

# WOMEN'S LIVES LEEDS

Empowering Women and Girls in Leeds

## Evaluation of the Women and Girls first Forum

### **Purpose of this report**

This report is an evaluation of the first Women and Girls Forum meeting which was held on March 29<sup>th</sup> 2017. This paper will outline the aims of hosting the meeting and will evaluate to what extent these were reached in the first instance. It will analyse attendance, workshop contributions and feedback, and make proposals for future Forum meetings and structures.

### **Introduction**

Women's Lives Leeds aims and objectives include the establishment of a Women and Girl's Forum that would link to decision making structures and partnerships across the city, enabling women and girl's voices and participation in city service developments. It will also provide a platform to champion women and girls priorities, enabling discussion with partners and to action through co-production activities to make lives for women and girls in Leeds better.

### **Aim of the meeting**

There were four broad aims of the meeting:

1. To launch the Women and Girls Forum and inform attendees about Women's Lives Leeds.
2. To inspire women and girls to become involved in the development of the Forum.
3. To agree five priorities for Women and Girls in Leeds.
4. To agree a simple structure and elect/or agree a process to identify a Forum Chair.

### **The format of the meeting**

The event was open to any woman or girl who had an interest in shaping services for women and girls in Leeds. An introductory talk was given by the Women's Lives Leeds Project Manager, who at the International Day for Women Event at Leeds Town Hall launched the Forum and promoted this meeting then.

This was followed by a series of round table conversations and workshops to determine priorities for women and girls, who the Chair would be, or the process to identify a Chair and the Forum's Terms of reference.

### **Attendance**

There were over 70 attendees on the day and of those 40 completed a short evaluation of the meeting, which will be used to structure future forum meetings.

## Outcomes

The workshops were structured in a way where previous consultations identifying priorities for women and girls were presented to attendees. They were asked if those were correct and then if any were missing.

Attendees were asked (per table) to list their top five and present them to the rest of the group. Through a process of voting with “sticky dots” each person could then choose their top 3 priorities.

These were then counted and the overall top five priorities for women are:

1. Employment
2. Safety
3. Violence towards women and girls including sexual violence
4. Poverty and Austerity
5. Health and Wellbeing

\*The priorities identified by this group for Girls are:

1. Education
2. Safety
3. Campaigning
4. Being empowered to make choices
5. Having a voice and to influence

\*however there were no girls present and the girls priorities came from women, so to truly capture girls priorities a further conversation, planned at an appropriate time to attract girls will take place. Girls will be invited to discuss and agreed their priorities, but those from the meeting will be presented and discussed as part of that conversation.

The next session attendees were given a draft Chairs role descriptor and draft forum terms of reference to tweak, amend, add to and change, which resulted in an agreement once these had been revised they would form the actual Governance documents for the forum.

When asked about a process to identify a Chair who would take the leadership role, an expression of interest by a member of the group was made.

Following a “pitch” to the whole group Kate Bratt-Farrar, CEO Wheatfield’s Hospice, was nominated to be the Chair for the first year, which the group agreed.

A further expression was made for a Deputy Chair and Marvina Newton was agreed to take this role by the group.

## Unexpected Outcomes

The biggest unexpected outcome of the meeting was the establishment of a girls sub group of the forum. Although those who attended did discuss girl’s priorities, it was clear no girls were present, so as a result Flavia Docherty, CEO of Getaway Girls offered to lead a girl’s sub group, to have those conversations and link with the Forum, which was accepted by the group.

Following on from this a structure of sub groups on priorities was starting to take shape, with there being a Safety, Employment and Health and Wellbeing sub groups developing, which were linked to other established women’s groups and networks across the city – again another positive, useful, essential but unexpected outcome of the meeting.

## Participants feedback

On the day attendees were asked to complete evaluation forms and of those women who completed them, they predominantly reported having a very positive experience.

40 forms were completed and all said they agreed or strongly agreed that they were inspired to be involved.

All but one stated that they had the opportunity to discuss and agree priorities for women and girls and that the event was what they expected.

However a couple of people stated that there was not enough time and it felt a bit rushed.

The feedback from evaluations collected on the day included the following:

*“I only found out about this event by accident and I am really pleased I did! Great to see such a diversity of women willing to work together”*

*“Dedicated networking time - lots of very interesting people I would have loved to talk to more, so more time for workshops discussions and conversations please”*

## Conclusion

The event reached its key aims and was well attended and the Women’s Forum has a circulation list of over 150 members following this event and as a result a membership database has been established, it’s currently free and all will receive bulletins, keeping them up to date with opportunities and initiatives to take part in as the forum develops.

Overall the event was a success with more than expected attending on the day and feedback indicates that this was beneficial, had a positive vibe and attendees would attend future Forum meetings. There is an appetite across the city, and partners are expressing interest in linking with the forum, to talk to and with women and girls to ensure that they capture their voices and can help in service development across the city, which is what the forum was established to do.

## Next steps

1. The Chair and the Women’s Lives Leeds Project Manager will meet to discuss the findings of this meeting and take appropriate action to develop Safety, Employment, Health and Well being and Girls Sub Groups, by linking with existing women’s networks across the city.
2. The Project Manager to present the early findings and priorities of the meeting to strategic partners through the Equalities Assembly structures and meetings.
3. The Project Manager to arrange dates and topics for sub groups and the Forum meetings and where possible invite key strategic partners to those conversations.
4. The Terms of Reference, Chairs role descriptor and a Forum structure will be revised and developed and then circulated around the membership and posted on to the Women’s Lives Leeds web site for information.