Action Plan

The European Charter for equality of women and men in local life



Bristol Women's Commission

Committed to achieving real equality for women in Bristol

Background

On International Women's Day, March 8th 2013, Bristol became the first city in the UK to sign the European Charter for equality of women and men in local life. In addition to signing the Charter, the Mayor, George Ferguson established the Bristol Women's Commission to be the mechanism by which the City demonstrates its progress on meeting the obligations of the Charter.

The Women's Commission was tasked with identifying the key priorities of Bristol women and producing a Women's Strategy setting out goals and an action plan which convey the commitments in the Charter. Bristol Women's Commission is made up of senior women from key agencies across the city and is chaired by Penny Gane, Chair of Bristol Women's Voice - a network for all women in Bristol.

Bristol Women's Commission is made up of senior women from the following organisations:

- Avon and Somerset Constabulary
- Bristol City Council
- Bristol Fawcett Society
- Bristol Women's Voice
- City of Bristol College
- Confederation of British Industry
- Firstgroup
- South West Media
- UNISON
- University of Bristol
- University Hospitals Bristol
- University of West of England
- Voscur
- West of England Local Enterprise Partnership

The European Charter for equality of women and men in local life

In signing the Charter on behalf of Bristol, the mayor made a formal commitment to the principle of gender equality and to undertake the necessary actions to achieve real equality in practice.

The Charter has six fundamental principles:

1. Equality of women and men is a fundamental right
2. To ensure the equality of women and men, multiple discrimination and disadvantage must be addressed
3. The balanced participation of women and men in decision making is a pre-requisite of a democratic society
4. The elimination of gender stereotypes is fundamental to achieving equality of women and men
5. Integrating the gender perspective into all activities of local and regional government is necessary to advance equality of women and men
6. Properly resourced action plans and programmes are necessary tools to advance equality of women and men

The Charter contains thirty articles with commitments to implement gender equality across a range of sectors. See Appendix 1 for the complete Charter. In order to meet the Charter obligations, Bristol Women's Commission has produced this action plan which outlines work which will be undertaken to progress the Charter commitments.

Bristol Women's Commission have chosen to prioritise the following articles in the EU Charter as these most closely reflect the priorities identified by Bristol women through consultation.

Article 1 Democratic accountability

Article 2 The Political role

Article 3 Participation in Political and Civic life

Article 6 Countering Stereotypes

Article 14 Health

Article 22 Gender Based Violence

Article 26 Mobility and Transport

Article 27 Economic Development

Bristol Women's Commission Priorities

In order to progress work in these priority areas, the Commission has established five Task Groups; Women's Safety, Women's Representation in Public Life, Women's Health, Women and Transport and Women and the Economy. A number of organisations are represented on the task groups as outlined below:

Women's Safety	Bristol City Council, University of Bristol, Somerset and Avon Rape and Sexual Abuse Support, Bristol Women's Voice, University of the West of England, Bristol Women's Voice, Bristol Fawcett.
Women's Representation in Public Life	Bristol Women's Voice, Voscur, Bristol Fawcett, Bristol City Council.
Women's Health	University of Bristol, Bristol Women's Voice, Care Forum, Womankind, University Hospitals Bristol, University of the West of England, Healthwatch, Clinical Commissioning Group, Bristol City Council.
Women and Transport	Bristol Women's Voice, University of the West of England, FirstGroup, Local Enterprise Partnership
Women and the Economy	Voscur, Fairplay South-West, Women's Budget Group, Bristol City Council, University of West of England,

Each task group has a mix of academics, experts and women working in the field. Both universities have placed key academics on the task groups to give direction and to provide research capacity for the task groups.

The Action Plan in this document outlines the work that each task group is focussing on to progress work in each of the priority articles of the EU Charter.

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Mayor George Ferguson signs the European Charter for equality of women and men in local life on behalf of Bristol in March 2013.

