

An abstract illustration in shades of purple, pink, and orange. It depicts a woman's profile from the chest up, facing right. She is holding a megaphone to her mouth, and a large, stylized wave or sound wave emanates from the megaphone, filling the right side of the image. The background is a solid dark purple.

Annual Report

April 2021 - April 2022



Contents

Staff and trustees	3
Message from co-chairs	4
A year of change	5
Disabled Women Take Action (DWTA)	5
Together for Change	6
Volunteer and Training Coordinator	6
International Women's Day	6
Internship	8
Working with the Bristol women's sector	9
Sexual harassment on public transport	10
Support for the proposed nil cap policy on sexual entertainment venues	11
Anti-sexual harassment training	11
Membership and communication	12
Looking forward	13
Financial review	14
Thank you	15

Staff and trustees

Current Board 2021-22

1. Clare Meraz – co-Chair from November 2021
2. Carole Johnson – joined and co-Chair from November 2021
3. Bonny Chung – joined and Vice Chair from November 2021
4. Stephanie Poyntz – Treasurer
5. Ifeoma Fox
6. Nicki Norman
7. Sophie Shirt
8. Liz Potter – joined November 2021
9. Fran Inman – joined November 2021
10. Alice Clermont – joined November 2021

Exiting trustees

Penelope Gane – Chair, resigned November 2021
Alison Pallett – Secretary to the Board, resigned June 2021
Diane Bunyan – resigned November 2021
Vicki Morris – resigned June 2021

Current Staff

Katy Taylor – Director, started November 2020
Ellen Hammett – Advocacy and Voice Coordinator, started November 2021
Helen Ince – Community Organiser, started November 2021
Dahlia von Carolath – Community Organiser, started January 2022
Troy Tanska – Volunteer and Training Coordinator, started February 2022

Other staff that worked for Bristol Women's Voice in 2020-21

Jane Duffus – International Women's Day Coordinator, January – March 2022
Khairun Miah – Community Facilitator, April – June 2021, December 2021 – March 2022
Kate Atkinson – Intern, University of West England, July – September 2021
Becky White – Operations Manager, finished November 2021
Laila Garzon Deguer – Communications Coordinator, finished November 2021
Lily Khandker – Community Facilitator, finished June 2021

Message from the co-Chairs:

This year, we have emerged from the Covid-19 pandemic into what is being described as a “new normal”, however women’s positions continue to be as precarious and challenging as ever. Internationally, the invasion of Ukraine has cost lives, homes, and livelihoods, whilst leading many women and their families to seek refuge, whilst the United Supreme Court’s reversal of Roe vs Wade illustrates how long-held rights can be put at risk. In the UK, women are disproportionately impacted by the Cost-of-Living Crisis, while women’s safety continues to be threatened. Between April 2021 and March 2022, 125 women were killed by men in the UK, and in June 2022, the murder of Zara Aleena whilst walking home prompted vigils and protests across the country. We continue to hope for a fair and equal society, and the Women’s Health Strategy, informed by colleagues at Bristol Women’s Commission, goes some way to bring women’s issues into the limelight.

In the face of these challenges, Bristol Women’s Voice continues to deliver. We have initiated community organising projects to amplify women’s voices, were critical in Bristol City Council’s decision to declare a Cost-of-Living emergency, and we have initiated campaigns on issues impacting women today including exploitative employment practices in the care industry and worked to address tangible issues affecting women, such as accessibility of access to pavements and toilets. Our International Women’s Day event was held in person for the first time since 2020, and was, as always, a joyful celebration focusing on pertinent issues. We are a very small charity, with an extremely committed staff team, and could not have achieved without the efforts of Katy, Troy, Dahlia, Helen, Ellen and Jane, as well as our fantastic team of volunteers.

The Board has seen significant change in 2021-2, after our longstanding Chair Penny Gane stood down at our last AGM and we welcomed a number of new Trustees. Penny left big shoes to fill, and the last year has been a steep learning curve for us, and we have been working hard to develop our new Board. This includes incorporating feminist governance principles and developing further our values including inclusivity and respectful feedback. We have adopted a co-Chair model sharing responsibilities and decision-making. We have developed a five-year strategic plan and our priority is to ensure that we remain financially viable.

