



BRISTOL WOMEN'S VOICE



ANNUAL REPORT

APRIL 2022–MARCH 2023

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STAFF AND TRUSTEES 2022–2023

CURRENT BOARD

Clare Meraz – Co-Chair
Carole Johnson – Co-Chair
Bonny Chung
Camilla Hall – Treasurer
Liz Potter
Alice Clermont
Libby Watson
Hannah Stapley-Parker
Emily Johnstone

EXITING TRUSTEES

Stephanie Poyntz
Ifeoma Fox
Nicki Norman
Sophie Shirt
Fran Inman

CURRENT STAFF

Katy Taylor – Director
Helen Ince – Community Organiser
Dahlia von Carolath – Community Organiser
Troy Tanka – Volunteer and Training Coordinator
Eilidh Tannett – Community Hub Coordinator
Jane Duffus – Communications Lead

Other staff who worked for Bristol Women's Voice during 2022–2023

Jane Duffus – International Women's Day Coordinator
Ellen Hammett – Advocacy and Voice Coordinator
Sophie Shirt – Advocacy and Voice Coordinator cover

A MESSAGE FROM THE CO-CHAIRS



Carole Johnson



Clare Meraz

2022–2023 was yet another mixed picture for women’s rights locally, nationally and internationally.

It saw two high profile female leaders - Nicola Sturgeon and Jacinda Ardern - stepping down from office, citing the pressures of the role. It saw continued regression on women’s and girls’ opportunities in Afghanistan, eroding reproductive rights in the United States, and devastation for women and their families in Ukraine, Turkey and Sudan. Yet the power and solidarity of women has shone through, notably via the women’s revolution in Iran. And, closer to home, in campaigns to secure free period products in Scotland, and continued raising of the profile of menopause.

Bristol has continued to be part of this movement, with our sisters across the city influencing the government’s women’s health strategy, campaigning for disabled women’s rights, and highlighting the impossible choices women make with limited resources during the cost-of-living crisis. Bristol Women’s Voice has a powerful base through our members and relationships, and we have worked to create spaces where voices can be heard and amplified.



*"If I can't dance, I don't
want to be part of
your revolution."*

We understand that our members and supporters sometimes disagree, but we want to create a space where respectful challenge and debate can happen while we remain part of a strong movement making women's equality a reality. Emma Goldman once said: "If I can't dance, I don't want to be part of your revolution." And we were overjoyed by the joyful dancing, singing and community we experienced at our annual International Women's Day event in March this year.

In 2023, we have started to invigorate our membership through members-only events, and our annual International Women's Day event was yet another roaring success despite the weather threatening to dampen our spirits.

We have been joined by skilled, passionate and generous new trustees who are taking a strategic lead in key areas such as communications and marketing. New and old staff continue to work with dedication and drive to deliver on our strategic plan.

Our values – empowering, transparent, inclusive and nurturing - are central to how our charity works and develops together. We strongly believe that Bristol Women's Voice has a key role to play in continuing to create an inclusive space for the women and girls of our wonderful city to come together, find common ground, disagree, form movements and, above all, to dance.

Carole Johnson and Clare Meraz

2022–2023

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

2022–23 was a year of embedding new staff and new projects and, through this, deepening our relationship with women in the community. It's been a tough year for most of us because the rising prices hit the poorest communities the hardest.



Get ready! Make protest signs

Materials available. BYO. Donations of brushes, cardboards, paint, sticks & fabrics appreciated. Children welcome.

22nd

Drop in between

PRSC 14 Hillgrove

ORGANISING

The cost-of-living crisis was already tangible in many neighbourhoods and communities we were working in during March 2022. During our regular meetings with decision makers and the mayor's conversations with community workers, we frequently shared the stories women were telling us about their hardships. These conversations formed the seed from which the One City Cost-of-Living Response grew.

Women approached us with stories about employers' exploitative practices, especially in the caring and cleaning industry. And so we started surveys, met with unions, organised care providers' 'Know Your Rights' workshops, and held in-depth conversations with women to find out what change they needed and what campaigns could be developed to create safer and more dignified working environments for them. After much consideration, we decided to give our full support to the existing Ethical Care Charter, written by UNISON and signed by Bristol's Mayor Marvin Rees. We co-organised the Caring Economy event with Bristol Women's Commission, who produced a manifesto to initiate the change we need to see to make this a fairer and more liveable society where women's caring responsibilities are seen and supported.



October 2022,
10am – 3pm
Bristol BS2 8JT



Feeling the blues again?

You are invited to join us for a relaxed morning, in good company, to find out more about support in your area, stress releasing mandala drawing, chatting, cookies & a hot cuppa.

