

# Full Council

9 November 2021



**Report of:** Penny Gane, Chair Bristol Women's Commission (BWC)

**Title:** Annual Update: Work of Bristol Women's Commission 2020/2021

**Ward:** City-wide

**Presenting the Report:** Penny Gane Chair, Bristol Women's Commission

## Recommendation

- To note the report
- To ensure Bristol City Council continues to support the Bristol Women's Commission to implement its work plan
- To continue to support the Women's Commission

## Summary

This report provides a summary of the work undertaken by BWC during November 2020 – October 2021

### The significant issues in the report are:

The report sets out the work undertaken by the Women's Commission in the priority areas of; Safety, Health, Education, Economy and Business. Appendix 1 and 2 details responses from the Health and Safety task group.



## Relevant Strategies

1. European Charter of Equality for Women and Men in Local Life
2. The One City Plan
3. Bristol Inclusive and Sustainable Economic Growth Strategy
4. Joint Strategic Needs Assessment Women’s Health Strategy
5. Bristol City Council’s Equality and Inclusion Policy and Strategy 2018-2023
6. Mayoral Commission on Domestic Abuse task and finish group

## Consultation

### 1. Internal

BWC has a cross party membership of Elected Members and has been supported by Cllr Helen Godwin in her role as Cabinet member for Women, Families and Homes and more recently Cllr. Helen Holland. Ann James is the lead BCC officer on the Commission. The Commission is supported by Cherene Whitfield, Equalities Officer.

### 2. External

Please see the list below of all the organisations which make up the Commission and its 5 task groups. More than 70 external agencies are participants in the work of the Commission.

BWC has the following membership:

Bristol City Council (Councillors and Officers), Bristol City Office, Bristol Women’s Voice (BWV), University of Bristol (UOB), University West of England(UWE), City of Bristol College (CoBC), Avon and Somerset Police, Trade Union Congress (TUC), Business West, University Hospitals Bristol (UHB), Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), Volunteering Organisation Standing Conference on Urban Regeneration (Voscur), First Bus, Bristol Headteachers Forum, Be on Board, Task Group leads on Economy, Health, Business, Education, Safety. Chair: Penny Gane BWV

The commission has representatives on the Economy and Skills Board.

Members of the commission have also taken part in the Commission on Domestic Violence task and finish group set up by Cllr Asher Craig and Cllr Helen Godwin. Two members of BWC will join the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and Chief Constable of Avon and Somerset Police in setting up a region wide summit on tackling Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) including a review of the Force itself.

This year the Bristol Women’s Commission has established two Task and finish groups in addition to its five Task Groups to work on Sexual Entertainment Venues (SEV) and the Councillor survey. A report on the survey will be sent to party leaders shortly.

## Context

1. 2020-1 has seen shocking murders of women including that of Sarah Everard at the hands of a serving Metropolitan Police Officer and brutal treatment of women at the hands of police officers. Many questions have been raised about sexism and misogyny in policing.

2. A damning Ofsted report followed the ‘Everyone Invited’ Initiative which showed the huge scale of sexual harassment including rape of young women and girls in our schools. 22 Bristol schools were named where such incidents had taken place.
3. Bristol’s Licensing Committee has launched a consultation on the number of sex establishments appropriate for Bristol. Prior to the survey, the Licensing Committee awarded licenses to the two SEV’s in the city.
4. Drink spiking has been recorded on video in the city and has led to important conversations on how to keep women safe in the night-time economy.
5. The impact of Covid 19 continues to hit women hard, with more women likely to lose their jobs, suffering long covid and mental health issues and having to go through pregnancy, childbirth and sometimes miscarriage without the usual support. More women have been subjected to violence and abuse in what has been called the ‘shadow pandemic’. Women took a disproportionate share of the domestic burden due to closure of schools and nurseries, and women were and are hugely overrepresented in adult social care and nursing posts.
6. Bristol Women’s Voice’s City Listening Project showed that Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic women experience particular inequalities in relation to the access of services such as maternity, health and employment.
7. Bristol City Council’s White Ribbon status has lapsed.

## 2020/2021 Progress

### BWC meetings

This year BWC has hosted the following speakers:

Month, Year	Speaker	Topic
November 20	Carol Watson, Head of Adult Social Care Commissioning BCC, Cllr Helen Holland	Health and Social Care response to economic factors
January 21	Jane Taylor, Employment Skills and Learning BCC	Kickstart and other interventions to support women affected by covid 19
	Lizzie Henden, Sue Moss PH	How BCC is dealing with DVA in lockdown
March 21	Jonathan Downing, Mayor’s Office	Mayor Commission on Domestic Abuse report
	Anna Smith, Safety Task Group lead	Progress on work on femicides
May 21	Mayor of Bristol Marvin Rees Cllr. Helen Godwin- Cabinet Member for Women BCC	Support for BWC and women’s equality
July 21	Kalpana Woolf-Be on Board, Zara Nanu- Lead Women in Business (WiB) task group, Sandra Gordon- WiB Charter, Victoria Matthews-Business West	Women in Business