Roundtable Event

In October 2014 Bristol Women's Commission held a Roundtable and Networking Event at the University of Bristol to share the work of the Commission and invite feedback from stakeholders.

The five Commission task groups gave presentations on their work, priorities and planned actions and delegates were invited to contribute by sharing ideas, information and identifying further actions needed to make the priorities happen.

Delegates took part in facilitated discussions in each of the five task group work areas and were asked to rank their top two priorities from a list of potential actions provided by each task group. Delegates were able to add new priorities and vote on them.

The responses provided at the meeting enabled the Commission and its task groups to:

- Identify priority actions across the commission to feed into this action plan
- Identify new projects and partners
- Identify cross cutting issues to work on jointly



Women discuss priorities for action at the Roundtable and Networking Event.

Women's Representation in Public Life

Article 1	**Democratic Accountability**
Article 2	**Political representation**
Article 3	**Participation in political and civil life**

The Women's Representation task group works to increase women's representation and leadership in politics and in both public and private sector institutions across the city. Women make up 51% of Bristol's population but whereas 100% of Bristol's Members of Parliament are women only 36% of Bristol's 70 local councillors are women.
The aim of the group is to bring about change in public, private and political institutions in the city to ensure gender balanced leadership and to ensure that the city's key organisations hear, understand and respond to the needs of women.

Objective	Action	Outcome	Owner	Timescale
Increase the number of women elected as councillors by removing barriers to election and promoting women's participation in public life as a social norm. Increase the number of women elected as councillors by removing barriers to election and promoting women's participation in public life as a social norm.	Develop and launch 50:50 campaign to have 50% women councillors in Bristol 2016.	50:50 campaign Launch event held at City Hall Media coverage of the launch event.	Women's representation Task Group Bristol City Council	Complete - July 2015

Objective	Action	Outcome	Owner	Timescale
	Work with a range of media outlets and stakeholder organisations to communicate and promote the benefits of women's participation in political and democratic roles.	Magazine article, press coverage and social media coverage of campaign on a monthly basis.	South west Media	July 2015-January 2016
	Identify and promote existing elected women to act as role models in breaking down of gender stereotypes.	Leaflet about how women can become councillors, film and council web page about being a woman councillor. Increased understanding of councillor role and election process by women.	All political parties	Film and webpage complete – October 2013
	Hold 'Women in Public Life' event to give women the opportunity to meet women involved in public life.	Daytime and evening event held and a range of women attend.	Women's representation Task Group, Bristol City Council	Complete – October 2013
	Hold information day for potential councillors to give further information on standing for election	Increased number of women standing for election.	All political parties, Bristol City Council	Autumn 2016

Objective	Action	Outcome	Owner	Timescale
	Encourage a commitment from all party leaders for at least one woman candidate for election in each ward.	Public commitment from party leaders. At least one female candidate for each ward at 2016 election	Women's representation Task Group	2016 election (date TBC
Achieve more women on private sector boards	Conduct research into the gender make up of public and private sector boards in Bristol.	Final report published	Women's representation Task Group	Draft report complete.
	Establish working links with Business West to audit and adopt best practice in local business	Increased representation of women on private sector boards.	Business West	
Achieve more women on public sector boards.	Conduct survey of public meetings to establish how often women attend and the duration they speak.	Research conducted at City Council. Results showed that women tend to speak for shorter durations than men.	Women's representation Task Group	Draft report complete.
	Highlight range of decision-making and influencing roles across the city via 'Women in Public Life' event	More women aware of opportunities to get involved in decision-making roles and process of application better understood.	Women's representation Task Group, Bristol City Council,	



Bristol's Lord Mayor Councillor Clare Campion-Smith and elected Mayor George Ferguson join Penny Gane, Chair of Bristol Women's Commission at the launch of the 50:50 campaign which aims to increase the number of women councillors in Bristol from 36% to 50% by 2016.

