**Invitation to tender**

**Independent evaluation of the impact of MASH’s services**

1. **About MASH**

Since MASH first started out as a street outreach van almost 30 years ago in response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic, we have stopped at nothing to support women who are sex working in Greater Manchester to stay safe, healthy and feel more in control of their lives. Whilst the nature of sex work, the context in which we operate, and the support we provide has changed dramatically since 1991, this absolutely remains our mission. MASH continues to support some of the most marginalised women in the city region; women who fall through the gaps in mainstream services, and who face stigma, discrimination and multiple barriers to accessing the support they need. The women we support are on the sharpest end of social & health inequalities. They were amongst the hardest hit by the Covid-19 pandemic and the ongoing Cost of Living Crisis

At MASH, we have always had a strong focus on choice and empowerment. We meet women where they are at, and provide a range of non-judgemental, confidential, and trauma informed advice and support services. We focus on the material impact and reality of women’s lives, and how we can work with them to create the change that works for them.

Our work crosses multiple boundaries – geographical, different forms of sex work, and many areas that are normally siloed, including homelessness, mental health, substance misuse, criminal justice, asylum and immigration, domestic and sexual abuse, exploitation and poverty. This is to ensure women receive holistic, joined up support. We work in partnership to tackle and address the root causes of the challenging issues faced by many of the women who use our services, always amplifying their voices, experiences and ideas for change.

1. **MASH’s outcomes**

The following outcomes should be covered by the evaluation.

Through MASH women\* who sex work\*\*:

* Are healthier
* Are safer
* Have improved wellbeing
* Are able to identify and achieve their goals

The following outcomes should be excluded from the evaluation.

Through MASH in Greater Manchester:

* Women who sex work are heard, understood and experience less stigma
* Other agencies and policymakers understand the needs of women who sex work and are more effective at supporting them

\* people who identify as women some or all of the time

\*\* people who are, have been or might become involved in sex work

1. **Evaluation scope and specification**

We are seeking an independent researcher or group of researchers to undertake an evaluation of MASH’s services over 2023 and 2024. They will evaluate whether MASH is meeting its stated outcomes through service delivery.

In scope for the evaluation are MASH’s core services operating in Manchester:

* The Drop-in Centre, open week days for food, activities and support
* The Outreach Van service, providing harm reduction support on sex work beats at night
* On foot outreach for women rough sleeping/begging in Manchester City Centre
* One to one long-term casework support
* Sexual health clinic
* Specialist inreach support for women in two temporary accommodations

Other services which could be included in the scope for evaluation include:

* Outreach to indoor sex work premises
* Independent Sexual Violence Advocate support
* Thrive programme for women looking to exit sex work
* Counselling
* Services outside of Manchester
* Other therapeutic, practical and creative activities

**Evaluation aims**

The aims of the research are to help MASH to:

* Understand the impact of our support on service users’ safety, health, wellbeing and ability to identify and achieve their goals
* Understand whether the intersectional identities of service users (eg. care leavers, those from the global majority, those who are disabled) affect the impact of MASH’s services
* Improve our provision of services based on what we learn from the evaluation
* Demonstrate the impact of MASH’s services to potential commissioners and funders
* Enable other agencies and policymakers to better support women who sex work by sharing our findings

**Evaluation methods**

We expect the researcher(s) to produce an evaluation plan suggesting a methodology they feel best fits the project aims and budget as part of their proposal. Both quantitative and qualitative data should be used within the evaluation. We would expect the evaluator to use existing MASH data as part of the evaluation, and undertake further primary research to fill any gaps required for the evaluation. We are particularly interested in tenders which explain how they would link the evaluation to our existing Theory of Change.

We would also expect there to be a strong focus on the voices of women who are sex working in the evaluation, using existing MASH consultations and insight, as well as potential further fieldwork. We have an active Service User Advisory Panel who should also be consulted and involved in the evaluation planning and delivery.

**Resources for the Evaluation**

* Theory of Change. We have service-level and an organisation-level theory of change linking our activities to our outputs, outcomes and impact goals. The organisation-level Theory of Change is included as part of the tender for reference.
* Activity data. Every intervention undertaken is recorded on a database, these can be analysed and filtered in many different ways. This data could be shared in an anonymised format. For example, we know the number of women who each service reached and the number of times they accessed that service. We also know what types of support were provided e.g. housing support, mental health support or items provided such as condoms or a mobile phone.
* Survey data. There is an annual service user survey which collects anonymous feedback from service users about the impact they feel MASH has on their lives both quantitatively and qualitatively. In April 2024 the survey reached 43 service users. The survey data can be filtered by service accessed. Quantitative questions included “Has your health improved as a result of MASH’s support?”, “Is your wellbeing better as a result of MASH’s support?”, “Do you feel safer as a result of MASH’s support?”, and “Has MASH supported you to identify and achieve your goals?” with a scale of “not at all”, “a little”, “a lot”, “not sure”. Free text questions gave service users the chance to explain their answers in their own words.
* Outcome star data. There is a small amount of use of [Outcome Stars](https://www.outcomesstar.org.uk/) tool which provides distance travelled outcome data. Primarily for service users who are engaging with 1-1 Casework Support.

**Researcher skills, experience and background**

Applicants or groups will need to provide evidence of their expertise in carrying out the methods described in their evaluation plan. They will ideally need to demonstrate experience of undertaking research with people experiencing multiple disadvantage. They will ideally have a track record in influencing funding outcomes. We are open to receiving proposals from research partners or collaborators able to work in partnership on this project. We would particularly welcome proposals from people of colour, people with disabilities, people with a lived experience of sex work and people from refugee and migrant communities.

**Timetable**

The timetable for the evaluation is as follows:

23rd September 2024 Contract Signed / Project starts

31th January 2025 Research Project and final outputs completed

Ann Wilkes, who leads on monitoring at MASH, will be the main point of contact at MASH throughout the project and will be able to provide support, answer questions and link the researcher with other members of the MASH team. We will expect the researcher(s) to provide monthly updates on their progress and to attend a meeting at the midpoint of the research to present their progress.

**Outputs**

The following outputs are required:

31st January 2025 A written report highlighting the key findings and recommendations from the research

An accessible output highlighting the key findings and recommendations from the research

**Budget**

The budget will be agreed with the researcher(s), and we ask that the research project is costed out in the proposal. The maximum budget for this work is £6,000 (inclusive of VAT where charged). This is inclusive of a £500 budget for incentives to support the involvement of service users in the planning and research within the evaluation.

1. **Proposal**

The proposal should be a word document, font size 12, and maximum 4 pages. The following should be covered:

1. Describe how you will carry out this evaluation including the quantitative and qualitative methodology you would use and how you would link it to the Theory of Change. Include the schedule for the work and the outputs you would produce. If working in partnership, please describe the activities and responsibilities of each of the partners within the project.
2. Propose a budget for the work outlining the different costs involved.
3. Describe why you would be the best person (or people) to undertake this research including research expertise, qualifications and previous work with people experiencing multiple disadvantage.

Proposals will be assessed on the basis of 50%, 25%, 25% respectively to the questions above. Proposals should be emailed to Ann Wilkes on Ann@mash.org.uk by midnight on 9th of September 2024.

**Bidding timetable**

The timetable for the submission process is as follows:

2nd August 2024 Invitation to tender published

Midnight 9th September Deadline for Proposals

w/c 16th September Interviews and successful applicant informed

23rd September Contract signed

**DBS Check**

As this work will involve contact with vulnerable adults, the successful applicant will need an up to date DBS check which MASH can support with.

If you have any questions regarding this invitation to tender please email Ann Wilkes on Ann@mash.org.uk.