August 21	Mark Shelford, Police and Crime Commissioner, Avon and Somerset Police	How to deliver on Manifesto for Women’s Safety
September 21	Marian Curran, Laura Beynon, Education Task Force	Girls’ conference, Mentoring Scheme
	Dr. Lisa Brodie- Head of Engineering Design and Mathematics, UWE	Re-engineering Inclusion
	Rav Bumbra - Cajigo	STEM in schools

### 1. Women and the Economy task group

Lead: Diane Bunyan BWV

Task group membership: UoB, UWE, TUC, BWV, Fairplay SW, Women’s Budget Group

The task group has continued to advocate for the contribution of women to the local economy to be recognised and facilitated specifically in the light of the disproportionate impact of the covid-19 pandemic on women.

This year the group has focussed on raising the importance of care, both childcare and other care for women to be able to participate at all levels in the workforce and their role as the main providers of paid and unpaid care.

The task group has produced evidence-based reports to highlight:

1. the role of care in providing a functioning, flexible and fairer economy;
2. the need to get care recognised as infrastructure in the funding of economic recovery
3. the place of care in the building of a green sustainable economy;
4. the contribution of care provision and good employment practices in addressing inequality and social mobility.

The group represents the Women’s Commission on the Economy and Skills Board. It has commented on the draft Corporate Strategy, had meetings with the West of England Combined Authority (WECA), and with care providers. The group has also raised issues with major developers in the city; has produced briefings for Bristol MPs on the importance of childcare and other care, one member even appeared on Woman’s Hour.

The task group will continue this work including supporting the development of a Bristol model of municipal childcare and working with women from the City Listening Project to raise their concerns about the barriers they face in accessing employment.

## 2. Women and girls’ education

### **Education Task Group**

Chairs: Marian Curran, Principal- St Brendan’s and Laura Beynon, Deputy Head- Redmaids' High

Organisations represented (2020-21): St Brendan's Sixth Form College, Redmaids' High School, Oasis Brightstowe, St Mary Redcliffe and Temple, Orchard School, Cabot Learning Federation, Backwell School, Badminton School, We the Curious, Cajigo

#### Areas of focus

1. Developing female leaders: Members of the Education Task group have acted as mentors for 17 aspiring female leaders. Each mentee has had two-three mentoring sessions. The programme for 2020-21 culminated in a Women Leadership online conference with sessions on Imposter Syndrome and stepping up to Senior Leadership as well as an opportunity to ask a panel questions about their journey into leadership. Delivering statutory guidance on VAWG in the classroom: Following a sharing of existing teaching resources to support this topic, the Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) lead at Redmaids' High School has been working to develop new resources which will be shared across the Education Partnership.
2. First of joint meetings with Council Officers and VAWG specialists on sexual harassment in Bristol Schools
3. The Task Group was unable to hold the planned girls’ conference this year but has plans for later in the year.

#### Planned Areas of focus (2021-22)

1. Developing female leaders: The group hopes to have a second cohort of aspiring female leaders to match with mentors. They will also explore the possibility of leadership shadowing in a different setting for cohort 1. An in-person networking event and a second conference are also planned.

Responding to everyone's invited: The Education Task Force will be putting this firmly on the agenda over the coming year.

2. Student conference: The exact focus is to be confirmed but it is likely to be set up to maximise student participation with a focus on the issues that they are facing and what they would like to see included in PSHE and pastoral programmes (linked to item 2 above). It is the group’s aim to hold an online event in the Autumn term with the intention of using the student voice from this to shape a full student conference in the summer term.
3. Expanding the Task Force reach: the group hopes to widen its membership to include representatives from other Bristol schools, colleges and universities.

### 3. Women’s Health

Lead: Monira Chowdhury- North Bristol Trust, Sarah O’Leary- Missing Link, Next Link and Safe Link

**Membership:** North Bristol Trust, BWV, Missing Link, Community Access Support Service, Self-Injury Support, Womankind, GPs, UoB, UWE and UHB Centre for health and clinical research

The Women’s Health Task Group has largely focussed on the disproportional and long-term impact of Covid 19 on different groups of women i.e. women who are victims of violence and abuse, women who are carers, younger women working in health & care, disabled people, older women and particularly Black & Asian women.