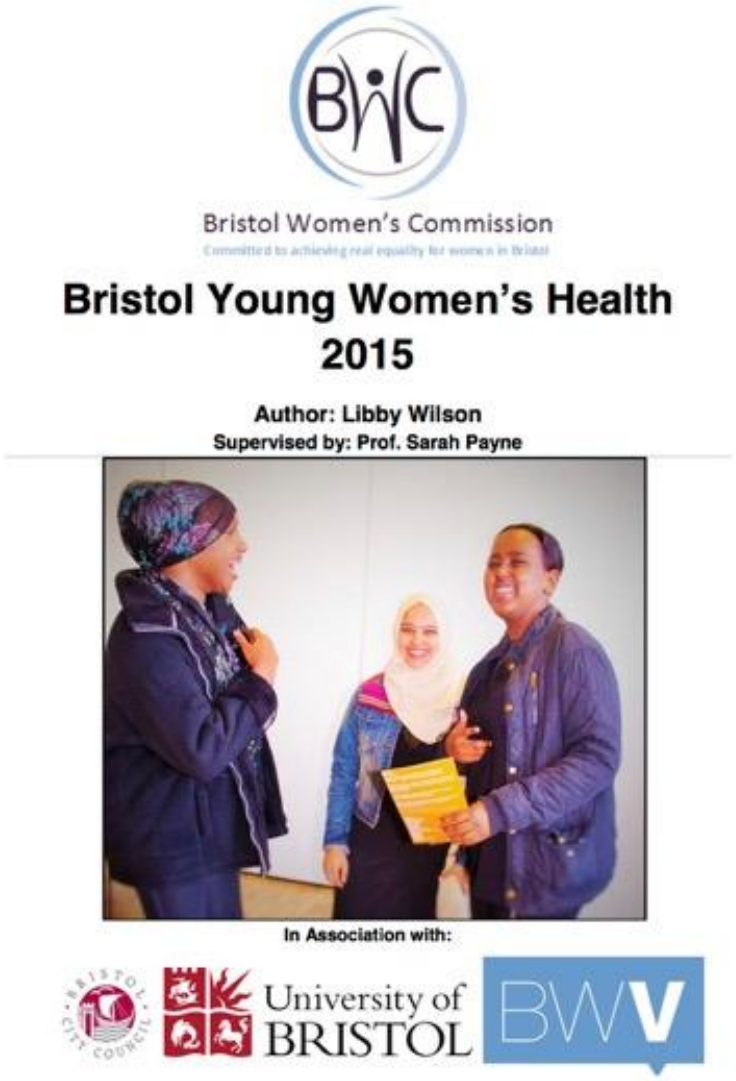
Women's Health

Article 14 – Health

The Women and Health task group works to improve the health and wellbeing of Bristol Women of all ages through research, action, and influence. The group will change strategy and raise the profile of the importance of women's health and of taking a gendered approach in all aspects of health promotion and planning to secure equal opportunities for women to enjoy good health.

Objective	Action	Outcomes	Owner	Timescale
To improve the health and wellbeing of Bristol Women of all ages through research, action, and influence.	Conduct research into young women's health needs in Bristol. Researcher from BWV under supervision of University of Bristol.	Report 'Bristol Young Women's Health' – a literature review of young women's health needs, completed. Clear idea of health needs and inequalities of young women.	University of Bristol	Complete January 2015
	Appoint researcher to conduct focus groups with young women to understand where young women find information about health and what their experiences of health services in Bristol are.	Recommendations as to how to improve access to health information and services for young women.	University of the West of England	September 2015

