

# She Votes: Nottingham Women's Manifesto

A manifesto for the East Midlands Combined  
County Authority Mayor, and Police and  
Crime Commissioner elections 2024

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 Nottingham  
Women's Centre

come on in

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On 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2024, people across Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire will head to the polls to elect their first ever Mayor for the East Midlands Combined County Authority. In Nottinghamshire, we will also be voting for a Police and Crime Commissioner, making this a hugely important local election that will shape the lives of local communities for decades to come.

The East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA) Election brings a unique opportunity to set priorities, shape policies, and drive forward initiatives on skills, housing, transport and the environment to improve the lives of over 400, 000 women in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire (51% of residents in the region).<sup>1</sup>



Nottingham Women's Centre, alongside our partners in the sector, is calling for a gender responsive and intersectional approach to strategic planning and resource allocation so that everyone in the region can access the benefits this opportunity brings equally.

**She Votes: Nottingham Women's Manifesto sets out our key asks and we call on candidates to ensure that women's voices are listened to at this historic moment for Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire.**

This Manifesto is based on contributions from over 100 women's organisations in Nottinghamshire that form our Women's Organisations Network (WON), survey responses from women and evidence from current research on women's rights and needs.

## **About Nottingham Women's Centre**

Women are at the heart of everything we do. As one of the oldest and last remaining women's centres in the UK (established in 1971), Nottingham Women's Centre provides a supportive space to help all self-identifying women achieve their goals. Our mission is to enable women in Nottinghamshire to reach their full potential, have their voices heard and overcome barriers to creating a better future for themselves.

We do this by campaigning, providing courses and activities, offering volunteering opportunities and running information, advice and guidance services. We bring women and women's organisations together at our base on Chaucer Street, online and with partners at other venues in the city and county.

## **Our overarching asks: Women's needs at the heart of policy making**

The new Combined Authority is an opportunity to do things differently and include women, other underrepresented groups, and our communities in the design and delivery of initiatives and services. We are calling for:

- Mechanisms to be established through which women's voices in all their diversity are heard and consulted on across the region with representation from a diverse range of women's groups and organisations.
- Funding for specialist women's organisations and groups who provide valuable support to women across these policy areas and are often best placed to deliver the right services, at the right time to those who need it the most.
- Transparency and accountability through the publication of comprehensive equality impact assessments for all decisions, especially where investments are being made, and collection of disaggregated data across gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, and other protected characteristics.

## **Our thematic asks: Meeting women's needs**

The Mayor and Police and Crime Commissioner will have powers to significantly influence women's lives across specific areas of our lives. We have developed asks on each of these policy areas and will look forward to working with the new elected officials on making these happen for women in the region.

### **Policing and violence against women and girls**

We are calling for:

- Continued and sustainable funding for specialist women's organisations to provide holistic support to survivors across their journey, including support for recovery and healing, and to deliver initiatives tackling violence against women and girls.
- The inclusion of women with lived experience and women's organisations at decision making for the development of initiatives, commissioning and police response to truly reflect the needs of women and improve women's trust and confidence in the police and criminal justice system. Women involved

should be compensated for their time and expertise.

- A more coordinated approach between policing, victim services, and women's groups and organisations to ensure women are able to report crime and receive the support they need, where they need it.
- Recognition that violence against women and girls often starts with words, and effective response to hate incidents as well as hate crime. This should include safe reporting mechanisms and access to culturally appropriate and trauma informed support.
- An increase in early intervention and education for boys and men as well as the use of protection orders and notices for VAWG related offences.
- Emergency funding for survivors of domestic abuse (regardless of migration status) to enable them to be safe and to cover their immediate and short-term costs.
- Training and accountability for the Police to ensure that women receive service that is respectful, trauma informed, and gender responsive.

## Housing

Single mothers now make up two-thirds (66%) of all families in England that are homeless many of whom are fleeing domestic abuse. Homelessness (including forced moves, multiple moves and unsuitable accommodation) has a damaging impact on children's well-being, social development and educational attainment. For women in the UK, the home is the most dangerous place for women as the most common suspect for female homicide victims aged 16 years and over is their partner or ex-partner<sup>ii</sup>.