The task group members have been working on projects and issues concerning those impacted by the pandemic;

1. Ensuring women’s needs are represented and understood in the Community Mental Health Target Operating Model and Implementation Process
2. Responding to the increase in women experiencing domestic and sexual violence and abuse who have a mental health need
3. Burnout and women who work in the health and social care sector
4. The group asked for and received from the CCG a strategy for improving care and maternal health outcomes for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic women

The Task Group responded to the parliamentary call for evidence on Menopause policies and guidance in the workplace. **See Appendix 1**

This year the group responded to the Department of Health and Social Care’s Women’s Health Strategy: Call for Evidence by collating members’ experience and evidence on the response to women’s health, including case studies and patients’ feedback. It highlighted the impact of the pandemic, and included evidence on the following:

1. Women report feeling unheard by medical professionals
2. Negative stereotyping of women with mental health issues
3. Differences in healthcare professionals’ treatment of women
4. Menopause support
5. Intersection between domestic/sexual violence and women’s mental health
6. Intersection between menopause and women’s mental health
7. Autism in women
8. Alcohol misuse in women
9. GP training on women’s health
10. Emergency contraception
11. Medical experiences of women with less visible/hidden long-term illnesses (that disproportionately affect women)
12. Incontinence and pelvic organ prolapse
13. Intersection between self-harm and Domestic Violence and Abuse
14. Young women, puberty and periods
15. Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic women and mental health
16. Younger women and self-harm

17. Sole carers and Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic carers
18. Disabled women in work
19. Chronic health conditions which disproportionately affect women
20. Alzheimer’s Disease/dementia
21. Impact of lockdown on women, self-harm and DVA
22. Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic communities, long covid and bereavement

## **See Appendix 2**

The priorities over the next year will be the intersection between women’s mental health and VAWG, menopause, women with chronic pain & hidden long-term illnesses, maternity health especially for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic women, a campaign on health professionals dismissing women’s health issues.

There will also be an update to the Women’s Health Strategy.

### **4. Women’s Safety**

Lead: Anna Smith- CEO, One25

**Member organisations:** St Mungo’s, Identification and Referral to Improve Safety (IRISi), UWE, UoB, BCC, Bristol Drugs Project, Avon and Somerset Police, Probation, Services, Working Links, Somerset & Avon Rape & Sexual Abuse Support (SARSAS)

Women’s Safety is a key focus of Bristol Women’s Commission as more and more women and girls in the City report not feeling safe - on our streets, in our schools, workplaces, clubs and bars and some in their homes.

The Safety Task Group has focused on three key issues this year:

- 1. Domestic violence:** We have requested an analysis of the high number of Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) in Bristol, the second highest in the country at the time of the request. The chair of The Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership, Ivan Powell, agreed to produce this and it has been recently received by the task group chair and will be discussed at the next meeting.
- 2. Women’s safety on public transport:** We know there to be a significant issue and the group is trying to get more data/quantitative evidence through a question in the City Council questionnaire to the Bristol public, to ascertain if women have experienced this and, if so, what form it took. Bristol Women’s Voice conducted its own survey which revealed more than fifty women from a brief survey had experienced sexual harassment on public transport. The chair of the task group has been attending meetings hosted by SARI in relation to public transport and hate crime.
- 3. Sexual Entertainment Venues (SEVs):** The Commission has objected to the continued licensing of SEVs and is calling for there not to be any SEV’s in Bristol, proposal currently out for consultation. The outcome will be determined by the Licensing team. The group has met with Bristol Sex Workers Collective to hear their views on working in SEVs. The group has gathered substantial evidence to show the negative impact of SEVs on women as a group in the City. The task group has engaged with stakeholders and made representations at licensing meetings outlining the way SEVs fuel a sexist culture that can lead to gender-based violence.

Women’s Safety on public transport will be one of the focuses of the coming year, as will using the data on DHRs to try and push some strategic change across the city around the response to VAWG. It is hoped that the funding for responding to women with complex needs experiencing DVA -which is an integral part of the Changing Futures bid- will support a better response. The task group welcomes the funding for Respite Rooms coming into Bristol. The group will also continue its push to have no sex establishments in the City to help tackle the harmful culture that paves the way for male violence against women and girls.

## 5. Women in Business Task Group

**Lead: Zara Nanu, member of Economy and Skills Board.**

**Member organisations:** Rolls Royce, OVO Energy, Destination Bristol, UWE, Shift Consultancy, Strategy Hive Ltd, Moon Executive Search, BWV, Structur3dPeople, Women’s Work Lab, Community of Purpose, Business West, KPMG, Gapsquare

The task group has been supporting women in business during the Covid recovery with a focus on returning to work, support packages from the government and the impact on women in Bristol businesses. The impact is lacking as packages did not take women into account. The group has the objective of working with the DWP to support women in work in Bristol. The group has set up a kickstart guide designed to create opportunities for women. They also support women who want to set up their own business. Women in business shared their stories on International Women’s Day. Be on Board has 350 professionals on their database and have placed 20 trustees.