Objective	Action	Outcomes	Owner	Timescale
Raise the profile of the importance of women's health and of taking a gendered approach in all aspects of health promotion and planning to secure equal opportunities for women to enjoy good health.	Present findings of research by convening and hosting an event for health and other professionals on Young Women's health.	Improved knowledge by health professionals of young women's health needs, appropriate interventions and the importance of taking a gendered approach to health across the city.	University of Bristol, University of the West of England	Spring 2016
	Investigate the possibility of an online Women's Health resource and a printed Women's Health Directory.	Increased awareness and take up of health screening, preventative health care, and health services for women.	Health and wellbeing Board, Care Forum	March 2016
	Launch city-wide campaign to raise the profile of Women's health issues by producing posters, leaflets, billboard and social media presence.	Higher profile for women's health in the city.	Women's Health Task Group	Spring 2017
Promote women and girl's sports and exercise as a means of helping reduce health inequalities, preventing ill health and encouraging wellbeing.	Encourage the Bristol Sports and Active Recreation Partnership to form a women's sub group. BWC to be represented on the women's partnership.	Fewer secondary school age girls drop out of sport, more women take up both competitive and non-competitive sport and recreation.	Bristol Sports and Active Recreation Partnership, Women's Health Task Group	Spring 2017



Bristol Young Women's Health published by Bristol Women's Commission in 2015.

The covers shows young women from Integrate Bristol talking about their campaign against Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) at International Women's Day 2015.



A poster from the 'Bristol Girls Can' campaign, which encourages women and girls to take up sports and exercise.

Photo credit: Chris Bahn

Women's Safety

Article 22 – Gender-based violence

The Women and Safety Task Group have focussed most of their work to date on tackling gender based violence. There are many organisations in Bristol already working to combat gender-based violence and provide services to victims and survivors and the task group has been focusing its work on adding value to existing good work through its influence and reach.

The main priority for the group has been to make Bristol a city that will not tolerate any form of gender-based violence by becoming a Zero Tolerance City. Bristol will become a Zero Tolerance City by major employers and smaller businesses across the city signing up to a Pledge to undertake specific action to address gender based violence and commit to having strong domestic and sexual abuse policies and practices.

Objective	Action	Outcome	Owner	Timescale
Reduce and ultimately eliminate gender –based violence, abuse and exploitation in Bristol.	Develop and launch Zero Tolerance City campaign and secure funding to recruit a Zero Tolerance worker.		Women and Safety Task Group	Launch complete March 2015 Funding obtained from Public Health Worker appointed September 2015

Objective	Action	Outcome	Owner	Timescale
	Identify and promote organisations that have signed the Zero Tolerance pledge and demonstrate good practice through a dedicated website.	Increased awareness and understanding of Zero Tolerance throughout the city and acknowledgement that domestic and sexual violence are not private matters.	Bristol City Council, Women and Safety Task Group	Zero Tolerance website to be set up October 2015
	Request that the licensing committee reviews the Bristol SEV Policy.	Review takes full account of Article 22.2 of the Charter which refers to an unequal relationship of power.	Women and Safety Task Group	Review of link between violence and SEVs complete. Review of SEV Policy requested Nov 2014. Licensing Committee due to review SEV Policy Autumn 2015
Work with Business and other organisations to develop staff and client policies and procedures to improve their response to tackling domestic and sexual violence.	Increase the number of organisations signing Zero Tolerance pledges.	Increased numbers of businesses with robust policies and procedures.	Bristol City Council	Review January 2016.
	Survey the student population of both universities in Bristol regarding sexual incidents and prevalence.		University of Bristol, University of West of England	January 2016

Objective	Action	Outcome	Owner	Timescale
	Set up Joint University Forum to implement commitments to Zero Tolerance		University of Bristol, University of West of England	First meeting September 2015



Penny Gane, Chair of Bristol Women's Commission and George Ferguson, Mayor of Bristol with leading city figures and employers sign the Zero Tolerance Pledge on International Women's Day, March 2015.



A Bristol bus stop displays Zero Tolerance campaign posters.

