

Assessment tool and partnership supporting vulnerable women in Greater Manchester receives £3 million boost

A new assessment tool being used to support women in contact with the Criminal Justice System in Greater Manchester has been validated for use in the UK – along with a huge funding boost to expand the project.

The Women's Risk Needs Assessment (WRNA) tool allows women's centres to carry out a trauma informed, in-depth assessment with each woman supported following criminal justice involvement, to better understand factors leading to her arrest or conviction, and how to support her avoid re-offending. Women are supported following release from prison, through a community (non-custodial) sentence or through police liaison and diversion schemes.

The assessment has been in use since January 2024 at women's centres in Salford, Oldham and Stockport through the Effective Women's Centres (EWC) Partnership. More than 300 women in Greater Manchester have already received the assessment and support to date.

Following research by the Women's Crime and Justice Group at the University of Birmingham, the tool has now been validated for use in the UK and is due to be rolled out more widely. Expansion of the EWC Partnership will be supported by a £3 million boost made up of £1.5 million from funders The JABBS Foundation for Women and Girls plus matched funding from the Henry Smith Foundation – enabling more women's centres to join the EWC Partnership and use WRNA.

The funding boost signals increased confidence in gender responsive, trauma informed assessment and support at women's centres as a way to reduce re-offending and improve health and wellbeing outcomes. Previous research from the University of Birmingham has shown more than 80 per cent of women who offend have experienced physical or sexual abuse. Their research also shows specialist women's interventions, like those provided by women's centres, are up to 42% more effective than non-gendered support in reducing re-offending.

Current EWC Partnership members in Greater Manchester are The Women's Centre Stockport, Salford Foundation's Together Women Project and Farida Women's Centre run by Partners of Prisoners. These centres are currently the first in the UK to trial the Gendered Wellbeing Assessment (GWA), a similar in-depth assessment developed through the EWC Partnership for women not involved in the Criminal Justice System but facing multiple unmet need such as trauma, domestic abuse or addiction.

As well as creating personalised support plans for each woman, both the WRNA and GWA provide valuable data for policy makers and funders in Greater Manchester on the effectiveness of community-based, gender-responsive support and the biggest challenges facing women and girls in the region.

Chloe Geoghegan, Deputy Director at The JABBS Foundation for Women and Girls, said, "This investment reflects the growing confidence in what we have known for a long time: supporting women in the community works. It's brilliant to have the growing academic evidence to back it up and the opportunity to scale up this transformational partnership."

Details of how organisations can apply to join the Effective Women's Centres Partnership will be published by The JABBS Foundation for Women and Girls later this year.

Notes to Editors:

- The Effective Women's Centres Partnership includes Anawim – Birmingham's Centre for Women, Farida Women's Centre (Partners of Prisoners), The Nelson Trust, Salford Foundation, The Women's Centre Stockport, Together Women, The Women's Centre Cornwall, and The University of Birmingham, funded by The JABBS Foundation for Women and Girls. As of August 2025, it is also supported by the Henry Smith Foundation.
- The WRNA (Women's Risk Needs Assessment) is a gender-responsive tool originally developed in the US and designed to assess risks, needs, and strengths of women in the criminal justice system.
- The validation study was conducted by the Women, Crime and Justice Research Group at the University of Birmingham and is the first of its kind in the UK. The study involved more than 500 women, one of the largest WRNA validation cohorts in the world. Read the validation report [here](#).
- Women's Centres provide holistic, trauma-informed counselling and casework on issues such as domestic abuse, housing, mental health, substance use and addiction, and employment.

For further information and interview requests, please contact

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