

Women Talking, City Listening: List of Recommendations

Below is a full list of the recommendations proposed by the Women Talking, City Listening research project. The report was split into ten key themes. For ease of cross-reference, the pages of each theme in the full research report are listed against each theme heading. The recommendations are numbered, corresponding to the summary report.

The recommendations listed below are initial recommendations endorsed by the Women Talking, City Listening Steering Group and have been proposed to CMT. The recommendations will be built upon and refined in senior leadership meetings.

Careers and Motherhood (Pages 10-27)

- **Recommendation 1:** Flexible Working Arrangements (including flexibility in recruitment to facilitate job shares) to be implemented by employers in corporate policy and job advertisements.
- **Recommendation 2:** Leicester City Council to integrate an action into its Equality Action Plan to support and publicise more opportunities for women employees, including networking events and promotion of the Council's employee groups.

Recommendation 3: Leicester City Council to further consider and integrate an appropriate action into its Equality Action Plan: ways in which to promote professional and employment opportunities and to provide more opportunities for women in the City to network (for example, an externally focused event, possibly in partnership with Economic Regeneration).

- **Recommendation 4:** Leicester City Council's Voluntary Community Sector liaisons and Communications team to communicate news of both Council-affiliated and external networking events to women-majority community groups (for example, library and children's centre 'Toddler Time' attendees), to offer mothers who are not in employment greater professional opportunities.
- **Recommendation 5:** Leicester City Council's Human Resources team to consider implementing employee policy for those returning from maternity leave to better support both the employee and their manager's facilitation of their re-entry into work.
- **Recommendation 6:** That the government flexible working taskforce continue to campaign for employers to adopt flexible working practises in the public sector and the private sector.
- **Recommendation 7:** That the Job Centre Plus continue to build on its work thus far to promote flexible working practises, by challenging appropriately and

requiring adequate justification where an employer has communicated that an opportunity is not suitable for flexible working.

- **Recommendation 8:** That governmental policymakers review the '30 hours free childcare scheme', taking into account and addressing the issues raised by participants, to give women a greater opportunity to re-enter work without suffering financially.
- **Recommendation 9:** That governmental policymakers consider exploring the merits and risks to implementing an allowance or financial benefit (subject to certain conditions), where women are relying on family members informally to take on childcare responsibilities to enable them to work, to ensure that family members (particularly female family members) are supplemented and are not experiencing detriment financially.

Community Support (Pages 28-32)

- **Recommendation 10:** Leicester City Council to review all funding application systems, to check accessibility and make the relevant changes where any issues with accessibility are determined.
- **Recommendation 11:** Leicester City Council's teams dealing with bid applications (within both Neighbourhoods and Procurement) to consider how contact information for advice and support is published, to ensure maximum uptake of such offers of support.
- **Recommendation 12:** Adult Social Care and others who may have an interest in mapping the support offer to consider whether it may be beneficial to align to Leicester Open Data, in order that information isn't replicated and can be found in one place.
- **Recommendation 13:** Leicester City Council to develop a Comms plan which fulfils two functions; 1. to make VCS organisations and community groups aware of the Open Data Platform and to encourage as many as possible to add information to the relevant map and 2. to make citizens of Leicester aware of the Open Data Platform and how to use it.
- **Recommendation 14:** Once the Open Data Platform is more developed, consider overlaying VCS support map with public transport routes map to establish whether there are any issues which need to be addressed. This will need to be in partnership with public transport operators.

Workplace – Policies vs. Practice (Pages 32-50)

- **Recommendation 15:** That Leicester City Council's Equality Action Plan 2021 incorporate work internally to support line managers to understand organisational support mechanisms which are particularly relevant to the issues that participants have raised (such as the flexible working policy, time off for dependents policy) how those policies and support mechanisms support equality and how to make decisions which promote a supportive environment and also more flexible

working, where it is practicable. This is likely to be achieved most effectively through some form of training or workshop style events.