Special guests: Herbalists Without Borders, Bristol.

A massage therapist to tend to your head and shoulders (clothed) if you feel like it.

WELLBEING MORNING FOR WOMEN

2nd November 2022, 9.30am – 11.30am at The Hub,
Gainsborough Square, Lockleaze, Bristol BS7 9FB



*"Collaboration
is key in these
hard times."*

Over the last 12 months, we have offered a variety of workshops hosted and facilitated by female artists, speakers, practitioners and us, such as 'Reclaim your Power', 'Welcoming our Daughters into their Menstruation Cycle', 'Let's Talk about Women at Work', and 'Be Magnificent' – a confidence building and group facilitation skills workshop. We have also been creating peer-to-peer spaces such as 'Talking about Menopause' and 'Art for Wellbeing' workshops.

We have had pop-up stalls in various city-wide locations including at the St Paul's Adventure Playground, where women decided the campaign they would be running to improve their situation would be called: 'Help. Just Help.'

We also worked in welcoming and community spaces offering pop-up events, such as weekly and monthly sessions in areas including Avonmouth, Fishponds, Hartcliffe, Horfield, Knowle, Lockleaze, Redcliffe, St Paul's, Wellspring Settlement and Withywood.

Collaboration is key in these hard times and we fostered relationships with many other organisations, community spaces, communities and women-led groups to be more effective for the benefit of all the women in Bristol.

THE COST-OF-LIVING CRISIS AND THE WOMEN'S COMMUNITY HUB

This year, alongside many voluntary sector organisations in Bristol, we were part of on-going discussions with Bristol City Council about how best to respond to the cost-of-living crisis. We were also part of the conversation about developing Welcoming Spaces and Community Hubs to enable women to access the support they need across the winter. We successfully applied for Community Hub funding and Eilidh Tannett joined the team in November 2022. Her role is to support Welcoming Spaces across Bristol become more inclusive and accessible to women.

Eilidh quickly developed a comprehensive online directory of services, support networks and groups for women, and we shared this along with a Bristol Women's Voice Guide to Supporting Women's Access to more than 100 welcoming

spaces. Eilidh supported the set-up of women-only welcoming space sessions and invested time in building a network of connections with partners in the community including local government, charitable organisations, and allied corporate businesses.

While all of this was intended to bolster the accessibility of services for women in the community, Eilidh added value to the Welcoming Spaces through holding an ongoing series of 'Inspiring Women Talks' in underfunded areas of Bristol. She also started and maintained a WhatsApp Broadcast Group which promotes news and events relating to local women. This has connected women in the community to each other, as well as with third-parties who are particularly dedicated to supporting them. You can join the WhatsApp group by messaging this number: **07796 433 663**.





DISABLED WOMEN TAKE ACTION

We continued our Disabled Women's Take Action (DWTA) project, run in partnership with the West of England Centre for Independent Living (WECIL) throughout 2022–2023. Helen Ince, our Community Organiser, has worked with participants to raise awareness about the campaign to re-open public toilets which have remained closed since Covid 19 lockdowns. Toilets have been a key issue for the women we work with, and the lack of them creates a particular barrier for disabled women having equal access to public spaces.

The DWTA project therefore worked hard to secure signatures for the Acorn petition calling for toilet provision to be reviewed and for closed toilets to be re-opened, and participants secured support in lobbying the Mayor's Office after speaking at the Women's Commission and the Disability Commission.

In addition, DWTA participants have been working with a volunteer videographer to create a short film that raises awareness of Bristol's Community Toilet Scheme, which ensures that the public has access to toilet facilities during normal opening hours without needing to make a purchase. The film hopes to encourage more venues to sign-up and to educate staff about why this is so important.



DWTA has also co-founded the Public Toilets Equalities Task Group, involving more than 20 organisations. These organisations all support people who are most in need of public toilet provision: such as older people, disabled people, people with long-term health conditions, women, children and homeless people.

INCLUSIVE COUNSELLING

Some DWTA members discovered that they shared similar difficult experiences regarding accessing adequate counselling and psychotherapy. Some women found that their impairment became over-focused on at these sessions, that their access needs weren't met at the counselling sessions, and/or that the language used didn't fit the Social Model of Disability.

Therefore, the women decided that DWTA needed to influence the counselling process at an early stage. So we approached the University of the West of England to offer a session with a group of counselling and psychotherapy students. In the session, we spoke with students about ours and their experiences and about the Social Model of Disability. We heard that, in practice, they were worried to touch on the subject of disability with people they counselled in case they caused offence or made people feel uncomfortable, which reflects wider societal attitudes towards disability. By the end of the session, the students said they felt much more comfortable talking about disability.

