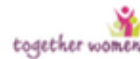


The Effective Women's Centres Partnership

Ensuring women have the chance to thrive.



Greater Manchester

Jan 2024 – June 2025
project update

Evidencing the impact of women's centres,
building support for women with multiple unmet need

Hello and welcome to the Effective Women's Centres Partnership in Greater Manchester.

Eighteen months ago, our organisations began a journey to better evidence the support we offer women and campaign for vital funding. Being part of the EWC Partnership means collaborating with women's centres across England and Wales, the University of Birmingham and our funders, The JABBS Foundation for Women and Girls. Together we're using new assessments to deliver personalised support plans for each woman in a gender-responsive, trauma-informed way. We're also building evidence on the life events associated with Criminal Justice System (CJS) involvement and the best ways to support women with multiple, unmet need. Ultimately we are campaigning for long term, sustainable funding for women's centres so that **every woman can get the support she needs to thrive.**



Farida Women's Centre in Oldham

Supporting women across Oldham following criminal justice involvement, social services involvement, or self-referral

pops.org.uk/



The Together Women Project

Supporting women with criminal justice involvement and / or domestic abuse

salfordfoundation.org.uk



The Women's Centre Stockport

One stop women's centre open to any woman living in Stockport, through self referral or criminal justice involvement

stockportwomenscentre.co.uk



Phil East, CEO,
Salford Foundation



Nikki Guy, CEO, The
Women's Centre
Stockport



Emma Guerriero
Assistant director,
POPs, Your Family Our
Support



Our Assessments:

Trauma informed & gender-responsive, measuring risks, needs and strengths

Women's Risk Needs Assessment (WRNA)

- For women at risk of offending or who are criminal justice involved
- Developed in the US and validated for use in the UK in Aug 2025
- In use across all EWC Partnership centres
- More than 200 questions covering areas including childhood, health, housing and relationships
- Provides greater detail for pre-sentence reports
- Identifies risk factors linked to re/offending

Gendered Wellbeing Assessment (GWA)

- For women not in contact with the CJS but who have multiple, unmet need
- Developed by EWC Partnership research partners University of Birmingham
- Roll out from Summer 2025, validation aimed for 2026
- Identifies links between early life events and later life outcomes
- Creates detailed support plan including referrals to outside agencies

Categories measured:

Risks: historic/ childhood abuse, history of mental illness, spending time in care, homelessness

Needs: debt and other money worries, unemployment, insecure housing or at risk of / currently homeless, substance or alcohol abuse

Strengths: parental involvement, family support, academic achievement, self efficacy

“The Women's Risk Needs Assessment (WRNA) means we can talk to the women about mental health from so many different angles – childhood experiences, self esteem and trauma. We can tailor the support in a way that's individualised and helps her feel safe.”

Case worker,
The Women's Centre Stockport



The Women's Risk Needs Assessment identifies risk factors linked to offending and the most effective support:

Referral to women's centre:

Women are referred following Criminal Justice involvement – through GMP liaison and diversion schemes, out of court disposals or probation services following conviction

Assessment:



At an assessment appointment a caseworker uses the WRNA to find out more about a woman's journey into offending, her immediate needs and what strengths they can support her to build on.

Support & referrals

The WRNA algorithm scores each section of the assessment to highlight a woman's risks, needs and strengths. It then creates a tailored support plan. Caseworkers work with women to address immediate needs such as support with housing or domestic abuse. They can also arrange for women to receive counselling and support them to attend other therapeutic groups or activities at the women's centre. Support is also provided with referrals to external sources of support.

Case study: 'F'

Referral: 'F' was referred to The Women's Centre Stockport by police following multiple contacts for offending.

Assessment: A member of the casework team sat down with 'F' to understand her journey into offending. 'F' said she was finding daily life a struggle and stealing to fund drug use. Her housing had also become unaffordable and a close relative had recently begun a custodial sentence, causing 'F' significant distress. The assessment flagged a number of risks for 'F' including lack of family support, mental health issues, housing needs, substance abuse and debt.

Support Plan: The case work team supported 'F' to enroll onto the healthy lifestyle programme at the women's centre. She was also supported to contact her housing provider.

Outcomes: 'F' was able to begin addressing her substance misuse, spending money on food and a gym membership instead. 'F' said she was feeling more able to recognise unhealthy relationships and found the confidence to say no to social contacts asking her to steal for them. She felt she had a more positive outlook on life. Staff and volunteers at SWC will continue to support 'F' through one-to-one casework appointments and attendance at groups as long as is needed.



Risks and needs among women in Greater Manchester:

Proportion of women assessed using the Women's Risk Needs Assessment in Oldham, Salford and Stockport showing the following risks and needs:

66% Mental illness

64% Physical Abuse

62% Unemployment / debt

61% Depression

59% Abuse in adulthood

57% History of PTSD

45% Sexual Abuse

43% Childhood abuse

Insights:

- The majority of women in the Criminal Justice System were themselves victims of an offence well before they ever offended.
- Rates of childhood abuse are more than double the national average for the UK*, showing that risk factors for offending are sown early.
- The majority of women assessed presented with at least three risks and needs, showing the complexity of their lives and how risk factors can influence and exacerbate each other.
- Rates of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) are nearly six times higher than the general population** suggesting a cycle of generational trauma and lack of trauma recognition in earlier interventions.

