

HELLO, WE ARE



until all women have choice, freedom and power

IMPACT REPORT 2023/24



“It took a long time to let you in, did you know that? To talk about the things I don’t talk about. But I’m really glad that I did.” - MASH Service User

These words remind us why our services at MASH are so vital as a place of safety and support.

We are delighted to be sharing with you our Impact Report for 2023/24. It has been one of the busiest years in our history in terms of the number of women turning to us for support. This is against the backdrop of deepening inequalities, divisions and a further chipping away of crucial support services and networks.

To meet increasing demand and complexity, we have developed and launched new services this year in response to what women tell us they need and in line with our five-year strategy.

We have extended our crucial van and sauna outreach to women in Oldham, Rochdale and Bury.

We have recruited an Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA) focused on supporting women who have experienced sexual violence or assault. Shockingly, we have seen numbers of women accessing support following violence and assault increase by more than 30% in the last year.

In partnership with the Greater Manchester Resilience Hub and other services, we have developed a ‘Pathfinder’ service for women who are survivors of sexual assault, with specific aims to improve access to mental health services and support.

We also launched a new pilot programme, Thrive, targeted at women leaving sex work and wishing to move away from engagement with MASH’s other services.

We are delighted to welcome our new Chair of the Board, Jackie Driver who says;

“It is a privilege to be joining MASH. Hearing from the women MASH supports, it is clear that our services and approach are fundamental to improving outcomes for women.

MASH provides somewhere to turn to for women who are pushed to the margins of society and face multiple barriers. Many are surviving through a complex web of traumas including poverty, violence, homelessness, mental ill health and isolation.

MASH also serves to hold up a mirror to continued violations of human rights in the face of multiple forms of oppressive social power. The safety net MASH provides is vital in the context of the structural and systemic discrimination women are so often dealing with. MASH is a critical part of the landscape that addresses the unwarranted inequalities women face. I am committed and hope I can do justice to the important position of chair of this vital organisation.”

In everything we do we aim to support women to experience better health, safety and wellbeing. Our activities, achievements and success stories on the pages that follow are an absolute testament to the collective community that is MASH, and our thanks go to the women we support, our staff, volunteers and trustees, our partners, funders and supporters. We continue in our mission until all women have choice, freedom and power.



ANNIE & JACKIE

MASH CEO & CHAIR

“Once you get that trust, you’ve got a lifelong supporter. I’m forever grateful.”

Former MASH service user, G

A lot of us don’t have people in our lives that ever made us feel like we were worth anything. Some of the girls didn’t even get fed as children and things.

So to get out of that mindset of feeling worthless...that takes a lot.

Trying to get through that barrier to help women is the biggest thing. But that trust takes a lot.

My MASH caseworker went on to become such an important person in my life! But that first night it was simple things they gave us like free condoms, teas and coffees.

Support was never forced on me. And they never punished me for missing a health appointment or something. I’d just walk in and my case worker would be like, “Don’t worry G. Come in when you’re ready. We’ll make another appointment.”

If it wasn’t for MASH’s partnerships with GP services and their way of working I never would have gone to the doctors.

OUR WHY



OUR WHY

A world where all women have choice, freedom and power.

Through MASH women* who sex work**:

- Are healthier
- Are safer
- Have more choices
- Have improved wellbeing
- Are able to identify and achieve their goals

Through MASH in Greater Manchester:

- Women who sex work are heard, understood and experience less stigma
- Other agencies and policymakers understand the needs of women who sex work and are more effective at supporting them

* people who identify as women some or all of the time

** people who are, have been or might become involved in sex work

OUR YEAR

“...my heart was broken on the streets and MASH is the surgery...

They've been the backbone of that beat and working girls...

Thanks for helping me by coming into my life. You've helped me with a medical problem, psychological issues, mental health as well as drugs. Thanks for making it easier for me.”

MASH Service User

WE REACHED



women

Offering face to face services in:



and supporting women across Greater Manchester

Including:



women without secure accommodation



street sex workers



women with addictions



survivors of violence

THE CONTEXT

COST OF LIVING CRISIS

The cost of living crisis continues to heavily impact our service users.

Women are under greater financial pressure because of higher costs. Many women are also impacted by higher rents because of Manchester's increasingly expensive housing market.

The sex work beats are quieter, with punters also likely being impacted by the crisis. This means women are having to work longer hours to earn the same amount of money.



