

# Govan Roadshow

## Report

**Mental  
Health**

**Childcare**

**Low  
Paid**

**Disability**

**Work**

**Social  
Security**

**Public  
Services**

**Caring**

**Equal  
Pay**

**Schools**

**Welfare  
Reform**

**Wednesday, 28th August, 2019**

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## Introduction

The Scottish Women's Convention (SWC) held discussions at the Pearce Institute in Govan on Wednesday, 28th of August, 2019, to discuss what matters to local women. A number of points were raised throughout the day which affected the area at both a local and national level.

This report is intended to showcase the real situations faced by women everyday in a unique setting for both local and national policymakers and encourage women at a primary level to become more involved. It seeks to extoll the advantages of qualitative evidence from people who are most acutely affected by policy decisions but who are often not part of the decision making process.

*The SWC would like to extend a warm thanks to all the women who attended on the day.*



### 6 Key Points from the Roadshow:

- **Lack of flexible childcare in the area for working mothers**
- **Community hub for women to access information and local services required.**
- **More focus on health and wellbeing from early years for children.**
- **Lack of capabilities and resources in schools for supporting children.**
- **High expense of public transport for local women.**
- **Need for more custom built social housing and affordable amenities.**

## **Childcare**

*The lack of flexible, affordable childcare for women was raised as a crucial point within the Roadshow. For those working full-time, particularly on precarious and unsociable contracts, this can be an extreme burden. With the vast majority of single parent families and primary carers for children being women, this can lead to having to make choices between expensive childcare and working.*

Comments included:

- The inflexibility of childcare, especially around evenings and weekends, for accommodating women working outwith 9 to 5 hours.
- Problems with inflexible nursery hours forcing women to uptake childminders whose fees may run to hundreds a month. This leads to many being unable to afford to use this as a full time option.
- Issues for women who may not have help from families to ease caring burdens meaning it is unsustainable to work.
- Lack of flexibility or understanding in workplaces for those with children.

*“We need flexible childcare. No nurseries are open late despite hours women may work.”*

*“Many women do not have families that can watch children so they just can’t afford to take on a job and pay for childcare.”*

## **Cost of Living and Employment**

*Continuing rises in the cost of living for women and their families has led to feeling unable to cope with these burdens. In work poverty was seen as having a major effect. Little resources are available for women who are juggling employment with the costs of raising families and feeling the pressure of increasing food and rental prices.*

Comments included:

- A lack of access to resources for grants and social security due to rigid requirements.
- A rise in those in work struggling to make ends meet.
- In work poverty not being taken seriously due to assumptions that because someone is employed full time, they are not struggling.
- A lack of real terms growth in wages for women in sectors where they predominate.
- Little value placed on the unpaid caring roles women take on within society.

*“It can be disheartening to work and feel like you get nothing in return.”*

*“Sometimes it feels like it’s an uphill struggle.”*

## Social Security and Help

*Problems within the social security system with the implementation of Universal Credit (UC) and welfare reform have led to many issues across Scotland. With women making up the vast majority of the population affected by such problems, Govan was no different in terms of issues raised around this topic.*

Comments included:

- Feelings that the system is “*stacked against you*”, notably for those women on precarious contracts where they face differing payments each month. This runs the risk of leading to delays and errors in what they are owed.
- The confusing make up of social security entitlement and difficulties with application forms.
- Not knowing where to go to access information about what you are entitled to.
- Mistakes in UC payments and having to owe this back over the following months.

*“It feels like it doesn’t matter what you do, you can’t get the help you need.”*

## Services

*Community based services available within the Govan area are seen as a lifeline to many women, providing invaluable support and a great resource as links to other organisations that can help. Concerns were raised, however, around funding contingencies for such organisations and the help that could be lost to many women if these were cut.*

Focus revolved around:

- Lack of availability of many services during weekends and evenings. This can be a particular issue for women who need access to specialist help but may work routine office hours.
- Fears that services which are desperately needed may be cut in the future with funding only committed for certain short periods of time.
- A need to use targeted interventions for support within local areas for those who really need it.
- Integrated support services which focus on all issues and that can link into other services are crucial for the area.
- Issues with communicating local resources for those who may be digitally excluded. It was thought using community hub points and drop in centres was a key solution to providing information to local women.
- Many services being quite niche in terms of what they can help with. More local, joined up resources to combat this was thought to be needed.

- Problems with funding focused around a need for quick fixes. Emphasis should be more focused around what these services are doing for the community over the next ten to fifteen years.

*“If you have someone in that service role, it takes away from all your other problems too. The end result of these services is to everyone’s advantage as there is less strain on the NHS, families, and less people tapping into other services.”*

*“Having someone who puts you in right direction is a very fortunate thing. What happens if this port of call is taken away?”*

*“You are trying to hold down a job, but can’t access the services that you need for help because of your hours.”*

### **Case Study: Govan Home and Education Link Project (H.E.L.P.)**

Govan H.E.L.P. offers a wide range of services including children’s summer programmes and a family education support project, plus much more. The organisation aims to improve educational attainment and life skills of families within the area.