As Chairs, we continuously reflect on our charitable objectives and how we are delivering against these and are constantly struck by the challenges associated with representing the diversity of voices and views across the city. We seek to be a broad church, welcoming open dialogue, and respectful disagreement – recognising the many issues and concerns that do unite us. We have more to do to engage and listen to a breadth of women’s voices and will be further developing how we work with members and supporters and offer real benefit of being part of our community. We also recognise the many issues that divide women and members, including our campaign for a nil cap on sexual entertainment venues, and our transgender inclusion policy. We want to keep listening and developing our work to create a fair and equal society, whilst encouraging respectful challenge and dissent.

Across the UK, Trustees play an invaluable role as unpaid volunteers overseeing and supporting charities. This is particularly true for small charities like Bristol Women’s Voice. We extend our heartfelt thanks to the contribution all of our Trustees have made, and particularly to our outgoing Treasurer Stephanie Poyntz who is stepping down after four years on the Board.

Thank you to everyone who has supported Bristol Women’s Voice over the last decade, and we hope for many more successful years working to make equality a reality in Bristol.

Carole Johnson and Clare Meraz

A year of change

2021-22 was another year of change for Bristol Women's Voice. We have two new chairs and a co-chair who bring fresh energy, ideas and direction. Our new trustees bring greater diversity and help us towards our goal of being more representative of the communities of women we wish to serve.

We also have a new staff team. At the start of 2021-22 we faced an uncertain future with very little funding secured for the second half of the year. However, we were successful in our applications to the Bristol Impact Fund, the People's Health Trust and Quartet, enabling us to sustain the organisation and develop new roles.

Following on from the City Listening Project, through which we heard from 530 women about the barriers they faced to fulfilling their aspirations, we wanted to return to the women we worked with, supporting them to upskill and campaign to change the issues they told us were the most important to them.

With our new funding, we employed two Community Organisers, one specifically to work with women who identify as disabled, to do just this.

A campaign poster for 'Disabled Women Take Action'. It features an illustration of four women in yellow and orange dresses, one of whom is in a wheelchair, holding red flags. The text on the poster includes the title 'Disabled Women Take Action', the call to action 'Join with others to work towards positive change across Bristol.', the contact email 'DWTa@BristolWomensVoice.org.uk', and logos for funding partners: Bristol Women's Voice, WECIL (West of England Centre for Independent Living), funded through Health Lottery, South West, and People's Health Trust.

Disabled Women Take Action

Join with others
to work towards
positive change
across Bristol.

Get involved:
DWTa@BristolWomensVoice.org.uk

BWV
BRISTOL WOMEN'S VOICE

WECIL
supporting independent living

funded
through

Health
Lottery

South
West

people's
health
trust

Disabled Women Take Action (DWTA)

In October 2021, Helen Ince joined the team to co-deliver this campaign and influence project in partnership with the West of England Centre for Independent Living (WECIL). The project brings women together on a monthly basis to identify key issues and work together to address the double disadvantage they face when trying to access opportunities, health and wellbeing services and activities.

DWTA explored the issue of pavement obstructions. This includes lots of different items, such as household waste bins, cars and furniture outside cafes, that block the pavement. These can be a challenge for all pedestrians and pose particular difficulties for blind and partially sighted people, wheelchair users and mobility scooters. Following this we have worked with Age UK Bristol to develop leaflets raising awareness of this issues and advising people on what they should do if they come across an obstruction.

After a blind participant shared the difficulties she had in putting the correct items in recycling boxes, we have been working with Bristol City Council to develop a way of marking recycling boxes and household waste bins more accessible for visually impaired people.

Going into 2022-23, DWTA will be supporting ACORN in their campaign to re-open public toilets. With women using toilets 2.3 times more than men, making up the majority of carers and older people, and experiencing menstruation and pregnancy, toilets are very much a gendered issue. DWTA participants reported being particularly isolated during Covid when public toilets closed, preventing many from leaving their homes.

DWTA also hopes to build on links established with the universities to develop a trainers-with-lived-experience-led social model of disability training that has a gendered analysis and recognises the differing barriers that women face. This will initially be developed for psychotherapy and counselling students to support the development of more inclusive counselling services in Bristol.

Together for Change

Dahlia von Carolath joined us in January 2022 as a Community Organiser focused on working with disadvantaged women to tackle issues holding them back from greater equality, especially in more peripheral areas of the city. In the few months since starting, Dahlia has made strong links with women, organisations and community centres across the city from where we are hearing about how the cost-of-living crisis is beginning to impact.

With increasing poverty comes greater opportunity for worker exploitation as women are less likely to speak up about poor working conditions or harassment. As we are hearing about these incidents with increasing frequency, particularly in relation to employment agencies in the caring and cleaning sectors, we start to look at how we can empower women, form alliances and work together to call for change in 2022-23.

