

Bristol Women's Forum

Open Forum in St Paul's Learning and Family Centre, 17.03.09

Summary DRAFT

Women discussed issues along five main themes which reflect Scrutiny commissions (points raised). The Women's Forum started pointing to avenues for following up the issues raised and will do so in the next weeks. Any developments will be posted on www.bristolwomensforum.org.

Here are some suggestions of what women might want to follow up themselves: St Pauls Learning centre library is a great source of info (on what's going on, plans for the area etc.). Cllr Rogers sends email updates – request this to jon.rogers@bristol.gov.uk. It is also worth googling two sites about support to local campaign groups: Grass Roots and the Greater Bristol Foundation

Health	Follow up plan/notes
Kids without breakfast, free lunch, malnutrition. Primary breakfast clubs. Education/sugar levels.	<i>Send summary to Annie Hudson, LINK, PCTs, Scrutiny, Neighbourhood Partnerships – what are they doing about it... follow up replies</i>
Lack of funding for e.g. yoga. and complementary therapies	<i>Emotional health and wellbeing strategy consultation</i>
Support for families when mother gets ill, professional help.	<i>Take to AGM as suggestion for priority for work programme 2009/2010</i>
System problem: mothers getting fobbed off by dismissive attitudes of receptionists ('I know when my child is ill')	
No emergency dental care after 9pm! We have to suffer and sometimes after 7pm there is no care.	
More help for people with MS. e.g. nutrition, drug availability.	
Breast cancer / services quick response, there seems to have been a good improvement	<i>Scrutiny</i>

Sexual Health Clinic – difficult to get appointments, language barriers. And lack of continuous help	
It's more about breast awareness now than breast examining. Asian women are not necessarily aware 'not for me' inspite of info – could do workshops, bring people in	<i>Maybe something with Muslim Women's Network or an event along those lines – women's health day?</i>
It would be useful to have a health worker to explain to women about e.g. cervical cancer; workshops and info-sessions for public with a health professional cross section	<i>See above</i>
Women DO want the choice of requesting female doctor. It took a lot of persistence to be seen by female doctor for ectopic pregnancy. Also difficult to have a choice for births	<i>Florene to take to Scrutiny</i>
Some health issues are taboo and women are at the bottom of the list – then you only get an appointment next week even though you need help now.	
What is the council in control of, what is its role?	<i>Clarify in future</i>
Integration of complementary therapies. Mental health services don't offer Counselling quickly enough. There is a delay.	<i>Delay a real issue; counselling / support as AGM suggestion for work programme?</i>

Children and Young People Services	Follow up plan/notes
	<i>Summary to Scrutiny, follow up</i>
Concerned at the lack of educational achievement of black girls (& boys) at local schools. An ongoing concern!	<i>Emotional Health and Wellbeing strategy consultation</i>
How can community buildings such as schools be used for the community outside school hours.	<i>Feed to Neighbourhood Partnerships</i>
How is the Council going to reach the community and really understand? Cabot Circus is a big thorn in our side. We hope the same is not going to happen in Dove Lane!!	<i>Local councillor Rogers and neighbourhood partnership</i>
How is the Council going to sustain after school clubs and after school	<i>Emotional Health and Wellbeing strategy consultation</i>

play, many of which are closing down. They are a massive support to women.	<i>Submission to full council? Possible priority for work programme at AGM?</i>
We need more skateboard parks like the Horfield Sports Centre one.	<i>Councillor, Parks, Neighbourhood Partnership – feed into parks and green spaces strategy when it reaches St Pauls</i>

Environment & Transport	Follow up plan/notes
	<i>Scrutiny summary and follow up</i>
What can we say about buses?! Is there a review, will they get better? Need to find a good model to build on.	<i>April 30th meeting with First Bus at Council House with new Manager there as part of Scrutiny Commission. Open public meeting from 6pm (signpost at AGM, Website, Newsbulletin)</i>
Increase number of car-share schemes. Council has cash to allocate for this to improve parking situation.	<i>Scrutiny?</i>

Care and Safer Communities	Follow up plan/notes
	<i>Summary to Scrutiny</i>
It is important to celebrate 'Women's Day' – men learn to respect women and that sorts out a lot of problems created by men which cost the city a lot of money. 'Celebrate Women and save a lot of money'.	<i>Continue lobbying and fund raising for IWD, Equality Scheme priorities</i>
I am disgusted at the lack of celebration on Women's Day. All other cities do – Bristol takes no interest. When it was run by the BCC community grants – women from all over came and celebrated.	<i>See above</i>
It's good when women's needs are met – like having a female case worker if you feel it's not good to have a male case worker.	

The portrayal of women as sex objects in advertising and pornography makes all women vulnerable.	<i>Priority in Equality Scheme? Link to Fawcett campaign</i>
Asian women need projects led by and for Asian women on a small local scale.	
The 'Prevent' funding is encouraging Muslims in Bristol to segregate, not integrate.	<i>Liaise with Muslim Women's Network</i>
Centralisation of resources (offices) means women won't travel and their needs are not being met.	<i>Target in Equality Scheme, Possible priority for work programme / AGM</i>
Women with mental health needs have no support until they are in crisis when they can access support but might also lose their children. Women (mothers) need the chance to build relationships – like with carers for their children – <i>before</i> they reach crisis.	<i>See health above. Possible priority for work programme / AGM (links into the same rationale reforming services and programmes around women in prison)</i>
Hear more about child and mother support	
St Pauls has poverty, drugs and visible street sex markets – all of this is oppressive for women and children. There is extreme violence.	<i>Local councillor Neighbourhood Partnership</i>

Quality of Life	Follow up plan/notes
Redcliffe area – Council promised to develop the area – nothing done yet – planning in progress.	<i>Councillor</i>
Cleanliness of Queen Square needs attention.	<i>Sign post and report</i>
Dogs are fouling the pavement.	<i>Sign post</i>
Adult leisure learning – shall provide discounts for the over 50's.	
Noise of dogs barking at night – health and safety.	<i>Sign post</i>

Home choice – 3 choices every week. Better than Groups 1-5.	
Not enough social housing.	
From April 1 st over 60s can swim free at any pool.	

Feedback / evaluation:

The evaluation has been mixed but overall quite good. A couple of women didn't feel comfortable as it was difficult for her to have a voice within her group 'slightly oppressive'. Others found the atmosphere warm and welcoming.

What they liked:

- Opportunity to meet with other women informally on how to progress things
- Meeting women, organisations they didn't know existed, women working together
- Venue
- Good to have tables and topics
- Diverse backgrounds, what's topical in different sectors
- Discussion and enthusiasm
- Learning what the Women's Forum is, informal nature, flexibility of topics, meeting women
- Women making a difference
- Emphasis on women's issues

Here are the suggestions that we need to take on board for future Forums:

- Need complete explanation of what the Women's Forum is
- Bit 'wooly': needs more structure / focus. Also clarity about women's forum structure and how feedback is taken forward
- (More women)
- Individuals dominating the discussions around the table – being able to speak without interruptions
- Really find out why everyone is there (what women's issues are) – I think this could be done with different start e.g. doing introductions and asking about main issues / concerns
- More guidance / information on topics (Angela's suggestion: perhaps only do those topics where the Co-optee is present to inform a)
- Hear developments that have happened since the last meeting
- More info on process of feedback

The women heard about this through a mixture of leaflets, publicity, contacts, word of mouth, email (database), google search, women who made a difference, reclaim the night march (very few through the mailing list!!!!)