- **Recommendation 16:** Leicester City Council to consider what training and/ or guidance managers are currently having on Occupational Health and consider reviewing this to promote an understanding of Occupational Health as a supportive tool, not a disciplinary measure.
- **Recommendation 17:** That further work is undertaken with other services within the Council, for example economic regeneration, tourism and culture, to establish whether there are any actions that could be included in the Equality Action Plan 2021 which would encourage other employers in the City to promote supportive policies and work environment, for example flexible working and increased part-time working and job share opportunities, where practicable.
- **Recommendation 18:** Organisations should review their policies collaboratively with their employees, by seeking feedback on how policy is currently used and understood. This could be facilitated by an anonymous internal survey, the information gathered aiding meaningful policy refinement. It is not within Leicester City council's remit to implement this in other organisations, but the Council should pay further consideration to how they might be able to influence and share best practice with employers across the City.
- **Recommendation 19:** Awareness raising and information sharing locally and nationally to ensure that women understand their rights in relation to employment, and to increase women's confidence and ability to challenge effectively, where they have experienced both overt and/or covert discrimination, harassment or victimisation. This also links with a recommendation under 'Safety' to ensure that women are confident and equipped to raise concerns and complaints in relation to service provision (p.75)
- **Recommendation 20:** That policymakers consider providing some form of funding to SMEs and VCS organisations to enable them to purchase equipment, for the specific purpose of encouraging and enabling them to implement flexible/ home working.
- **Recommendation 21:** The government flexible working taskforce/ policymakers to consider how they might influence employers to more openly consider employee part-time proposals and support part-time employees to do an effective job within contracted hours.
- **Recommendation 22:** The government flexible working taskforce/ policymakers to consider how they can promote and encourage employees to offer job shares, to better support part-time employees to progress in their careers into more senior or skilled roles – benefitting both employer and employee.
- **Recommendation 23:** Leicester City Council to consider implementing a zero-tolerance approach within the review of the Dignity at Work Policy.
- **Recommendation 24:** Policymakers to consider ways in which to either encourage or mandate transparent recruitment processes that are publicly

available for scrutiny and are designed using positive action where lawful, to reduce recruitment bias.

- **Recommendation 25:** Leicester City Council to ensure that guidance on how to use the positive action provisions under the Equality Act and guidance on recruitment panel make-up is included in updated recruitment guidance for managers.

Recognition of and Support for Carers (Pages 50-67)

- **Recommendation 26:** Leicester City Council to work with schools in the City to help to introduce guidance, training or professional development, as deemed appropriate, for teachers - to aid them in identifying young carers and referring to the relevant support. To publicise tools to aid schools in identifying young carers, for example the young carers identification tool for education staff **on the schools intranet.**
- **Recommendation 27:** Policymakers to consider the issue more widely to see whether there are any additional national measures which could be put into place to better equip teachers in identifying young carers.
- **Recommendation 28:** Leicester City Council to consider the merit of PSHE/Citizenship in the City's schools including a lesson on being a carer and having meaningful conversations about caring. Although this is not directly within the Council's remit, it is worth considering how the Council might effectively engage with schools to achieve this.
- **Recommendation 29:** Leicester City Council's Adult Social Care/Communications teams to share information with schools in the city on what support is available for young carers.
- **Recommendation 30:** Leicester City Council's Adult Social Care Department to work with health partners to review the way in which information is shared with carers; to make information packs more easily accessible, so that service users know exactly what support is available and whether they are entitled to such services. To utilise the Council's communication mechanisms, including social media, to raise awareness of information and support for carers.
- **Recommendation 31:** Undertake further work locally with the relevant service area to understand and respond to the issues raised by participants in relation to respite.
- **Recommendation 32:** Government to include policy ideas to address the nuanced issues raised in this report in relation to unpaid caring responsibilities, particularly in terms of the financial difficulties that they face, in the Green Paper on Social Care, and publish for public consultation.
- **Recommendation 33:** Leicester City Council to ensure that the relevant corporate policies acknowledge carers and the discrimination they can face

arising from their association with someone with a disability/ies (discrimination by association).

- **Recommendation 34:** Leicester City Council to consider offering carers discounts, deals or occasional free treats at City Council run sites (museum and heritage sites, for example) and events, to acknowledge the hard work of those who care and the minimal disposable income available. To encourage other businesses in the City (who are in a position to do so), to also consider offering discounts or deals for carers.