We are calling for:

- More accessible, affordable and safe housing to reduce the use of hotels for asylum seekers and women rough sleeping and to enable survivors to access emergency accommodation and move on from refuge.
- Enforcement action under the Housing Act 2004 to identify and eradicate damp and mould hazards in privately rented and social housing.<sup>iii</sup> Pregnant women, older people and women with disabilities are most at risk of health issues from damp and mould.<sup>iv</sup>



- Building of energy efficient homes, investment in social housing and support for women to buy houses particularly single mothers.
- Exemption of survivors of domestic abuse from local connections or residency requirements for the application of social housing.
- Provision of storage facilities for women fleeing domestic abuse and introduction of a streamlined legal system that requires the perpetrator to leave so that survivors can continue or secure a sole tenancy.

## **Transport**

The government's £2 bus fare cap, though useful is not efficient as women have to make multiple trips either to access appointments, visit an elderly parent, food banks or school run. In Nottingham, women who have to travel for medical appointments particularly to neighbouring cities for specialist medical services such as endometriosis care are faced with high transportation costs and often miss their appointments. Current public transport systems are more suited to longer commuting journeys instead of multiple short journeys.

We are calling for:

- Lower fares for multiple short journeys.
- Investment in safety measures for women on public transportation across the region.
- Introduction of accessible and family-friendly facilities on transport, particularly on trains and trams, such as space for wheelchairs and pushchairs, and level boarding.

## **Employment, skills and economic development**

We are calling for:

- Investment in social infrastructure such as care that supports our communities while creating jobs for everyone – research shows that any investment in care in the UK would produce 2.7 times as many jobs as an equivalent investment in construction: 6.3 times as many jobs for women and 10% more for men.<sup>v</sup>
- A skills and employment strategy that recognises the unique challenges experienced by women, and includes a focus on flexible work, support for women returning

from maternity leave, support for fathers and partners to take up parental leave, greater availability of part time work, and formal childcare for non-standard hours.

- Funding for childcare to enable women to work, attend courses, participate in activities to improve skills such as volunteering, and attend interviews. Evidence shows that childcare is a major barrier for women to attend courses, get employment and stay employed within communities in Nottinghamshire.<sup>vi</sup>
- Investment in the community provision of adult education, including through women's groups and organisations which are proven to improve outcomes.
- Investment in access to internet and digital literacy.

## **Climate and net zero**

We are calling for:

- Representation of women and girls in new, green jobs through access to training and development opportunities, subsidies and other incentives.

- Programmes to encourage women and girls, including at school, to enter male dominated green sectors as well as encouraging men and boys to enter caring roles.
- An intersectional approach to net zero that involves and considers the needs of women from across different social and economic backgrounds.

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<sup>i</sup> <https://nottinghamshireinsight.org.uk/people/key-population-facts/> accessed 08/04/24.

<sup>ii</sup> Homicide in England and Wales: year ending March 2023 available at

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/homicideinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2023#:~:text=Adult%20victims,the%20year%20ending%20March%2023> accessed 19/04/24.

<sup>iii</sup> Housing Health and Safety Rating System available at

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a799834ed915d0422069a0a/150940.pdf>: Housing Act 2004 available at <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/34/contents> accessed 19/04/24.

<sup>iv</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/damp-and-mould-understanding-and-addressing-the-health-risks-for-rented-housing-providers/understanding-and-addressing-the-health-risks-of-damp-and-mould-in-the-home--2#who-the-guidance-is-for> accessed 19/04/24.

<sup>v</sup> Mary-Ann Stephenson, Director of Women's Budget Group (WEC 2020)

<sup>vi</sup> Nottingham Women's Centre Research on childcare available at <https://www.nottinghamwomenscentre.com/national-update-unaffordable-childcare-costs-in-nottingham/> accessed 19/04/24.