Volunteer and Training Coordinator

In November 2021, our operations manager, Becky White, left the organisation to focus on her academic studies. The role was reconfigured to focus on volunteer support, development and training and Troy Tanska joined the team as our Volunteer and Training Coordinator in February. She hit the ground running as we prepared for International Women's Day – the first in-person event run by a new staff team and a largely new board of trustees.

International Women's Day

We were delighted to return to the City Hall to run this event - our annual celebration of International Women's Day (although we celebrate women and their achievements across the year).

The day was well-attended and workshops were full. Around 1,500 people took part in 23 workshops, panels discussions and talks, with more than 20 organisations and women-led services promoting their specialist work.



Celebrate International Women's Day 2022
with Bristol Women's Voice

**Come and be heard.
Join our movement.
Every voice matters.**

**Together, we can
#BreaktheBiasBristol**

Saturday 5 March 2022, 10.30am – 4pm
Bristol City Hall, College Green, Bristol BS1 5TR

   

The programme included:

- an intro to podcast-making with Sound Women South West
- a self-defence class from Sister Courage
- a therapeutic yoga class for sexual violence survivors from SARSAS
- a panel on the Mayoral Referendum in partnership with Bristol Ideas
- a creative session to make Positive Postcards – From One Mother to Another
- a panel discussion on how to include disabled women in decision-making
- a meet-up for Sadaga: Arabic Women's Speaking Group
- a round table discussion for Bristol Women's Voice members to meet the workers and discuss priorities for the future.



We were pleased to have attracted a diverse audience.

Of those that filled in the feedback forms:

- 14% identified as being from Black and minoritised backgrounds; 50.7% identified as white/white British
- 8% were aged 16-24; 46% were aged 25-49; 24% were aged 50-64;
- 20% identified as disabled
- 61% identified as heterosexual; 16% as bisexual; 3.7% as lesbian/gay
- 40% had no religion; 13% were Christian; 9% were Muslim.

The event couldn't have been possible without all the hard work of Jane Duffus who stepped in to support coordination in January 2022. And, as always, the day was largely run by our invaluable volunteers with more than 80 volunteer workshop leaders, speakers and stewards who were supported by Bristol Women's Voice's small part-time team to deliver.

We are already excited about planning and running our International Women's Day event in 2023 with a more experienced team, a longer and more structured build-up, and the expertise of a young women's steering group to support the design and delivery.

What did you enjoy about the day:

"Good to see other people ather after 2 years of Covid. Interesting talks/debates. Laughter."

"Kindness coming from every table. An inspiring mix of people - wonderful to be among them, I wish I could have stayed longer."

"Connecting with other women and knowledgeable workshop leaders."

"Good discussion on intersection between women and people with disabilities."

"Welcoming, great location, lots of activities, loads of women, toilets great. Free fruit. Samosas were awesome!"

"Hearing more about women's groups, initiatives, events."

Internship

How and why did you get involved with BWV?

I wanted to find an organisation in Bristol that stands up for women's rights and aligns with my values. After a bit of Google searching, I came across BWV and it seemed like a perfect fit! At the time I was also applying for a master's course in literature and gender studies, and I felt like it would be a relevant charity to support that could also enhance my education.

What are you doing now at BWV?

The first thing I did with BWV was stewarding at the International Women's Day event in March 2022. It was a wonderful day of celebration and I met lots of lovely and inspiring people.

Since then, a small group of us have been helping to plan for the next IWD in March 2023. We've had the space to share ideas about how we think the event could be even more beneficial for women and those who identify as women in Bristol. I also recently attended a strategic meeting and took minutes; this was really insightful into how BWV supports the women's sector and it was a privilege to meet and hear from different people working in other charities across the city.

What are you looking forward to?

Becoming more involved with the work BWV does. The next IWD event will be great, and I'm also keen to see how I can bring and develop my skills to support other strands of the organisation.

What advice would you give to anyone who wants to know more about volunteering with us?

It feels like a really exciting time to join BWV. We have a lot of choice with the work we're doing, and Troy, our wonderful Volunteer Coordinator, seems very keen to help us develop as individuals within our volunteering for the charity. I feel like a valued member of the team and don't feel any pressure to do more work than I have the capacity to do. Everyone I've met so far has been incredibly friendly, welcoming and driven, and I leave every BWV session feeling completely energised! I'd recommend anyone who is considering getting involved to have a chat with us to see if it could work for them, as it is a really good opportunity.