Sports and access (Pages 67-70)

- **Recommendation 35:** The Department of Education to give guidance to schools and colleges relating to the P.E. Curriculum and equal access to sports in practice, to ensure education providers are aware that while they can separate by sex for P.E. lawfully, they are obliged to provide the same opportunities for both girls and boys to engage in sports.
- **Recommendation 36:** Existing Council-operated sport and gym facilities to consider expanding their selection of 'women only' classes where there is evidence of need and to offer these at a range of days and times, accommodating for the many responsibilities women take on (as highlighted throughout this report). In addition, to advertise services more widely to enable women to participate.

Safety (Pages 71-79)

- **Recommendation 37:** Local Authorities to consider keeping intermittent streetlights on to ensure no one area is pitch-black. This local strategy should be individually tailored to neighbourhoods, with priority given to areas of higher criminal activity.
- **Recommendation 38:** Leicester City Council to consider the merit of PSHE/Citizenship in the City's schools including a lesson on a rape culture and identifying harmful views and behaviour around love, sex and sexual assault, (such as shaming women who are sexually active or based on how many sexual partners they have, rape jokes, victim blaming, judging what women wear, 'cat calling'). Whilst this is not within the Council's direct remit, it is worth considering how the Council might effectively engage with schools to achieve this.
- **Recommendation 39:** Feed the issues raised in this section to the Smart Cities Team and Community Safety to consider whether we can use technology as a means to collaborate with citizens, to identify problems in their neighbourhoods and help facilitate a safer Leicester.
- **Recommendation 40:** The Council's Community Safety and Protection team to support local community awareness initiatives relating to standing against rape culture and violence towards women (i.e. in externally circulated communications such as Your Leicester).

- **Recommendation 41:** National policymakers consider ways in which women who have experienced domestic violence are enabled to safely stay in their own homes should they wish to, and instead perpetrators are required to leave the household.
- **Recommendation 42:** Leicester City Council to do some awareness raising work on how citizens can raise complaints and escalate concerns about any public body/authority if they feel that their complaint has not been sufficiently dealt with. Work may also need to be undertaken nationally to ensure that women are equipped to challenge effectively. This links with a recommendation in the section 'Workplace – Policies vs. Practise' (p.35) which recommends that awareness raising work is undertaken to ensure that women are aware of their rights in employment and are equipped to challenge where these are breached and where they have experienced discrimination, harassment and victimisation. It may be that these two recommendations can be combined, if appropriate.
- **Recommendation 43:** Leicester City Council and the Government Equalities Office to continue to support campaigns to increase awareness and recognition around the different types of abuse, where and how to get support, both locally and nationally.
- **Recommendation 44:** Leicester City Council to ensure our relevant commissioned services (in Community Safety, Housing and Social Care) continue to make available practical help and support to survivors of domestic violence, taking into account the lived experiences of those seeking support and taking steps to ease the process of resettling and in some cases, becoming independent for the first time.

Personalisation of Services and Communication to Service Users (Pages 79-93)

- **Recommendation 45:** Ask the CCG to suggest that GPs document conversations on concerns voiced over dependant's behaviours and commit to listening and exploring these with the advocate.
- **Recommendation 46:** Reviewing the sharing systems of key information in health and social care patient files.
- **Recommendation 47:** Social care workers and health workers to provide service users date deadlines to provide updates/information where possible.
- **Recommendation 48:** Social care services to continue to review the way in which dependant services users go through from child's to adults' services and respond to feedback to ensure a gradual and manageable transition for the service user.
- **Recommendation 49:** Feedback to colleges the need for post-college lessons to both pay fair attention to all career paths (not putting the onus on University) and for such sessions to take a more collaborative structure, in which students are

made to feel comfortable asking questions, and confident their query will be met with a response.