Women have a very distinct path into the criminal justice system - they need specialist support to find their way out.

*Source: Office for National Statistics

**Source: PTSD UK



Data, insights and recommendations:

44%

average improvement in housing needs following assessment using the WRNA and support from a women's centre

Scores for self efficacy were

28% higher

among women who maintained custody or contact with their children*

*data from WRNA assessments
Jan - Dec 2024 only

67%

of women did not have a stable and loving relationship with someone they could trust and rely on

18%

of women said they had been threatened or coerced into offending by a partner

57%

of women had a history of PTSD

For women with CJS involvement, housing is closely linked to other risks and needs including mental health, maintaining parental involvement and debt

Non-custodial sentences that keep families together can support improved long term outcomes for women

Social isolation and/or feelings of loneliness are a common experience for criminal justice involved women

Domestic abuse is strongly linked with women's criminal justice involvement

The majority of women with criminal justice involvement have been victims of an offence long before they offend

Women's centres need long term, sustainable funding to deliver services that meet the needs of women and their community

- Supporting women to address factors behind their offending
- Contributing to government ambition to reduce custodial sentences for women
- Breaking cycles of generational trauma
- Reduced cost to tax payer



How do we fit into the Greater Manchester policy landscape?

Data and expertise from the EWC Partnership provide valuable insights on health equity and investment in prevention over crisis response:

GM VAWG Strategy

As well as supporting women in the aftermath of domestic abuse, women's centres provide courses supporting women to identify future harmful relationship patterns. EWC Partnership data demonstrates the relationship between higher levels of self efficacy and improved long term outcomes – something women's centres support women to develop.

GM Live Well

Women's centres have decades of experience working to identify long term barriers to work and supporting women to re-enter education, training and employment through healthy living courses, mental health support and volunteering opportunities.

GM Strategy 2025 - 2035

- Use of the WRNA supports a prevention-first approach, aligned with GM work to become a prevention demonstrator
- Women's centres have a deep understanding of the communities they support, promoting place-based approaches
- Supporting women to overcome factors behind offending and addiction contributes to long term health outcomes and reduces pressure on acute NHS services

Case study: Client 'J'

Client J was referred to Farida Women's Centre in Oldham through probation due to animal cruelty. She had failed to seek prompt vet care for her pets and their living conditions were unsuitable.

Using the WRNA assessment showed J was struggling with her mental health and keeping her home clean following family bereavements. J had had to pay for services from Environmental Health, with the cost adding to existing financial difficulties. She struggled to remain employed due to a long term health condition.

A referral to Mind was made and J also received counselling through The Women's Centre Stockport's GM-wide service. A referral was made to Adult Social Services to help with J's living conditions and physical limitations. Staff at Farida supported J to engage with debt advice services and encouraged her to begin attending groups at the women's centre where she could make friends.

Counselling has helped J gain confidence and become more independent. She is actively addressing her debts, managing her home better and beginning to see a positive future.

“Women's centres are a crucial source of support for women with Criminal Justice System involvement. Identifying the reasons leading to offending and supporting a woman to overcome these challenges can be transformational both for her and the wider community. Having an effective outcomes tool such as the Women's Risk Needs Assessment clearly demonstrates the positive outcomes women's centres make.”

Martin Nugent
Senior Policy, Partnership and Commissioning
Manager, GMCA

The Effective Women's Centres Partnership



Ensuring women have the chance to thrive.

Moving forward in Greater Manchester:

Next steps:

Roll out of GWA

Staff at Stockport and Salford using the Gendered Wellbeing Assessment to provide the same trauma-informed, gender-responsive assessment and support to women not in contact with the CJS but who still have multiple, unmet need.

Data from these assessments will be used to validate the GWA for use in the UK through research by the University of Birmingham and build understanding about the challenges and risk factors facing women in GM.

Expanding to other womens centres

Expressions of interest to join the Partnership will be open from November 2025, through a funding partnership between JABBS Foundation for Women and Girls and the Henry Smith Foundation.

Engaging & influencing

Continuing to engage policy makers and commissioners to share our research and best practice

Contributing to research

Read more here:

jabbswomenandgirls.org.uk/resources/research-summaries

Long term goals:

Building the evidence base on risks and needs linked to offending and the most effective interventions

Working to provide gender-responsive, trauma-informed support for as many women as possible in Greater Manchester

Providing insight, data and expertise to policy makers and commissioners on the needs of women with multiple unmet needs and / or experience of trauma

Continuing to champion women centres and campaign for long term, sustainable funding



Get in touch:

Amy Cubey, policy and communications lead (Greater Manchester)

amy.cubey@stockportwomenscentre.co.uk

stockportwomenscentre.co.uk/the-effective-womens-centre-project/