MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

Women's Health and Social Justice Programme

Invitation- Expressions of Interest to facilitate the Women's Health & Social Justice Network

MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

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1. Background

Gender equality is both a human rights and social justice issue. It means ensuring that women have equal power, opportunity, representation and access to resources, while tackling the structural and systemic inequalities that continue to shape life chances and outcomes.

A social justice approach to gender equality focuses on:

- Equity over equality, recognising that different groups of women face different barriers and may require tailored support to achieve fair outcomes.
- Tackling systemic discrimination, including sexism, misogyny, gender-based violence, unequal pay, occupational segregation and under-representation in leadership and decision-making.
- Intersectionality, recognising that gender inequality is often compounded by racism, disability discrimination, poverty, age, sexuality, religion and migration status.
- Shifting power and resources, ensuring women and girls have a meaningful voice in decisions that affect their lives and communities.
- Advancing human rights, dignity and freedom from discrimination, so everyone can reach their full potential.

In Manchester, gender inequality has real and lasting consequences for women's health and wellbeing. Women experience some of the starkest health inequalities in the country. Female life expectancy is among the lowest of comparable local authorities, and a girl born in the most deprived 20% of areas within Manchester can expect to live around 7.0 years less than a girl born in the least deprived 20% of areas.(2022-2024, Office for National Statistics). They also spend more of their lives in poor health and disability.

These inequalities are even greater for women from global majority communities. Black women are three times more likely to die during pregnancy or childbirth than White women, while Asian and Mixed Heritage women are twice as likely. Such disparities are not inevitable. They reflect the cumulative impact of gender inequality, poverty, discrimination and a health and care system that has too often overlooked women's needs.

Reducing these inequalities requires a whole-system response. This means addressing the social, economic and structural factors that drive poor outcomes, while ensuring women's voices, experiences and needs shape research, policy, commissioning and service design.

To address these persistent and avoidable inequalities, Manchester City Council has launched a Women’s Health and Social Justice Programme. The programme will bring partners together to take a whole-system approach to improving women’s

health outcomes, tackling the social, economic and structural factors that drive inequality, and ensuring that women's voices shape the policies and services that affect their lives.

2. The Women's Health & Social Justice Network

We are aiming to develop a city-wide Network bringing together organisations that influence and shape women's health, wellbeing and social justice outcomes. The Network/collaborative will include VCSE organisations representing diverse groups of women across Manchester, alongside partners and organisations from sectors such as health, employment, education, transport, housing, culture and climate.

The Network will act as the primary mechanism for engagement, collaboration and collective action, ensuring that womens lived experiences, expertise and voices inform decision-making. It will identify emerging issues and unmet needs, influence policy and service development, champion an intersectional approach to addressing inequalities, and mobilise partners around shared priorities. By connecting organisations across sectors, the Network will help drive system-wide change, strengthen accountability and support the delivery of the Women's Health and Social Justice Programme.

Alongside the Network, a Women's Health and Social Justice Steering Group will be established to provide strategic leadership and oversight of the programme. The Steering Group will ensure accountability across partners, and champion collective action to improve women's health and tackle the social, economic and structural inequalities that affect women's lives.

2.1 Role of the Network

The Women's Health & Social Justice Network will provide a forum for partnership, insight and influence, bringing together representatives from across sectors to support the delivery of the Women's Health & Social Justice Programme.

Network members will:

- Champion the interests of women across Manchester, ensuring that women's voices, lived experiences and priorities inform policy, service development and decision-making.
- Provide intelligence and insight from their communities, organisations and areas of expertise, identifying emerging issues, challenges and opportunities relating to women's health and social justice.
- Highlight gaps in services, provision, representation, evidence and knowledge, helping to inform priorities for action and improvement.
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- Contribute expertise, learning and good practice through cross-sector collaboration, supporting collective action to improve outcomes for women.
- Maintain awareness of emerging national, regional and local developments in women's health and social justice,
- Act as ambassadors for the Women's Health & Social Justice Programme, promoting its vision, objectives and priorities across their networks and organisations.