Stephanie Butler
BWV volunteer

Working with the Bristol women's sector

As a women's equality voice and influence charity we do not provide direct support to women, but rather seek to upskill, empower and support them to speak out about the issues that most directly affect them in order to achieve change in policy and practice. We also aim to represent socially and economically marginalised women's voices in places where they might otherwise go unheard.

In 2021, Bristol Women's Voice consulted women-led organisations and groups to find out what added value we could provide as an umbrella organisation that does not specialise in any specific issue alone or in supporting a specific group of women.

Women's groups and charities highlighted that we might take a coordinating role to support the strength, sustainability and voice of the sector through bringing them together. Throughout 2021-22 this has involved:

- Coordinating quarterly meetings so that agencies could meet, share, support and learn from each other.
- Sharing information about campaigns, funding opportunities, emerging issues and services relevant to women.
- Providing individual capacity building support to smaller women's organisation to help sustain them.
- Sharing resources, and supporting organisations to share resources e.g. mentoring, policies or training opportunities across the sector.

Through working together and sharing information about emerging needs, we hope to ensure the voices of the more marginalised women are heard, known and represented when groups sit in strategic and decision-making meetings.

Closer working relationships between organisations also support women's access to services and increase knowledge and understanding of what's available to them.

Other strategic meetings we have regularly attended throughout 2021-22 include:

- Public Transport, Safety and Equalities group
- Women's Independent Advisory Group to the police
- Women's Safety Task Group
- Women's Commission

In partnership with these groups, we have worked to address sexual harassment and women's safety and to support the council's proposed nil cap on sexual entertainment venues, both of which continue into 2022-23.



Sexual harassment on public transport

In April and May of 2021, we ran a short survey in partnership with hate crime charity, SARI, and the Women's Safety Task Group to get a snapshot picture of women's experiences of sexual harassment on all forms of public transport, at stations and stops or walking to them. We invited women to share their experiences to help us evidence the scale of the problem to transport providers and the city council, to support our call for regular data to be collected.



Fifty-four women responded:

- 59% had experienced verbal sexual harassment on Bristol transport
- 38% had been inappropriately touched
- 63% had been made to feel unsafe
- 57% felt “very unsafe” (to the point of not using buses at night-time) to “relatively unsafe/alert” when walking home from the bus stop – particularly at night time.

Women reported a crossover of sexism with other forms of harassment including “fatism”, Islamophobia, racism, homophobia, transphobia, disablism and ageism. Women wearing hijabs are particularly vulnerable to abuse.

Eighty per cent of victims/survivors stated they didn't report it; the top two reasons were: they didn't feel there was any point/they would be taken seriously, and there wasn't anyone to report it to.

Comments included:

“I wouldn't be taken seriously by anyone. Women, girls and those who identify as female have this happen to them all the time, every day.”

“Would not know who to report it to... No confidence or belief that anyone would take any action. Did not feel able to say anything to bus driver - did not think he would take it seriously or be helpful.”

“What's the point? No-one does anything and I'd just be told 'they were only trying to be friendly'.”

“It did not seem serious enough just seemed like part of being a woman.”

“I didn't think to report it. Is true that for many days I was scared to see him again on the bus when I was returning home after work, but I never thought about reporting. I suppose because you get used to this kind of thing.”

We presented this feedback to First Bus and other transport providers at the Public Transport Safety and Equalities Group who acknowledge there is an issue; however, progress to address it is slow. We will continue to lobby for action, offering support e.g. training, policy review, advice and learning from elsewhere, in 2022-23.

Support for the proposed nil cap policy on sexual entertainment venues

Throughout 2021-22 we have been working to raise awareness of the negative impact of sexual entertainment venues on men's attitudes towards women.

We have produced several briefings that summarise qualitative and quantitative research, much of which is based on women's lived experience, which illustrates how work to tackle male violence against women and girls and the male entitlement that underpins it is most effective at the community and cultural level.

This is why we supported the council's proposed nil cap policy and continued, along with other organisations in the sector, to campaign in favour of this into 2022-23.



Anti-sexual harassment training

In 2021 we designed and delivered two well-received anti-sexual harassment training sessions to commercial construction company, Sweet Construct.

We also supported Bristol City Council with the development of their anti-sexual harassment training package for night time economy workers.

We provided a misogyny awareness-raising workshop to Hate Crime Officers in the Avon and Somerset Police and are in conversation about delivering further training in 2022-23.