- **Recommendation 50:** Universities and other adult learning institutions to identify and establish whether there is a need for childcare facilities and act accordingly to accommodate for this. This may be in the form of creating links with nearby nurseries to offer parents subsidised rates or priority places for children.
- **Recommendation 51:** Employers in Leicester and across the country to be encouraged to support **their employees more widely in gaining additional qualifications.**
- **Recommendation 52:** The GEO to consider feeding back to the Department for Health the expressed need to assign 'lead GPs' to patients and prioritise this GP as the care provider, for patients to receive consistent care. Similarly, in a longstanding condition, the GP first approached with the concern/s should be the one to oversee this care, to ensure continuous support, non-conflating information or guidance offered, and lesser oversights via inter-GP communication.
- **Recommendation 53:** Leicester City Council to continue to ensure where decisions are made to channel shift our services, that an EIA is completed - demonstrating consideration of our PSED.
- **Recommendation 54:** Leicester City Council to ensure that service users are given notice of our services digitising and to make online access an option to using services, not the only method of using the service.
- **Recommendation 55:** In recognition that digital inclusion plays an important role in enabling women to not only access services but also to engage fully in public life (including work and education), particularly given some of the additional barriers posed by Covid-19, the Smart Cities, Equalities, Adult Skills and Learning and Neighbourhoods, in addition to other relevant services, will work together to scope a proposal for a project to deal with issues that have been highlighted as part of this project and more widely in response to Covid-19 – such as lack of access to devices, including appropriate devices for work and study and lack of access to adequate internet connection.
- **Recommendation 56:** That the Government should evaluate and review existing legislation and policy to ensure it takes an approach which fully considers the interaction between sex and other protected characteristics, or 'intersectionality' in addressing inequalities disproportionately experienced by women, many of which are covered in the later sections of this report.
- **Recommendation 57:** That the Government should make it possible to bring a single discrimination claim based on an individual's full identity (which is likely to include multiple intersecting protected characteristics), by reviewing and then implementing Section 14 of the Equality Act 2010. Whilst Section 14 covers 'dual discrimination' there may be merit in considering intersectionality of more than

two protected characteristics in conjunction with one another, as part of the review.

Finance (Pages 93-99)

- **Recommendation 58:** Leicester City Council to address period poverty in the Equality Action Plan - as part of that work opening a dialogue with Leicester's Homeless Charities on access to menstrual care products for people experiencing period poverty.
- **Recommendation 59:** When calling for physical donations, Homeless Charities in Leicester to include mention of menstrual care products on their donation list. When calling for fiscal donations, Homeless Charities in Leicester could mention this money, in part, will buy menstrual products – to boost awareness around this essential need often overlooked.
- **Recommendation 60:** Leicester City Council to commit to providing free menstrual products in all Council buildings that are accessed by the public.
- **Recommendation 61:** That the Government consider the proposal that those eligible for free prescriptions be able to request free menstrual care products from primary healthcare services such as GPs and GUM Clinics.
- **Recommendation 62:** Leicester City Council's Public Health, Sustainability (within Estates & Buildings Services) and Education services to consider the procurement of menstrual cups to be provided in school to each young person with periods, appealing to the Department for Education and their commitment to fully-fund access to free menstrual products in schools and colleges for funding.
- **Recommendation 63:** Benefits, both current and those being phased out, to be assimilated by the Government, to ensure no eligible recipient is left waiting for payments and that no debts occur from overpayment – with any debts incurred to be gradually redacted from the overarching eligible payments.
- **Recommendation 64:** The Government to review of the Universal Credit assessment process to cut down wait-times for a verdict.
- **Recommendation 65:** The Government to ensure that those who are jobseekers do not receive a benefit penalisation for attempts to make them better adapted or skilled to work.
- **Recommendation 66:** Organisations to offer information to their employees on pension as a mandated part of their starter pack.
- **Recommendation 67:** Organisations should consider periodically publishing data on their pay gaps in relation to protected characteristics beyond gender and making this information publicly accessible.

Health (Pages 99-110)

- **Recommendation 68:** If not already, healthcare practitioners should undergo some form of unconscious bias training to ensure they are providing care that is fair and consistent to all patients.
- **Recommendation 69:** Leicester City Council's Public Health to discuss with healthcare practitioners the need for training staff on 'pain bias' and dispelling myths of different pain and symptoms experienced by people of various backgrounds.
- **Recommendation 70:** Community-based officers should touch base with community group leaders to ensure they are aware of relevant support their participants may be entitled to. This could support constituents who don't have direct contact with the Local Authority to be more aware of support mechanisms in place and access the full range of support available to them.
- **Recommendation 71:** Government to create long-term solutions to currently 'underfunded' (Mental Health Policy Group 2020) mental health support within the Comprehensive Spending Review.
- **Recommendation 72:** Leicester City Council's Public Health to request local GP surgeries to offer multiple forms of contact and not require a reason to give an appointment, where a service user doesn't feel comfortable disclosing.