As well as organising parental involvement and local community initiatives, direct support is also offered to parents and carers, as well as acting as signposts to other organisations and help with access to services. This was seen as providing a great resource for parents and was a unique organisation which the area was fortunate to have for children’s benefit.

## **Health and Wellbeing**

*Discussions on healthcare tended to coalesce around lengthy waits for particularly specialist services for both women and their children. This, coupled with fears around increasing mental health issues and stigma was still seen as a common problem, preventing many women from speaking out.*

Comments included:

- A large focus on the use of prescription pills as a *“quick fix”* solution, rather than taking more integrative and holistic approaches.
- Short staffing in social care making many women are forced to wait until they are at a *“crisis point”* before getting help.
- High increases in anxiety and suicide, particularly for young people.
- The high cost of healthy and nutritious food means many women on low incomes struggle, forcing them to go for cheaper, less healthy options.
- Feeling of being *“stuck”* due to lengthy waiting lists for issues such as mental health treatments.

*“Health and wellbeing is not just about tablets.”*

## **Area Regeneration**

*The ongoing regeneration of the Govan area is overwhelmingly viewed as a positive thing for both the local community and economy. A need for community participation around developments though as well as rising cost of living due to gentrification still poses a threat for many residents.*

Further issues that arose from women:

- More uptake needed in community participation for changes being made to the area through gentrification.
- A need for more accessible information around community participation instead of resigning this to just online.
- Concerns that local amenities are being posed a threat by new builds, leading to less localised facilities for residents.
- A spike in housing prices leading to issues this may cause for local residents—particularly those in private lets.

*“We need community groups that can go out and tell people how to make a difference.”*

*“Regeneration is great but you have to think about locals and not shoving them to the side.”*

### **Case Study: Govan Thriving Places**

A ten year programme introduced to help improve the quality of life and wellbeing for people in the community, the decade long plan seeks to involve local communities and use experiences of residents when developing the area. The Thriving Places approach was introduced to help existing services work together and address local challenges.

## **Housing**

*A lack of affordable housing is a concern for those living within the Govan community. Attempts to get social housing was seen as a major issue where women and their families may be placed on waiting lists for long periods.*

Issues arising at the event:

- Fears that higher housing prices allow those on larger incomes to move into the area, leaving less for local women and their families.
- Dealing with the housing system was seen as hard to navigate, *“like banging your head off a brick wall.”*
- Overcrowding for families was a cause for concern with little seen to being done about this due to not being roofless.
- The high cost of private rentals for families causing real struggle and hardship.
- A lack of inflexibility with the rigid structure of housing rules and the feeling that this can be difficult to accommodate women.

- Houses falling into bad conditions with private landlords charging high rental prices, with little care for tenants and repairs in properties.
- Issues around single people, especially young women, struggling to meet the criteria for affordable housing is seen as being a real struggle. This is often seen as a key catalyst for homelessness and sleeping rough.
- Problems around temporary homeless accommodation such as B and B's for those who may have extensive issues such as drug and alcohol issues already. These were seen as putting vulnerable individuals into situations where they may be unable to cope.
- Local Housing Allowance is too small an income in order to help with rising rents.
- Complications with accessing information around housing and your rights, particularly with legislation.

*“How do people negotiate all this with no help?”*

*“If you do not know your rights and exercise them, you will get palmed off – it feels like that anyway.”*

### **Case Study: Govan Law Centre**

Govan Law Centre aim's to offer holistic approaches which can do as much as possible for individuals experiencing housing issues. There are a wide range of matters dealt with, including court actions raised for rent and mortgage arrears, and defending people in court and tribunals. The organisation was seen as providing services which were extremely beneficial within the local area with women commenting that they were extremely fortunate to have such a resource so close to them in order to help with exercising legal rights and free legal services for tenants of both social and private housing.

## **Transport**

*Problems with transport was raised as a key issue. The high cost of public transport was the major focus brought forth at the event, but other key points revolved around delays and road blockages since the building of the new Queen Elizabeth University Hospital (QEUH).*

Issues included:

- Lack of information for women with disabilities who may get concessionary travel, yet are unaware of how to claim this.
- A rise in road restrictions due to increased traffic and road blockages as an effect of the hospital opening.
- High costs of transport impacting on access to employment and job centres, leading to sanctioning.

*“Do you eat or do you get the bus? It's getting out of hand.”*

## What are the key priorities for women in your local area?

- Housing and affordable amenities.
- Signposting information – how do women know where to go to for help?
- Schools
- Childcare
- Health and wellbeing.

*These findings will be used to feed into a wider Glasgow Area Report concerning issues for women at both a local and national level. The Scottish Women's Convention would like to give warm thanks to women who participated in the engagement process to ensure local voices and experiences are heard.*



*The SWC would like to extend many thanks to Humza Yousaf, local MSP, and Cabinet Secretary for Justice for coming along to the event.*

The Scottish Women's Convention (SWC) is funded to engage with women throughout Scotland in order that their views might influence public policy.

This is achieved in a number of different ways - through roadshow, round table, conference and celebratory events. Following each event, a report is compiled and issued to women who attend and relevant policy and decision makers.

The SWC uses the views of women to respond to Scottish and UK Government consultation papers.

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