



**West
Northamptonshire
Council**

Women's Forum

Minutes of a meeting of the Women's Forum held at on Tuesday 25 May 2021 at 11.00 am.

Present Pauline Woodhouse (Co-Chair), Sally Wood, Dawn Thomas, Neelam Aggarwal-Singh, Eleri Neale, Alex Rex, Anjona Roy, Cllr Janice Duffy, Michelle Myers, Hazel Gray, Sgt Steve Bedford.

Substitute
Members:

Also
Present:

Apologies for
Absence: Cllr Anna King, Morcea Walker and Annabel Pickering

Officers Debs Burns, Debbie MacColl

1. Welcome & Introductions

Everyone was welcomed to the meeting and introductions made around the screen.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The Minutes were agreed as a true record.

The only action point is picked up in the agenda – BAME sub group Terms of Reference.

3. Independent Advisory Committee - Northamptonshire Police

Sgt Bedford apologised for no one attending the last meeting – unfortunately operational duties meant the Sgt that was going to attend had to pull out at the last moment.

In answer to a concern about the Northampton IAG Sgt Bedford explained that it had become unworkable with only 2 members of the public attending which meant it was not achieving its purpose of being a critical friend. Attempts to reinvigorate the membership had not been successful which was why it was currently being trialled as

an agenda item at the Forums. This would be reviewed and evaluated after 12 months.

4. **Violence Against Women**

This was a discussion to enable Sgt Bedford to identify who from the police / OFPCC would be the best to speak at the next meeting.

There was a lengthy discussion around the police response to victims of violence from BAME and other diverse backgrounds and also around which agencies were funded to support women from BAME and other diverse backgrounds.

This was then split into the 2 different themes are follows:-

Sgt Bedford reported that the Police response to DA & SA to women from diverse backgrounds was being reviewed following feedback from another Forum. This would then be brought to the forums for discussion so the Forum would be able to see the direction of travel and to challenge it before it was finalised. **Action Sgt Bedford to find out what the timescales were.**

For the next meeting it was agreed to ask Sgt Bedford to approach the OFPCC to ask for someone to attend to answer the following questions:-

- Which agencies/groups are funded by OFPCC to support women and girls who are victims of violence/Domestic Abuse/Sexual Abuse
- Which agencies/groups are funded by OFPCC as above who have noted connections to BAME communities and other diverse backgrounds and are they evidencing that they are working with these communities
- What the outcomes are specifically for BAME/women from diverse backgrounds as too many victims are saying they can't access support.
- What funds, if any, are ringfenced for women from diverse communities and/or those with No Recourse to Public Funds and what are the outcomes.
- What service gaps have been identified by OFPCC and what solutions, if any, are planned.

On a positive note Voice had been successful in obtaining MJ funding and were currently recruiting for IDVA's for the County as follows to sit within Sunflower:-

- Out of hours – weekend evenings 16:00 – 02:00
- Diversity & Inclusion
- Complex Needs

Further information can be found through the link below. The closing date is 1 June [Vacancies | Voice for Victims & Witnesses \(voicenorthants.org\)](https://voicenorthants.org)

It was agreed that processes should be in place to hold to account that those funded to work with diverse communities actually did so.

5. **BAME Sub Group**

The draft Terms of Reference had been circulated and, apart from changing BAME to Diverse Communities / BAME throughout the document, the ToR was agreed.

As for feeding back from the sub-group to the Forum, Anjona, who is a Co-Chair of the sub-group, agreed to put herself forward, at the next sub-group, to be the link between the two groups. The group thanked Anjona.

There was currently some funding available from Lloyds for groups led by BAME communities. It was agreed it would better for a collaborative bid rather than smaller ones from the different groups that would be competing against each other. Although the bid would need to be led by the BAME community, Sally and Alex both offered support with completing applications. It was important that everyone was aware of what was happening to avoid overlap in order to take maximum advantage of the opportunities.

6. **Community Information Exchange**

Eleri stated she was new to post and would welcome 1:1 discussions with members around any issues they were experiencing. She could be contacted by email - eleri.neale@northants.pnn.police.uk

Hazel (Fire Service) asked if the forum members would be interested in attending a focus group around fire. It was agreed this would be a good idea and an evening session would be best for most community members and plenty of notice. **Action: Hazel send details when ready to Debbie for circulation.**

Sheila Baker

The sad news that Sheila, a very active and well-loved member of the Forum had sadly passed away. It was agreed to do an electronic condolence card for the family and send the link around to members so they could add their own personal messages. Also to find out when the funeral was in case people were able to line the route in respect.

Meeting Update – the funeral is limited to 30 attendees so is invitation only. It is **3pm, Friday 11 June** and a You Tube link will be available nearer the time to attend virtually.

International Women's Day Virtual Event 2021

If you've not managed to catch up with the virtual International Women's Day yet – here is the link! Enjoy. [International Day of Persons with Disabilities - 03.12.20 - YouTube](#)

7. **Next Meeting**

Tuesday 27 July, 11am by Teams

Please be aware meetings will now be by **Teams** rather than Zoom.