DWTA CASE STUDY

DWTA PARTICIPANT, SHRUTHI VENKATACHALAM



I decided to join Disabled Women Take Action for several key reasons. Firstly, I wanted to connect with other disabled women in Bristol and establish a network of friendships. As an international disabled student living in Bristol, I faced numerous challenges due to my disability and student status. I struggled to find a safe space where I could share my experiences and learn from others with similar identities, such as disabled women.

Disabled Women Take Action is an exceptional group for the following reasons. Firstly, it provides a highly safe and welcoming environment for disabled women, particularly those from diverse backgrounds. It offers an open space where every member can freely share their concerns, ideas, and plans for taking action to bring about positive change in the lives of our disabled community and promote a more equitable society.

Being a member of Disabled Women Take Action has been immensely beneficial to me. Firstly, I have learned about numerous resources and services that are available to disabled individuals. This knowledge has empowered me to access the support I need. Secondly, the organization has provided me with a collective space to share ideas and collaborate on interventions related to mental health, which has been a personal concern from a lived experience perspective. Lastly, Disabled Women Take Action has facilitated my participation in training sessions and workshops, allowing me to enhance and transform my skills, which ultimately contributes to making a positive impact.



VOLUNTEERING

In the first part of 2022–2023, Bristol Women’s Voice’s Volunteer and Training Coordinator, Troy Tanska, developed new systems to support more than 40 women who registered to volunteer with Bristol Women’s Voice. Between them, volunteers have contributed more than 200 hours as media bloggers and reviewers, strategic researchers, grassroots supporters, mentors and more. We delivered six volunteer induction sessions across the year.

More than
200

hours have been
contributed by volunteers

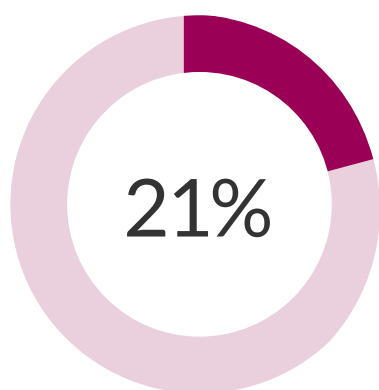
6

volunteer induction
sessions were delivered

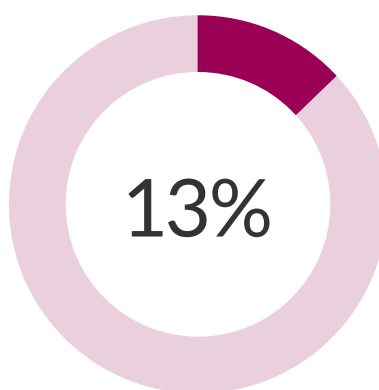


INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

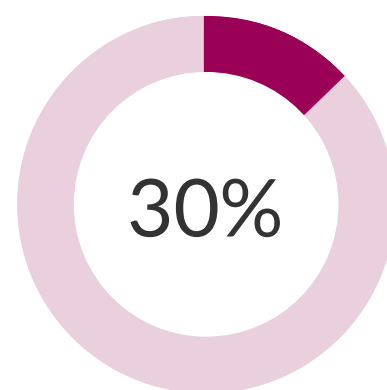
Volunteers were key to the production of our biggest and best International Women's Day (IWD) celebration yet. We held this on 11 March 2023 inside City Hall and outside on College Green. The event brought together around 2,000 people taking part in an expanded programme of performance, activities, discussions, panel debates, creative activities and workshops.



attendees identified as
lesbian or bisexual



described themselves
as disabled



were from Black and
minoritised backgrounds



"I loved it. Massive well done to everyone. Just brilliant."

"Such a joy."

"So nice to see women being themselves from all around the world."

"Really quite amazing community."

"Not the stereotypical women you see on TV."

"I would love to see more of this every year."

Following the daytime activities, we held our first ever IWD evening event, which brought together a stellar line-up of women performers who gathered in the Wiper and Tru Brewery Tap Room.

The whole day-long event was headed up by an incredible team of volunteer women, who had worked all year to deliver a high quality, exciting, stimulating and creative day welcoming all. Joining were **188** fantastic volunteer performers, contributors, and stewards working for a total of **1,700 hours** (equivalent to £18K minimum wage) to make IWD23 happen.

Feedback from women was heart-warming: the event was rated highly by nearly all, resulting in a 4–4.5 out of 5 score across the board in terms of inclusivity and accessibility, organisation and quality.