Women and Transport

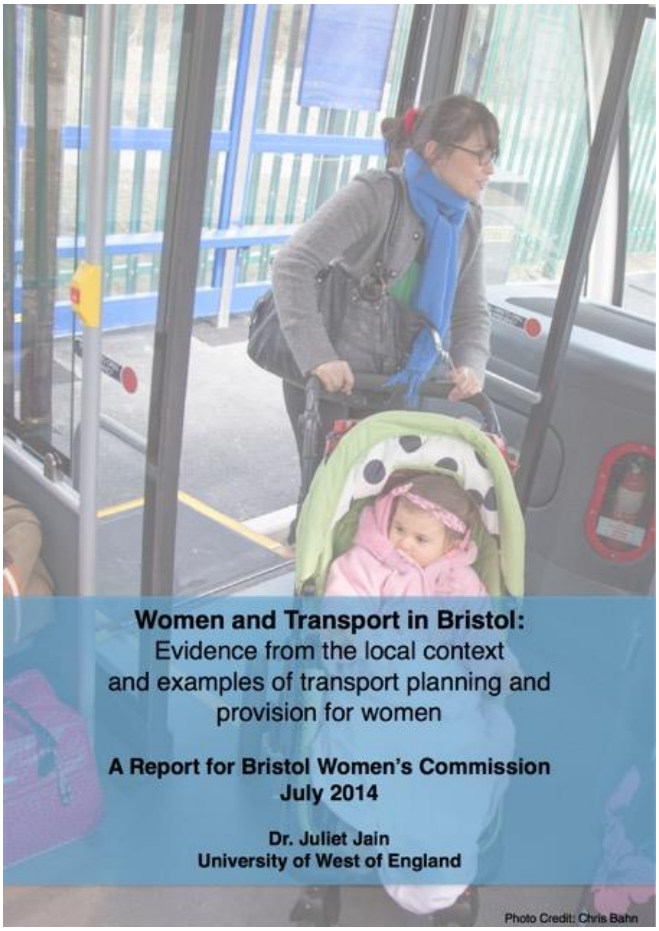
Article 26 Mobility and Transport

Women have distinct travel patterns and needs which are not always considered in transport planning and policy, meaning women can be excluded from economic and social activities through the transport system.

The vision of the Women and Transport task group is Bristol as a modern European city, where women are active and empowered citizens in terms of work, culture, family and education, supported by truly inclusive transport systems and an environment that meets their needs while contributing to the elimination of gender inequalities.

Objective	Action	Outcome	Owner	Timescale
Work in partnership with key service providers and commissioners to develop an understanding of women's transport needs and concerns.	Commission research into women's transport needs in Bristol and the south-west. Incorporate recommendations into transport planning to improve transport for women.	Report published ' 'Women and Transport in Bristol'	University of West of England	Report complete – July 2014
	Convene meetings with transport planners and women across Bristol so that women's transport needs are heard.	Demonstrable changes to improve services as a result of feedback from women. Feedback from women demonstrates improved satisfaction.	Bristol Women's Voice, Firstgroup, Bristol City Council.	2016

Objective	Action	Outcome	Owner	Timescale
Work in partnership to develop strategies to meet the specific transport needs of women.	Convene multi-agency workshop on gender mainstreaming and transport	All future work demonstrably gender mainstreamed.	University of West of England	2016





Women and Transport in Bristol, published by Bristol Women's Commission in July 2014.

Photo Credits: Chris Bahn

Women and the Economy

Article 27 Economic Development

The Women and the Economy Task Group was established following consultation with women in Bristol who identified the pay gap between women and men and the reasons for it as a key issue. The concerns included access to jobs, childcare; part time work which fits in with caring; low pay and zero hour contracts.

The task group works to address the economic and social exclusion of women on low income living in Bristol by promoting measures that include support for the living wage, secure contracts, accessible childcare, flexible working conditions and enlist the skills, creativity and experience of women to help deliver shared economic prosperity for the city.