“Sweet Construct commissioned Bristol Women’s Voice to design and deliver training to our teams on the issue of sexual harassment and misogyny in the workplace and beyond. As a regional construction company, it is important that our teams and supply chain are supported to identify, intervene and prevent unwanted or inappropriate conduct wherever it occurs. We worked with Katy to develop a bespoke training course that was tailored to the needs of our teams. The training sessions included case studies and statistics which really helped to convey to our teams the impact of such behaviour. Practical tools were also included, helping the teams to know what to do, as well as when. The feedback was extremely positive, with most attendees rating the training 5/5. I would recommend Katy and Bristol Women’s Voice to any company wishing to support their teams in tackling this important topic.”

Linda Sweet
Sweet Construct

Membership and communication

In November 2021, we were delighted to be awarded some money for on-going communications as part of our Bristol Impact Fund Grant and to have Ellen Hammett join the team.

Her skills and experience have enabled us to develop our communications. In 2021-22 we have increased our social media followers across all channels; we have:

- 4,985 (up from 4,679) Facebook followers.
- 4,826 (up from 4,745) Twitter followers.
- 3,137 (up from 2,609) Instagram followers.

In 2021-22 we have sought to be increasingly transparent with and accountable to our membership. This is on-going work which we will continue into 2022-23 as we take a closer look at what it means to be a member of Bristol Women's Voice now that Covid restrictions have passed and more face-to-face events are possible.

In the meantime: we have tried to make our newsletter more informative of what we are doing so that members can understand the variety of issues we are working on. Our newsletter goes to 4,213 recipients, with a consistent open rate of more than 31%.

We have started an annual members' survey where we ask for your feedback on how you think we're doing and what you think the top priorities are for us to work on in the next year. In 2021 you told us these were women's safety and women's economic inequality.

We also held a roundtable event at International Women's Day where we invited women to meet the team, hear about our work and engage in small group discussions to feed back to us on what they feel our priorities should be. This will be a regular part of our International Women's Day event from now on.

Feedback from these sources highlights how divided our members are on certain issues and that we have both backing and opposition on issues including our support for the Council's proposed nil cap on sexual entertainment venues.



Looking forward

Going into 2022-23 with new staff, new chairs and a largely new board, we will be reflecting on our vision, mission and values and exploring how we can better empower our membership to lead campaigns that are reflective of all women's experiences in Bristol, continuing to focus on economic inequality and safety.



We offer continued commitment to engaging in constructive conversation with members; our director has consistently offered to speak to women who wish to share ideas or concerns, or who wish to understand why we have reached our positions. We may not always agree but we feel that dialogue is always the best way forward and we will be looking to find ways to extend these opportunities in the coming years.

Financial review

2021/2022 marks the fifth full financial year that Bristol Women's Voice has operated as a CIO and it has been a year of growth.

Where our money comes from:

Our main source of income to support our core work is the grant funding received from Bristol City Council's Impact Fund 2. This was awarded in October 2021. Prior to that we were in receipt of Bristol Impact Fund 1.

At a similar time we also received a two-year grant from Quartet to support core costs: the Volunteer and Training Coordinator and part of the Director post.

We received a two-year grant from the People's Health Trust to fund our Disabled Women Take Action Project.

Across 2021-22 we spent the grant provided by Awards for All to run our Covid Keep in Contact Project.

We would like to thank our regular donors, those that contributed to our fundraising campaign and those who made one-off donations at International Women's Day or other points throughout the year. Your support is vital and very much appreciated.

We thank Bristol City Council for their donation in kind of the City Hall, secured via the Women's Commission, for International Women's Day event.

Our income:

	2020-21	2021-22
Income from donations	£197	£13,929
Income from charitable activities:		
Bristol City Council Impact Fund	£37,019	£40,352
Bristol City Council City Listening Project	£35,726	£0
Awards for All, National Lottery Fund	£10,000	£0
Quartet	£8,000	£20,000
People's Health Trust		£22,000
Internships	£2,299	£1,260
DWP (Access to Work payments)		£5,079
Income from events	£0	
Other	£213	£200
Total income	£93,257	£102,820

Our expenditure:

Our expenditure in 2021-22 was £92,596, providing a surplus of unrestricted funds of £10,224.

A total of £45,957 are brought forward into 2022-23.



THANK YOU

Many thanks to all of our volunteers, members, supporters, donors and funders.
Our work would not be possible without your incredible contributions.

MANY THANKS TO OUR FUNDERS THIS YEAR



in kind funding
– City Hall