27%

increase in demand for financial support



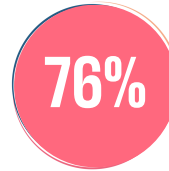
176%

increase in demand for food parcels

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

There has been an increase in violence and assault against the women we support.

Punters are increasingly using violence to avoid paying or to take back money.



increase in demand for support with safety

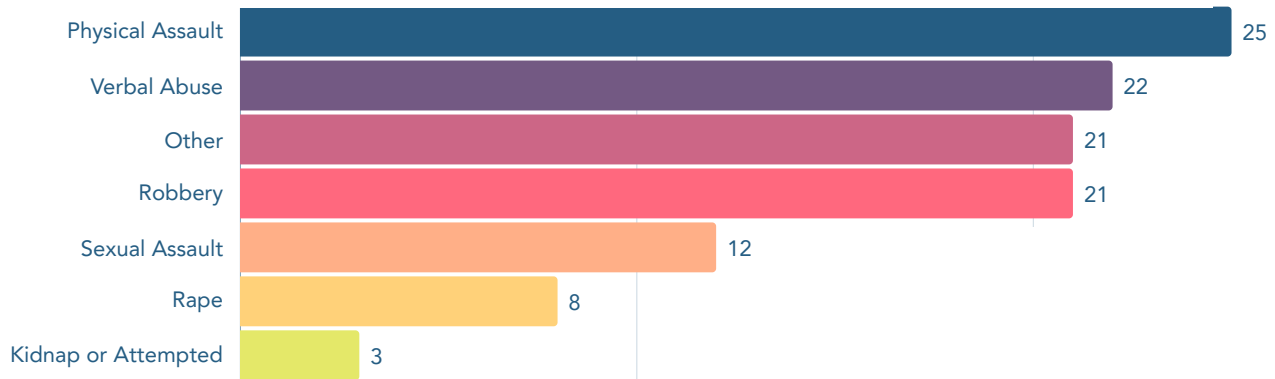


increase in demand for support following violence



incidents reported to MASH (much lower than the true number of incidents)

Incidents reported to MASH 2023/24



OUR IMPACT

**“[MASH] makes me
feel safe and that I'm
a good person.**

**They help you see the
good in yourself.”**

MASH Service User

OUR IMPACT ON HEALTH

76% of women felt their health had improved as a result of MASH*



*Service User Survey conducted in April 2024, 43 women took part (18% of service users at the time).



OUR IMPACT ON WELLBEING AND GOALS



women accessed creative and social sessions through MASH



women supported with their mental health



women accessed intensive one to one support with housing, mental health, criminal justice, addictions and finances

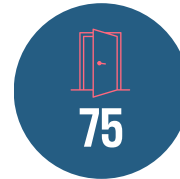


women accessed counselling

93% of women felt their wellbeing had improved as a result of MASH*



women were supported with housing and homelessness



women were supported into accommodation

*Service User Survey conducted in April 2024, 43 women took part (18% of service users at the time).

Thrive

Our pilot programme, Thrive, was launched in 2023, created for women wanting to leave sex work.

Based on consultation with our service user advisory panel, Sue's Space, the pilot has explored wellbeing activities, digital inclusion skills, confidence-building workshops, peer support, addiction recovery support, befriending, training and volunteering.



“When I first came to MASH I wouldn’t be able to sit for a long time and do something like this. Now I really enjoy it.”

Woman attending creative workshops

OUR IMPACT ON SAFETY

91% of women felt their safety had improved as a result of MASH*

*Service User Survey conducted in April 2024, 43 women took part (18% of service users at the time).

**“When working the beat, it makes me feel a lot safer knowing the van is out.”
MASH Service User**



women accessed the Outreach Van while street sex working at night



women accessed support following violence or assault



times women accessed information about Dodgy Punters



women were provided with advice around modern slavery



95%

of women felt understood by MASH staff and volunteers

9.2

out of 10 was the average rating women gave for the support they have received from MASH

“Whenever anything has happened, MASH has been there”
MASH Service User

CHANTELLE'S STORY

“I want to be able to help somebody, even if it's just to change that one person's life.”

I didn't really have a childhood.

At nine years old my brother gave me cannabis to 'keep me quiet'. I was abused.

I ended up with an older man and then later I had a child at a young age.

Things just escalated in my life.

I went from smoking cannabis then to ecstasy, speed, cocaine and then crack.

I ended up selling drugs and I was in an abusive relationship for ten years. He ended up in jail for attempting to murder me.

