Manchester. People think they have no opportunity and no say. However, it does not mean they do not have an opinion, but rather that they face barriers that prevent them from engaging with local institutions.
- Further collaboration between public services, businesses and VCSE organisations to share intelligence around women's participation and learn skills and knowledge that would help staff and service users be more confident when sharing their opinion.
- Explore platforms in which women could participate anonymously.
- Develop networking opportunities to deepen the understanding of the support services landscape within the city to improve the effective signposting of women to the most appropriate services.
- Better promotion of opportunities for women to participate in organisation's business and community life by utilising a wide range of resources available (e.g. forums).
- Promote awareness and explore flexible solutions to challenges women may be more likely to experience in their professional and personal life (e.g. childcare issues, cost of transport) to pick up signals and create a safe space.
- Further develop professional relationships and mentorship opportunities.
- Explore the role of grants as levers to enable women to participate and make their voice heard.
- Promoting empowerment for women in Salford - including champions for women and role models and mentoring 'Promoting not apologising'.
- Better encouragement of women's involvement and voice in decision making processes - capturing their stories and ensuring voices of the unheard/marginalised /underserved are part of it.

Good Practice Case Study: Empowering Women

Women with Wings were set up in 2017. Based in Little Hulton, it aims to help women, specifically those from communities impacted by racial inequality, and those where English is not their first language, to get into career training, employment, and self-employment.

Through their work in the local community, they saw women and mums who were isolated and not engaging with available support programmes and opportunities to develop their own enterprises. This was often due to a lack of confidence, knowledge, language barriers, lack of childcare support and cost.

CEO and founder of the organisation, Jasmin Bakhre wanted to address this; "Women with Wings support women to improve their lives. We have gone from a community to charity and have grown as a community interest company. We do workshops and training events.... Our door is open to any woman, especially those where English isn't their first language and those who struggle with childcare."

Since the founding of the charity, Jasmin has helped support over 300 women from local communities, with women of all ages still coming through her door every day.

When asked how it feels to be a woman helping other women, Jasmin said: "I am very grateful and very blessed to be in this position to support other women because I have also been supported and mentored to get to where I am. I felt it was my time to step up and support other women as well, so it feels great, and I am enjoying my job every single day."

Reflections

Reflections from women who live in and work in Salford

"I was delighted to see this Women's Commission happening, I just thought, 'wow, this is great. We need a platform to empower ourselves and take forth issues that impact on women all around.'"

"The commission should be used to understand what is going on in Salford and to promote women, making sure their voices are heard and that issues can be discussed in a respectful way."

"There are so many issues relating to poverty so we need to find out how we can get women in the community involved and ensure all women are incorporated in the commission's vision."

"This isn't just about women. It's about men too. There seems to be something cultural, and we teach boys to be a certain way. We excuse behaviours and say that it is just boys being boys. So, we almost teach boys from a young age that it is ok to treat women in a certain way. Addressing this should be a priority."

"There is a need for less talk and more action. We often sit in the same circles and see the same faces, but nothing actually happens. There is a need for some kind of timeline and some specific actions. Also, we need to involve as many people as possible and give them a voice."

"More work needs to be done with boys and men, so they understand the impact their behaviour has on how we feel. It's their responsibility to change, but it's always girls and women to always have to be hyper vigilant wherever we are to make sure we are safe."

"Everything we tend to do is usually because a crisis has come about. I'd like to deal with stuff before this point Prevention rather than cure. Let's not use the commission to find issues, let's create change!"



Reflections from the commissioners

“ It has been a privilege to be a commissioner and spend time with women in Salford to debate the issues and inform the outcomes. I am especially pleased to see that the recommendations call for systemic and behavioural change from agencies and individuals who create the barriers, as opposed to putting the onus on women to find ways to work around them. ”

“ I believe that the recommendations reflect the needs of the women that we support both in Salford Foundation and Safe in Salford. The three key areas chosen to work on were very pertinent to the women we support. I am sure that when we fulfil these recommendations women will start to feel safer, more fulfilled and have happier lives in Salford. ”

Our services reflect similar ambitions in many of the areas identified. I was particularly pleased to see the white ribbon campaign mentioned in recommendation nine on improving safety.

I believe educating boys and men at an early stage through having positive male role models and attributes, learning about healthy relationships and how to control your emotions and feelings can really influence change in both attitude and behaviours in the future. I feel the recommendations are relevant and reflect the needs we identified as the commission. I feel that the combined voices of the commission give a strong message that things need to change, and what those changes are, to improve the lives of women and girls in Salford. ”

“ It has been a privilege to be part of this important conversation and to hear Salford women's views on how to make it a safer and more equitable place, where differences are valued, and support and opportunities are open to all. The passion of commission members to hear the voices of Salford women has been evident throughout. It is so encouraging and empowering to know that there are common voices fighting inequality, poverty and safety and working towards improving the lives of women in Salford. ”

“ It was an absolute honour and a pleasure to be involved in the commission. I feel privileged to have worked alongside some awesome women who want to make changes to the lives of women and girls. ”

I personally strive to support and improve the lives of the families I work with, so many are impacted by disadvantage and poverty. I work tirelessly for equality for all and will continue to do so. I feel I have new contacts and avenues to follow, to change and improve the lives of the children and their families we support. ”

“ As a member of the Salford Women and Girls' Commission, from discussion and lively debate at our meetings and listening to some excellent presentations by guest speakers including those who have suffered disadvantage and abuse, I have developed a greater awareness and understanding of the many and varied issues which negatively affect women and girls in Salford. ”

My aim will be to share this awareness and understanding within my organisation and its partners in the city in order to create and promote developmental and mentoring opportunities in a safe space, for Salford women and girls. ”

Next steps

Over the past 12 months, the Salford Women and Girls' Commission has heard countless stories (often harrowing) and reviewed numerous pieces of evidence of the very real experiences of women and girls living and working in the city.

Whilst this stage of the process is now complete, the even more important stage now begins.

It is time to turn this listening into action.

Over the next 12 months, conversations will take place with senior leaders, statutory agencies, businesses and community organisations across Salford to ask them to work with us to ensure these recommendations are taken forward and embedded into their work.

As only by working together can we inspire real change to happen - so that all women and girls in Salford can truly feel safe and supported and have the confidence and same opportunities to fulfil their potential.

We hope this will be the legacy of this commission.





Find out more about the SWAGC at
www.partnersinsalford.org/womengirlscommission