INTERNSHIPS

We loved having hardworking and bright International Relations graduate Olivia Barter with us for the summer. She brought fresh perspectives to the team and supported us with strategic research and admin support, as well as contributing features and blogs for the website. Thanks to University of Bristol for the placement.

We also hosted Elisa Montje-Jelfs, who graduated in International Relations in 2022. She started volunteering with Bristol Women's Voice following an informal chat about gender politics and the benefits of volunteering. Initially helping to organise workshops and talks, Elisa quickly realised her research skills and strategic knowledge could be useful and stepped up to help Bristol Women's Voice's Director, Katy Taylor. Now working part-time in London, Elisa remains in touch and would be happy to volunteer again.

CASE STUDY

ELISA MONTJE-JELFS



"I chose to volunteer with BWV as I feel a deep sense of purpose to be part of forces helping women and girls feel and live their power and to flourish. BWV works with women and girls across the region on a multiplicity of ways to do just this.

"One of the good things of volunteering with BWV has been working alongside such inspiring women and learning from them. A challenging aspect has been, at times, feeling greater sadness and rage that we live

in a world where so many gendered barriers persist and have such extreme impacts on people's lives.

"Volunteering with BWV has made me realise, even more, the importance of supporting and lifting up the women I hold dear as well as checking myself when I hold any form of prejudgement towards other women. I've also become more conscious of creating open conversations with people who may not believe in the relevance of feminism. The experience has also, fundamentally, increased my desire to spend my life working with women, alongside women and for women."

TRAINING

Bristol Women's Voice delivered 'Feminist Governance Training' to an audience from five different trustee boards in women's sector. We also delivered 'Your Work through a Feminist Lens' and 'Anti-Sexual Harassment' training to private and voluntary sector organisations. In addition, we supported the development of new 'Anti-Sexual Harassment' training tools for use in night-time economy venues. We will be setting up further 'Feminist Leadership and Activism' training sessions in the coming year.

COLLABORATING, INFLUENCING AND RAISING AWARENESS

Bristol Women's Voice continued to provide a coordinating and supportive role for the women's sector across 2022–2023 through facilitating quarterly meetings and shared resources where possible.

We coordinated the submission of a joint bid across six women-led groups for £500,000 but were unfortunately unsuccessful. However, we supported two small organisations to access smaller funding, and we provided training to community mentors in Sadaga Arabic Speaking Women's Group to support the development of their project. We have shared a Menopause and Menstruation Policy template, and provided ad hoc advice and support to help build women's groups' capacity.

We continue to work with our partners to support the increase in women's safety on public transport and in public spaces. We are doing this through raising women's concerns in meetings with transport providers, the police and other relevant bodies. Bristol Women's Voice is also represented in the following groups:

- Women's Independent Advisory Group (police) – Co-Chair
- One City Transport Board
- Public Transport Safety and Equalities Group
- Violence Against Women and Girls Public Transport
- Night-time Economy Advisory Board
- Womens' Safety Taskgroup – Bristol Women's Commission
- Women's Economic Taskgroup – Bristol Women's Commission
- Bristol Women's Commission
- Community Exchange
- Cost of Living Coordination Group



BRISTOL WOMEN'S VOICE MEMBERS

Our membership is free and open to anyone who identifies as a woman, lives/works/studies in Bristol, and agrees with our mission, vision and values.

BENEFITS OF BEING A MEMBER INCLUDE:

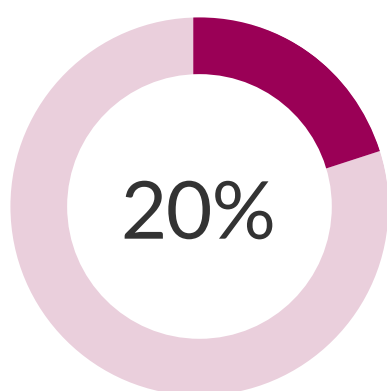
- Annual membership survey to inform our decisions about what areas of work we focus on.
- Invite to our AGM with a vote to confirm trustees in role.
- Invitation to bi-annual members' events focused on learning and discussion, such as: 'in conversation' talks, political question times, panel discussions on current or emerging issues that most impact women and women's equality.
- Priority access to workshops and training events where numbers are limited.

In 2022–2023, we have sought to be increasingly clear about, transparent with and accountable to our membership. We welcome all opportunities to get to know our members more and to encourage other women to join us.