I got very very unwell and I became addicted to heroin. I also discovered I had contracted HIV.

A few years ago I decided that I needed to change.

I got into some supported accommodation, which was good, and then I started working with my Housing First worker at MASH.

It's been really hard and challenging but I have changed so much with support from MASH.

I've learned to deal with a lot of things.

I've learnt to deal with my HIV. I buried my head in the sand at first but my MASH worker and others have been with me through this. I wouldn't have dealt with it otherwise. I'd have been on total self destruct. I'm not afraid to talk about it, I'll tell it to you straight. Because I'm not a disease.

My MASH worker is very supportive with so many things. She takes me to appointments, she has helped me to find somewhere permanent to live and helped me get funding for my flat.

She is there to talk to. It took a while for me to open up to her but it has been really positive. She is very caring. Everyone at MASH genuinely cares.

Drugs can make you lose who you are. MASH has been helping me to get myself back.

If I didn't have this support, I'd still be committing crime but I don't even think about it now.

I'm quite proud of myself that I don't shoplift anymore.

I'm in a much better place now, mentally too.

It's been hard! Really hard but I'm getting my life back on track.

About six months ago I put my foot down and said enough is enough. I'm sorting myself out with my drugs. So I'm doing alright. I'm working on that at the moment.

Now I'm looking forward to getting clean off gear and going back to work. I'm gonna have a life.

In future I'd like to use what I've been through to help others, maybe young people.

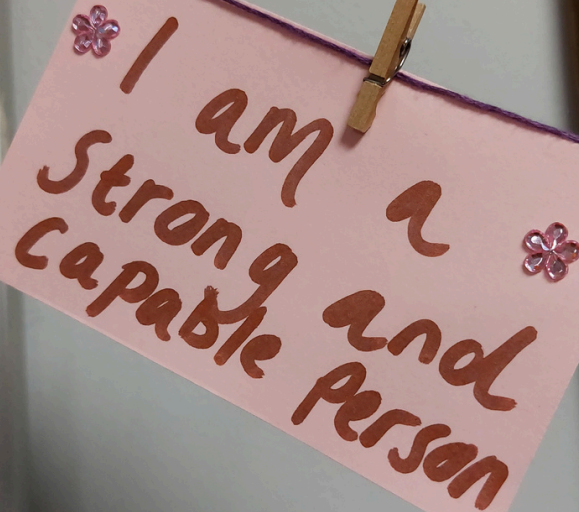
I want to be part of my family members' lives. I don't want to miss out. I want to see my grandchildren growing up.

If I was speaking to someone who was in a similar place to where I was I'd say; carry on! You will get there. You will get there in the end.

I want to be able to help somebody, even if it's just to change that one person's life.

OUR INFLUENCE AND IMPACT ON SYSTEMS, SERVICES AND STIGMA

- MASH women shared their experiences of custody for the hard hitting **Baird Inquiry** and we will be working with Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) on the recommendations.
- MASH women contributed to Agenda Alliance research; **We Need Support** into Multiple Child Removal. The resulting recommendations have been adopted by GMCA.
- MASH women took part in the national **Women's Rough Sleeping Census** to highlight women's, often hidden, experiences of homelessness. This work demonstrated that there is significant under counting of numbers of women who are homeless. Helping to prove the need for a gender-informed response to homelessness, so that women are able to access the support which they need.



I am a
Strong and
Capable person

Sue's Space is MASH's lived experience advisory panel.

Hear about the impact we've been having:

- We are part of the Manchester Sex Work Forum. We make sure the voices of women who sex work are represented and heard by Manchester City Council and the other partner organisations.
- We shared our stories as part of the Heard Storytelling exhibition at the Manchester Arndale to raise awareness of the challenges women who sex work face.
- We developed a funding bid for Rosa's Voices from the Frontline fund, which we were awarded! The funding will support the new sMASH project in 2024.
- We helped to design a new MASH project called Thrive.
- We delivered four half-day Trauma Informed Best Practice Training sessions.

Sue's Space, what's it all about? Hear from one of our members...



"I get a lot of satisfaction from it. There are lots of projects we are working on like working to break down barriers to employment. We are influencing services and pushing for things that women need. We've all been there and we know. We can say what would have helped us.

It gets us out of our comfort zones, too. Like, sitting here in the offices at MASH with the staff team. I never could have imagined that. Sometimes I'm like 'what am I doing here!?'