**Women in Business Charter:** Lead – Jane Ginnever, Sandra Gordon

Women in Business Charter signatories: OVO, Burges Salmon, UWE, Moon Executive Search, Manor Community, National Composites Centre, Business West, Chickp Ltd, Hargreaves Lansdown, ADLIB, Flipper, Stephenson Law, Redington, Sawdays, Action M.E, Bishop Fleming, Pelican, BCC, Bristol Airport, TLT LLP Solicitors, One Big Circle, Clarke Wilmott, GCP, Ian Williams, water2business, Rolls Royce, Simeitve, Centre for modelling and simulation, SR2, Tech Talent Academy, Stride Treglown, Triodos Bank.

Signatories to the Women in Business Charter have continued to make progress on all aspects of gender equality for the last 12 months:

1. Some signatories have stated that flexible working is core to their “return to the office” planning, and all flexible working requests are being accepted by default. Declined requests must first be authorised by the Managing Director.
2. By reviewing and offering all vacancies on a part-time and full-time basis, signatories have increased the range of roles available
3. Business West and ADLIB introduced two female executives to their Board. Burges Salmon reported that 50% of those promoted into senior positions were female. Small business Flipper Ltd saw two women being appointed to senior roles in recent internal promotions, and GCP Chartered Architects now have 42% women in senior management team. Representation of women on the TLT Governance and Oversight

Board increased from 40% to 60% and OVO Energy appointed their first female board member in April 2020.

4. The National Composites Centre reported that one of their female directors is now responsible for reporting on gender Equality and Inclusion.
5. One Big Circle Ltd, OVO Energy and Simitive have introduced mentoring schemes for women.
6. TLT reported an increase in representation in the number of female partners at TLT which has increased from 25.5% (as per our last report) to 28% as at May 2021.
7. Pelican implemented gender de-coding for all job adverts which resulted in 62% of applicants being female and completed gender composition analysis of every department and level of management identifying areas for improvement.
8. Hargreaves Lansdown this year launched a pilot Sponsorship program for mid-level female and ethnic minority talent to support their progression through to more senior levels. H&L exceeded their Women in Finance Charter target of 25-30% female RL2 and above by reporting 30.4% up from 21.7% in 2016.
9. Burges Salmon developed a gender taskforce in 2020 with the specific remit of increasing representation of women into senior leadership. They have partnered with the Women’s Work Lab, a community collaboration that supports unemployed mums, aged 25+ and receiving benefits, to become work ready.
10. In spite of the impact of Covid-19 on the working world Charter signatories have made significant progress in the last year. Signatories have continued to report on their Gender Pay Gap despite that not being mandated by the Government. They have responded to the Black Lives Matter movement and engaged with employees and members of the wider community who have experienced discrimination and exclusion.

## **6. Bristol Women’s Commission Communication**

The budget for the commission is provided by the Mayor’s office which has enabled us to employ a Communications freelancer to bring our work together.

Investment in comms over the past year has seen Bristol Women’s Commission launch a new micro website hosted by Bristol Women’s Voice and create a communications toolkit and establish documents and processes to help share the work it’s undertaking with the public and other stakeholders.

This investment has seen its audience grow from 150 to over 700 followers on Twitter with Instagram and LinkedIn channels launched, with almost 500 and 235 followers respectively. We also launched a YouTube channel to host videos. It has raised the profile of the Commission and put it on the radar of some high-profile leaders including the Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England & Wales and the Avon & Somerset Chief Constable.

We’ve run some high-profile campaigns around 16 Days of Action in November/December 2020 with videos from city leaders (including Bristol City Council’s incumbent Mayor, MPs, PCC and charity leaders) highlighting violence against women and girls in the city, outlining how they were tackling it and what viewers could do. Around International Women’s Day in March 2021, where we focused on 8 achievements of Bristol Women’s Commission for

our 8th anniversary and asked City leaders what they were doing for women and girls, with videos from the Mayor, MPs, PCC, NHS lead, UWE deputy Vice Chancellor and more.

We engaged regional and Bristol Mayoral and Police Crime Commissioner candidates around the May 2021 election, pressing them on what they'd do for gender equality. All regional mayor and PCC candidates and the front-runners in the Bristol Mayor election submitted videos outlining this, which we know helped inform voters in the city. It also launched a relationship with the new regional Mayor and PCC.

We've secured press coverage with local newspapers and websites and have featured on broadcast reports, we've hosted guest blogs from commissioners and partners and have delivered key comms - from position statements to responses and opinion pieces around the topic of tackling violence against women and girls by not having SEV's in the City.

Penny Gane, Chair Bristol Women’s Commission 19th October 2021

## **Appendices:**

### **Appendix 1: Evidence on Menopause and the workplace**

### **Appendix 2: Department of Health and Social Care’s Women’s Health Strategy: Call for Evidence response**