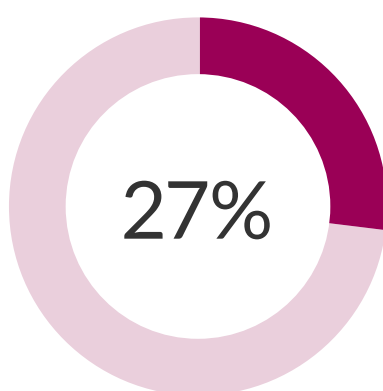
We have made our newsletter more informative about what we are doing so that members can understand the variety of issues we are working on. Our newsletter goes to 4,185 recipients with a regular open rate of around 40%.

We ran our annual members' survey for the second time this year, to 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. We had a good increase in responses this year, with 162 members telling us what they thought. Of the 162 who replied, we have a fairly even split between those who had been members for more than five years and newer members, down to those who had joined within the previous year. Equalities data highlights that we need to do better to reach out to young women and Black and minoritised women.

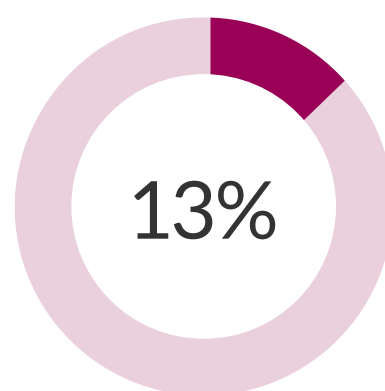
Currently our members break down as follows:



identified as lesbian
or bisexual



identified
as disabled



identified as being from
Black and minoritised
backgrounds

27%

regularly experienced economic
hardship and a further **12%**
experienced it occasionally

42%

stated that money held them back
from regular activities and a further
20% said it did so occasionally.

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

We focussed our well-attended Annual General Meeting, last held in October 2022, on women's safety. Somerset and Avon Rape and Sexual Abuse Services (SARSAS) CEO and BWV Director Katy Taylor, were in conversation with author Jane Meyrick to launch Jane's new book: '#MeToo for Women and Men: Understanding Power through Sexual Harassment'.

Bristol Women's Voice held our first members' only event of 2022–23 in November and this focussed on women's safety. Bristol Women's Voice chaired a women-only panel discussion where members could put their questions and opinions to leading women police officers, including Chief Constable Sarah Crew. Feedback indicated there was a lot of appetite for these events, and we also learnt how we can facilitate them more effectively and inclusively in future.

We will continue to provide events in these areas of focus, and to develop women's actions groups to raise awareness and campaign in these areas in 2023–2024.

**During 2022–2023, our social media followers
across all channels have changed as follows:**



5,105

(up from 4,985)

Facebook followers



4,933

(up from 4,827)

Twitter followers



3,517

(up from 3,137)

Instagram followers



LOOKING FORWARD

Across the year, women repeatedly told us that the most pressing areas of concern they want us to work on are women's economic inequality and the lack of women's safety. These priorities have remained consistent for years and, going into 2023–2024, we will be looking at movement building to support campaigns to tackle these issues.

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

2022/2023 marks the fifth full financial year that Bristol Women's Voice has operated as a CIO and it has been another 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.

We have a two-year grant from Quartet to support core costs including: the Volunteer and Training Coordinator role and part of the Director post.

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

This year, we received another grant from Quartet to employ our Community Hub Coordinator.

This year, for the first time, we received funding towards our International Women's Day event from the Big Lottery Awards for All. We were also extremely grateful for monetary and in-kind sponsorship from Hargreaves Lansdown and Leidos.

We would like to thank our regular donors 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 Bristol City Hall, secured via Bristol Women's Commission, for International Women's Day event.

Our income

	2022–2023	2021–2022
Income from donations	£2,131	£13,929
Income from charitable activities:		
Bristol City Council Impact Fund	£45,106	£40,352
Awards for All, National Lottery Fund	£10,000	0
Quartet	£44,800	£20,000
People's Health Trust	£10,000	£22,000
Internships	£1,260	£1,260
DWP (Access to Work payments)		£5,079
Other grants	£9,900	
Training sales	£1,500	£200
Total income	£124,697	£102,820

Our expenditure

	2022–2023	2021–2022
Salaries including Pension and NI	£61,903	£41,902
User engagement and access costs	£462	£924
Activity costs	£17,185	£21,752
Printing and publicity	£1,803	£815
Volunteer expenses	£1,673	£416
Costs of merchandise	£0	£200
Support costs including support salaries, rent, access to work, website, travel, insurance, telephone and depreciation	£34,480	£26,588
Total expenditure	£117,507	£92,597

We will carry forward £53,147 into 2023-24, of which £21,216 is unrestricted.

THANK YOU

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



**HARGREAVES
LANSDOWN**



CONTACT US

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