

GM4WOMEN2028

SAFETY GROUP BRIEFING

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 has provided an opportunity to use our collective voice to demand better support for the safety of women and girls across Greater Manchester. **Hence, the *Safety Group* aims to draw on and extend the power of women's voices to shape action and improvements in responses to women who face and survive violence and harm.**

2022 Scorecard:

GM4Women2028's two 'Safety' measures are:

- **Indicator 1: Support for Sexual-Based Violence Survivors.** 56% of female survivors of gender sexual-based violence in GM did not access support in relation to what happened to them.
- **Indicator 2: Access to refuge for survivors with no recourse to public funds:** 99% of women survivors with no recourse to public funds have been refused access to a refuge because of their immigration status.

Building the evidence to call for action...

Previously, we were able to draw from two local one-off research projects: the VOSGM 'Voices of Survivors project'¹ and the Safety4Sisters 'Migrant Women's Rights to Safety Pilot Project'². The two scorecard measures derive directly from the reports that centre on the experiences of survivors of sexual and gender-based violence. Note that 'Safety' indicator 1 has remained the same since 2019, and indicator 2 has only slightly changed, reflecting the lack of available GM-wide data on any issue of women's experiences of violence and lack of safety. This lack of annual GM-wide data is telling, and the below call to action for consultation will include the urgent need for better data.

¹ VOSGM (2018) Voices of Survivors. Report available here: <http://vosgm.org.uk/>

² Safety for Sisters (2016) Migrant Women's Rights to Safety Pilot Project. Report available here: <https://www.safety4sisters.org/about>



For the 2023 data reveal, we used data referral and service uptake data from Trafford Domestic Abuse Service (TDAS) from 2021 and 2022.

With regards to Sexual violence Indicator 1: In Year 2021, 105 out of 799 TDAS' service users reported sexual violence. This number increased in 2022 (133 out of 913), taking into consideration the number of service users. **For indicator 2,** service user uptake data showed an increase in the number of women survivors where immigration was a key determinant of their access to services. According to TDAS data, in 2021, 20% of women survivors had insecure immigration, while 31% of women survivors had insecure immigration in 2022.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that there continues to be a steady increase in the number of women survivors of abuse with no recourse to public funds requiring specialist support. However, there is a dearth of GM-wide data on service support for women survivors of DVA with no recourse to public funds.

Key Action: We are inviting local organisations to highlight how they are supporting women with no recourse to public funds experiencing domestic abuse throughout 2023, and call on GM leaders to collect and publish reliable data on support for women with no recourse to public funds.

Moving to action...

Key Action 2023: The Safety group calls on:

1. GM local authorities, TfGM and GMP to draw on the learnings from the #RightToTheStreets project, Make Space for Girls, gendered design, the #IsThisOkay campaign and local Night Time Economy Charters to put more emphasis on ensuring that the safety of women and girls is designed into the planning and operation of our streets, public spaces, parks and public transport.³
2. GMCA to prioritise and implement policy actions focused on supporting sexual violence victims and women with no recourse to public funds experiencing domestic abuse.

³ This call to action cuts across and is also a priority of the Culture & Active Lives group.



Evidence⁴ from a Manchester-based qualitative study among migrant women with lived experience of domestic violence underscored the importance of collaborative working between all stakeholders to ensure migrant women with no recourse to public funds can access the services they need. Thus, we are keen to work with various groups, including grassroots and community groups, faith-based organisations, advocacy and delivery organisations in the women's sector and statutory partners.

We are actively seeking local women and specialist groups and organisations to promote these 'Safety' concerns. We invite individual women and representatives from local groups and organisations to join the GM Scorecard 'Safety' group. Together, we can collectively engage in campaigning and shape local policy, practice, and influence the commissioning of services for survivors of gender-based violence.

For the group to effectively represent the diverse experiences of survivors of gender-based violence, we need expertise and knowledge representing a wide range of issues and communities. For example, those working with women experiencing sexual violence, domestic violence, immigration appeals, poor mental health, criminalisation and imprisonment, sex work. And from a range of positions that require an active understanding and specific response, whether concerning racialisation, sexuality and/ or disability.

The group will offer a space of solidarity where we can understand the priorities in local issues of women's safety. We can collectively demand investment and overcome the current barriers to improving support for women who experience gender-based violence.

Our focus will be to ensure action that creates a positive impact in the lives of women who experience sexual and gender-based violence. Join us to ensure women's voices are heard, and change happens in Greater Manchester.

We also need data and stories from grassroots organisations on how they are maximising their resources in managing the increasing demand for service support from women with no recourse to public funds.

⁴ Femi-Ajao, O. (2018) Intimate partner violence and abuse against Nigerian women resident in England, UK: a cross-sectional qualitative study. BMC Women's Health DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12905-018-0610-4>



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