

# GM4WOMEN2028

## KEY POLICY PRIORITIES TO SUPPORT WOMEN THROUGH THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The **COVID pandemic** is exposing women in Greater Manchester to major risks. These risks take a variety of different forms. Many women are on the front-line providing our health, care and other key services; while other women are employed in sectors hard hit by lockdowns such as hospitality and the arts - facing job loss and income insecurity. Neither the economic, nor the health risks are evenly distributed, and these are often particularly affecting low paid and frontline workers, where those from racially minoritised communities are disproportionately concentrated. Meanwhile, disabled women have often faced long periods of shielding and loneliness.

Women are also having to juggle work with the major additional burden of home schooling, while worrying about how to look after their families on reduced budgets. The situation is challenging even when home is a safe space; but it is clear, and concerning, that lockdowns have also exposed women to increased risks of domestic violence.

In this extraordinary time **GM4Women2028** is calling for local and national policymakers to recognise the additional risks and problems that women have been facing, and to initiate or call for specific actions to help reduce gender inequalities during the pandemic and beyond.

Our action groups have ten key priorities for policymakers, as listed overleaf.



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2028

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## Safety action group

1. Immediately suspend the No Recourse to Public Funds policy (with a view to its permanent abolition) to ensure all migrant women have equal access to safety and protection from violence
2. With urgency, implement a local violence against women and girls strategy, investing in grassroots, inclusive frontline services that can support women to access safety during the pandemic.

## Participation action group

5. Support women's care work to free up time for political participation.
6. Ensure that those most affected by COVID are listened to and that they are central to policy making, including women, BAME groups, adults who need help with their care and disabled people.

## Education action group

7. Vaccinate all staff in schools and early-years education as a priority to help reopen schools and safeguard staff.
8. Provide financial support to nurseries to prevent long term damage to childcare infrastructure.

## Employment action group

3. Pay the real living wage now to all the care workers who are putting their own lives at risk for our sake.
4. Give parents a right to paid furlough if schools are closed or children self-isolating.

## Culture and Active Lives action group

9. Make streets and parks safe and accessible for women to exercise and ask employers to facilitate exercise during the working day.

10. Support those in the arts, culture and creative industries - especially those such as freelancers falling through the cracks of the income support schemes.



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