

The Effective Women's Centres Partnership



Ensuring women have the chance to thrive.

In Greater Manchester

Quarterly update - Dec 2024



Case Study: Client J

Referral: Client J was referred to Farida Women's Centre in Oldham through probation due to animal cruelty. She had failed to seek prompt vet care for her pets and their living conditions were unsuitable.

Assessment: J was found to be struggling with her mental health following family bereavements. She was struggling to keep her home clean and had had to pay for services from Environmental Health. This cost had added to existing financial difficulties after she had become solely responsible for the mortgage when her mother died. J also struggled to remain employed due to a long term health condition.

Support: A referral to Mind was made and J also received counselling from Stockport Women's Centre. A referral was made to Adult Social Services to help with J's living conditions and physical limitations. Staff at Farida also supported J to engage with debt advice services and encouraged her to begin attending groups at Farida where she could make new friends.

Outcome: J has had her home cleaned, allowing her to better manage the condition of her property. She is receiving help from other agencies to enable her to live independently including access to bathing in her own home. Following counselling J has gained confidence in her abilities and is becoming more independent. She is actively addressing her debts with relevant agencies and is beginning to see a positive future.

Parliamentary Event

Staff members from Stockport Women's Centre and Salford Foundation met MPs and members of the House of Lords at the Effective Women's Centres Project Parliamentary event on November 20. Prisons Minister Lord Timpson sat down with staff members for a roundtable chat to hear their recommendations for working with women in contact with the CJS and preventing re/offending through community support. We'll be building on this engagement with visits by MPs to Greater Manchester women's centres and supporting MPs to use EWC Project research in written and spoken questions in Parliament to raise awareness of the work women's centres do and how non-custodial sentences can reduce re-offending and improve long term outcomes for women.



Dashboard: Jan - Dec 2024

172

Completed WRNA assessments

7

Average number of complex needs per service user

69%

Proportion of service users demonstrating mental health needs

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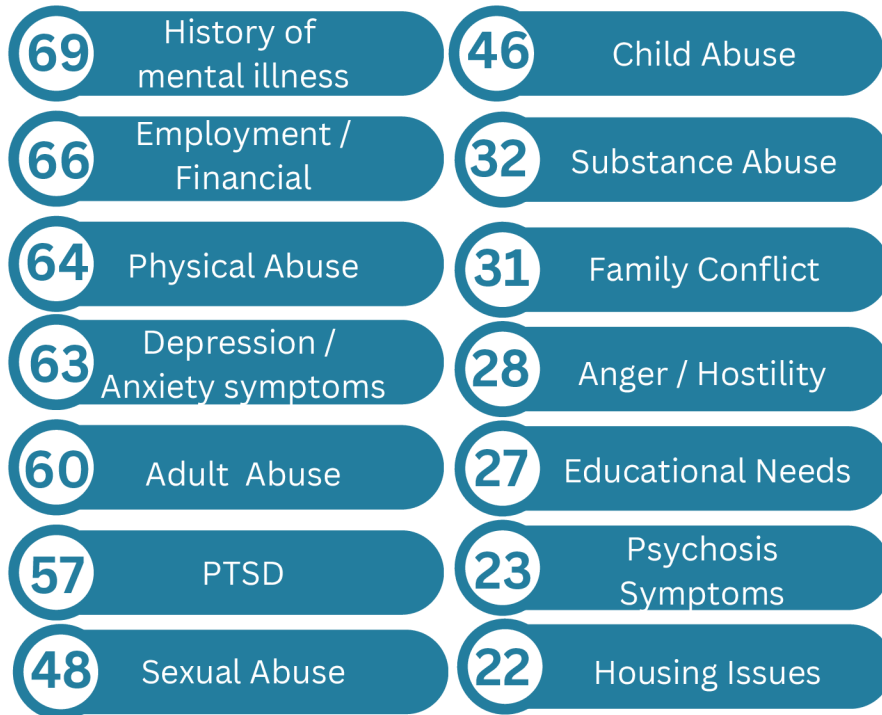


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WRNA data from Greater Manchester in more detail

Percentage of service users flagging risks and needs



Percentage of service users flagging strengths:

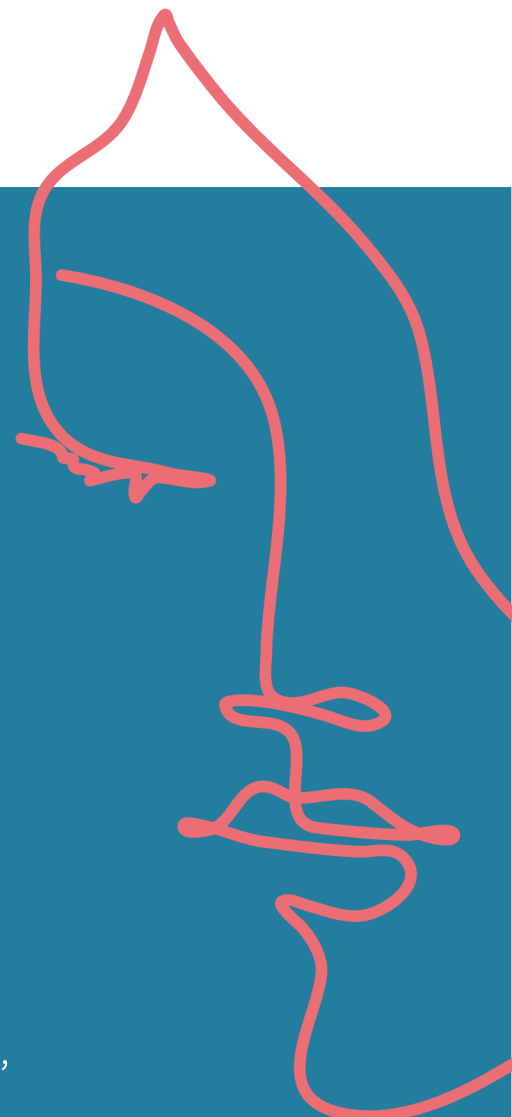


Gendered Wellbeing Assessment

All three Greater Manchester EWC members (Stockport, Salford and Oldham) will begin using the Gendered Wellbeing Assessment (GWA) from January 2025 onwards.

Like the WRNA, this assessment will take a holistic look at all aspects of a woman's life and identify risks, needs and strengths. Data from the assessments in Stockport and Salford will be used by the University of Birmingham to validate the GWA for wider use as part of the Effective Women's Centres Project.

Alongside ongoing WRNA data, GWA assessment data from all three centres can be used to show policy makers (such as MPs and councillors) and funders/ commissioners (such as Greater Manchester NHS or GMCA) the factors contributing to poor mental health and trauma - and the best ways to prevent or support. Data from both assessments across three sites will also provide a 'real time' picture of the key challenges facing women in Greater Manchester, giving us more power to work with others in the charity sector to campaign for change - such as on housing, food poverty, health inequality or barriers to education.



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Latest research findings

Exploring Needs Profiles in Criminal-Justice Involved Women - University of Birmingham

The latest research findings analysed the results of 500 women assessed using the WRNA at Anawim, Together Women and Nelson Trust women's centres:

- **Data showed clear evidence of a pattern of victimisation running through women's lives, creating a cycle of poverty women found it difficult to escape**
- **Mental health:** CJS-involved women were four times more likely to suffer mental illhealth and nine times more likely to attempt suicide than the general population. They were four times as likely to have experienced abuse (as a child and/or an adult) than the general population.
- **Substance Abuse:** For half of women, substance misuse was directly linked to their offence, but only a third had been able to get help for this.
- **Relationships:** Over eighty per cent of women maintained contact with family members, but half reported family members having their own issues with the criminal justice system, substance abuse or violence. A quarter of women said their partner encouraged them to engage in criminal behaviour.
- **Parenting:** Being a single parent was associated with more positive outcomes than for women who were in a relationship. Child custody status appears particularly protective, with those maintaining custody showing lower substance use rates, reduced justice system involvement, and fewer connections with antisocial peers.

How can we use these findings?

Coupled with data from the WRNA assessments carried out so far in Greater Manchester these research findings offer a number of suggestions for the ways politicians and commissioners such as GMCA and Greater Manchester NHS services could support women earlier to reduce re-offending, prevent women entering the CJS in the first place and reduce generational trauma:

- **Recognise the protective factors of parenting:** Sentencing which keeps families together, such as community-based approaches, maintains the protective aspects of parenting. Greater support for single mothers and work to reduce previous negative stereotypes around single parent families could also empower women currently in abusive relationships to build the confidence to leave.
- **Greater resource to support women in recognising coercive control and domestic abuse:** Damaging personal relationships are intertwined with other offending risk factors including substance abuse, poor mental health and insecure housing. Women's centres provide the expertise to support women recognise and overcome domestic abuse, stabilise their mental health and access help with surrounding issues such as housing and substance misuse. This work could also start earlier as part of schools' PHSE curricula, meaning young people are better equipped to recognise and prevent damaging relationships.



Get in touch:

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