

Response to MAMA Health and Poverty Partnership January 2021

Greater Manchester Combined Authority stands together with the Mama Health and Poverty Partnership in its desire to effectively tackle gender and racial discrimination. We know that inequality is one of the key barriers to people reaching their full potential, which not only has negative consequences for individuals and families, but society as a whole. We recognise that we must tackle these inequalities if we are to deliver our ambition of making Greater Manchester one of the best places in the world to grow up, get on and grow old.

We particularly recognise and share Mama's concerns about the 'intersectionality' of inequalities, where multiple oppressions come together and interact. We know that inequalities are often higher for women and girls and for those from a BAME background. That is just one example of intersectionality.

We have already many things in action to tackle inequalities in a broad sense but also in respect of particularly marginalised groups. We will work with the Mama Health and Poverty Partnership, as well as other stakeholders, to strengthen what we already do and to look at other things we can do to make a real difference.

GM Women and Girls' Equality Panel

Delivering on a key commitment of Mayor Andy Burnham, a new panel to accelerate gender equality in Greater Manchester has been set up. The Greater Manchester [Women and Girls' Equality Panel](#) brings together a 20-strong group of diverse and informed women from across our 10 boroughs with the stated aim of informing public policy to "enable women and girls to live their best life in Greater Manchester."

The Panel is jointly chaired by Portfolio Lead for Equalities and Ageing, Cllr Brenda Warrington, and Chief Executive Portfolio Lead for Equalities and Ageing, Pam Smith. Greater Manchester's Deputy Mayor for Policing, Crime, Criminal Justice and Fire, Bev Hughes is also a core member. The Panel will establish a clear vision for women and girls in Greater Manchester to understand issues and inequalities affecting their lives, and recognising women and girls' particular experience of COVID.

The first meeting of the Panel was held on 7 December 2020 and a detailed two year action plan is being developed to focus on priority areas for intervention in addressing gender inequality within GM.

GM Strategy to end gender-based abuse of women and girls

We will shortly publish a GM Strategy to end gender-based abuse of women and girls. We expect the strategy will make key commitments such as:

- Seeking to strengthen the Greater Manchester Employment Charter to develop further how it supports women in the workplace.
- Ensuring that when victims disclose gender-based violence and abuse, appropriate and accessible information is available in the right places.
- Commissioning services that are culturally and age appropriate.
- Developing a secure and sustainable funding model to ensure a whole system approach for vulnerable and marginalised women is accessible and effective.

Race Equality Panel

Greater Manchester's [Race Equality Panel](#) aims to tackle inequality, injustice and discrimination in society, through the advancement of equity, fairness and positive relationships in public organisations and the services they deliver.

The Panel does this by:

- Advising the Mayor of Greater Manchester and the Greater Manchester Lead for Ageing and Equalities of the challenges and opportunities faced by people linked to their race or ethnicity.
- Holding to account political leaders for tackling the systemic and institutional prejudice that causes inequality.
- Supporting the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) and its public, private and voluntary sector partners, to develop effective solutions to these issues.

We recognise that the inequalities faced by many communities are structural and deep seated. The recent report of Public Health England on inequalities and COVID-19 bears this out. All decisions we make in the future will have race equality at their heart.

Co-design of appropriate actions

We will continue to work with service users to co-design solutions and interventions that meet the needs of particular communities. In preparing strategies in various policy arenas we have worked with Mama's and others to ensure we listen to and hear the voices of

service users who have experience of being multiply disadvantaged. We have and will continue to work with community and voluntary groups to consider issues which negatively impact on the lived experience of African women. This includes in the arena of health and justice and in the development our gender-based abuse strategy.

This is part of a wider and ongoing piece of work to understand how we can best share power more equitably with communities. In doing so we want to create opportunities for people with first-hand experience to be at the forefront of decision making in Greater Manchester. The work has already led to a commitment in the [Integrated Health and Justice Strategy](#) to seek the support and advice of lived experience led groups and networks to be involved in the co-design, co-production and co-commissioning of services.

We are committed to providing funding to organisations which provide specialist support to BAME communities. The Ministry of Justice recently provided Greater Manchester with extraordinary funding to help domestic abuse and sexual violence charities respond to Covid-19. In total £860,000 funding was provided to organisations across Greater Manchester. Organisations which provide specialist support to women and families within BAME communities were supported through this funding, to ensure that support services are provided by those who are best placed to meet these communities' specific needs. Several organisations, who specifically work with African women have benefited from this funding.

Tackling Modern Slavery

Greater Manchester has been recognised nationally for its strength in tackling modern slavery. Strong partnerships have been at the heart of this success involving Greater Manchester Police, local authorities and other regional and national agencies such as the National Crime Agency. We recognise this specifically affects BAME women particularly in respect of coercion to sexual and domestic servitude.

We must not and will not rest on our laurels though. Work has been undertaken, working with various groups to raise awareness amongst members of African communities in GM of the signs of modern slavery and how to report it. There is little large scale research on the experiences of modern slavery and exploitation of BAME women nationally or within GM. It is acknowledged that the vast majority of knowledge regarding experiences rests with support organisations as few women consent to access Governmental support or report to enforcement authorities.

Stop the Traffik has been commissioned by [Programme Challenger](#) (GM's multi-agency programme targeting serious and organised crime) to deliver Community Data Analysis around modern slavery. We will seek to collaborate with community and voluntary groups to support data collection, analysis and action to better understand the experiences of their service users who are victims of exploitation and modern slavery.

Our commitment to supporting women

We recognise the challenges faced by women who have no recourse to public funds and how this can exacerbate the existing challenges faced. We will commit to gaining intelligence on the prevalence of this issue and the effects it has. Where appropriate we will seek conversations with national government to seek change as well as examining what support mechanisms may be appropriate.

Mental ill-health is a key challenge for Greater Manchester and we recognise that the risk is higher where inequality is prevalent and we know there is a higher prevalence within BAME communities. With the Greater Manchester Health & Social Care Partnership we have developed a GM wide mental health strategy that aims to maximise mental health.

Too often the police are often the first responding service when people are in mental health crisis. Working with Greater Manchester Police and health colleagues we have drastically reduced the numbers of people detained in police cells when detained under the Mental Health Act. Significant training has been delivered to front line police officers by Mental Health Trusts.

In addition, the Combined Authority has funded a partnership between the NHS and GMP that sees mental health professionals working alongside police colleagues in their control room. The team of practitioners support police colleagues by triaging incidents that contain a significant mental health element. This triage includes an active element whereby, when appropriate, practitioners re-contact callers to provide clinical advice and support with a view to removing the need for police attendance and developing an alternative course of action. If deployment of a police officer is necessary, the practitioners support officers by providing relevant advice and/or background history to ensure they have more detailed information to support them.

In conclusion Greater Manchester Combined Authority is committed to tackling inequalities in all their forms, which we know blight the lives of many and hold them back. We have and continue to do much work to date. There remains much to do, and we specifically recognise

the inequalities faced by women from our BAME communities. This is why we are pleased to stand and work with Mamas in this ongoing journey.