Objective	Action	Outcome	Owner	Timescale
Promote gender mainstreaming and equality across all areas of economic development in Bristol.	Respond with a gender equality analysis to the Local Enterprise Partnership consultation paper.	Group submitted analysis which was published online with recommendations for strengthening diversity and women's representation.	Women and Economy Task Group	Complete – December 2014
	Promote fairness in allocation of EU funds to address women's employment needs and access to jobs and training.	Supported Women and Economy task group representative to become a member of the Local Enterprise Partnership decision-making body on the European Structural and Investment Funds.	Women and Economy Task Group, Local Enterprise Partnership	Ongoing

Objective	Action	Outcome	Owner	Timescale
	Promote gender equality mainstreaming in planning, commissioning and developing the Employment Zones.	Draft criteria for gender mainstreaming to be addressed in the development of planning and commissioning briefs. Hold initial meetings with Local Enterprise Partnership senior management team on themes of childcare, training, ESOL and transport.	Women and Economy Task Group, Bristol City Council	2015-2018
Develop a Gender Equality Charter for local Employment Zones covering planning, infrastructure, transport and employment and access conditions.	Set up a discussion meeting with women from the voluntary sector, business and academia in the city on the Local Enterprise Partnership to agree key principles for a Charter.	Charter principles agreed with stakeholders.	Women and Economy Task Group	October 2015
	Identify gender sensitive planning and infrastructure requirements; discuss with VBB Planning Officers and identify a means of requiring compliance for contractors involved in sire development.	Draft set of criteria and guidance produced. Method of ensuring compliance agreed.	Women and Economy Task Group Bristol City Council.	October 2015

Objective	Action	Outcome	Owner	Timescale
	Meet with Local Enterprise Partnership. Senior Managers to present draft Charter and invite sponsorship.	Charter endorsed by LEP.	Women and Economy Task Group, Local Enterprise Partnership	November 2015
	Work with organisations receiving European Social Funding to promote the good practice Charter.	ESF funded organisations adopt Charter.	Women and Economy Task Group	November 2015 – March 2016
	Seek endorsement of the Campaign and the Local Enterprise Zone Charter by the newly elected Bristol City Mayor.	Campaign endorsed by Mayor and profile raised.	Women and Economy Task Group	May 2016
Campaign for better employment conditions for women working in an identified sector of low pay.	In partnership with Single Parents Action Network and other organisations, identify key issues for women working in the agreed area through discussions with them and Trade Unions.	Draft set of issues identified for one sector of low pay.	Single Parents Action Network, Trade Unions, Women and Economy Task Group	February 2016

Objective	Action	Outcome	Owner	Timescale
	Draft a set of minimum standards for employers in this sector to address fixed hours, living wage, maternity right, carers leave etc.	Standards drafted and agreed by stakeholders.	Women and Economy Task Group	March 2016
	Invite organisations represented on Bristol Women's Commission to adopt the standard, devise robust monitoring processes and campaign for sponsorship by other businesses in the city.	All BWC organisations adopt the Charter. Targets for businesses signing up to the Charter agreed.	Women and Economy Task Group	March 2016
Ensure that gender equality and in particular the needs of disadvantaged women are included in the City Deal[1].	Meet with key Bristol City Council officers. Present comments and suggestions to Bristol City Council scrutiny and Local Economic Partnership Scrutiny Commissions.	Scrutiny Commissions understand gender perspective and make recommendations for inclusion in City Deal.	Bristol City Council	Sept 2015

[1] The City Deal scheme transfers certain powers, such as the ability to set and spend budgets from central government to local authorities in a bid to increase growth. The Bristol City Region expects the deal to help deliver an additional 40,000 jobs and over £1 billion of investment to support local growth over the next 30 years.

Objective	Action	Outcome	Owner	Timescale
Promote gender equality best practice to all Bristol businesses.	Establish new 'Women in Business' task group with University of West of England, CBI, Bristol Women's Voice, South West Media, Business West, Business in the Community, Project You and local business representatives.	Task Group established and meets regularly.	Women and Economy Task Group	Spring 2016

'Gender equality is more than a goal in itself. It is a precondition for meeting the challenge of reducing poverty, promoting sustainable development and building good governance.'

Kofi Annan

'Human rights are women's rights and women's rights are human rights once and for all.'

Hilary Clinton

Bristol Women's Commission

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