3. About your Organisation

We are seeking an organisation, or partnership of organisations, with a demonstrable track record of working with and alongside women. Applicants should be able to demonstrate an understanding of the diverse experiences of women and of how different factors and forms of inequality can influence health, wellbeing and life chances.

The successful organisation(s) will have knowledge of the issues affecting women across health and wellbeing, including the social, economic and environmental factors that shape outcomes. An understanding of the Manchester context, and the ability to work effectively with a wide range of stakeholders and communities, will be important.

We are looking for organisations that can demonstrate:

- Experience of working with women and women's groups, with examples of how this has informed and shaped services, programmes or community initiatives.
- An understanding of the factors that influence women's health, wellbeing and life chances, including the broader social and economic conditions that can impact health equity.
- A commitment to advancing equity and social justice, and experience of supporting improved outcomes for women and marginalised communities.
- Established relationships with, or the ability to engage and build trust with, a broad range of women and communities across Manchester.
- Experience of bringing people and organisations together around shared objectives and facilitating collaboration to achieve meaningful change.

While organisation/s may operate beyond Manchester, the primary focus of this programme will be on women in Manchester.

4. Deliverables

4.1 Network Development and Coordination

The successful organisation/s will support the development, growth and ongoing coordination of a Women's Health & Social Justice Network, bringing together organisations, communities and stakeholders with an interest in improving outcomes for women in Manchester

This will include:

- Building and maintaining engagement across a diverse range of sectors, organisations and communities.
- Creating opportunities for women from diverse communities, cultures, identities and lived experiences to participate, with a focus on reaching and amplifying voices that are often underrepresented, marginalised or excluded from decision-making.
- Creating opportunities for collaboration, shared learning and collective action in relation to women's health and social justice.

4.2 Facilitation and Engagement

The successful organisation will be expected to provide effective coordination and facilitation of the network, ensuring that members are able to contribute meaningfully and work collectively.

This may include:

- Planning and facilitating network meetings and engagement activities.
- Providing appropriate administrative and organisational support.
- Creating inclusive environments that encourage participation and ensure diverse perspectives are heard.
- Supporting the identification of shared priorities, opportunities and recommendations.
- Promoting the exchange of learning, evidence, insight and good practice across the network.

4.3 Insight and Reporting

The successful organisation will support the exchange of intelligence and insight between the Network and the Women's Health & Social Justice Steering Group.

This may include:

- Providing updates on activity, emerging themes and areas for consideration.
- Identifying and escalating risks, challenges or opportunities where appropriate.
- Supporting communication between the Network, Steering Group and the programme team.

4.4 Advocacy and Influence

The successful organisation will play a role in strengthening the collective voice of the Network and supporting opportunities to influence policy, practice and service development.

This may include:

- Facilitating engagement activities, workshops or events that support programme objectives.
- Supporting the Network to identify opportunities for collective influencing and advocacy.
- Monitoring developments that may affect women's health, wellbeing and equity.
- Strengthening connections between the Network, decision makers and strategic partners.

4.5 Financial Management

The successful organisation will be responsible for the effective management of the allocated budget and will be expected to provide assurance that resources are being managed appropriately and in line with agreed requirements. This will include

5. Contract amount and period covered – 3 year contract

The Women’s Health & Social Justice Network Facilitator will receive a facilitation fee of **£30,000** to deliver and coordinate the network. This fee will cover payments to VCSE network members, as well as any other associated and reasonable expenses incurred in facilitating the network. Payment to be agreed with the commissioning organisation.

6. Expression of Interest Questions

Please respond to the questions below as part of your Expression of Interest. We recommend keeping within the suggested word count for each question.

Applications will be assessed and shortlisted against the criteria set out in these questions.

If you require this information in an alternative format, please contact **Anissa Kheratkar** at anissa.kheratkar@manchester.gov.uk.