It can be frustrating as well though. Like trying to influence things more widely outside MASH. Sometimes it can feel like a tick box exercise that organisations want to work with Sue's Space. Sometimes we feel like they want something from us rather than us suggesting what we can bring to the table.

That can sometimes make me question whether to carry on, but then the other members will say, 'we're never gonna change anything if we sack it off!' And that motivates me to stay."

LOOKING AHEAD

“They have been supportive to me on many occasions. I felt suicidal, emotional, broken, depressed.

Coming here was the best thing.

Thank you MASH.”

MASH Service User

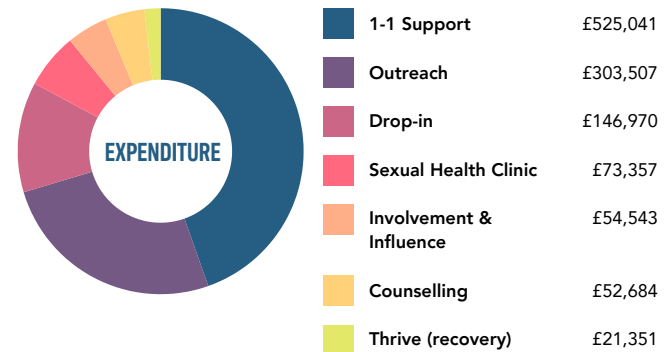
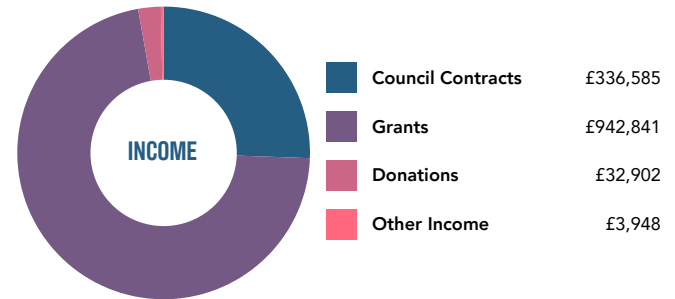
IN 2024/25 WE WILL BE

- Commissioning an independent evaluation of our services
- Welcoming MASH's new Chair of Trustees
- Launching a new project, 'sMASH', enabling service users to influence employers and reduce barriers to employment for women who have sex worked
- Delivering new sessions on creative writing, string art and music production in the Drop-in
- Creating a Butterfly Garden with women on some unused land at Piccadilly Station
- Conducting an organisational health check, governance review and Board audit
- Joining the new GM VCFSE Victims and Justice Workstream which aims to create a social movement for change to improve outcomes for victims of crime
- Fundraising to buy a second outreach van



FINANCIALS

MASH is hugely grateful for the support of our funders and donors who enabled us to impact so many women's lives.



THANK YOU



If you would like to donate to MASH's vital work supporting women in need please use the QR code.

VOLUNTEERS

A heartfelt thank you to all our dedicated volunteers, Sue's Space members and trustees. All the hours of time and energy that you give to MASH and the women we support makes a real impact.

We have over 50 volunteers and we are very proud that the team was awarded Volunteer Team of the Year at the Spirit of Manchester Awards in 2023.

"I've had the best time at MASH it's been a constant beacon in my life" Previous Volunteer:

If you would like to volunteer for MASH please visit our website www.mash.org.uk/get-involved

FUNDERS AND SUPPORTERS

Another huge and heartfelt thanks to our amazing funders and individual supporters. Your kind financial support truly changes lives. Thank you to:

Manchester City Council

Salford City Council

Trafford Council

Bury Council

Oldham and Rochdale Borough Council

Greater Manchester Combined Authority

Ministry of Justice

GM Housing First Partnership

Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust

Salford Community Answer Cancer

The National Lottery Community Fund

Greater Manchester High Sheriff's Trust

The Leathersellers' Company

The Henry Smith Charity

Pilgrim Trust

St Philip's Church

Tudor Trust

Grand Trust

Our Manchester VCS

Big Give

The Charity Service

Comic Relief

CRH Charitable Trust

Edward Holt Trust

Europa CEM

Treasured – a poem by J

Women in a room
Mixing together from all walks of life
No matter who you are
We are special and rare
Like a rare gem stone
We were once nobodies

But now are somebody
To be loved, cherished and cared for
And treated with respect.
We are all gems
Beautiful and rare
Yet special.



@MASH Manchester



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