

## Vocal Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence Forum

Monday 29<sup>th</sup> April  
10.00am – 11.30pm  
Zoom

### Attendance

#### Present

Name	Organisation
Maggie Langhorn	Salford Foundation
Jane Gregory	Salford Survivor Project
Gayna Williams	We Are Survivors
Treena Raffles	TLC
Duncan Lyons	We Are Survivors
Elizabeth Tangata	Warm Hut UK

#### In Attendance

Name	Organisation
Michelle Warburton	Salford CVS (Chair)
Helen O'Brien	Salford CVS (minutes)

#### Apologies

Name	Organisation
Anne Stebbings	Manchester Rape Crisis
Rabia Nadeem	TRC Sexual Abuse Manchester
Gemma Aitchison	Yes Matters UK?
Amy Moss	
Charlotte Clayton	Trafford Rape Crisis

### Welcome, Introduction and Apologies

Michelle Warburton (Salford CVS) welcomed everyone and invited all attendees to introduce themselves.

#### Item 1: Minutes of meeting held 06.02.2024

The minutes were approved.

#### Item 2: Your Updates

Maggie – Salford Foundation have got a new starter, a housing worker who will be supporting those with complex needs and supporting people getting accommodation.

Gayna – We Are Survivors have started a young people drop in on a Tuesday. Younger clients weren't attending the usual drop in. This starts on 30<sup>th</sup> April and it's 5.00pm – 7.00pm. They have also employed two new therapists and three new community workers. We Are Survivors have also obtained a contract for a North West talking service with a 5-7 year guarantee. We Are Survivors are now based at Media City across two units. They have also launched a website in partnership with George Trust House around Chemsex called On It - <https://onit.org.uk/> They will be promoting this at all Pride events.

### **Item 3: Reps Updates**

#### **Domestic Abuse Housing Advisory Group**

At the last Vocal Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence meeting, Dawn Redshaw from Salford Women's Aid was selected to be a rep on the Domestic Abuse Housing Advisory Group. Dawn has now retired from Salford Women's Aid. Jancie Lownes chairs this meeting but there has not been a meeting since last year.

The Advisory Group has informed that their group is closed to providers but that they have introduced a wider group for different service providers. Maggie stated that she attended this wider group meeting and that it was valuable with good discussion and there were lots of partners in the room. Michelle will inform them of the Manifesto and that Reps from this Vocal Forum are allowed to attend the main group meetings. Maggie informed the Forum that she has been invited to attend the main group meeting.

Jane asked if members of the Forum can pass on any issues to Maggie to share on their behalf. Michelle reminded the attendees that Maggie represents Salford Foundation whilst she is part of the Advisory Group, and not the Vocal Forum. Michelle asked that if anyone wanted to represent the Forum they can.

**Action: Michelle to email the wider Vocal Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence group with a summary of the Domestic Abuse Housing Advisory Board, how often it meets etc.**

#### **Tackling Domestic Abuse Board**

Michelle was unable to attend the last meeting so could not provide an update for this meeting.

#### **Salford Safeguarding Partnership Domestic Abuse Sub-Group**

Michelle will ask the lead of this Sub-Group to attend the next Vocal Forum meeting.

There was an update that Operation Encompass. Some schools are not following the protocols when supporting children and domestic abuse. Schools have agreed to do additional training for front line staff.

Changes are being made to the Domestic Abuse Protection Order. Michelle has asked if Claire Badley can attend a future Forum meeting to present on updates on Operation Encompass and the changes to the Domestic Abuse Protection Order. The attendees agreed that they are happy for Claire to attend the next Forum meeting in August.

Michelle also informed that Victim Support for victims of crime is no longer operating in Salford. Catch 22 <https://www.catch-22.org.uk> has now been given the contract for victim support services in Greater Manchester. They are currently working on the back log of referrals from GMP. Duncan added that there was an issue between cross organisation communication.

#### **Item 4: Funding Opportunity**

Michelle has been approached by Julie Craig about the Housing Strategy. In the last Forum meeting, concerns were raised around not hearing back confirming that work was done with the information provided from organisation service users. Maggie was unsure if they had still heard anything but would check.

There has been a small underspend on the Safe Accommodation fund. Commissioners are looking for domestic abuse support services or providers to correct a proposal for the £25,000 available as part of the under spend. The money can only be spent on those who are already in domestic abuse safe housing accommodation and who are also classed as minoritised and hard to reach.

Jane suggested that the money would be good for Salford Foundation. Maggie agreed that the money would be good for their organisation as they have a good range of service users. Gayna wasn't sure what We Are Survivors could do with it but would ask the team.

**Action: Michelle to ask Julie for a better idea of the needs for individuals, what will the reporting look like, time frame for money spend etc.**

#### **Item 5: Key themes, issues or trends to share with strategic partnerships**

Michelle asked the attendees what key themes that them as organisations or their service users would like to be fed back to strategic partnership meetings. Michelle fed back comments from the last Forum meeting to all Board formally and they have been noted in minutes.

The issues raised in the last meeting included:

- Mental health issues that are common trends across the Boards for VCSE organisations
- Salford Housing's response has been reported as being unsympathetic due to lack of understanding of no recourse to public funds and asking for proof of domestic abuse

Jane said that the Home Office have given people their stay but there is no temporary housing available. People don't understand the legality of housing. Training is needed for Salford Housing especially with trauma informed practice.

Maggie informed that Salford Foundation try to work in partnership with housing such as providing domestic abuse training. Maggie emphasised that housing are having a hard time recruiting experienced staff or trying to train inexperienced staff which is a slow burn. Salford Foundation have invited them to team meetings to inform staff on the housing challenges and to get a better working relationship.

Maggie also said that there are around 5000 on the waiting list and only 700 houses available. There is also a query about private rented accommodation and the quality of them. Salford Council are telling people to go to private accommodation but people on benefits won't get priority over better paid workers. Creative thinking is needed to solve this housing crisis.

Jane added that the Home Office has put the duty of care on to the Councils by handing out Stays with no housing available. Jane suggested taking this higher to the Salford Mayor or Greater Manchester Mayor and that feedback needs to be given to say what the housing are dealing with and also what is being heard on the ground. Voices of people with influence are needed.

Michelle suggested opening conversations via this Forum with the housing to understand their main pressures. Also having a wider dialogue of what we can do together can help raise awareness in arenas that the housing can't reach. Housing is in the Greater Manchester Mayor Manifesto.

Michelle will invite Claire Badley to the next Forum meeting to provide updates and also ask someone from the housing to talk about the pressured they're facing so that the attendees of this Forum can gain further understanding.

Other issues raised included:

- Cafcass and police – issues with courts since lock down, some clients haven't gone to court after six years. Workers are constantly chasing police for updates. It seems to follow a trend of someone seeking help but then either things are not communicated across properly (whether this be down to English not being first language etc) and the lack of decent follow up. Also lack of referrals from the police.
- Stalking and harassment case changes with GMP – It has recently been stalking awareness week. Finding that it is mixed bag between responses, both more recently and in experience historically. How the victim responds can affect the case

**Action: Michelle to talk to Jeanette at the Community Safety Partnership to make GMP more aware of the services of the VCSE sector.**

#### **Item 6: Any Other Business**

Jane asked if Safety4Sisters are part of this Forum as they do a lot of work in Salford.

**Action: Jane to send Safety4Sisters contact information to Helen to add to the Forum contact list**

If anyone knows of any workers or organisations which they think should be part of this Forum, they can send their contact details to Helen.

**Next Forum meeting:** Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> August 10.00am – 11.30am

**Meeting ended:** 11.10am