Question 1: Organisational Suitability

This question is about your organisation's experience and relationship with women's groups in Manchester.

Why is your organisation best placed to coordinate and facilitate the Manchester Women's Health and Social Justice Network?

Please tell us about:

- Describe your experience of working with women's organisations in Manchester to address gender inequality and improve outcomes for women. Include examples of how you have engaged women from diverse backgrounds, identities and lived experiences
- Your understanding of the issues that affect women's health, wellbeing and life chances
- The relationships and partnerships you have that would support this work.

(Maximum 300 words)

Total SCORE – 25%

Question 2: Partnership Working

This question is about your experience of bringing people together and supporting collaborative working.

a) Building Partnerships

Tell us about a time when you brought together organisations, groups or communities to work towards a shared goal.

Please describe:

- What you were trying to achieve.
- Who was involved.
- Your role in bringing people together.
- The outcomes that were achieved.

(Maximum 150 words)

b) Improving Outcomes for Women

Tell us about your experience of working with partners to address inequalities and improve outcomes for women.

Please describe:

- The issue or challenge being addressed.
- The organisations or communities involved.
- How you worked together.
- The difference the work made.

(Maximum 150 words)

C) Advancing Women's Health Equity Through Partnership Working

Please provide an example of how you have worked collaboratively across sectors to address barriers affecting women's health, wellbeing or life opportunities.

In your response, please explain:

- How you engaged partners and built consensus.
- How insight, evidence or lived experience informed the work.
- What changes, improvements or outcomes were achieved.

(Maximum 150 words)

Total Score – 25%

Question 3: Delivering the Network

This question is about how you would develop and coordinate the Women's Health & Social Justice Network.

A) Please describe your approach to developing and supporting an inclusive and effective Women's Health & Social Justice Network.

Please tell us:

- How you would engage organisations and communities from different sectors.
- How you would ensure women from a diverse range of backgrounds, identities and experiences are able to participate.
- How you would gather and share learning, evidence and insight.
- How you would help the Network's views to inform the Women's Health & Social Justice Programme.

(Maximum 250 words)

B) Budget and Resource Allocation

Please provide a summary of how you would allocate the available budget to deliver and coordinate the Women's Health & Social Justice Network.

Please describe:

- How the budget would be allocated across staffing, coordination, administration and facilitation activities.
- Any proposed payments, reimbursement or support for network members and women with lived experience.
- Resources allocated to engagement activities, events, communications and accessibility requirements.
- How the proposed budget represents value for money and supports the objectives of the Network.

(Maximum 200 words)

Total Score – 20%

Question 4 -Social value

4a) Please give examples of how you will create measurable social value through the delivery of this network. For example, this might include how you will actively increase participation and representation of women from diverse and underrepresented communities.

(Maximum 200 words)

Total score 20%

B) Please give an example of how you will support Manchester City Coun zero- carbon ambitions. Examples might include Prioritising venues accessible by public transport, walking and cycling routes or using digital communications,
registrations and resources to minimise paper consumption.

(Maximum 150 words)

Total Score 10%

7. Closing date & enquires

Closing date for Expressions of Interest to facilitate the Women's Health & Social Justice Network

16 October 2026

Short-listing process begins

w/c 19 October

Announcement of facilitator for Women's Health & Social Justice Network

w/c 2 November

All applications are to be submitted to Anissa Kheratkar: anissa.kheratkar@manchester.gov.uk

Further questions or information about Expressions of Interest should be directed to:

- Sharmila Kar, sharmilakar@nhs.net, Sharmila Kar, Joint Senior Reporting Officer for the Women's Health & Social Justice Programme and Joint Director Equality & Engagement (NHS Manchester Integrated Care Partnership/Manchester City Council)

- Anissa Kheratkar: anissa.kheratkar@manchester.gov.uk, Joint Programme Lead, Women's Health & Social Justice Programme, Public Health Department, Manchester City Council