

Bristol Women's Voice Response to Our Neighborhoods Consultation

The form is inappropriate for use by an organisation such as ours representing women and those who identify as women of all ages, ethnicities, religions and beliefs, sexual orientations, with and without disabilities and with and without caring responsibilities.

We therefore want to record issues in regard to the proposals raised with us by our members.

Community Links

The impact on carers of those currently using the service has not been considered and support for them to support service users to gain independence is not included in the proposals.

We note that women are the majority of the workforce and that older women (over 55) find it more difficult to find employment having been made redundant than men in the same age group.

Libraries

The library closures are of major concern to our members. Libraries are used by older women who do not have the income to buy books for themselves and are one of the few places women with small children can go which does not cost anything.

We have also had issues raised about libraries as places of information about public and other services and in particular about access to the internet as more and more has to be done on line particularly in relation to benefits and employment.

There seems to be limited information on those who use the library service and if there are alternatives for them.

Several members have pointed out that the Old Library in Eastville, while a welcome community resource, is not a library and so can not be used as a template for others.

Public Toilets

Again a major concern for members both older women and carers of both children and older people.

The aim of replacing these with access to business premises is laudable in the abstract but experience of these schemes is that businesses often request that someone buys something before being able to use the toilet.

Homeless women have expressed particular concerns about not being able to access business facilities and the importance of the availability of public toilets to help them manage when they are menstruating.

Neighbourhood Partnerships

We have expressed concerns before about the lack of proper representation on these and that equality considerations are not properly considered when decisions have been made on allocating funding.

Members who have responded are either unaware of their existence, or support particular community areas.

Proposals to increase income

The main suggestion from members is that there should be a charge on those providing student accommodation.